

# **VINTON IN 2025**

# **OUR COMMUNITY STORY**

**VOLUME 2 OF THE TOWN OF VINTON'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
**DRAFT 6.24.2025**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## VOLUME 2 OF THE TOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>COMMUNITY CONTEXT</b>                     | <b>4</b>   |
| Historic Context.....                        | 6          |
| Regional Context.....                        | 10         |
| Planning Context.....                        | 12         |
| Assets and Opportunities.....                | 16         |
| Vinton's Treasured Places.....               | 16         |
| Opportunities for Vinton's Future.....       | 18         |
| <b>COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT</b>            | <b>24</b>  |
| Transportation.....                          | 30         |
| Land Use and Environment.....                | 48         |
| Recreation and Quality of Life.....          | 58         |
| Downtown and Economic Development.....       | 66         |
| Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization..... | 76         |
| Community Facilities and Services.....       | 84         |
| Stormwater, Water, and Sewer.....            | 94         |
| <b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>                  | <b>104</b> |
| Phase 1 - Assets and Opportunities.....      | 106        |
| Phase 2 - Needs Assessment.....              | 110        |
| Phase 3 - Vision and Policy.....             | 118        |
| Phase 4 - Implementation.....                | 122        |
| Phase 5 - Adoption.....                      | 126        |

# COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Vinton in 2025 is a welcoming community of about 8,000 people, nestled in the heart of the Roanoke Valley between Southwest Virginia's largest city – Roanoke – and one of its greatest outdoor attractions and second largest lake – Smith Mountain Lake. Town residents' easy access to jobs, entertainment, and nature have made it a cherished hometown for generations. Vinton's Comprehensive Plan is about building on its many strengths and addressing the community's needs to ensure a high quality of life for generations to come.

The Community Story that unfolds across the following pages is the result of extensive community engagement, research, and data analysis. It looks back through nearly 150 years of Town history to describe the path that has led Vinton to 2025. It is also based on extensive analysis of the Town's existing conditions that reveal opportunities the Town can build upon, and the needs that it must address, to enhance quality of life and keep Vinton competitive as a great place to live, visit, and enjoy well into the future.

The Community Story lays out three fundamental layers for the foundation of the comprehensive plan. These are treasured places, opportunities, and needs, which are defined as follows:

- **Treasured Places** – Places valued by residents that came from earlier investments.
- **Opportunities** – Strengths that Vinton can build upon over the next 25 years.
- **Needs** – Issues to address over the next 25 years to enhance public health, safety, and wellbeing.

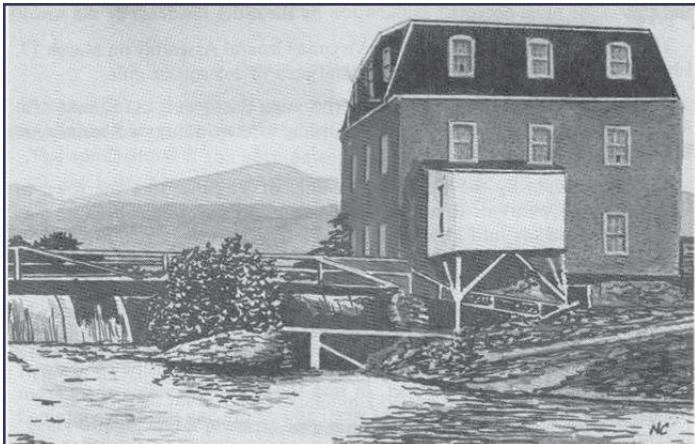


# HISTORIC CONTEXT

## EARLY SETTLEMENT

The area of present-day Vinton was part of a Native American trail called the Great Warriors' Path that extended from the Carolinas, Georgia, and Tennessee to Virginia and on north to Pennsylvania and New York. Most of the Native Americans in this area were of the Monacan Tribe and spoke languages in the Siouan language group. White settlers first came in the mid-1700s, drawn by the region's rich natural resources and abundant water supply.

Brothers Christian Gish and David Gish were two of the area's earliest settlers and they established a grist mill on Glade Creek in 1797. This led to the Town's first name of "Gish's Mill." Gish's Mill became a part of Roanoke County in 1838 and soon became a hub for the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Ohio Railroads. Families slowly came to the area, but substantial growth was not seen until the late 1800s.



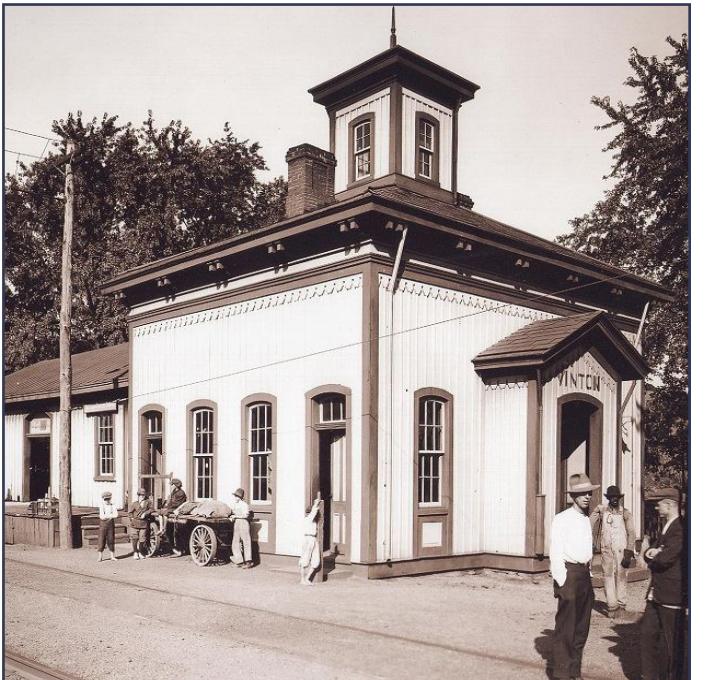
*Gish's Mill, built prior to 1838, from which our town's first name originated. The mill was constructed and operated by David Gish until it was sold to Isaac White Vinyard in 1867.*

Gish's Mill (Source: Town of Vinton)

## A TOWN IS BORN

In the 1870s and 1880s, the Gish Family began and led a movement to establish a town. New construction from Roanoke City, which was charted in 1882, along with increasing job opportunities on the railroads spurred population growth in Gish's Mill. A large meeting to

discuss incorporation was held in 1883 and on March 17, 1884, the Town of Vinton was chartered. At this time, Vinton had a population of 584 and a land area of 1.5 square miles.



## EARLY GROWTH

The City of Roanoke was the main driver of economic growth and development in Vinton. As Roanoke industrialized and shifted away from an agricultural society, Vinton was well-situated to follow suite. Intense land speculation was widespread in these early industrial years and much of the area's farmland was made available for development. This land speculation soon decreased along with the costs of land and housing. Families were able to purchase properties at a lower cost and were largely employed by the Norfolk and Western Railway Company. In the late 1800s, Vinton became widely known as a working person's town. Population growth also led to greater demand for services within the town. In 1889, the Vinton Dispatch was established as the first weekly newspaper.

In the early 1900s, the Town of Vinton welcomed many new businesses and commercial enterprises that provided additional job opportunities for residents. Among these were the American Viscose Plant (closed in the 1950s), Burlington Mills (now known as Precision Fabrics Group Inc), Vinton Milling Company, Vinton Fuel Company, Southern States Cooperative (now known as Cargill), and various others. Many schools, churches, restaurants, banks, and other businesses that served the needs of residents were also constructed around this time.



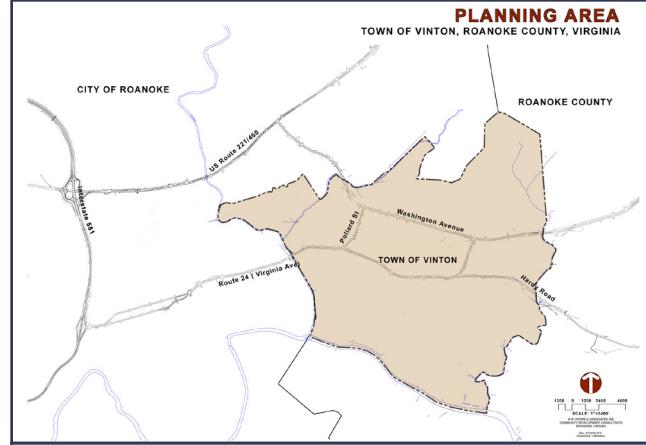
Vinton 2024 Dogwood Festival

## BUILDING COMMUNITY

A sense of community is important to residents of Vinton, which is evident in the Town's events and community facilities. The Vinton Dogwood Festival was established in the late 1950s and continues today as an annual occasion that brings together community members, volunteers, and tourists for a multi-day celebration. Another focal point of the community is the Vinton War Memorial, which was constructed in 1948 to recognize the sacrifices of the Town's citizens during World War II. It was later re-dedicated (in 1998) to recognize the sacrifices of the Town's citizens during all conflicts since World War II. The War Memorial also serves as an event center and a community meeting place for civic groups and residents to gather. Vinton celebrated its centennial, or "Vintennial," in 1984 and the Vinton Historical Society was formed that same year; the Historical Society published a book that documented the first 100 years of Vinton's history. That same year, the Vinton History Museum was opened with the mission of "Preserving the past... for the future."

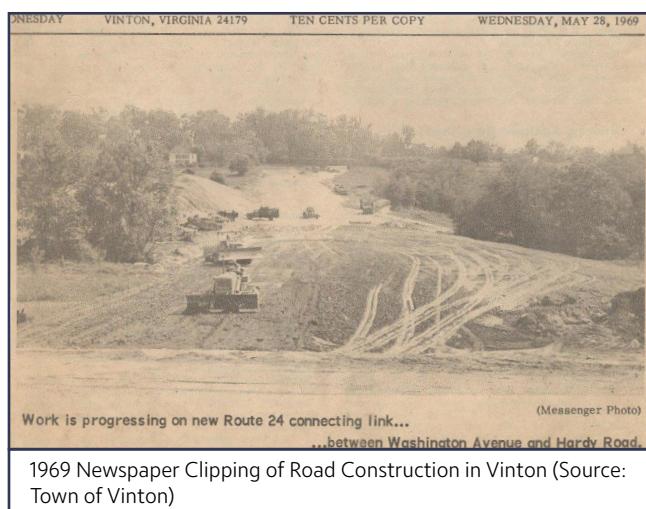
## RECENT HISTORY

A key part of Vinton's recent history was the annexation of Roanoke County property in 1963. This added 1.7 square miles of land to the Town of Vinton and nearly doubled its population.

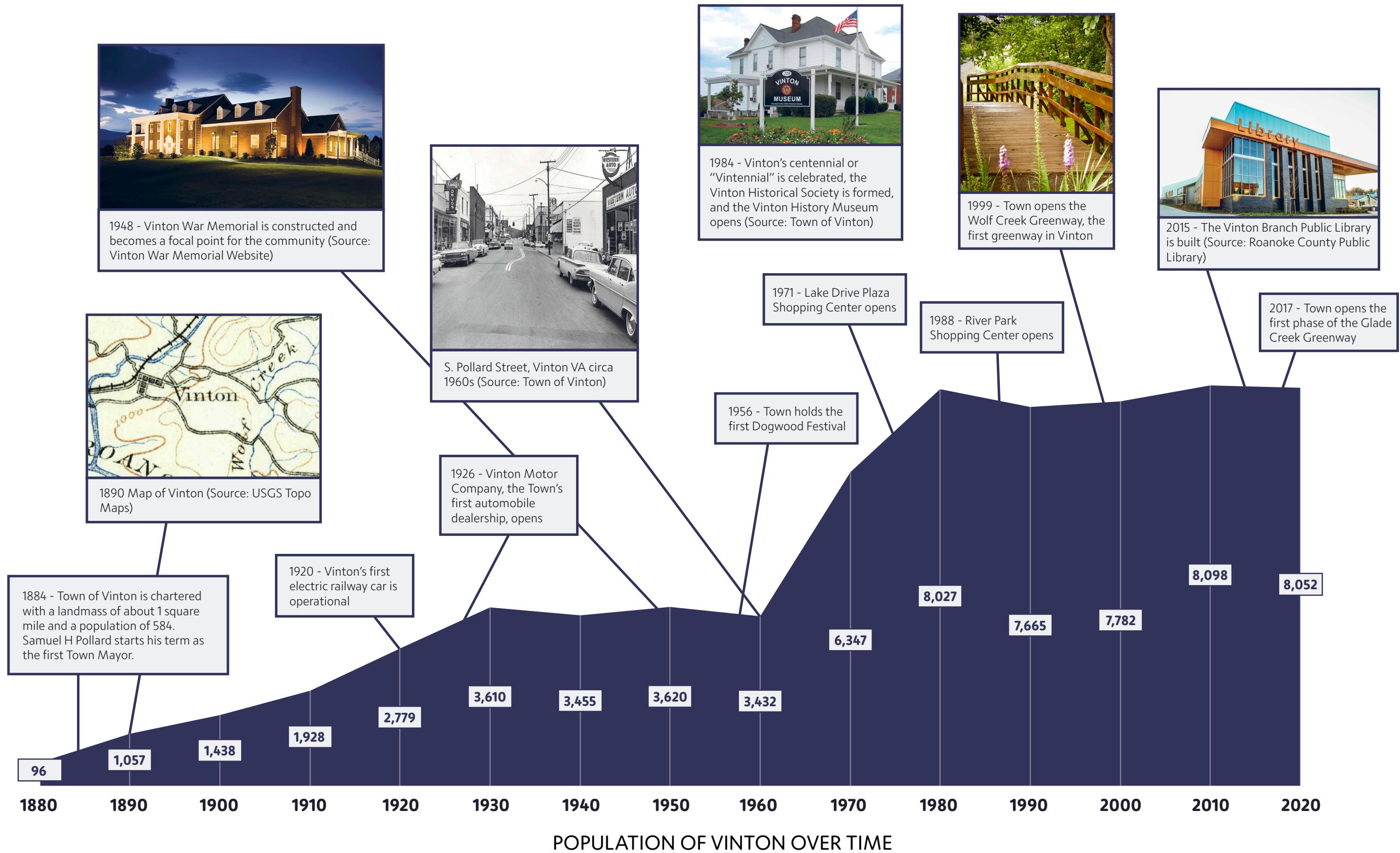


1963 Annexation Map (Source: Town of Vinton 2004-2024 Comprehensive Plan)

In the early 2000s, as part of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, Vinton invested in improvements and developments throughout the town that brought new growth and change. These major projects included upgrades and renovations to the Farmer's Market, enhancements to downtown streetscapes, and improvements to the Town's public infrastructure. In 2015, Vinton partnered with Roanoke County to construct the new Vinton Branch Public Library. Redevelopment picked up around this time as underutilized properties were reimagined and redeveloped for new businesses. One example of this was the conversion of the former library to a full-service restaurant. Vinton also continues to develop its greenway system to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and enjoyment. Wolf Creek Greenway, Glade Creek Greenway, and the Gladetown Trail are all located within the town, as well as a canoe/kayak launch at Tinker Creek. Vinton is also situated among a regional network of trails and greenways that extends to Roanoke County and the Blue Ridge Parkway.



1969 Newspaper Clipping of Road Construction in Vinton (Source: Town of Vinton)

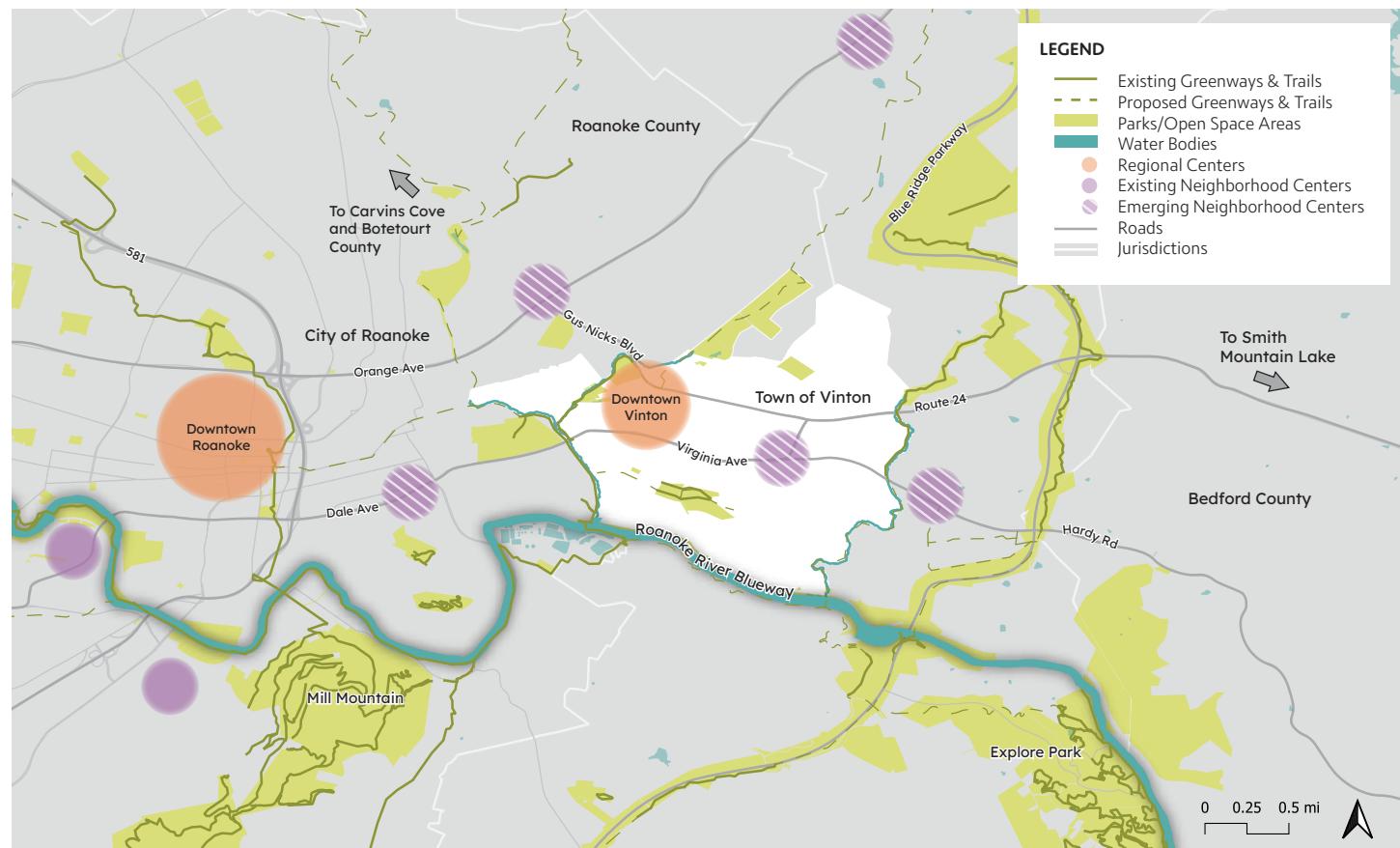


# REGIONAL CONTEXT

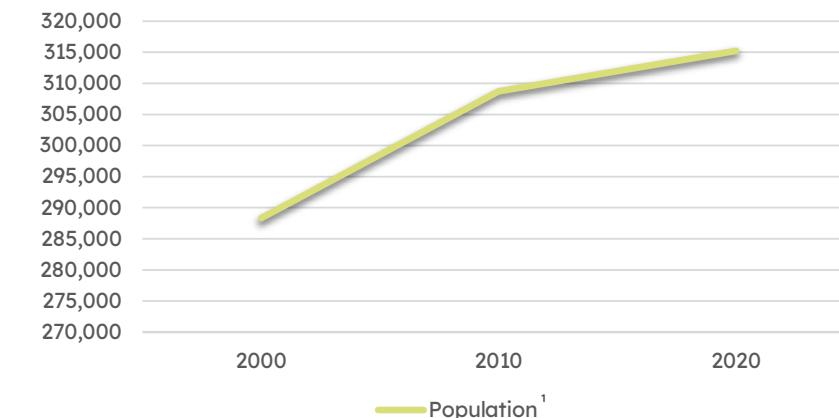
Vinton's history of growing along the railroad and Roanoke River has resulted in one of its greatest present-day strengths, which is its geographic location within the Roanoke Valley region. Vinton is in eastern Roanoke County and borders the City of Roanoke to the west and north. The downtown is less than three miles and a 10-minute drive or 15-minute bike ride to downtown Roanoke, which is southwest Virginia's largest urban center. A Norfolk Southern railroad main line crosses east-west across the southern edges of Vinton, hugging the Roanoke River, on its path between Roanoke and Norfolk. This line also once again carries passengers from Roanoke to Lynchburg, Charlottesville, Washington, DC and beyond on restored Amtrak passenger rail service north of Walnut Avenue. Vinton is also the region's most accessible location to Bedford County, the Town of Bedford, and Lynchburg.

The Town's location along the railroad and Roanoke River fueled its early development in the downtown area. Downtown benefited from growing during an era when towns were built around walking as the main mode of transportation. It has a dense mix of uses, a compact walkable grid of streets, and civic spaces such as the Vinton Farmers' Market. Downtown also benefits from easy access to population centers in Roanoke and Roanoke County, and as a result is emerging as a destination for the region. Places like downtown Vinton and Roanoke are considered "activity centers" because they include the highest concentrations of jobs and residents in the region.

The context map below shows Vinton in relation to existing and emerging activity centers, including smaller neighborhood centers such as the cluster of commercial activity in Vinton near Hardy Road, Washington Avenue, and the Bypass Road. Vinton is easily accessible to several centers in the City and County, including job clusters such as the Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital and associated services.



## Roanoke Valley Population Change



Having great access to activity centers helps bolster Vinton's economy, keeps its housing market strong, and maintains the Town as a desirable place to live for the region's workforce. Enhancing transportation connections, by all modes, from Vinton to these centers is important for the Town's economic success. The map highlights the importance of Washington Avenue/Gus Nicks Boulevard, Hardy Road, Virginia Avenue, and the regional greenway system for making connections between Vinton and nearby activity centers. The map also depicts emerging centers, which are places that the City of Roanoke and Roanoke County have identified as future centers but may have limited development in 2025.

Vinton's access to outdoor recreation and tourism amenities is also a strength. The Blue Ridge Parkway is less than a half-mile to the Vinton town line. The 469-mile scenic byway maintained by the National Park Service connects Shenandoah National Park in Virginia with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina. Vinton is also less than 10 miles to the world-famous Appalachian Trail, which connects Georgia to Maine. The regional greenway network is another significant asset for Vinton and the entire region. Vinton has access to Roanoke and Salem along the Roanoke River Greenway and sits at the junction of the Tinker Creek Greenway and Glade Creek Greenway, which both have plans for extensions into Roanoke and Botetourt counties. The existing and planned greenways put Vinton at the heart of this expanding network that is among the most extensive in the Southeastern United States.

The assets and advantages described in this section are driving growth in Vinton and across the region. The COVID pandemic enabled people to live in places like Vinton and the Roanoke Valley and work remotely. Places like Vinton that offer a high quality of life and great transportation access are benefiting from this ongoing trend. The Roanoke Valley region's population reached about 315,000 in 2020, up from about 288,000 in 2000.<sup>1</sup> The official forecasts from the Weldon Cooper Center, which prepares official population forecasts for localities in Virginia, anticipates this trend will continue with the Roanoke Valley region forecast to add another 24,000 people by 2050. Vinton is well situated to capture some of this growth given its ideal location within the region, however future growth will largely come from infill development and redevelopment since most land within the Town of Vinton is already developed.

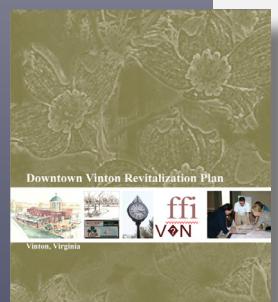
<sup>1</sup> Vinton is in the Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. The MSA in 2020 includes the cities of Roanoke and Salem and the counties of Roanoke, Botetourt, Franklin, and Craig, and all of the towns located within those counties. The population change since 2000 reflects this geography.

# PLANNING CONTEXT

The Vinton Comprehensive Plan is a general, long-range plan for the development of the entire Town. The Comprehensive Plan incorporates the recommendations of more detailed studies and plans for the various elements that make up its physical development including transportation, parks and greenways, housing, utilities, and more. The Vinton Comprehensive Plan incorporates many of the recommendations of the Plans described in this section, which have been adopted or developed since the last major update to the Comprehensive Plan in 2004. The previous Comprehensive Plan set Vinton on a course to several important accomplishments during the last 20 years including greenway extensions, downtown revitalization, repurposing of old school buildings into housing, and new community facilities such as the Vinton Library. The Vinton 2050 Comprehensive Plan is an opportunity to take stock of where the Town has been, and adjust direction based on today's existing conditions, priorities, and needs. These plans that predate the Vision 2050 Comprehensive Plan are summarized at a high level here to provide the reader with important context.

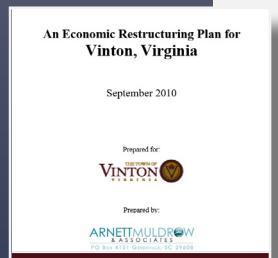
## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Vinton developed this 2004 Plan in conjunction with its Comprehensive Plan update as a supplement to its implementation strategy. The Plan identified deficiencies and action plans for five critical components of the Town: gateway/entrance corridors, housing and neighborhoods, greenway/parks and recreation/youth centers, economic development, and downtown redevelopment. The Plan identified six priorities: design and develop a new Town Center, create a downtown green, adaptive reuse of the old William Byrd High School and Roland E. Cook Elementary School into elderly assisted living housing, complete infrastructure and housing improvements in the Gladetown neighborhood, design and construct consistent signage throughout Vinton, and construct proposed greenways throughout Vinton.



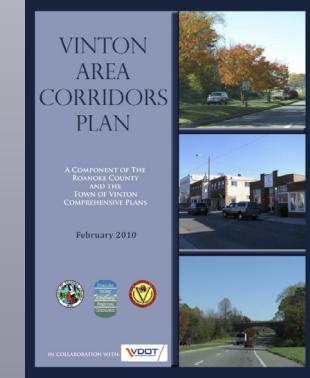
## DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN

The Downtown Vinton Revitalization Plan from 2010 outlines strategies for improving the economic and physical landscape of downtown. The Plan's recommendations focused on housing development, business retention and recruitment, and physical improvements such as wayfinding, gateway and streetscape improvements, farmers' market expansion, and redevelopment of the Dunman Floral and Vinton Motors properties. The two properties have redeveloped into a library and popular restaurants, which are helping Vinton become more of a regional destination.



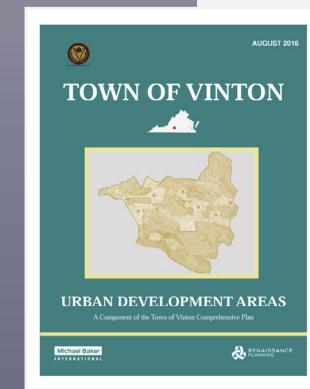
## ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING PLAN

The 2010 Economic Restructuring Plan assessed the local market conditions and made recommendations for how to increase economic activity downtown. Among the recommendations were the development of a new brand for Vinton, recruitment of target retail industries, and the development of mixed-use and residential projects downtown.



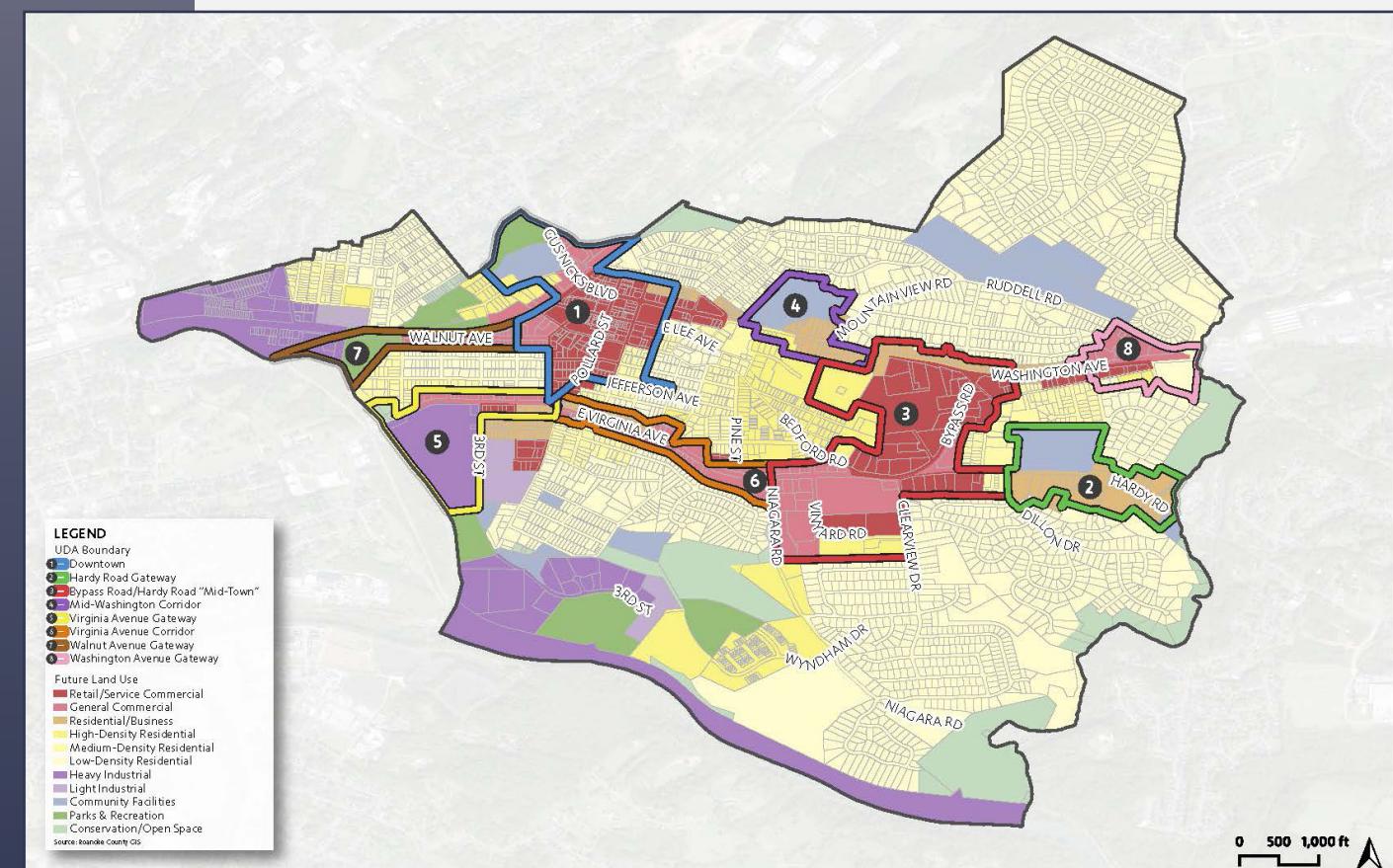
## VINTON AREA CORRIDORS PLAN

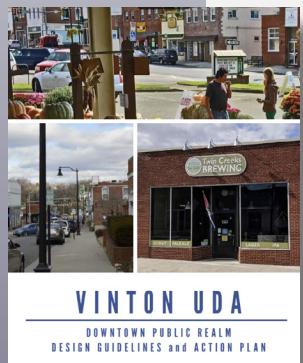
Roanoke County developed this plan in 2010 and it was adopted as part of the comprehensive plans for the Town of Vinton and the County. The Plan reports extensive data on Vinton's key roadway corridors for all modes of travel. The Plan considered various future land use scenarios to arrive at a set of land use, economic development, and transportation recommendations. Among the recommendations were gateway and wayfinding signage improvements, bike lanes and bicycle accommodations, enhanced crosswalks, new sidewalks and spot improvements for pedestrians, parking and intersection improvements, improvements to the Town's downtown façade program and County's commercial corridor matching grant program, and long-term redevelopment of aging commercial centers.



## URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREAS STUDY

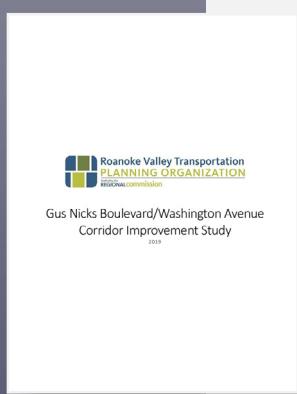
Using a State grant for technical assistance, the Town of Vinton in 2016 identified Urban Development Areas (UDAs), which became a component of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. UDAs are growth areas defined by local governments per the code of Virginia (15.2-2223.1). These areas are deemed appropriate for higher density development due to their proximity to transportation facilities and the availability of utilities. As such, they are areas appropriate for redevelopment or infill development. The study identified eight areas within the Town as UDAs and the Town incorporated these into its Comprehensive Plan. The UDAs are Downtown, Mid-Town: Bypass Road/Hardy Road, Virginia Avenue West Gateway, Hardy Road East Gateway, Mid-Washington Avenue Corridor, Virginia Avenue/Hardy Road Corridor, Walnut Avenue West Gateway, and Washington Avenue East Gateway.





## DOWNTOWN PUBLIC REALM DESIGN GUIDELINES

This 2018 study was funded by the State UDA Technical Assistance program and included several recommendations to the Town's zoning and subdivision ordinances to support traditional neighborhood development within the Town's designated urban development areas (UDAs). The study also produced public realm design guidelines for the downtown area.



## GUS NICKS BOULEVARD/WASHINGTON AVENUE CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT STUDY

This 2019 study by the Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization looked at opportunities to improve the Gus Nick Boulevard/Washington Avenue corridor. The study recommended near term opportunities, such as adding bike lanes as part of routine repaving; and studied a range of possible improvements to the roadway including narrower travel lanes, a four-lane to three-lane conversion including a dedicated center turn lane, and incorporating a reversible lane in the center. The study also recommended intersection improvements and new crosswalks.



## ROUTE 24 BIKE/PED PLAN

This 2022 Plan was funded by a Virginia GAP (Growth and Accessibility Planning) grant. It is focused on improving multimodal infrastructure and access along the Route 24 corridor and in the central portion of Vinton. The plan provided a "toolkit" for bicycle and pedestrian improvements, introduced the concept of a "slow street" that emphasizes shared space for pedestrians and vehicles with traffic calming improvements. Key projects identified in the Plan include new sidewalks on Virginia Avenue and Hardy Road, intersection improvements at Pollard Street and Virginia Avenue, wider sidewalks on Pollard Street, implementation of the Slow Street concept on Cleveland Avenue, reconfiguration of Washington Avenue from four to three lanes with buffered bike lanes, and pedestrian improvements on Vinyard Road and Bedford Road.

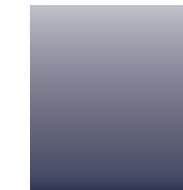
## OTHER PLANS AND STUDIES

Several regional and statewide plans also include recommendations for transportation that affect Vinton. These are briefly summarized below.



### 2018 ROANOKE VALLEY GREENWAY PLAN

Includes recommended extensions of the Glade Creek Greenway, the Wolf Creek Greenway, the Tinker Creek Greenway, the Gladetown Trail, and the Roanoke River Greenway.



### 2015 REGIONAL PEDESTRIAN VISION PLAN

Includes more than 30 recommended projects in Vinton to improve pedestrian travel including new sidewalks, crosswalks, intersection improvements, and trail/greenway extensions. Among the projects was adding sidewalk on Walnut Avenue from Lee Avenue to the city line, which is advancing towards implementation.



### 2016 ROANOKE VALLEY TRANSIT VISION PLAN

Includes recommendations for increasing service to Vinton and adding a short-term park and ride facility in the Town in the near term, adding a small transfer station and new service in the medium term (by 2030), and adding new service to Vinton in the long term (by 2040).



### 2012 BIKEWAY PLAN FOR THE ROANOKE VALLEY

Includes recommendations for new bicycle facilities on 13 street segments. Streets identified as "priority" for bicycle facilities in Vinton include Bypass Road, Hardy Road, Mountain View Road, Pollard Street, Virginia Avenue, and Walnut Avenue.



### 2023 ROANOKE VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The regional transportation plan identifies several needs for the transportation network in Vinton, which are summarized in the community needs assessment section.

# ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

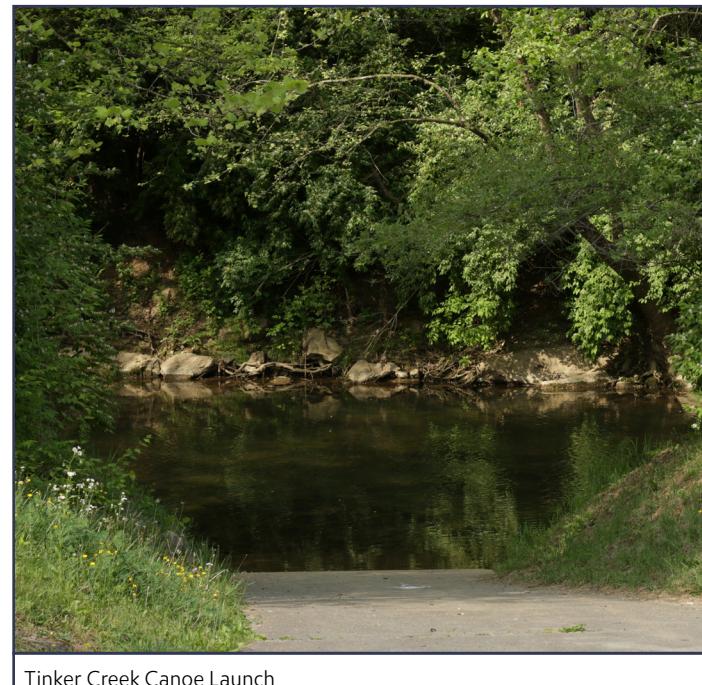


## Treasured Places

A key aspect of Vinton's Comprehensive Plan is to identify strategies to protect, enhance, and build upon these places so that future generations will benefit from them as well. These are places that Vinton can build upon to achieve the community's goals 2050.

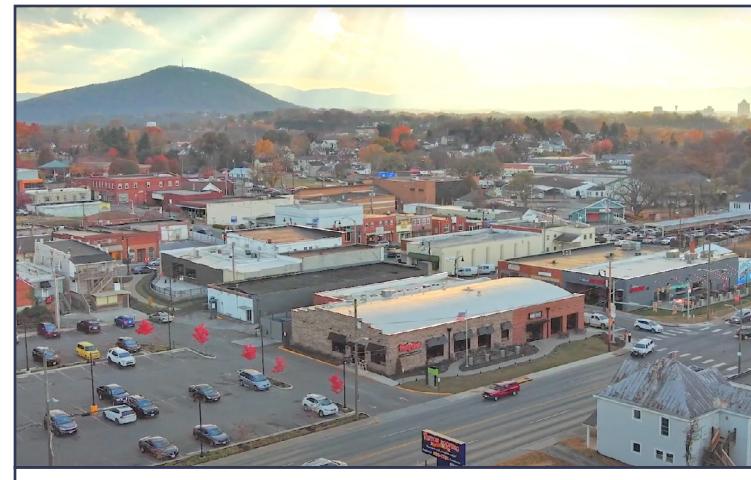
### VINTON'S TREASURED PLACES

Treasured places are part of what make Vinton special. Vinton has many treasured places that represent the investments of prior generations and which benefit the people who live, work, and visit Vinton. Community input shaped the map of treasured places and community assets described on this page.



Tinker Creek Canoe Launch

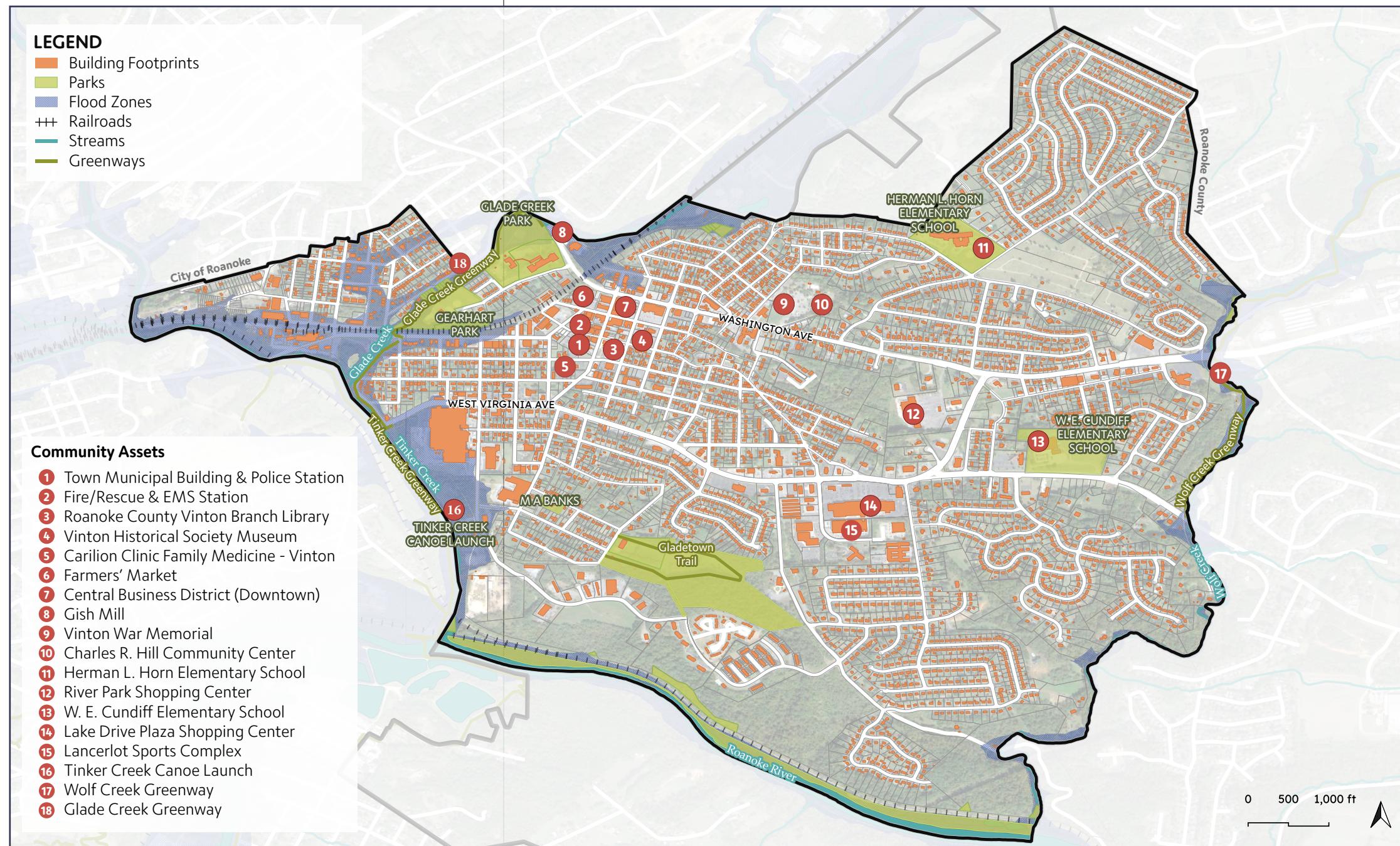
The places include historic sites such as the Gish Mill; community facilities such as the Vinton Library, Vinton War Memorial, and Vinton Farmers' Market; districts such as the downtown and shopping centers; and outdoor recreation assets such as the Tinker Creek Canoe Launch, Wolf Creek Greenway, and Glade Creek Greenway. Vinton has an abundance of treasured places and opportunities to create more that future generations will cherish.



Aerial imagery of Vinton



Glade Creek Greenway





## Opportunities

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR VINTON'S FUTURE

Vinton has several opportunities to enhance quality of life for residents. The opportunities listed in this section are based on existing strengths of the community. They go beyond the physical locations and include less tangible elements like strong Town leadership and the Town's position in the regional geography. Opportunities differ from treasured places, which are focused on past investments, and needs, which focus on deficiencies for key elements of the Town. Opportunities are oriented towards action and describe things the Town can take advantage of and build upon during the next 25 years.

The opportunities described in this section are based on extensive community engagement at the Dogwood Festival, with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, the community survey, and the Town Council and Planning Commission. These opportunities - along with treasured places described previously and needs that are described next - are the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan. The list of opportunities is not exhaustive; it captures those that came up most frequently during engagement.

### ROANOKE COUNTY'S ORIGINAL DOWNTOWN

Downtown Vinton is highly walkable with a mix of civic and commercial uses that make it a cherished place for the entire region. The block lengths are conducive to walkability with lengths ranging from 340 to 360 feet, and the heart of downtown can be traversed on foot in less than five minutes. Popular destinations include the Vinton Farmers' Market, Vinton Library, Town Hall, War Memorial, in addition to several retail and restaurant options. While the downtown has several needs that are outlined in the next section, the infrastructure is in place for it to continue growing and accommodating more residents and businesses on vacant and underutilized parcels. New developments such as Vinyard Station are visible examples of what is possible through redevelopment and repurposing of the historic building stock. Lee Avenue is in the heart of downtown with potential to grow as the key connector between civic spaces, such as the Vinton Farmers' Market, the local business community, and residential areas adjacent to the downtown.



Public art in Vinton



Glade Creek Greenway Phase 2A Ribbon Cutting and Arbor Day Celebration Event



Vinton Library

### CONNECTED GREENWAYS WITH ROOM TO EXPAND

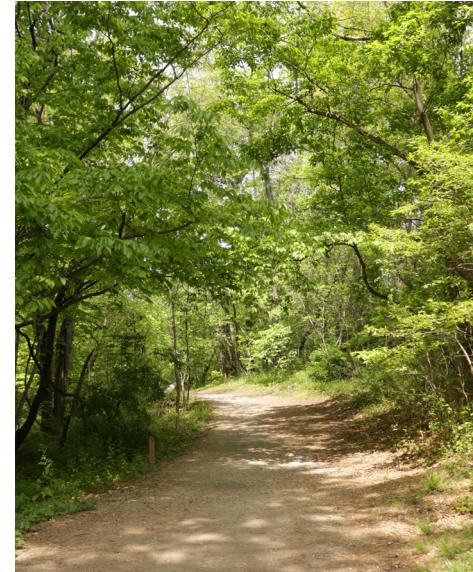
Vinton sits at the junction of several greenways of regional significance on the Roanoke River Greenway System. The Roanoke River Greenway spans a nearly continuous 14 miles from Salem on the west to the confluence of Tinker Creek and the Roanoke River just outside of Vinton. The Tinker Creek Greenway in Roanoke City and the Glade Creek Greenway in Vinton provide a direct connection to the Town. Upon completion, the Roanoke River Greenway will span 25 miles between the Explore Park in Roanoke County and Salem. Tinker Creek Greenway and Glade Creek Greenway both have planned extensions that will create an opportunity for Vinton to position itself as a trail hub for the region. The Tinker Creek Greenway upon completion will allow a person to travel all the way to Daleville Town Center and Appalachian Trail in Botetourt County, about 10 miles north of Vinton. The Glade Creek Greenway and Wolf Creek Greenway provide access to nature from the Town, with Glade Creek Greenway proposed to connect the Town to Vinyard Park and potentially Stewarts Knob Overlook on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Meanwhile Wolf Creek Greenway connects the east end of Vinton with the Blue Ridge Parkway. An east-west connection between the Glade Creek Greenway and Wolf Creek Greenway would further enhance the Town's opportunity to be a trail hub for the region.

### UPCOMING TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS

Vinton is crossed by a pair of regionally significant roadway corridors - Washington Avenue/Gus Nicks Boulevard and Virginia Avenue/Hardy Road. Walnut Avenue also provides a key connection between Washington Avenue, downtown Vinton, and Wise Avenue in the City of Roanoke. These roadways are not only key connectors for residents of Vinton, but also provide access from outlying parts of Roanoke and Bedford counties into the City of Roanoke. Several transportation improvements for these key corridors are in various stages of planning, design, and construction:

- Bicycle and pedestrian improvements on Walnut Avenue between downtown and the City.
- Roundabouts to improve traffic flow and safety for all users at Washington Avenue and Bypass Road and Hardy Road and Bypass Road.
- Pedestrian crosswalk and safety enhancements along West Virginia Avenue.

These projects will bring many benefits including better traffic flow and safety for all travel modes, better walkability and biking options, and new opportunities for development and redevelopment of aging commercial centers along these roadways. These projects also reflect the Town's success at winning grant funding to conduct planning, design, and construction of improvements to the transportation system.



Wolf Creek Greenway



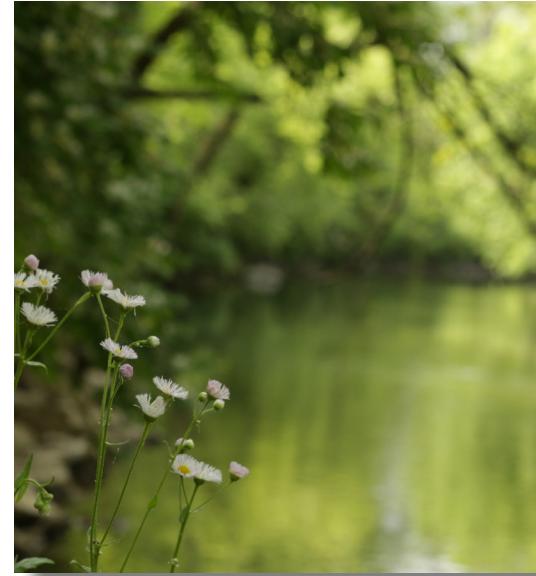
Crosswalk under construction at Gish Mill



Roundabout engineering plan

## OUTDOOR RECREATION ASSETS

Vinton and the entire Roanoke Valley region are rich in outdoor recreation assets. The Town has an expanding greenway network, sits along the Roanoke River Blueway, is less than 3 miles from the popular Explore Park in Roanoke County, is less than a half mile to the Blue Ridge Parkway with a greenway connecting the eastern end of Town directly to the famous scenic byway. The Blueway runs for more than 40 miles between Montgomery County in the west to Smith Mountain Lake in the east. Vinton has an access point on Tinker Creek and Roanoke County is planning for another access point to the Explore Park from Hardy Road, which would create more direct access for residents of Vinton. Building on the Town's brand as a thriving and charming small town with easy access to both the City of Roanoke and some of Virginia's best outdoor recreation assets is a great opportunity for the Town. In an age where parts of the workforce are more mobile than ever, outdoor recreation can attract employees and businesses, supporting the Town's economic development.



Tinker Creek

## COLLABORATIVE REGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Vinton maintains strong and productive relationships with Roanoke County and the City of Roanoke, which opens opportunities for collaboration around transportation investments, economic development, and greenway expansion. Regional collaboration is also critical for addressing emerging and urgent issues such as assisting the population that is homeless and housing affordability. Being able to demonstrate regional collaboration also helps the Town win grants to fund infrastructure and recreation investments. Maintaining strong relationships and participating in regional forums will likely open additional opportunities for Vinton in the future.



Vinton Municipal Building

## VINTON'S EMERGENCE AS A DESTINATION

Vinton has been an important population, employment, and entertainment center in the region throughout its 140-year existence. However, the Town experienced a decline in its downtown economic fortunes, like many towns across the state and country, and has worked hard to restore its vitality. Today Vinton is emerging once again as a top destination within the Roanoke Valley with popular restaurants, a downtown brewery, the Vinton Library, greenways, the Tinker Creek Canoe Launch, and more. The Town is also emerging as an entertainment and sports destination beyond downtown with facilities such as the Lancerlot, drawing people from across the region for ice hockey and figure skating, and Rosie's Gaming Emporium offering the region's only gaming facility. Additionally, the Blue Ridge Parkway delivers thousands of tourists per day to the Town's doorstep. More than 16 million people per year ride along a portion of the Blue Ridge Parkway spending more than \$1.3 billion in gateway communities. The Blue Ridge Parkway is the most visited property in the entire National Park Service system.



Rosie's Gaming Emporium

## LOCAL SCHOOL QUALITY & COMMUNITY

The Town is home to a pair of Roanoke County elementary schools – Herman L. Horn Elementary School and W.E. Cundiff Elementary School. The Town is also served by William Byrd Middle School and William Byrd High School, which are located just east of the Town's limits. Each of the four schools meets or exceeds the state's standards for school quality according to the 2023 accreditation reports from the Virginia Department of Education. Public engagement revealed that many people are concerned their children will leave Vinton upon graduating from high school and would like for them to have opportunities to return and live in Vinton during their adulthood. School quality is an important factor in where people decide to put down their roots and maintaining the quality of local schools represents an important opportunity for the Town and County.



Herman L. Horn Elementary School

## CONSISTENT LEADERSHIP & EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS

Vinton has benefited from effective and long-standing leadership in both elected and appointed positions. This has enabled the Town to tackle challenging projects, such as selling the water and sanitary sewer system to the Western Virginia Water Authority, and to make substantial headway on upgrading infrastructure across the Town, such as repaving a large share of the Town's streets in recent years. The Town has secured \$18.9 million in grants over the last decade to extend what the Town can do with its own resources, which is showing up in physical improvements to the Town such as the Glade Creek Greenway extension, the mid-block crosswalk of Gus Nicks Boulevard at the Gish Mill, and the Multi-Generational Park that will be constructed near the Vinton War Memorial. The Town also is debt free and in a strong position to invest in its future.



Multi-Generational Park concept plan



Dogwood Festival

## WELCOMING COMMUNITY FEEL

Early community engagement revealed that many Vinton residents value the tight-knit sense of community that exists in the Town. People shared stories of how the Town rallies to help those in need, how a police officer stopped and helped an older person put groceries in her car trunk, and how people are proud to live in Vinton and be from Vinton. The Town has local institutions and events that are important points of social connection, such as its churches and houses of worship, and the annual Dogwood Festival. Residents report a strong desire to maintain the sense of community even as the Town changes and grows in the coming decades. What some call "social capital" is an important asset, and one in short supply in many communities across the United States. The relationships among people, institutions, and businesses in Vinton are a significant opportunity and one that is important to continue nurturing.

## MOVE TO REGIONAL WATER AND WASTEWATER

### SANITARY SEWER SERVICE

Much of Vinton was developed several decades ago and the underground utilities are old and in need of repair and replacement. Vinton also has relied on well water in the past, which limited development in parts of the Town due to insufficient water flow and pressure. The Town sold its water and wastewater utilities to the Western Virginia Water Authority (WVWA) in 2022, which has increased the resources available to improve these critical utilities. The Authority is also in the process of moving Vinton away from the well water source and onto the regional water source, which is Carvin's Cove in Botetourt County. The western third of the Town, including the downtown area, is now served by the regional water source and the Authority is planning to move the eastern two-thirds of the Town onto the regional source in the coming years. In addition to anticipated water quality and pressure improvements, the Town will have more capacity to support long-term redevelopment in key areas that have previously been identified for it.



Carvin's Cove via Western Virginia Water Authority



# COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

# COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

## INTRODUCTION

The Town of Vinton's Comprehensive Plan is a guiding document for growth, development, preservation, and investment in the Town of Vinton through the year 2050. The Plan includes several policies and investments for achieving the Town's goals. Vinton started the comprehensive plan update by studying existing conditions and identifying critical needs to address over the next 25 years to ensure the Plan's policies and investments are sound.



"Welcome to Vinton" Postcard Mural

Vinton defines a need as an issue to address over the next 25 years to enhance public health, safety, and well-being. The community needs assessment involved an in-depth evaluation of the state of Vinton's infrastructure, facilities, and overall quality of life. The needs assessment was data driven

**Vinton defines a need as an issue to address over the next 25 years to enhance public health, safety, and well-being.**

but also included input from the community and the people charged with managing the Town's infrastructure, services, and facilities. The community helped identify needs through a community survey while focus groups for each needs assessment topic helped the Town prioritize needs.

## ORIENTATION TO THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The needs assessment studied existing conditions for seven broad topic areas:

- Transportation
- Land Use and Environment
- Recreation and Quality of Life
- Downtown and Economic Development
- Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization
- Community Facilities and Services
- Stormwater, Water, and Sanitary Sewer

Within each section you will find a summary of the top needs, maps and charts presenting key data, and a summary of the existing conditions that justify the needs.



The findings for each topic are presented on the following pages. However, first it is important to consider the existing demographic characteristics of the Town, and the forecast for population change through 2050. These important data points also underlie the identified needs.

## VINTON AT A GLANCE

### TOTAL POPULATION

**8,059**

**53%**  
FEMALE



**47%**  
MALE



### LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME

**98%**  
ENGLISH ONLY

**1.3%**  
SPANISH

**0.7%**  
OTHER

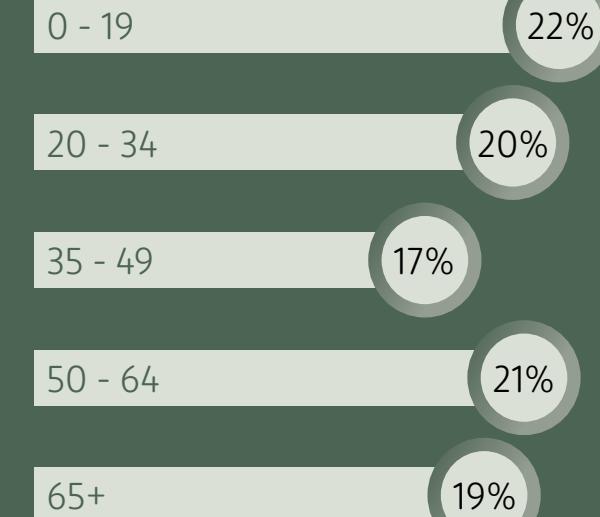
**3,774**  
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS

**56.5%**  
HOMEOWNERSHIP RATE

**\$851**  
MEDIAN GROSS RENT

**\$65,481**  
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD  
INCOME

### AGE



**19.2%**

POPULATION 25 & OLDER WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER



**25.3**  
MINUTES

AVERAGE TRAVEL TIME TO WORK



**11%**  
UP FROM  
2.4% IN 2010

WORKED FROM HOME

Source: All data are from the 2022 American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau except for total population (2020 Census)

## DEMOGRAPHICS OVERVIEW

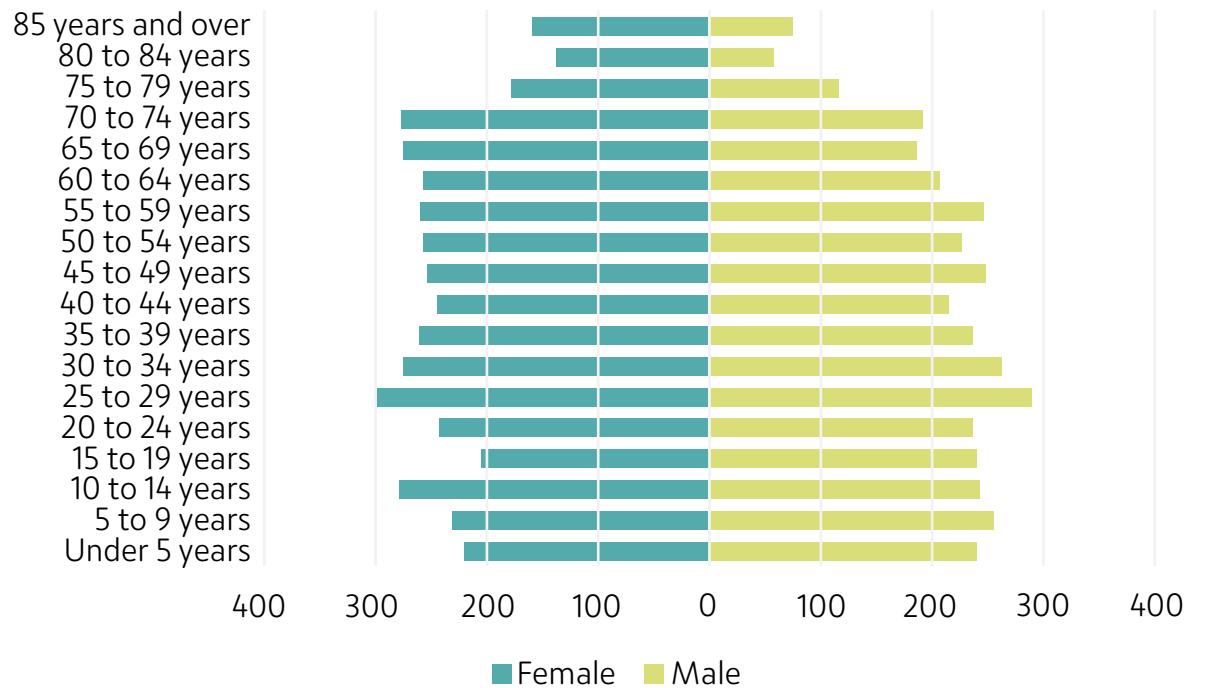
This section presents background information about the population of Vinton and how it has changed over time.

## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

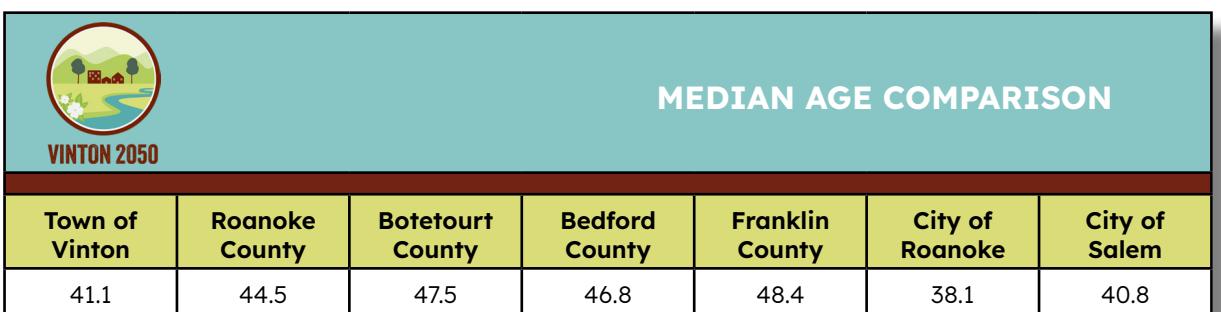
Vinton's population totaled 8,059 in the 2020 United States Decennial Census. The Town's population has been stable over the past 40 years. The 1980 Census found 8,027 people living within the Town.

While the overall population has remained stable, the composition of the population has changed over time. The median age in 2022 was 41.1. This was slightly up from 38.2 in 2010, but significantly up from 31.4 in 1980. Not surprisingly, the population is skewed towards older age groups, as seen in the population pyramid, compared to Virginia or the United States as a whole. While population pyramids tend to taper to a point at the top of the pyramid, due to there being fewer older people than younger people, in Vinton some older age groups have nearly as many people as younger age groups. This has implications for the services and infrastructure provided by Vinton.

### VINTON POPULATION



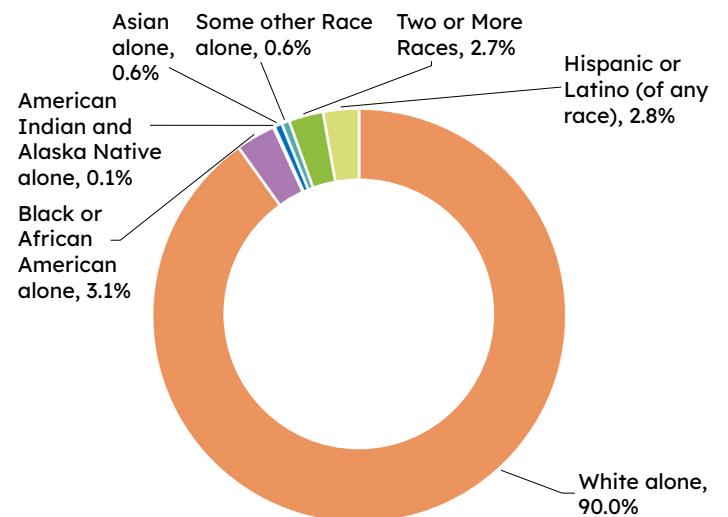
Source: 2020 Decennial Census Data



Source: 2022 American Community Survey

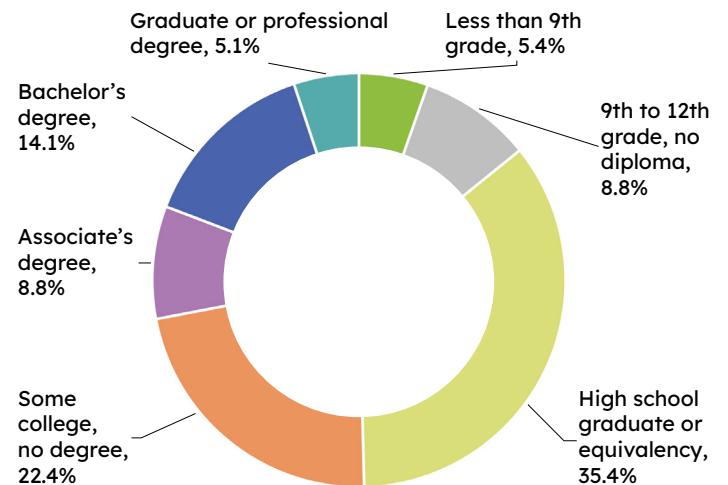
## RACE & ETHNICITY

In terms of race and ethnicity, a higher share of the Town's population is white than Virginia as a whole. Whereas about 90 percent of the Vinton population is white, the figure is about 60 percent for Virginia. The Town's racial and ethnic composition is nearly in line with Roanoke County as a whole, with the Town having a slightly higher share of residents that are white and black than the County, but a smaller share that are Hispanic/Latino.



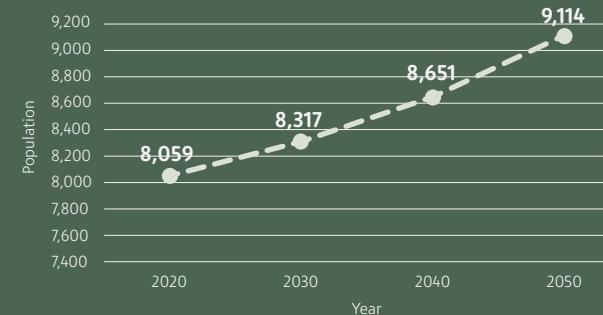
## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Vinton's population has lower rates of educational attainment than other jurisdictions in the region at both ends of the education spectrum. More Vinton residents lack a high school diploma and fewer have a college degree or higher than the City of Roanoke, City of Salem, and Roanoke County. This may be driven by the presence of colleges and universities in those jurisdictions. Anecdotally this may also be driven by the Town's history of blue-collar employment. While the educational attainment is lower than neighboring jurisdictions, the Town's income has been growing faster and the unemployment rate is low.



## POPULATION FORECAST

Vinton's steady population across several decades could indicate that it will remain stable into the future. However, the state's official source for population forecasting, the Weldon Cooper Center, shows the population increasing to 9,114 by 2050, an increase of about 13 percent from 2020.



The Town's consulting team assessed the Weldon Cooper Center forecast and developed the following points, some of which support the forecast while others cast doubt:

- Population change has been flat for decades. Extending recent trends would place the population well below the forecast of 9,114.
- Vinton's population is aging with more people aged 40 and over in 2020 than in 2010. This would indicate that births are likely on the decline.
- Vinton's land development patterns would indicate room for growth in housing units through development of undeveloped parcels, and redevelopment of aging parcels. This would indicate population growth is possible through the addition of households, even if average household size declines.
- The housing and real estate markets in Vinton are strong. Housing does not stay on the market long in Vinton and there are effectively no vacant, available housing units in the town. Vinton also has good access to regional jobs. This would indicate that Vinton has a strong market and can be expected to have a strong market into the future.

While population forecasting is an inexact science, there are indicators that both question and support the population forecast of 9,114 in 2050. Therefore, the Town finds this forecast is a reasonable growth possibility for planning purposes.

Source: Weldon Cooper Center

# TRANSPORTATION

# TRANSPORTATION

## NEEDS AT A GLANCE

Vinton's street network developed gradually over time beginning in the late 19th century. Largely completed by the latter half of the 20th century, the Town's streets are characterized by small grids of local streets that feed into a larger grid of collector and arterial streets serving the surrounding area.

The primary connecting corridors of Vinton are Gus Nicks Boulevard/Washington Avenue in the northern part of the Town and Hardy Road/Virginia Avenue in the southern part of the Town. These corridors connect the Town to Roanoke County. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are not nearly as extensive as vehicular ones as is typical for most communities of its era. Listed below are the top transportation-related needs based on data analysis, focus groups discussions, and community input:

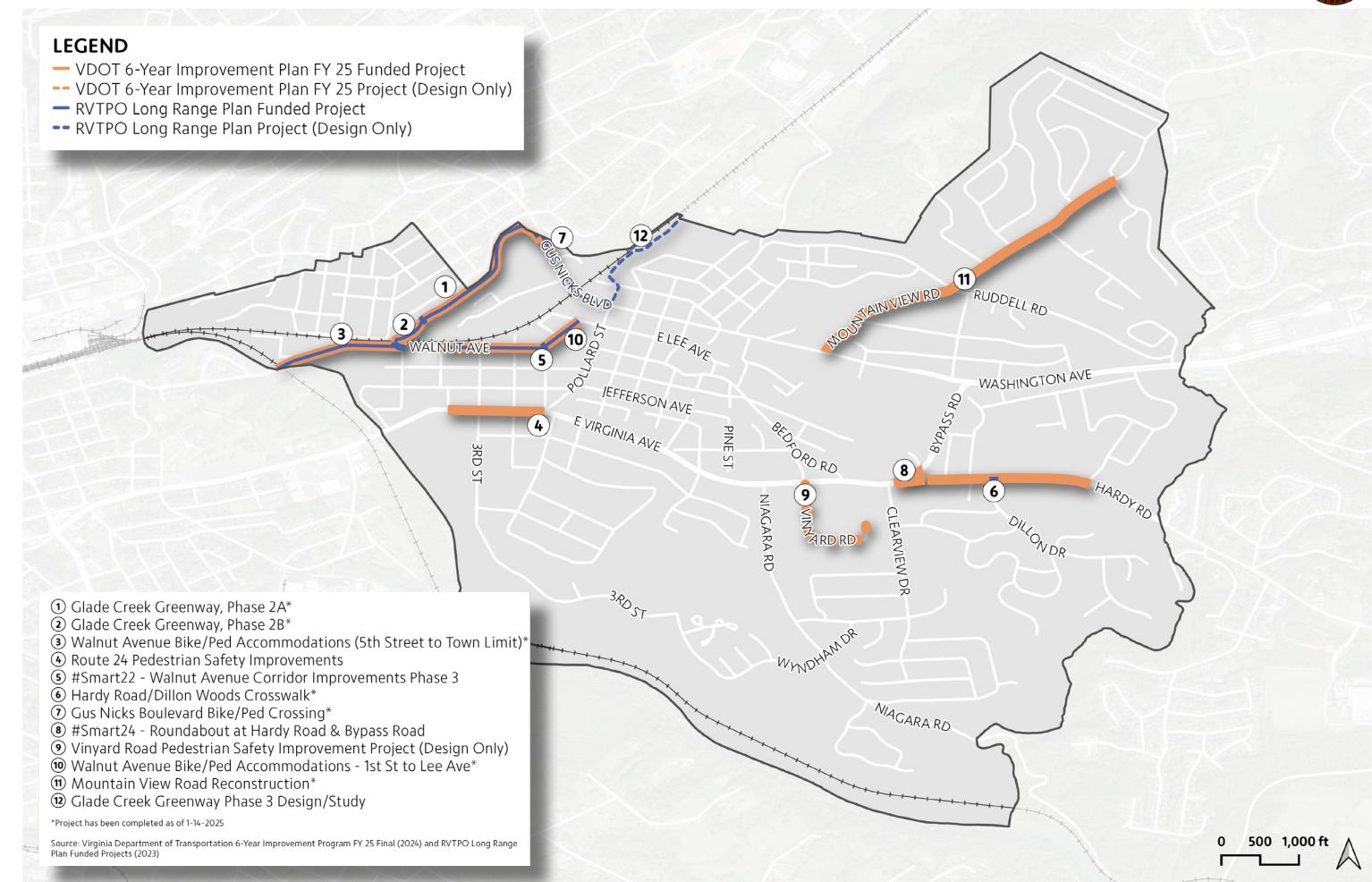
## TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

- Transportation for an Aging Population** – Vinton's aging population requires accessible, affordable, and safe transportation options tailored to their unique needs. Mobility is essential for fostering independence, maintaining social connections, and accessing services. Well-maintained sidewalks, safer crosswalks, and traffic calming measures can support this goal.
- Modern & Safe Street Design that Reconnects Neighborhoods & Accommodates All Modes**
  - Many of the Town's neighborhoods lack street lighting and safe walking connections to key destinations such as schools and parks. Strengthening pedestrian connections is needed to improve safety and accessibility for residents.
- Connected Networks for Walking & Biking** – Community engagement has highlighted a need for improved pedestrian connections, enhanced bicycle facilities, and slower vehicular traffic. Street improvements designed with the needs of all users in mind create a safer and more connected community.
- Better Downtown Vinton to Downtown Roanoke Connections for All Modes** – Improving the links between Vinton and Roanoke is vital for fostering regional connectivity. Safe routes for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers will strengthen community ties and enable Vinton residents to access services located in the City.

- Town-City-County Coordination on Washington/Gus Nicks & Greenway Connections** – Greenway gaps exist across Vinton from Glade Creek Greenway to Wolf Creek Greenway and from Vinton to other destinations in Roanoke County. Coordinated effort between Vinton, Roanoke City, and Roanoke County will be required to expand greenway access.

Street improvements designed with the needs of all users in mind create a safer and more connected community.

## Community Needs Assessment | Recently Completed and/or Current Transportation Projects



## WHAT WE HEARD

Vinton has a great opportunity to become a more walkable, accessible Town.

99

It can be difficult to safely cross Washington Avenue and Virginia Avenue/Hardy Road on foot.

99

Need connections on road between Wolf Creek Greenway and Tinker Creek/Glade Creek Greenways.

99

## VINTON'S RESIDENTS INDICATED THE FOLLOWING TRANSPORTATION GOALS ARE MOST IMPORTANT:

1 = Not Important      3 = Important      5 = Very Important

Make streets safer for all users

4.2

Reduce traffic congestion

3.9

Improve walkability

3.6

Not great protected options for walking or biking outside of my neighborhood.

99

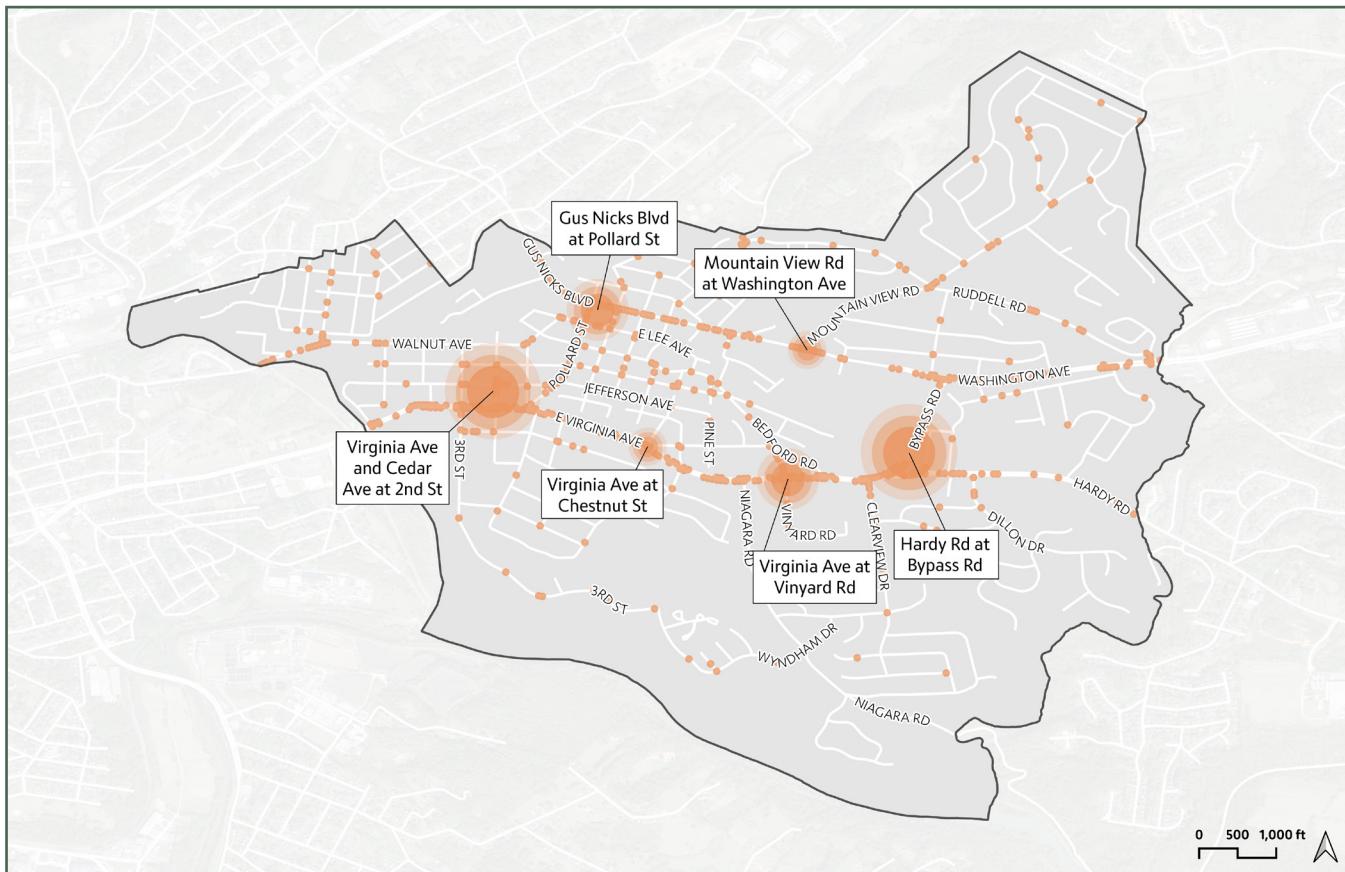
Washington Avenue is very congested. It is difficult to enter into traffic.

99

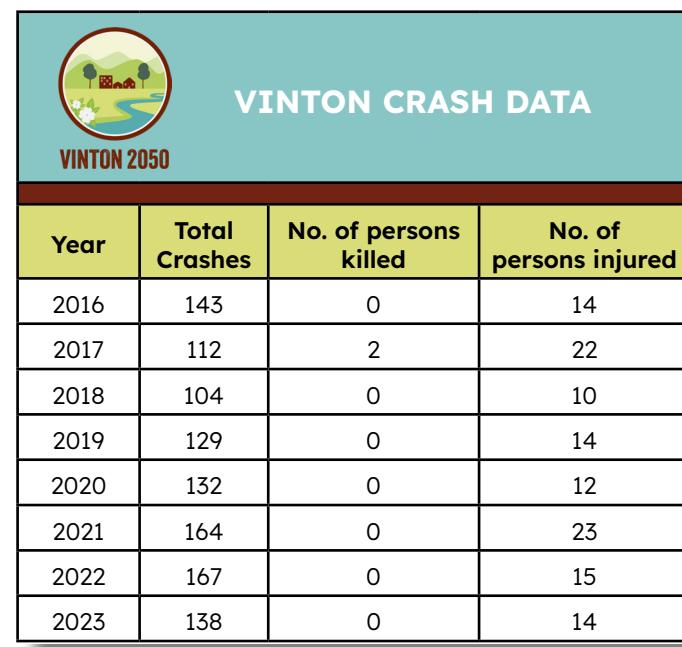
## EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY - VEHICULAR

As summarized in the stakeholder outreach on transportation, the primary vehicular needs in Vinton are for operational and safety purposes. The Town's well connected grid of streets and ample capacity on the majority of streets is the result of car centric roadway planning in past decades. While most streets have the capacity to accommodate average daily trips, there are a significant numbers of crashes at key intersections.

### Crashes



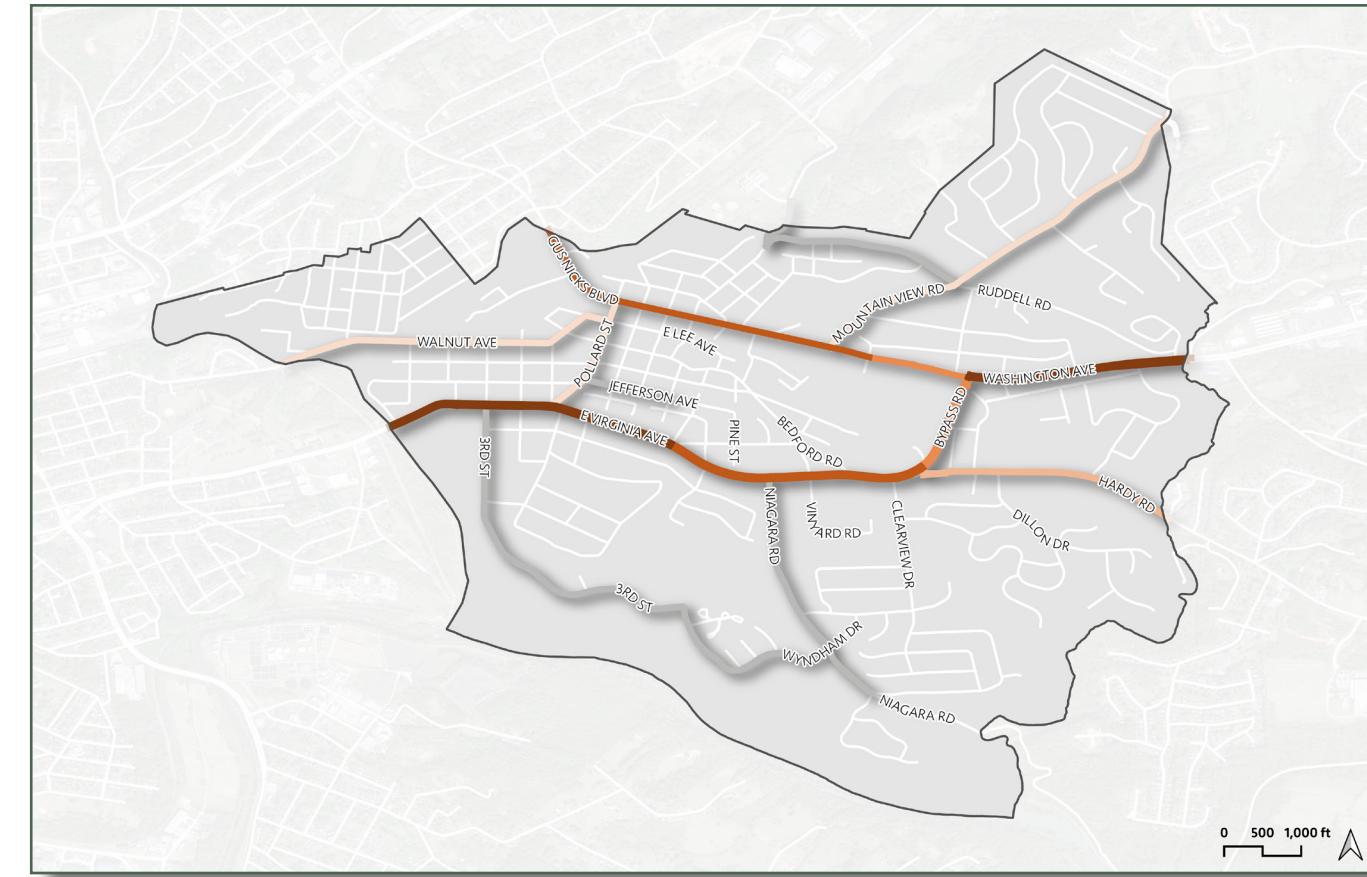
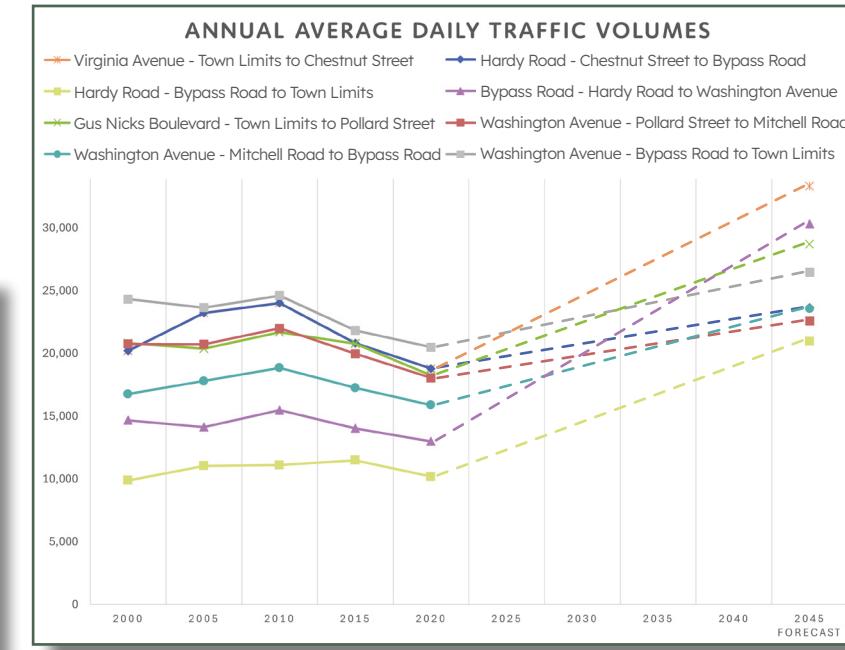
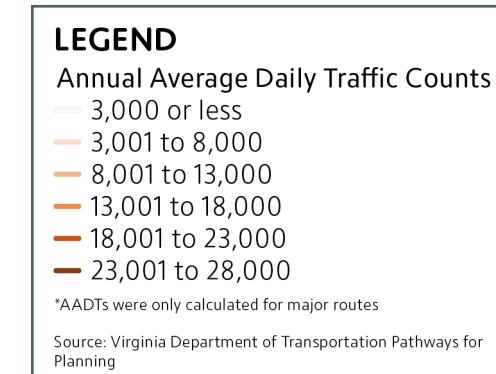
Crash activity generally centers on the two main arterials of Hardy/Virginia Ave and Gus Nicks/Washington Ave, as well as along Bypass Rd. Other streets where crashes are centered include Pollard St, Mountain View Rd, and Vinyard Rd. The Hardy Rd/Bypass Rd intersection has the highest crash density in Vinton and among the highest in the region.



### Annual Average Daily Traffic Volumes

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) measures the average number of vehicles traveling on a particular road each day over the course of a year. AADT values can help to establish needs based on road usage and indicate potential areas of congestion and accident risks. Analysis of past and projected AADT volumes shows relatively stable traffic on most major roads. During the COVID pandemic, traffic volumes sharply declined worldwide due to lockdowns, remote work, and reduced commuting. The cultural shift toward remote work and increased local travel could impact future transportation planning.

VDOT projections for the future show traffic volume increases for Vinton's roadways through 2045, however, even with increases in traffic volumes, Vinton's roadways do not exceed their maximum capacity.



## Potential for Safety Improvements

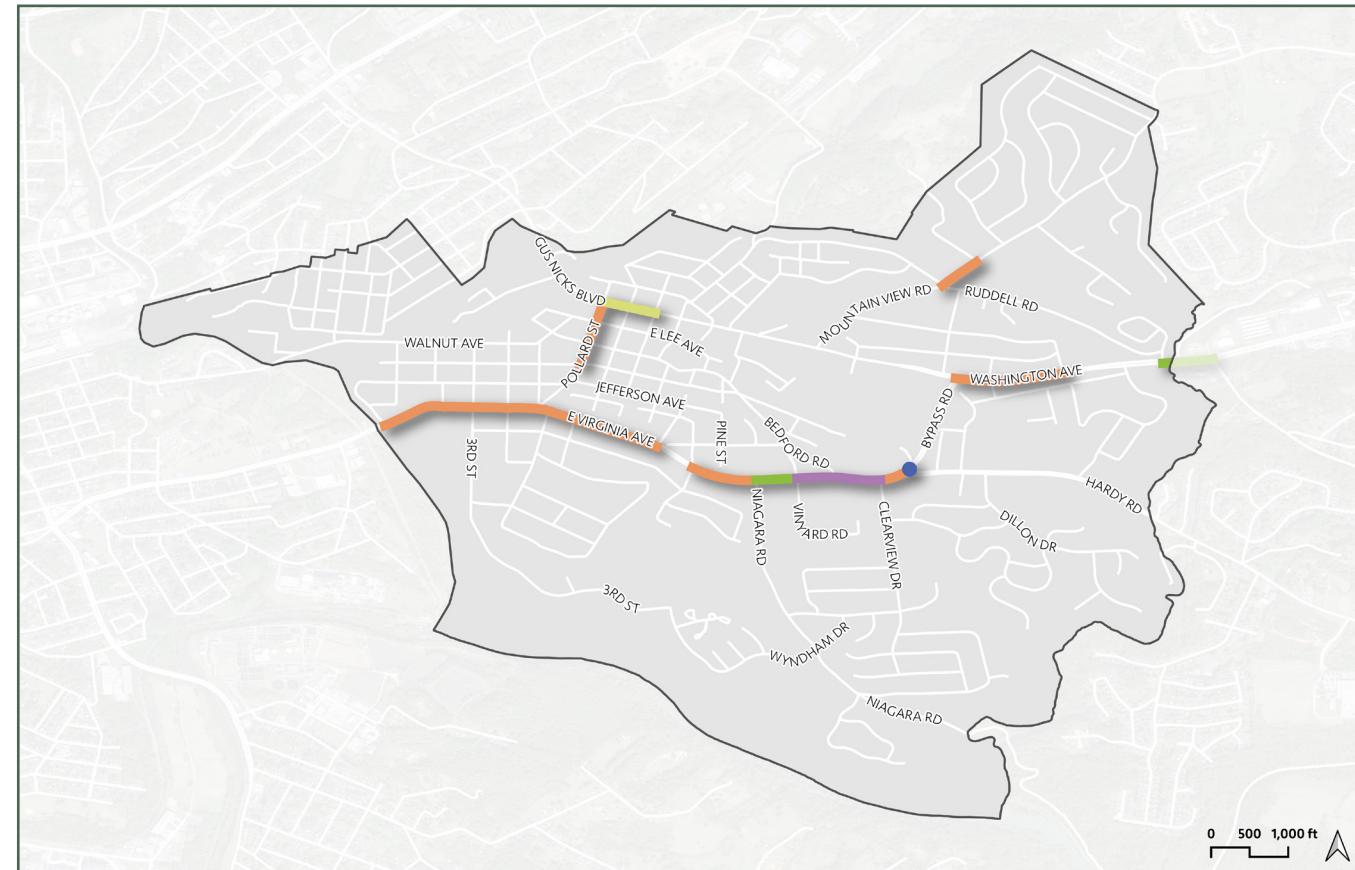
VDOT analyzes the roadway network based on guidelines set by the Highway Safety Manual (HSM) to identify areas with Potential for Safety Improvements (PSI). Factors compared in this analysis are the predicted number of crashes versus observed number of crashes in a given year. VDOT ranks these PSIs in order of priority for each district.

### LEGEND

#### Priority Rank in Salem District

- 1 to 20
- 26 to 50
- 51 to 75
- 76 to 100
- Over 100

Source: Virginia Department of Transportation Pathways for Planning



Income significantly influences transportation costs, as individuals with higher incomes are more likely to afford private vehicles, fuel, and maintenance, while those with lower incomes may rely on more affordable public transportation options. In Vinton, transportation costs are largely linked to private vehicles, with 92.5% of residents commuting to work by driving alone or working from home.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## HOUSEHOLD TRANSPORTATION COSTS

|   | Vinton   | Roanoke County |
|---|----------|----------------|
| Median Household Income                     | \$65,481 | \$75,258       |
| Average Transportation Costs as % of Income | 22%      | 25%            |
| Transit Ridership % of Workers              | 2%       | 1%             |
| Annual Transportation Cost                  | \$12,324 | \$14,087       |

Source: H & T Affordability Index

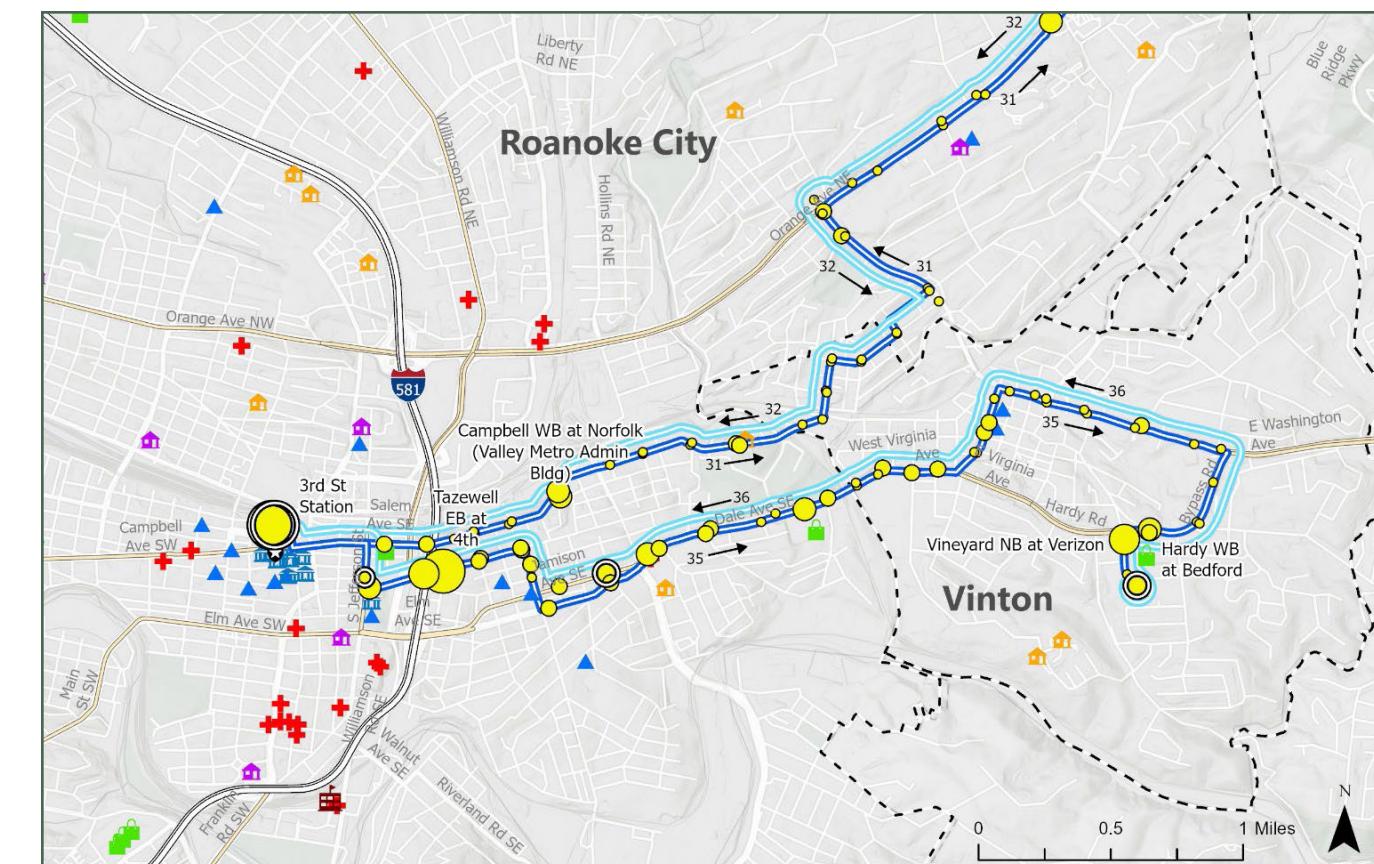
## BUS SERVICE

The two Valley Metro bus routes that service the Town of Vinton are Routes 31-32 and 35-36. Route 31-32 connects downtown Roanoke to Wildwood neighborhood and the River Park Shopping Center in Vinton. Route 35-36 destinations include Downtown Roanoke, Belmont and Fallon neighborhoods, Fallon Park and Elementary School, Tinker Creek Greenway, downtown Vinton, Lake Drive Plaza, and the River Park Shopping Center. Service for these routes is offered Monday-Saturday from 5:45am to 8:45pm, hourly. Routes 31, 32 and 36 performed below the system average of 20 trips per hour in FY2023. Route 35 exhibited the highest ridership out of the routes that service the Town of Vinton.<sup>2</sup>



**ROUTES SERVICING VINTON**

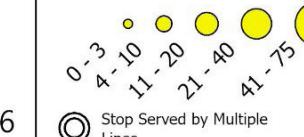
| Route | Passenger Trips FY2023 | Estimated Cost Per Trip FY2023 | Trips Per Mile FY2023 | Trips Per Hour FY2023 |
|-------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 31    | 37,515                 | \$6.52                         | 1.24                  | 15.06                 |
| 32    | 27,836                 | \$7.83                         | 1.12                  | 12.54                 |
| 35    | 57,390                 | \$3.63                         | 2.72                  | 27.06                 |
| 36    | 46,690                 | \$5.00                         | 2.12                  | 19.62                 |



## Valley Metro Strategic Plan

Routes 31, 32, 35, & 36

### Daily Stop Activity



### Trip Generators

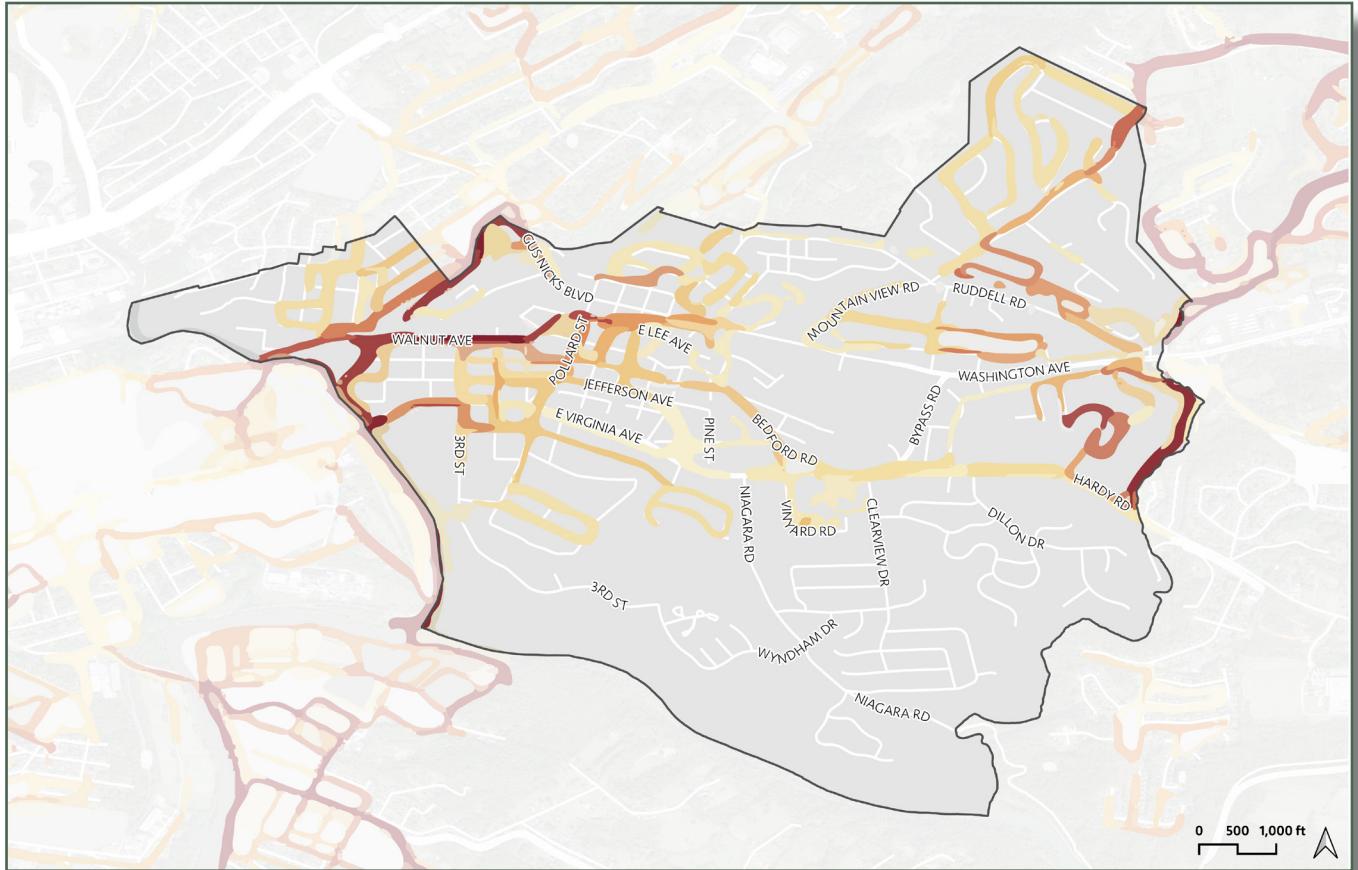
- Senior Housing
- Medical
- Government
- Shopping
- University
- Human Services
- Correctional Facility
- Low Income Housing

<sup>2</sup> Greater Roanoke Transit Company - Valley Metro Transit Strategic Plan (TSP) FY2025 - FY2034

## EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY - PEDESTRIAN

In Vinton, 73% of major corridors are equipped with sidewalks and they are generally well maintained.<sup>1</sup> Sidewalk gaps exist outside of the downtown area and access to pedestrian attractors such as parks, greenways, schools, and community facilities is limited from residential areas. High priority pedestrian projects should include ADA compliant sidewalks to schools and parks and connectivity with greenways.

The map below shows recorded walking paths individuals have documented on Strava. This data is not comprehensive as not everyone who walks in Vinton uses Strava but it does demonstrate potential gaps in pedestrian connectivity.



**RECORDED FOOT TRAFFIC IN VINTON**

Source: Strava Walking Data 2024

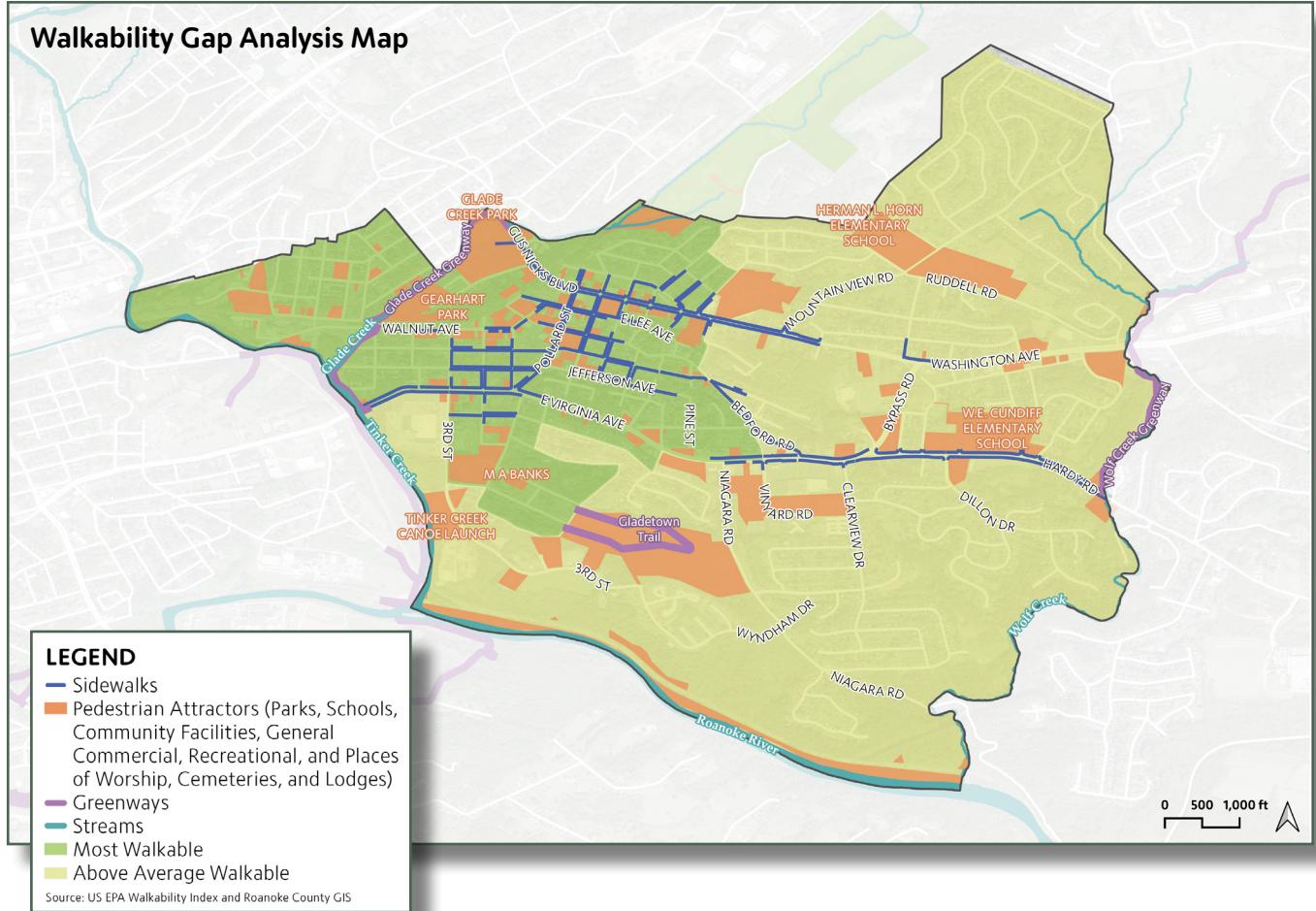
LESS FOOT TRAFFIC

MORE FOOT TRAFFIC

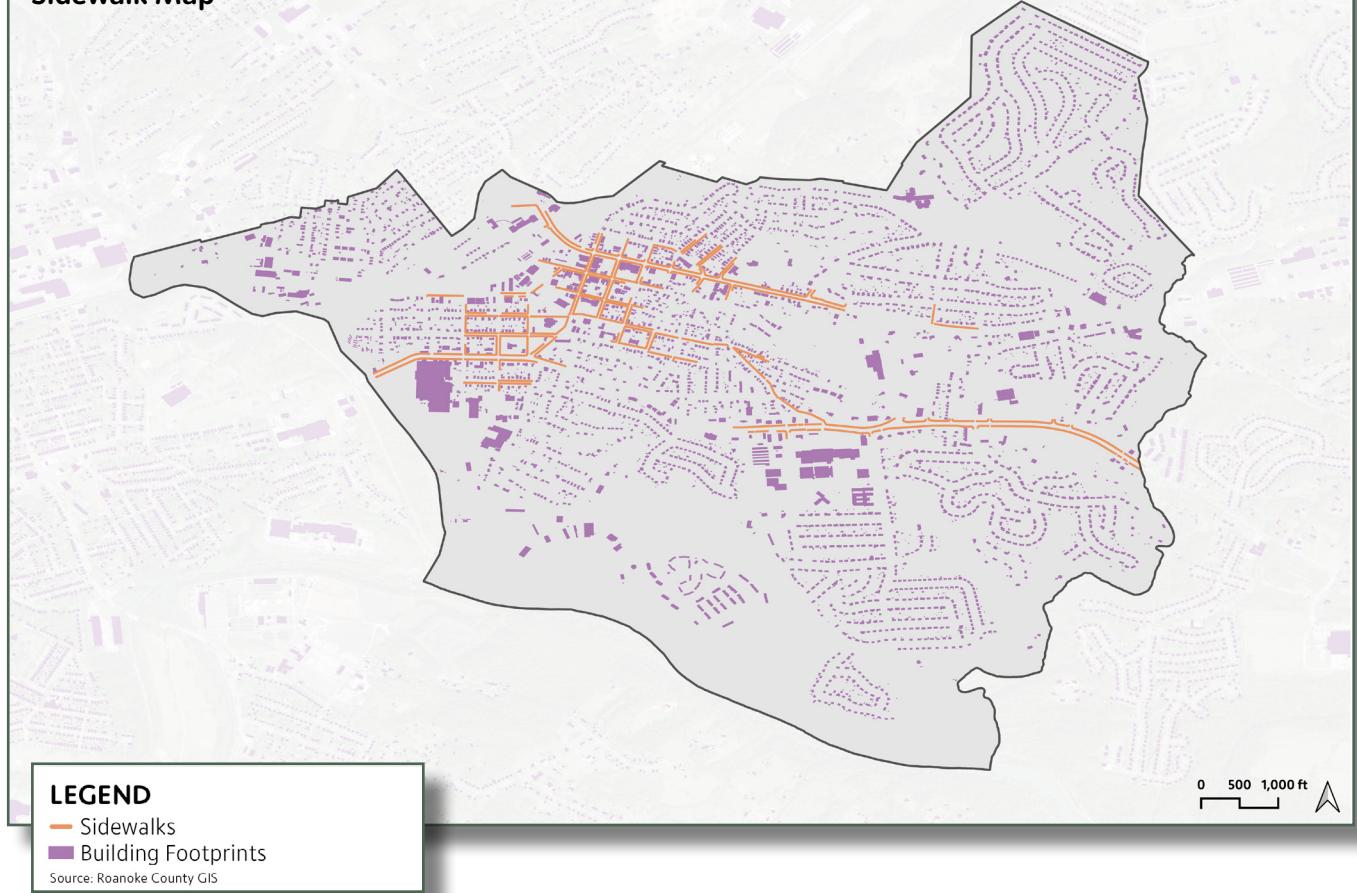
The Walkability Gap Analysis Map highlights pedestrian attractors such as parks, greenways, schools, and community facilities and sidewalks. The downtown area is well connected with sidewalks, however, pedestrian connectivity is lacking from residential neighborhoods to pedestrian attractors, especially schools and the downtown area.

Beyond the downtown, pedestrian accessibility is limited as demonstrated by the Walkability Gap Analysis Map. Despite the lack of pedestrian infrastructure outside the downtown, individuals do walk to and from pedestrian attractors as demonstrated in the map above. Community engagement activities highlighted a strong desire for sidewalks connecting to local schools, the need for safe crossing points at major roads, particularly Washington Ave and Hardy Rd, and widespread support for making commercial areas more accessible by foot.

<sup>1</sup> Vinton Major Corridors Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations



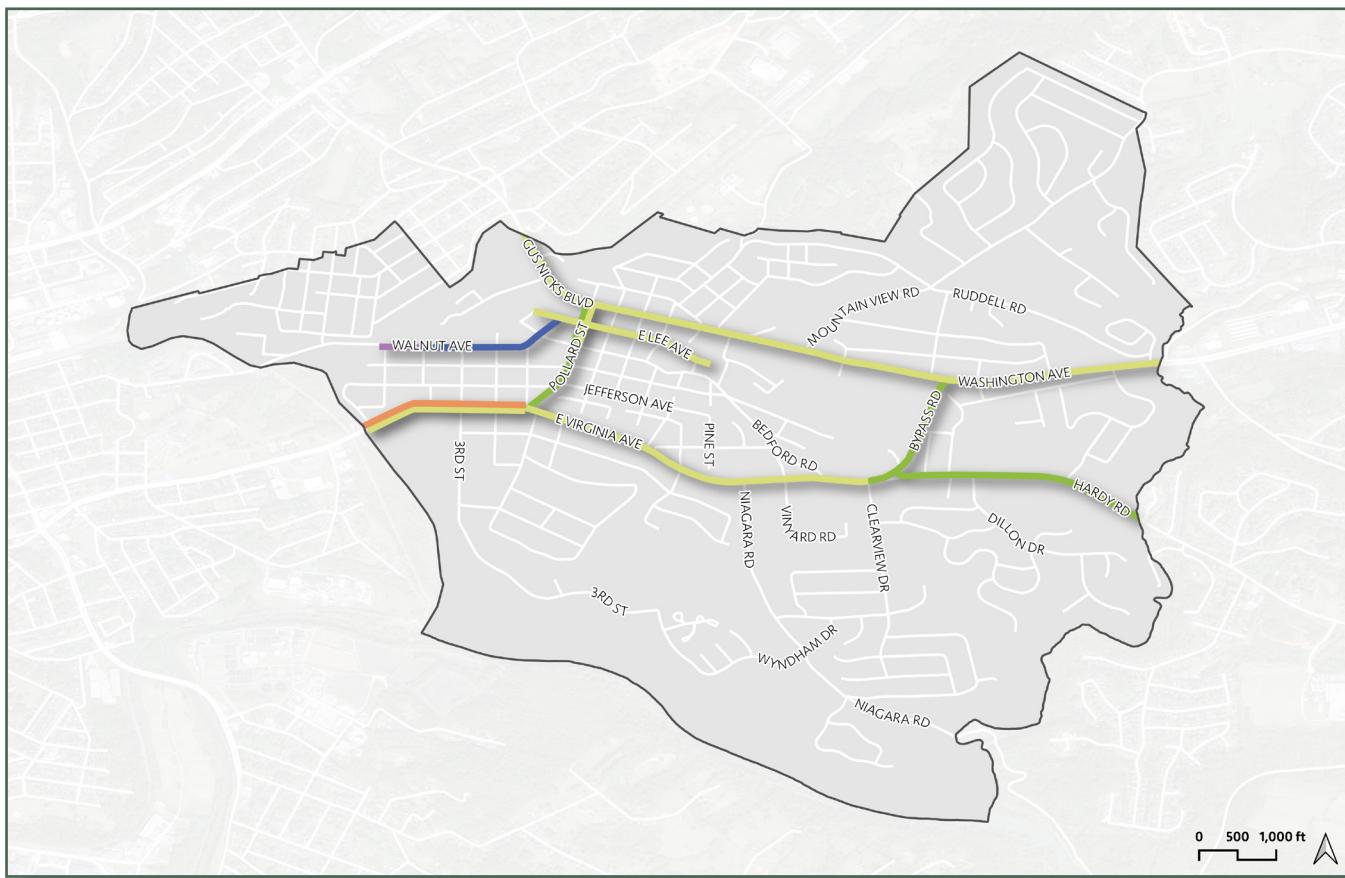
**Sidewalk Map**



## EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY - BICYCLE

There is a need for better bicycle connectivity in Vinton. Currently, bicyclists in the Town utilize greenways, as there are few formal bike facilities. As highlighted in community engagement activities, there are some connectivity issues between greenways. Additionally, roadways with higher traffic volumes such as Washington Ave and Virginia Ave need better infrastructure to improve safety.

### Bicycle Level of Service Map



#### LEGEND

##### Bicycle Level of Service

- LOS B
- LOS C
- LOS D
- LOS E
- LOS F

Source: RVARC Vinton Major Corridors Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations (2018)

The RVARC Vinton Major Corridors Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations analyzed four Vinton corridors for bicycle compatibility in 2018. Factors considered included number of lanes, curb lane width, bicycle lane presence and width, speed limit, traffic speeds, traffic volume, percent large trucks, and on-street parking. These factors inform the level of service for bicycles, with A indicating the best conditions and F the worst.

**BICYCLE COMPATIBILITY INDEX OF SELECT CORRIDORS**

Source: RVARC Vinton Major Corridors Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations (2018)

| Location   | BCI  | Level of Service | Bicycle Compatibility |
|--|------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Walnut Avenue - Glade Creek to 4th Street                | 2.08 | B                | Very High             |
| Walnut Avenue - 4th Street to Lee Avenue                 | 3.22 | C                | Moderately High       |
| Lee Avenue   | 4.67 | E                | Very Low              |
| Pollard Street - Virginia to Jackson (southbound)        | 3.99 | D                | Moderately Low        |
| Pollard Street - Virginia to Jackson (northbound)        | 4.39 | D                | Moderately Low        |
| Pollard Street - Jackson to Washington (southbound)      | 4.05 | D                | Moderately Low        |
| Pollard Street - Jackson to Washington (northbound)      | 4.44 | E                | Very Low              |
| Virginia Avenue - West City Limit to Pollard (eastbound) | 5.63 | F                | Extremely Low         |
| Virginia Avenue - West City Limit to Pollard (westbound) | 5.17 | E                | Very Low              |
| Virginia Avenue - Pollard to Clearview (eastbound)       | 4.87 | E                | Very Low              |
| Virginia Avenue - Pollard to Clearview (westbound)       | 4.72 | E                | Very Low              |
| Hardy Road - Clearview to Bypass                         | 4.11 | D                | Moderately Low        |
| Hardy Road - Bypass to East City Limit                   | 4.11 | D                | Moderately Low        |
| Bypass Road  | 4.16 | D                | Moderately Low        |
| Washington Avenue - East City Limit to Gus Nicks Blvd    | 5.09 | E                | Very Low              |
| Gus Nicks Blvd - Washington Avenue to West City Limit    | 4.97 | E                | Very Low              |

The highest priority recommendations from the study included improvements along Walnut Ave, Lee Ave, Pollard St, Virginia Ave/Hardy Rd/Bypass Rd, Washington Ave, and Gus Nicks Blvd. Bicycle infrastructure on these roadways should include narrowing lanes, adding bike lanes (protected bike lanes where possible), and shared lane markings (sharrows).

## APPENDIX A

This is a comprehensive list of current and proposed transportation projects in Vinton. Current/Funded projects are highlighted white and proposed/unfunded projects are highlighted in gray. Proposed/unfunded projects with a higher priority (listed in respective plans) are highlighted yellow. Some projects are included in multiple plans, with some receiving funding across different plans. No projects were removed despite these repetitions. Estimated costs are from the year of each plan (not inflated to current year). The first list of projects in the table below are from VDOT's Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). The SYIP is updated annually; the projects and budgets below are from the FY 2026 SYIP. Check <https://syip.virginiadot.org/> for the latest SYIP projects in Vinton.

| CURRENT AND PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS                 |  |   |                |
|--|--|---|----------------|
| VINTON 2050  |  |   |                |
| Title  | Description  | Need Addressed  | Estimated Cost |
| <b>VDOT 6-Year Improvement Program FY 26 FINAL (2025)</b>    |  |   |                |
| GLADE CREEK GREENWAY PHASE 2B                                | Facilities for Pedestrians and Bicycles from Gearhart Park/GC Greenway Phase 2A to Walnut Ave/GC Greenway Phase 1  | Safety (bike and ped)   | \$916,000      |
| ROUTE 24 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS                      | Safety from 4th Street to Pollard Street   | Safety (ped)  | \$2,912,000    |
| #SMART22 - WALNUT AVENUE CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS PHASE 3       | Reconstruction w/o Added Capacity from 1st St to 4th St  | System Management   | \$6,741,000    |
| #SMART24 - ROUNDABOUT AT HARDY RD & BYPASS RD (RTE 24)       | Reconstruction w/o Added Capacity from Bypass Rd to Clearview Dr   | System Management   | \$15,704,000   |
| VINYARD ROAD PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (PE ONLY) | Facilities for Pedestrians and Bicycles from Hardy Road to end of Vinyard Road   | Safety (bike and ped)   | \$356,000      |
| HARDY RD/DILLON WOODS CROSSWALK                              | Facilities for Pedestrians and Bicycles from Bypass Road to McDonald Street  | Safety (bike and ped)   | \$402,000      |
| MOUNTAIN VIEW RD RECONSTRUCTION                              | Reconstruction w/o Added Capacity from Washington Avenue (Route 24) to Shalon Circle   | System Management   | \$945,000      |
| GUS NICKS BLVD PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE CROSSING                   | Facilities for Pedestrians and Bicycles from Glade Creek Greenway to the Gish Mill Property  | Safety (bike and ped)   | \$356,000      |
| <b>RVTPPO Long Range Plan Funded Projects (2023)</b>         |  |   |                |
| GLADE CREEK GREENWAY, PHASE 2A                               | Paved 10' wide greenway from Gus Nicks Boulevard to Gearhart Park  | Safety (bike and ped)   | \$705,177      |
| WALNUT AVE BIKE/PED ACCOMMODATIONS (5TH ST TO TOWN LIMIT)    | Construct a sidewalk and bike lanes on Walnut Avenue between 5th Street and the City of Roanoke - Town of Vinton limit   | Safety (ped)  | \$2,068,142    |
| HARDY ROAD/DILLON WOODS CROSSWALK                            | Install a pedestrian crosswalk on Hardy Road at Dillon Drive   | Safety (bike and ped)   | \$497,911      |
| WALNUT AVENUE BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCOMMODATIONS          | Design and construction of ADA access from the Farmers Market to 1st Street. Connecting existing sidewalks with new concrete sidewalk and curb ramps, adding bike lanes, crosswalks and cross street intersections, pedestrian lighting, and construction storm drain improvements as required | Safety (bike and ped), System Management (operations, assets) | \$881,360      |

| Title   | Description  | Need Addressed        | Estimate  |
|---|--|-----------------------|---|
| <b>RVTPPO Long Range Plan Funded Projects (2023)</b>                      |  |                       |   |
| GLADE CREEK GREENWAY PHASE 2B   | Paved 10' wide greenway from Gearhart Park to Walnut Avenue  | Safety (bike and ped) | \$784,659   |
| #SMART22 - WALNUT AVENUE CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS PHASE 3                    | New Sidewalk, Bike land and Pedestrian crossing improvements between 1st Street and 4th in Vinton  | Safety (bike and ped) | \$7,399,781   |
| GUS NICKS BOULEVARD PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE CROSSING                           | Bike/Pedestrian Crossing from Billy Byrd Apartments to the Gish Mill Property  | Safety (bike and ped) | \$404,000   |
| GLADE CREEK GREENWAY PHASE 3 PE/STUDY                                     | Facilities for Pedestrians and Bicycles  | Safety (bike and ped) | \$275,000   |
| <b>RVTPPO Long Range Plan Priority Projects to Pursue (2023)</b>          |  |                       |   |
| STUDY: WASHINGTON AVE CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT STUDY                          | To identify and design projects to address safety issues, access management needs, multimodal deficiencies, and vehicular congestion issues during peak hours along Washington Avenue between South Pollard Street in the Town of Vinton to Stonebridge Drive at the Blue Ridge Parkway in Roanoke County, a distance of 2.5 miles | System Management     | \$150,000   |
| HARDY ROAD AND BYPASS ROUND ROUNDABOUT*                                   | Convert the intersection of Hardy Road/Bypass Road (Rt. 24) and Hardy Road (Rt. 634) from a signalized intersection to a two-lane roundabout. The project includes sidewalk in the immediate area of the roundabout  | System Management     | \$17,123,028  |
| CORTRAN TURNKEY THIRD-PARTY PROVIDED OPERATING ASSISTANCE                 | Operating assistance for Via Transportation, Inc. under contract with Roanoke County to provide ondemand transit services for Roanoke County residents 70+ or of any age with a disability   | Transit Access        | \$1,200,000   |
| <b>Town of Vinton Gap Summary Route 24 Bike/Ped Plan (2022)</b>           |  |                       |   |
| VIRGINIA AVENUE SIDEWALK FROM POLLARD STREET TO VINYARD ROAD              | Install conventional sidewalk on north side of street  | Safety (ped)          | \$2,535,944   |
| INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS ON POLLARD STREET AND VIRGINIA AVENUE           | Install crosswalks, ADA curb ramps, modified medians, and pedestrian crossing signals  | Safety (ped)          | \$194,231   |
| POLLARD STREET SIDEWALKS FROM VIRGINIA AVENUE TO CLEVELAND AVENUE         | Widen sidewalks to 6-ft width, ADA curb ramps, and crosswalks  | Safety (ped)          | \$1,634,473   |
| CLEVELAND AVENUE SLOW STREET FROM POLLARD STREET TO BEDFORD ROAD          | Install crosswalks, speed tables, ADA curb ramps, and sharrows   | Safety (ped)          | \$301,610   |
| WASHINGTON AVENUE LANE RECONFIGURATION FROM POLLARD STREET TO BYPASS ROAD | Reconfigure four-lane road to two lanes with center turn and buffered bicycle lanes  | Safety (bike)         | \$1,671,912   |
| VINYARD ROAD/BEDFORD ROAD IMPROVEMENTS                                    | Install crosswalks, speed tables, ADA curb ramps, sharrows, and conventional or painted sidewalks  | Safety (ped)          | \$196,556 (painted sidewalks option) \$402,729 (conventional sidewalk option) |

\* Project funded through SmartScale

| Title   | Description   | Need Addressed | Estimate |
|---|---|----------------|----------|
| <b>Town of Vinton Gap Summary Route 24 Bike/Ped Plan (2022)</b> |   |                |          |
| S BLAIR STREET FROM E CLEVELAND AVE TO JEFFERSON AVE            | Slow Street   | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| JEFFERSON AVENUE FROM S BLAIR ST TO CHESTNUT ST                 | Slow Street   | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| CHESTNUT STREET FROM JEFFERSON AVE TO E VIRGINIA AVE            | Slow Street: Uncontrolled crossing enhancements at Hardy Rd   | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| PINE STREET FROM WASHINGTON AVE TO E JACKSON AVE                | Slow Street   | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| E CLEVELAND AVENUE FROM BEDFORD RD TO DEAD END                  | Slow Street: Intersection redesign at Bedford Rd  | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| BEDFORD RD FROM E JACKSON AVE TO VIRGINIA AVE                   | Slow Street: Intersection redesign at E Cleveland Rd  | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| BEDFORD RD FROM VIRGINIA AVE TO HARDY RD                        | Sidewalk (one side); Signalized intersection enhancements at Hardy Rd   | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| E JACKSON AVENUE FROM S POPLAR ST TO PINE ST                    | Slow Street   | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| S POLLARD STREET FROM WASHINGTON AVE TO E CLEVELAND AVE         | Downtown Toolkit; Signalized intersection enhancements at Washington Ave & E Lee Ave; Uncontrolled crossing enhancements at E Jackson Ave & E Cleveland Ave | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| S MAPLE STREET FROM WASHINGTON AVE TO E CLEVELAND AVE           | Downtown Toolkit; Uncontrolled crossing enhancements at Washington Ave, E Lee Ave, E Jackson Ave and E Cleveland Ave  | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| E JACKSON AVENUE FROM W JACKSON AVE TO S POPLAR ST              | Downtown Toolkit; Uncontrolled crossing enhancements at S Pollard St & S Maple St   | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| E LEE AVENUE FROM W LEE AVE TO S POPLAR ST                      | Downtown Toolkit; Signalized intersection enhancements at S Pollard St; Uncontrolled crossing enhancements at S Maple St                                    | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| 1ST STREET FROM WALNUT AVE TO W CLEVELAND AVE                   | Sidewalk  | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| WALNUT AVENUE FROM WEST TOWN LIMITS TO W LEE AVE                | Planned/Proposed Improvements   | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| GUS NICKS BOULEVARD FROM GEARHART PARK TO WASHINGTON AVE        | Planned/Proposed Improvements; Signalized intersecton enhancements at S Pollard St; Uncontrolled crossing enhancements at W Madison Ave                     | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| FAIRMONT DRIVE FROM S PRESTON RD TO BUSH DR                     | Slow Street   | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| W VIRGINIA AVE FROM GLADE RD TO COMMERCIAL DRIVEWAY             | Sidewalk; Signalized intersection enhancements at commercial driveway   | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| HARDY ROAD FROM CHESTNUT ST TO VINYARD RD                       | Sidewalk; Uncontrolled crossing enhancements at Chestnut St and Spruce St; Signalized intersection enhancements at Bedord Rd                                | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |
| BYPASS ROAD FROM CLEARVIEW RD TO WASHINGTON AVE                 | Sidewalk; Uncontrolled crossing enhancements at shopping center; intersection redesign at Washington Ave  | Safety (ped)   | N/A      |

| Title   | Description  | Need Addressed                           | Estimate |
|---|--|--|----------|
| <b>Town of Vinton Gap Summary Route 24 Bike/Ped Plan (2022)</b>           |  |  |          |
| PRIVATE DRIVE FROM E CLEVELAND AVE TO DEAD END                            | Slow Street  | Safety (ped)                             | N/A      |
| FOOTPATH FROM E CLEVELAND AVE TO BYPASS RD                                | Off Road 10 ft Shared Use Path   | Safety (bike and ped)                    | N/A      |
| FOOTPATH FROM BYPASS RD TO FAIRMONT DR                                    | Off Road 10 ft Shared Use Path   | Safety (bike and ped)                    | N/A      |
| FOOTPATH FROM FAIRMONT DR TO WOLF CREEK GREENWAY                          | Off Road 10 ft Shared Use Path   | Safety (bike and ped)                    | N/A      |
| HARDY ROAD FROM VINYARD RD TO CLEARVIEW DR                                | Sidewalk; Signalized intersection enhancements at Bedford Rd   | Safety (ped)                             | N/A      |
| HARDY ROAD FROM CLEARVIEW RD TO NELSON ST                                 | Sidewalk   | Safety (ped)                             | N/A      |
| WASHINGTON AVE FROM MITCHELL RD TO BYPASS RD                              | Sidewalk   | Safety (ped)                             | N/A      |
| W LEE AVENUE FROM WALNUT AVE TO E LEE AVE                                 | Downtown Toolkit; Signalized intersection enhancements at S Pollard St   | Safety (ped)                             | N/A      |
| W JACKSON AVENUE FROM WALNUT AVE TO E JACKSON AVE                         | Downtown Toolkit; Uncontrolled crossing enhancements at S Pollard St   | Safety (ped)                             | N/A      |
| W CLEVELAND AVENUE FROM 1ST STREET TO POLLARD ST                          | Slow Street; Uncontrolled crossing crossing enhancements at S Pollard St   | Safety (ped)                             | N/A      |
| E JACKSON AVENUE FROM PINE ST TO BEDFORD RD                               | Slow Street; Intersection redesign at E Cleveland Rd   | Safety (ped)                             | N/A      |
| <b>VDOT Project Pipeline (2024)</b>                                       |  |  |          |
| INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: WASHINGTON AVE./ BYPASS ROAD            | Traffic control and reduce congestion at this busy intersection on Rte. 24   | System management                        | N/A      |
| GUS NICKS BLVD./ WASHINGTON AVE. CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT/ ACCESS MANAGEMENT  | Access management, accessibility, bike/ped improvements  | Safety (bike and ped), System Management | N/A      |
| BYPASS ROAD CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT  | Access management, bike/ped improvements, accessibility, economic development activity incentive   | Safety (bike and ped), System Management | N/A      |
| VINYARD ROAD CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT                                 | Traffic congestion, bike/ped improvements, accessibility, bus transit improvements, and access management in this corridor                 | Safety (bike and ped), System Management | N/A      |
| INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: SOUTH POLLARD STREET/E. VIRGINIA AVENUE | Traffic control, reduction of congestion, and the potential complete reconfiguration of this busy intersection on Rte. 24                  | Safety (ped), System Management          | N/A      |
| INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: 3RD STREET/W. VIRGINIA AVE.             | Traffic control, access management, and reduce congestion on this intersection where residential, industrial, and commerical uses converge | System Management                        | N/A      |
| VIRGINIA AVENUE/ HARDY ROAD CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS                         | Access management, accessibility, bike/ped improvements  | Safety (bike and ped), System Management | N/A      |

| Title   | Description   | Need Addressed  | Estimate |
|---|---|---|----------|
| <b>VDOT Project Pipeline (2024)</b>   |   |   |          |
| VINYARD ROAD: POTENTIAL CONNECTION WITH CLEARVIEW DRIVE STUDY AND PROJECT             | Traffic control, access management, and reduce congestion on this intersection where residential and commercial uses converge | System Management                                       | N/A      |
| INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: SPRUCE STREET/ EAST VIRGINIA AVENUE                 | Traffic control, reduction of congestion, and the potential addition of a traffic signal configuration on Rte. 24             | System Management                                       | N/A      |
| BYPASS ROAD/ HARDY ROAD/ CLEARVIEW DRIVE INTERSECTION/ CORRIDOR STUDY AND IMPROVEMENT | Traffic congestion, bike/ped improvements, accessibility, bus transit improvements, and access management on Rte. 24          | Safety (bike and ped), System Management Transit Access | N/A      |

# LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

# LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

## NEEDS AT A GLANCE

Vinton is a Town nestled between the Roanoke River and three of its tributaries – Glade Creek, Tinker Creek, and Wolf Creek. The Town slopes gently up from these waterways, which created an ideal landscape on which to build a Town. Today Vinton's 3.2 square miles is largely built out, with just a few significant undeveloped sites remaining. The form of Vinton's natural and built environment contribute to many of the Town's most important needs. Listed below are the top land use and environment related needs based on data analysis, focus groups discussions, and community input:

## LAND USE NEEDS

- Maintain Small-Town Feel & Preserve Stable Neighborhoods** – Vinton residents value the Town's neighborhoods and small-town feel. Protecting this valuable characteristic is important to people, as indicated through the community survey and engagement events.
- Mixed-Use Development in Downtown to Increase Vitality** – Downtown is a cherished place in Vinton. However, it has several notable gaps in its storefronts and lacks housing within the immediate downtown area. Additional housing will add population, which will support the market for more shops, increasing vitality and filling gaps in the storefronts.
- Redevelopment of Aging Commercial Centers** – Much of Vinton's development is several decades old and showing the wear and tear of aging. Trends such as e-commerce have reduced the need for some types of brick-and-mortar retail. Redevelopment of these centers into new uses that are needed in Vinton will be important over the next 25 years.

## ENVIRONMENT NEEDS

- Cleaner Water in Vinton's Streams & the Roanoke River** – The Roanoke River and many of its tributaries are impaired, which means the water does not meet state water quality standards. Reducing polluted runoff to these water bodies is a need.
- Mitigate Urban Heat Island Effect** – Temperatures have been increasing in Roanoke County. On average Roanoke County exceeds 95 degrees twice per year. By 2070 Roanoke County is forecast to exceed 95 degrees on between 18 and 37 days per year.<sup>1</sup> Preparing for this large increase in days with extreme heat is a need for Vinton and the entire region.

**Remove Invasives & Plant Natives** - Invasive plants such as kudzu, autumn olive, and honeysuckle reduce wildlife habitat and can contribute to erosion along the Town's waterways. Addressing the impacts of invasive species is an important need.

**Organized Environmental Stewardship** - There are several environmental organizations in the Roanoke Valley, but none focused primarily on Vinton. The Town could benefit from more organized support for protecting and improving the Town's natural environment.

**Manage & Mitigate Floodplain Risks** - Several properties in Vinton are within the floodplain, and many properties at risk from flooding lack flood insurance.

**More Trees** - Vinton's downtown area and major commercial centers lack tree canopy. Trees help mitigate the effects of hotter temperatures, and absorb stormwater, which can reduce runoff.

<sup>1</sup> Mid-Atlantic Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments. <https://www.midatlanticrisa.org/>

## WHAT WE HEARD

Kudzu is very prevalent in the area. It's visible along all the greenways.

“

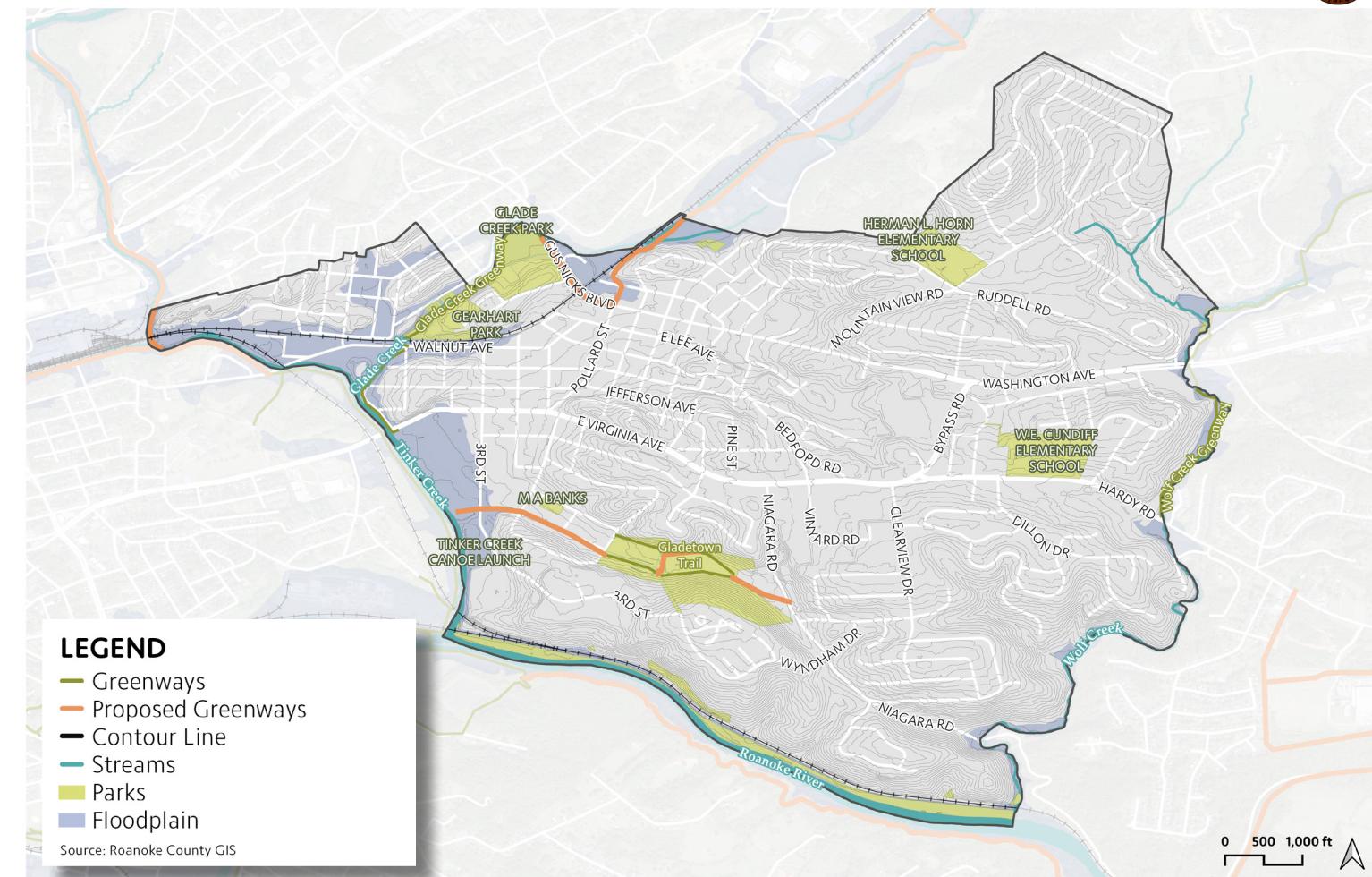
Would like to see more residential above commercial mixed-use downtown.

“

Larger parking lots are an opportunity for more tree planting.

“

## Community Needs Assessment | Environmental Resources



## VINTON'S RESIDENTS INDICATED THE FOLLOWING LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT GOALS ARE MOST IMPORTANT:

1 = Not Important

3 = Important

5 = Very Important

Maintain small-town feel & stable neighborhoods



Improve water quality for Vinton's streams, creeks, & the Roanoke River



Prioritize downtown & aging commercial centers for future development



Vacant buildings transformed into productive use.



Keep and improve upon what makes Vinton special.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

Vinton consists of both the natural and built environments. The natural environment refers to spaces that are mostly undeveloped. While none of Vinton's land is unaffected by human activity, there are still many natural features that merit protection, such as the streams and steep hillsides with tree canopy. The built environment constitutes most of the Town's land area. It includes buildings, streets, and parking areas. It is typically characterized by how land is used, such as residential, commercial, industrial, or mixed use.

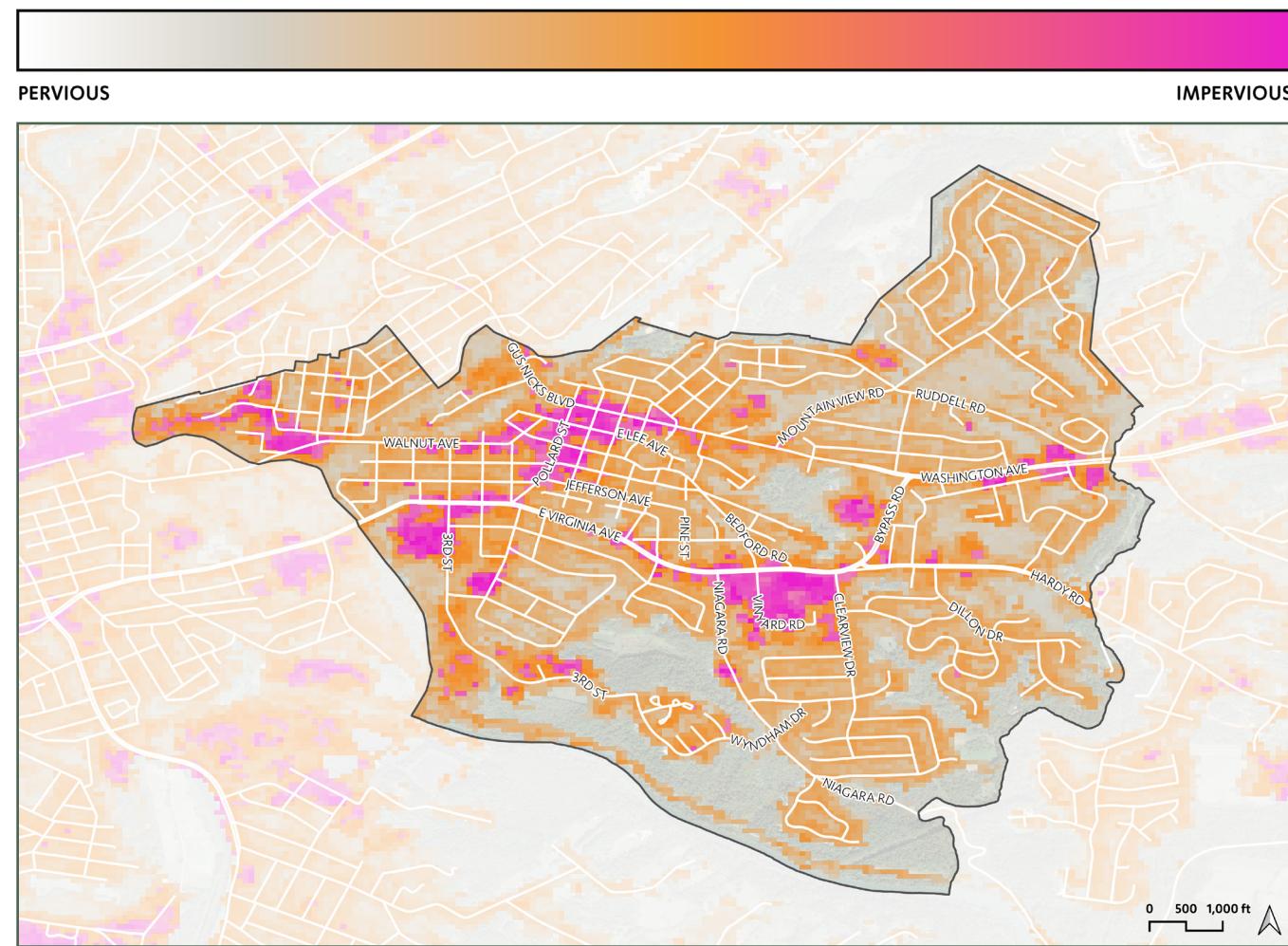
It is important that Towns like Vinton strive for balance between the built and natural environments. Both are essential for a thriving and healthy community. Natural areas are important for absorbing stormwater, providing shade that cools temperatures, and providing habitat for animal and plant life. The built environment is the place where social and economic interactions occur and the degree to which the built environment fosters interactions among Vinton's residents is important for economic development and quality of life. However, people also need nature and the ability to retreat to the Town's greenways, parks, and natural areas is highly important to the health of the Town's residents. This section describes existing conditions for both the built and natural world in Vinton.

## IMPERVIOUS LAND COVERAGE

Built areas tend to have extensive impervious surfaces, such as paved streets, roofs, and parking lots. They contribute to stormwater runoff and increase heat in urban areas. Higher volumes of runoff can lead to flooding and streambank erosion. The Town's greatest concentrations of impervious surfaces are found downtown and at major shopping centers. There are areas that should be considered for tree planting. The Glade Creek and Tinker Creek watersheds have most of the Town's impervious surface area.

### IMPERVIOUS COVERAGE 2021

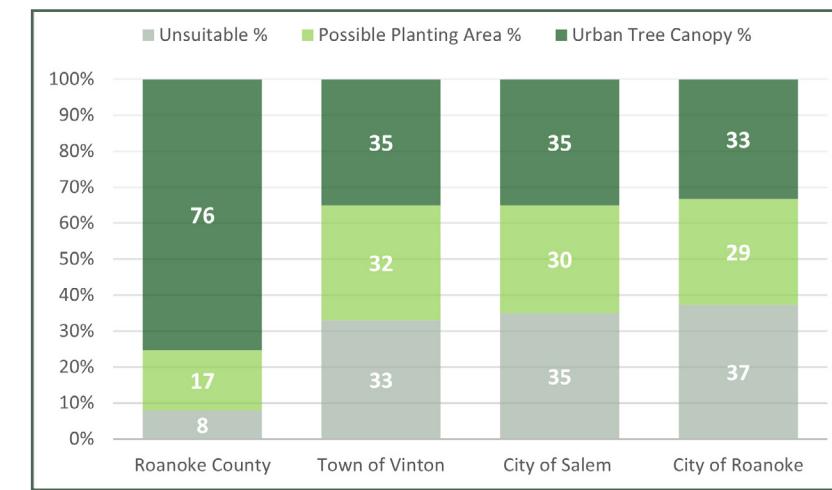
Source: National Land Cover Database 2021 CONUS Impervious Surface



## TREE CANOPY

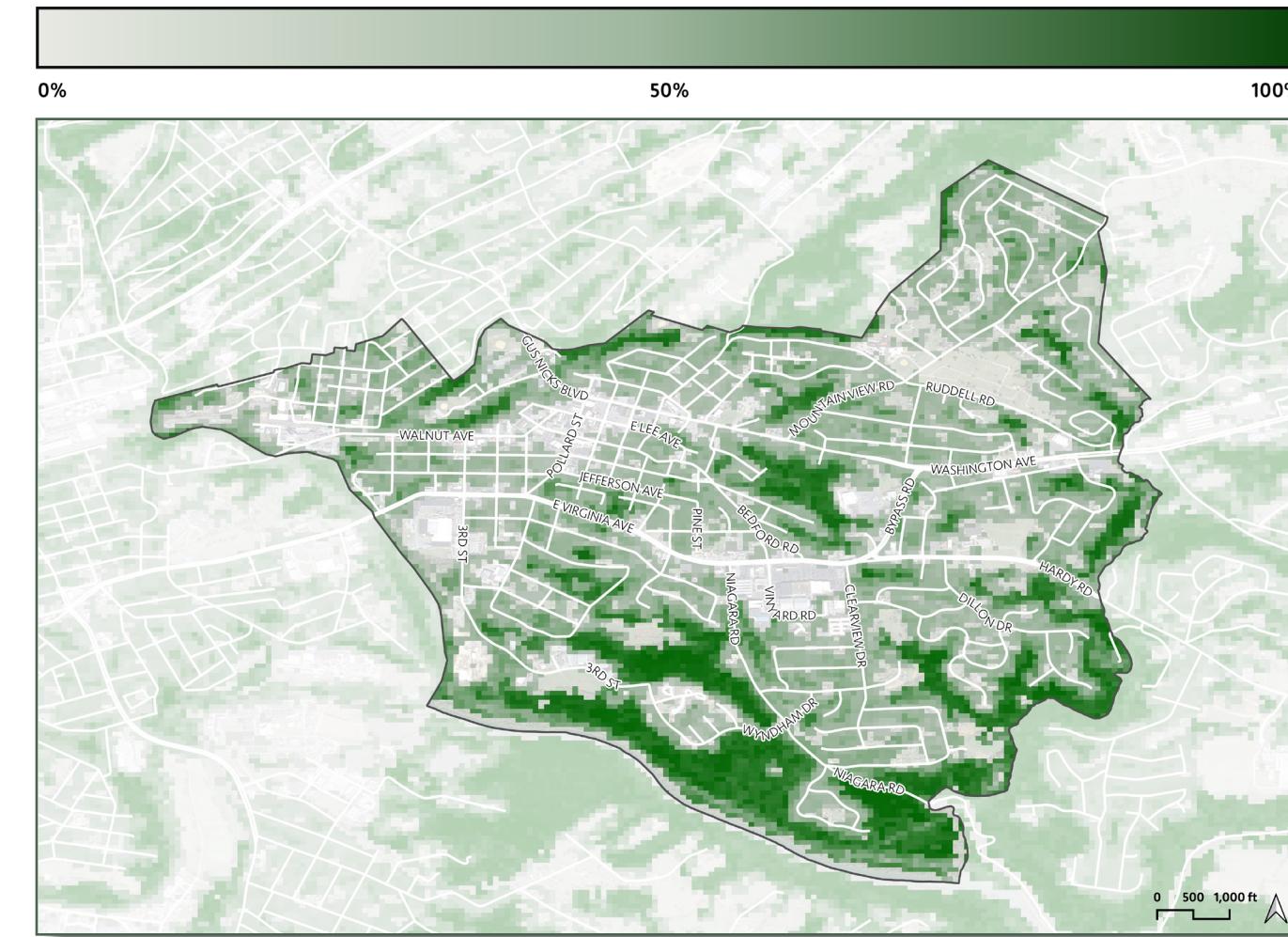
Urban tree canopy helps reduce noise pollution, filter air and water, reduce stormwater runoff, reduce energy use, and provide animal habitat and shade. As a result, tree canopy help support healthier neighborhoods with greater economic value. About 35% of the Town's land area is beneath tree canopy, which is comparable to the tree canopy areas of the City of Roanoke and City of Salem. The 2024 Roanoke Valley Urban Tree Canopy Assessment indicated that about 32% of Vinton's land area is suitable for additional tree planting to increase the canopy.<sup>2</sup>

Tree Canopy Chart



### PERCENT TREE CANOPY COVER 2021

Source: National Land Cover Database 2021 CONUS Tree Canopy



## WATERSHEDS

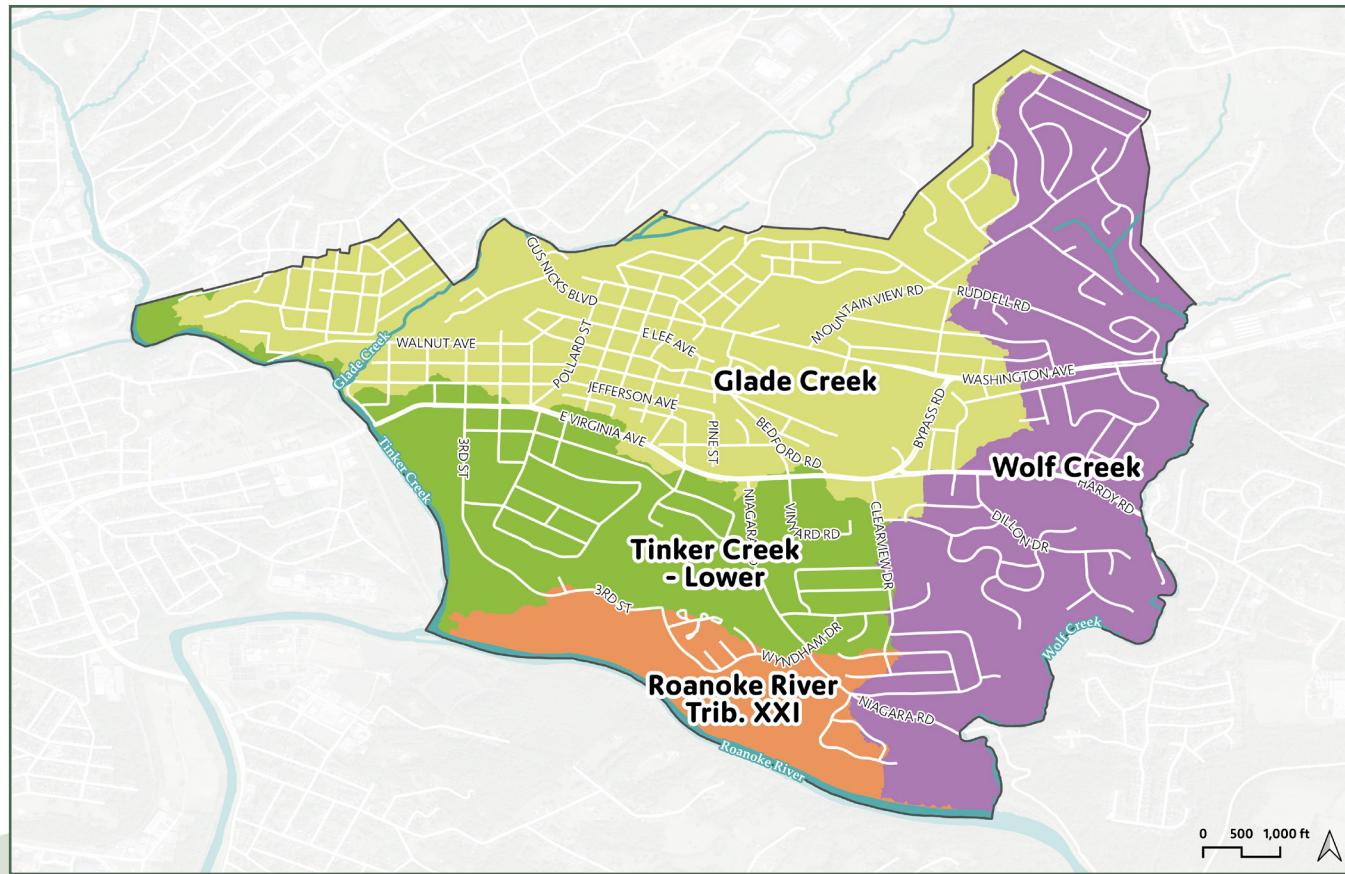
Water that falls on Vinton makes its way to the Roanoke River via Tinker Creek, Glade Creek, Wolf Creek, or by running off directly to the river. These waterways are important recreation and environmental assets. The

<sup>2</sup> Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission. 2024 Urban Tree Canopy Assessment.

Roanoke River flows into important state recreational assets, such as Smith Mountain Lake, Kerr Lake, and Lake Gaston. The river also feeds drinking water supplies for many communities, including places as far away as Virginia Beach. It is one of the state's most important and valued resources, and the quality of its water is of local, regional, and statewide importance.

The Roanoke River, Tinker Creek, and Glade Creek are considered impaired by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, meaning they do not meet Virginia's water quality standards. Among the sources of impairment are sediment, which harms aquatic life, and bacteria, which can lead to illness. The Town's stormwater does not go to a treatment plant before it reaches these waterbodies, which means that pollutants from streets, yards, buildings, and other surfaces can wash directly into them. The watershed map indicates which waterbody receives the water that runs off the Town's land. Addressing polluted stormwater is an important regional and local need.

#### Watershed Map



#### FLOODPLAINS

Most of Vinton is on high ground and outside of the floodplains. However, there are areas along Glade Creek and Tinker Creek that are within the 100-year floodplain, and some minor areas along Wolf Creek. These areas, known as Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA), have a 1 percent chance of flooding in any given year. Vinton participates in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) voluntary Community Rating System (CRS). In exchange for Vinton's proactive efforts to reduce flood risk through this program, policyholders in Town can receive reduced flood insurance premiums for buildings. However, flooding still periodically occurs within the Town. As a result, the Town has taken measures to reduce flood risk including limiting development

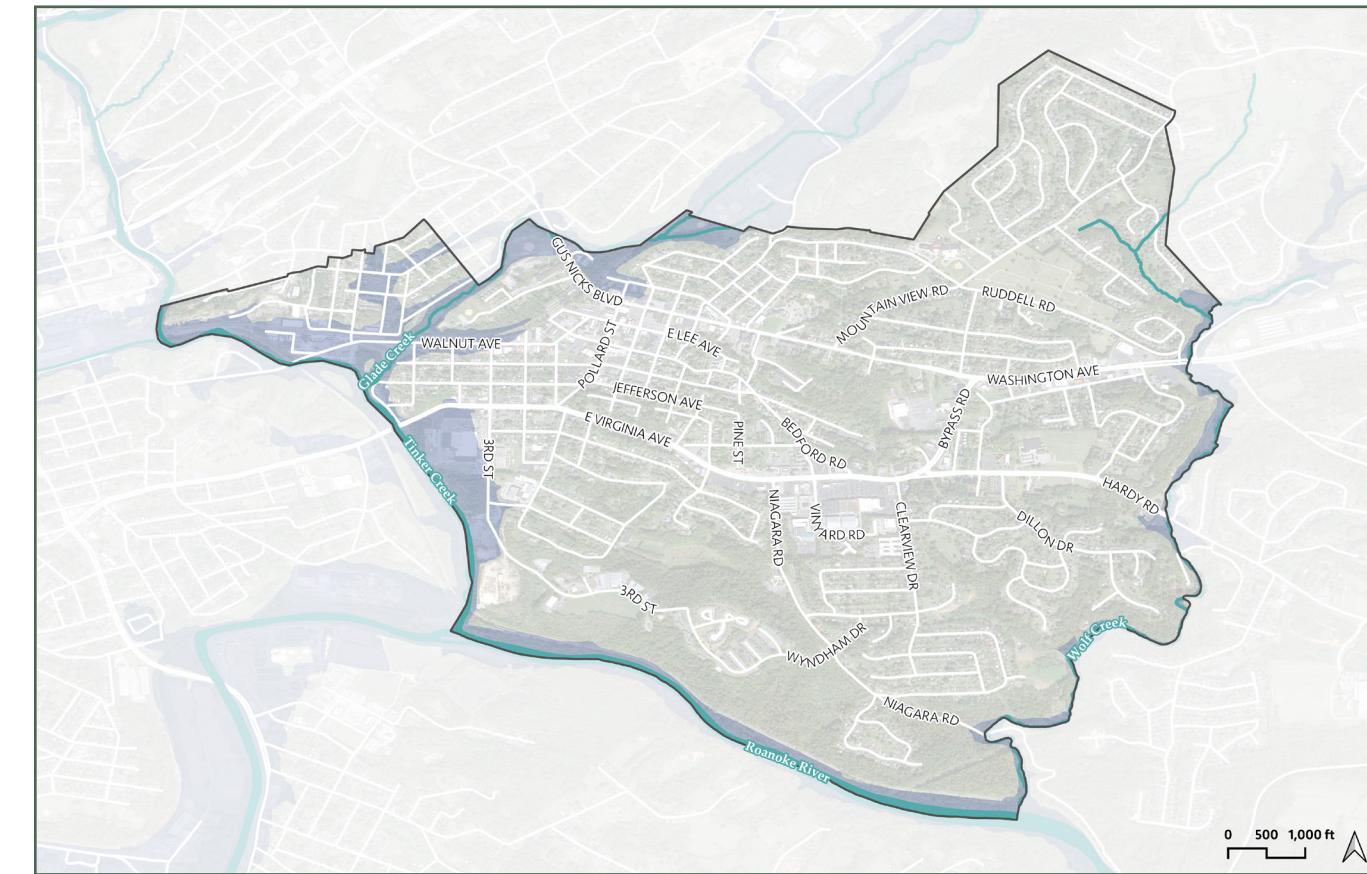
to more than 25 feet from stream banks, requiring first floors to be 1 foot above base flood elevation for commercial development and 2 feet for residential, and pursuing flood hazard mitigation grants to acquire properties within the special flood hazard areas. It is important to note that FEMA is expected to release new and more accurate data in 2025 on the extend of the floodplain, which may remove some properties from the special flood hazard areas, while adding others. It is anticipated that more properties will be removed from the special flood hazards areas than added.

#### LEGEND

100-Year Flood Zone

Source: Roanoke County GIS Data

#### Floodplain Map



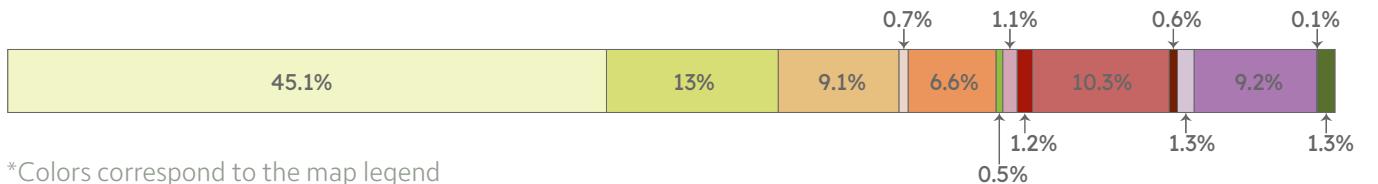
#### LAND USE

Most parcels of land within Vinton's 3.2 square miles are developed. While it is common to call Vinton "built out" as a result, structures within the Town will be altered or replaced over time. It is important to understand the current development pattern and how changing population needs and preferences will shape development in the future.

The Town in 2024 is largely residential. About 58 percent of the land is zoned for low-to-medium density residential. The Town's commercial development is concentrated in two centers – Downtown and around the corridors of Hardy Road and Bypass Road where the River Park Shopping Center and Lake Drive Plaza are located.

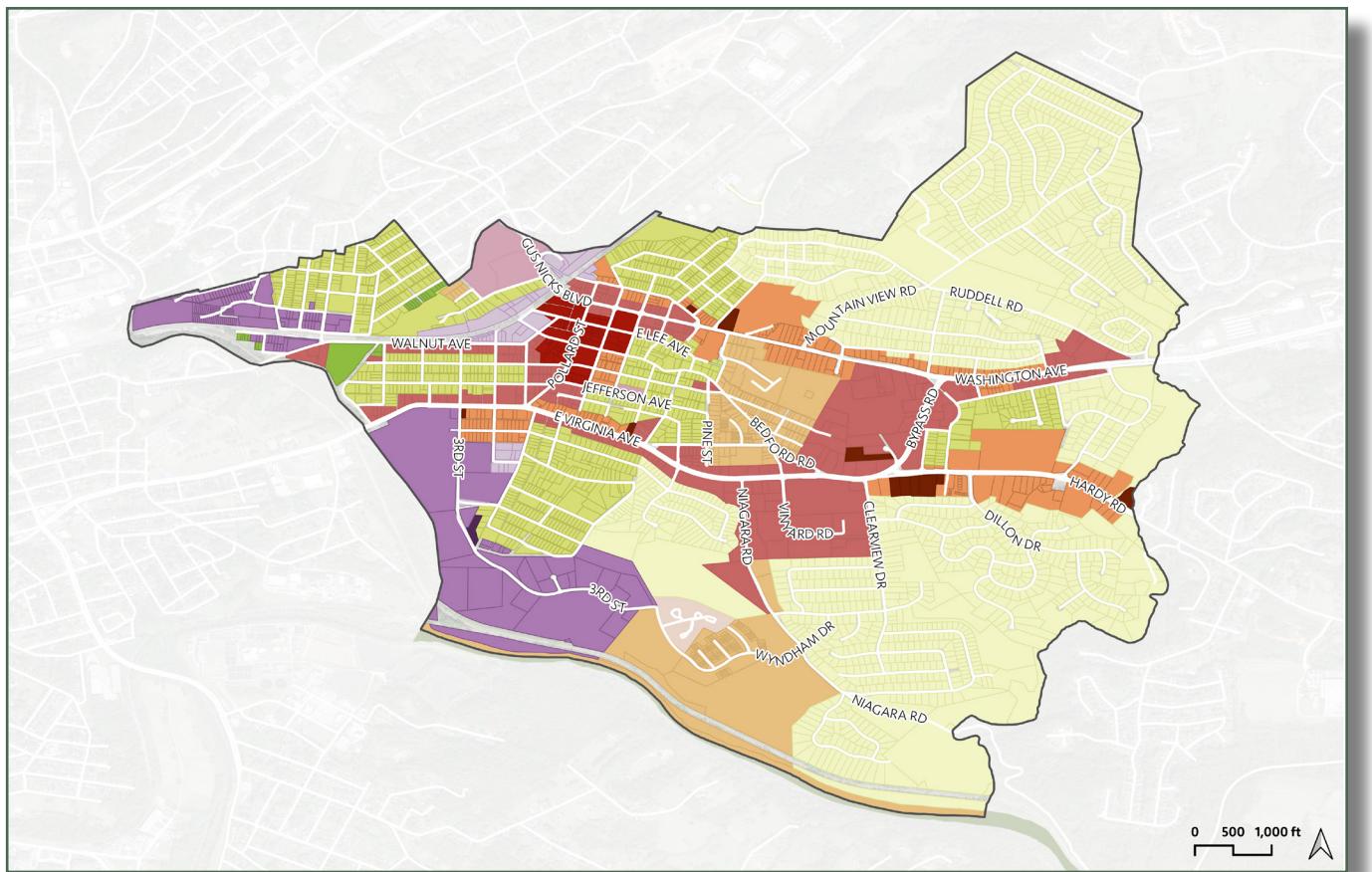
Most of the remaining commercial development in the Town is stretched out along the major corridors of Washington Avenue, Virginia Avenue, Hardy Road, and Bypass Road. The southwest corner of Vinton, along Tinker Creek and the Roanoke River, are where most of the industrially zoned land is found.

## Zoning by Percentage



\*Colors correspond to the map legend

## Zoning Map



### LEGEND

- R1 Low Density SF Residential
- R2 Moderate Density Residential
- R3 Medium to High Density Residential
- R3C Residential Conditional
- RB Residential Business District
- PO Public/Open Space
- MUD Mixed Use Development
- CB Central Business District
- GB General Business District
- GBC General Business Conditional
- M1 Limited Industrial District
- M2 General Industrial District
- M2C General Industrial Conditional
- AG1 Agriculture

Source: Roanoke County GIS

Zoning is the law that describes what is allowed on a parcel of land. Some parcels are either undeveloped or developed for a different use than what the zoning allows. Looking at the existing land use, from the tax assessor, shows that much of the industrially zoned land is undeveloped. This is due partially to steep slopes and former landfills on the Town's southern boundary near the Roanoke River. Understanding what is possible with those undeveloped parcels is another need.

# RECREATION & QUALITY OF LIFE

# RECREATION & QUALITY OF LIFE

## NEEDS AT A GLANCE

Recreation and quality of life are essential to overall health and well-being for Vinton's residents. The Town's existing parks, greenways, and waterways are cherished aspects of the Town, which residents want to protect and build upon.

However, it is not only recreation facilities within the Town limits that contribute to quality of life for residents. Vinton sits within close proximity of several major recreation assets in Roanoke City and Roanoke County, as shown in the map to the right. The Town can grow its outdoor recreation advantages through better connections to these assets including the Blue Ridge Parkway, Explore Park, and the regional greenway and blueway networks.

The region's long-term plans call for extending the Tinker Creek and Glade Creek greenways towards Botetourt County, and closing the Roanoke River Greenway gap between the City of Roanoke and the Explore Park. When these projects are complete the Town will sit at the junction of several popular trails. Meanwhile, Roanoke County is planning for better access to the Explore Park for bicycles and pedestrians, and new trails and recreation facilities within the park; and the Town will expand its park offerings with the Multi-Generational Park that is under development.

While recreation is clearly a Town strength now and in the future, there are several needs for Vinton to address to maximize the opportunities. Listed below are the top recreation and quality of life related needs based on data analysis, focus groups discussions, and community input.

## RECREATION & QUALITY OF LIFE NEEDS

- Better Access to Parks & Playgrounds** – Vinton needs to increase and improve access to parks and playgrounds so that everyone in Town can safely walk to a park or playground.
- Connections between Greenways** – Vinton's greenway network is largely concentrated on the eastern and western edges of Town. More access points and connections between greenways are needed.
- Accessible Recreation for All Ages** – The Town needs a wider range of active and passive recreation opportunities to meet the needs of a changing and aging population.
- Better Access to the Blue Ridge Parkway & Explore Park** – There is a need for safer, more direct connections to the Blue Ridge Parkway and Explore park from Vinton.

Spending time in nature provides numerous health benefits, including better focus, longer life expectancy, lower stress, and reduced cancer risk.<sup>1</sup>

## Community Needs Assessment | Regional Green and Blue Assets



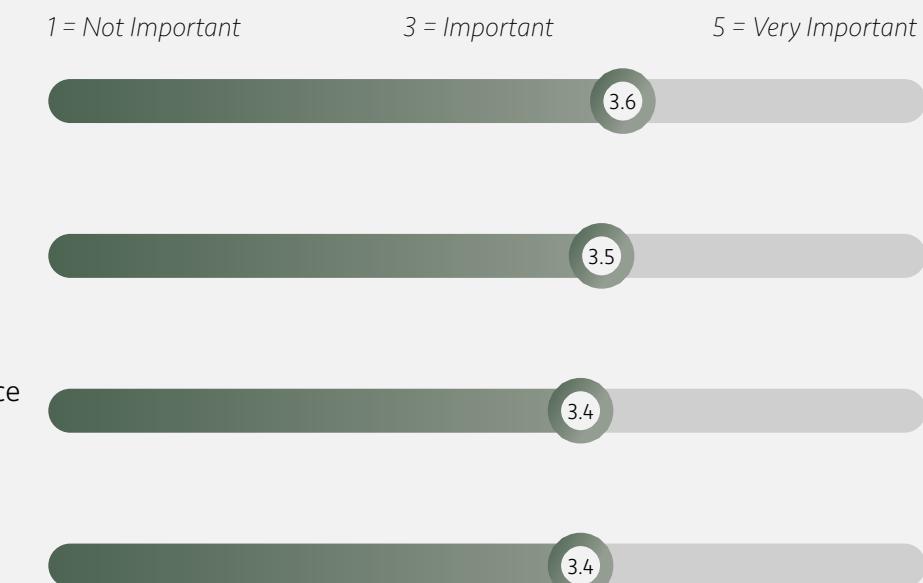
## WHAT WE HEARD

There is an opportunity for pocket parks along greenways to make more linear parks.

Make greenways and trails a priority.

I'd love to see more family focused activities and better playgrounds.

## VINTON'S RESIDENTS INDICATED THE FOLLOWING RECREATION & QUALITY OF LIFE GOALS ARE MOST IMPORTANT:



<sup>1</sup> USDA Forest Service (fs.usda.gov)



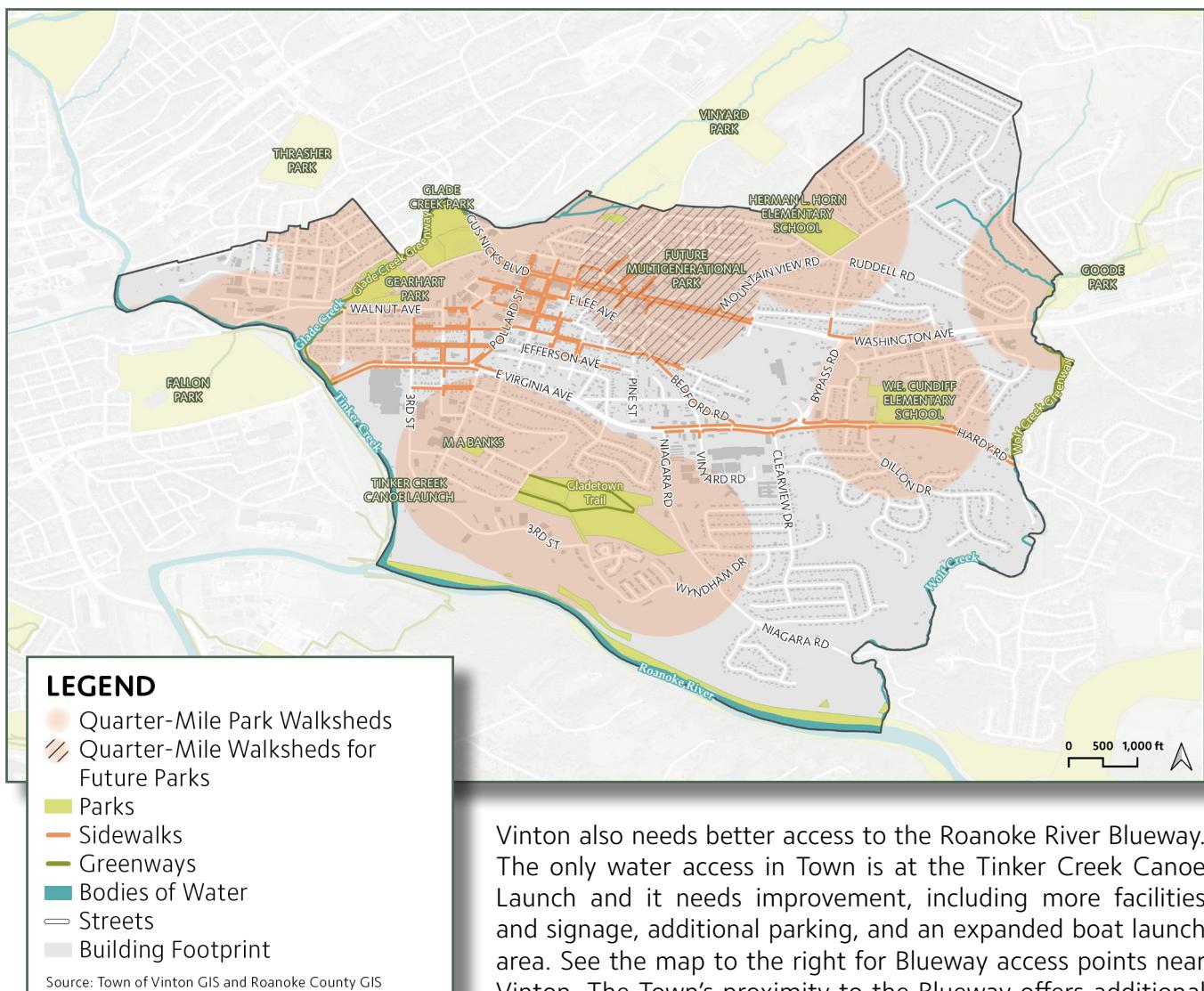
## EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

Recreation and quality of life in Vinton are closely connected to the broader Roanoke Valley region. Vinton is situated along an expansive regional greenway network that was initially formed in 1995 to improve quality of life for residents throughout the region.<sup>1</sup> Vinton is home to three greenways, Glade Creek Greenway, Gladetown Trail, and Wolf Creek Greenway. There are five parks including the two schools within the Town, which are owned and maintained by Roanoke County. Vinton is also along the Roanoke River Blueway with an access point off 3rd Street at Tinker Creek. The Blueway is 45 miles long and extends from Montgomery County to Smith Mountain Lake.<sup>2</sup>

## ACCESS TO PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

Portions of the Town have less access to a public park. A widely used standard for park access, established by the Trust for Public Land, states that everyone should be able to reach a park within a 10-minute walk of their home.<sup>3</sup> The Walking Access to Park map highlights areas of Town that meet this standard, as well as areas where increased access is needed. Areas in Vinton that are not within a 10-minute walk of a park need sidewalks or trails that connect the neighborhood to parks and playgrounds.

### Walking Access to Parks Map



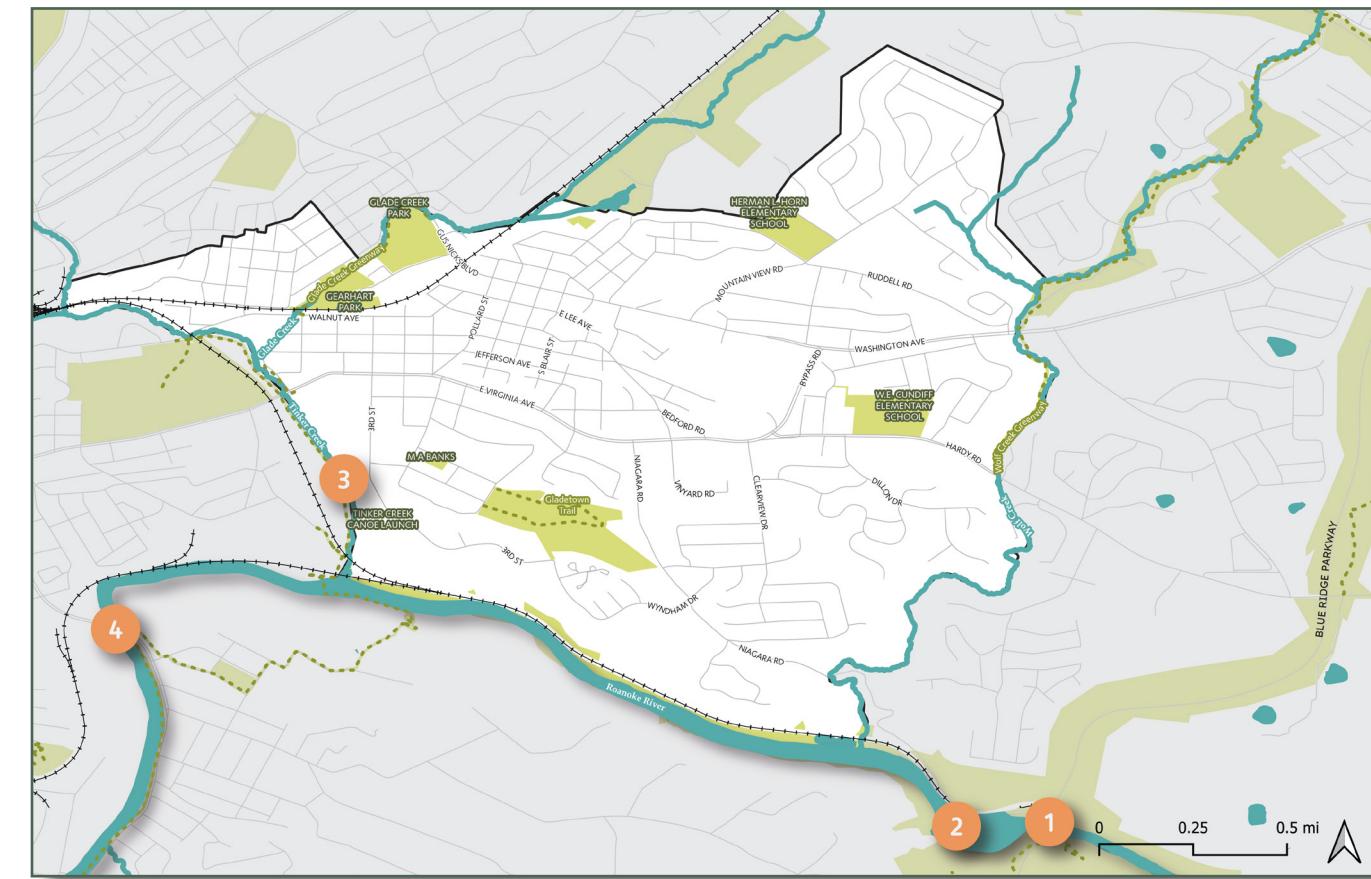
<sup>1</sup> Roanoke Valley Greenways.

<sup>2</sup> Roanoke River Blueway.

<sup>3</sup> Trust for Public Land. (10minutewalk.org)

Vinton needs to upgrade and expand its water access to realize the economic benefits of this resource.

## Blue Assets and Access Map



### LEGEND

- Bodies of Water
- Parks
- Greenways
- Streets
- Railroads

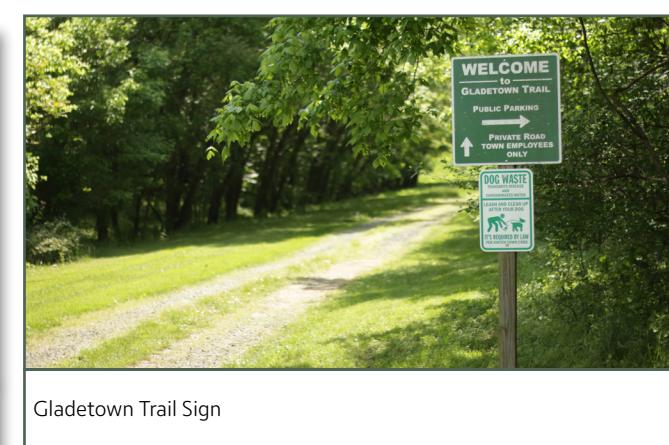
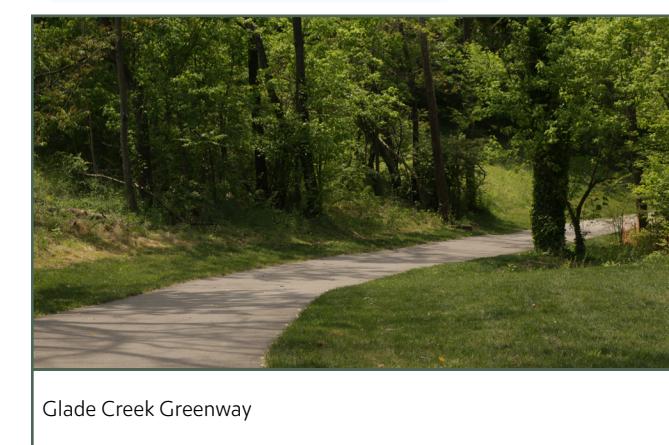
**Roanoke River Blueway Access Points**

- Blue Ridge Parkway Roanoke River Overlook
- Niagara Dam Portage
- Tinker Creek 3rd Street
- 13th Street/Bennington Street

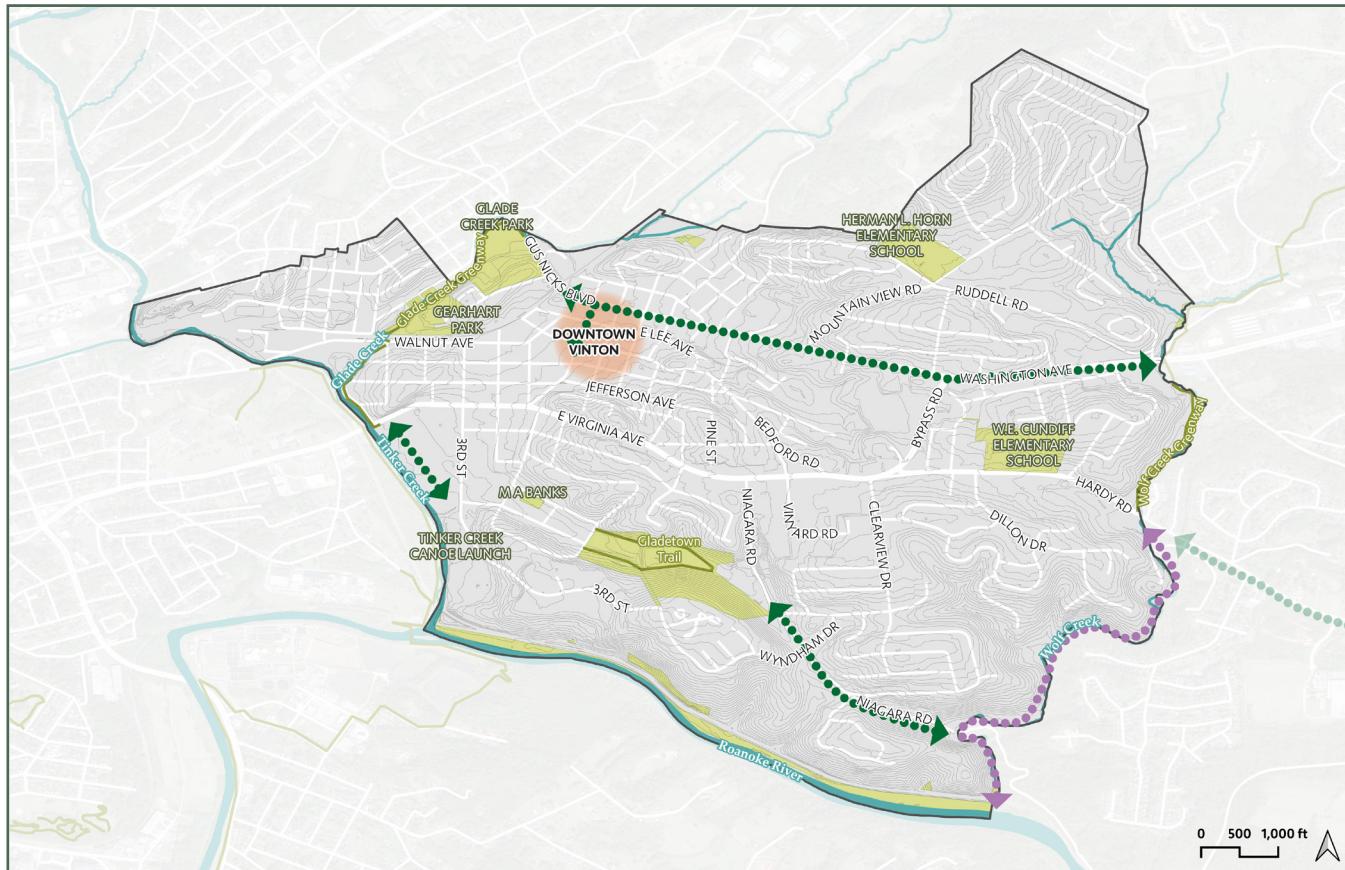
Source: Roanoke County GIS and Roanoke River Blueway Website

## CONNECTIONS BETWEEN GREENWAYS

Vinton's greenways are mainly situated along the eastern and western edges of Town. Pedestrians and cyclists primarily rely on sidewalks and streets to access greenways. The Greenway Network Gap Assessment Map highlights where connections are needed to improve access to the greenway network and connect greenway segments. These areas show a need to improve and increase east-west connections. Washington Avenue is a primary area of concern for pedestrians and cyclists, and has potential through design improvements to become a backbone for greenway connectivity.



## Greenway Network Gap Assessment Map



### LEGEND

- Greenway Gaps
- Greenway Gaps Addressed by Proposed Extension
- Greenways
- Proposed Greenway Extensions
- Parks
- Bodies of Water
- Streets
- Contour Lines

Source: RVARC and Roanoke County GIS

### ACCESSIBLE RECREATION FOR ALL AGES

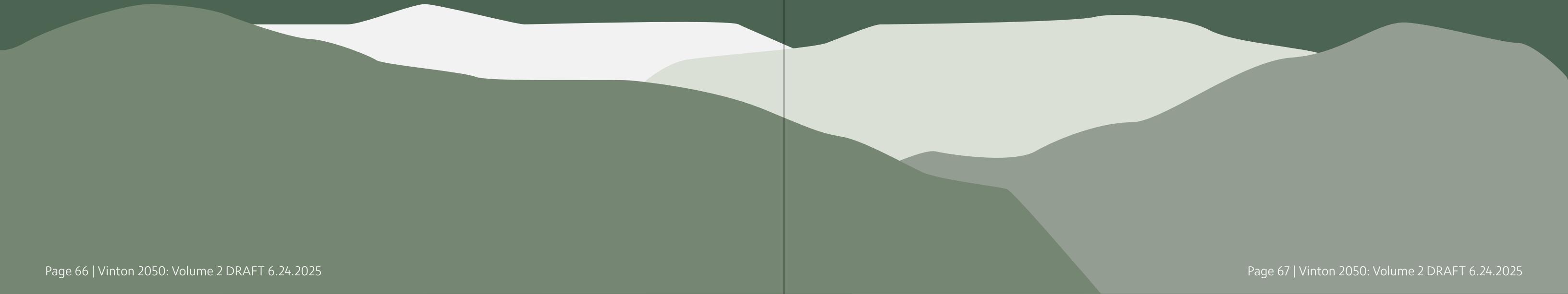
Residents expressed a need for a wider range of facilities at Vinton's parks. Most of the Town's parks have playgrounds or playfields, but a better balance of active and passive recreation is needed. Residents also expressed a need for parks and green spaces that provide solitude, restoration, and a sense of getting away. Pocket parks, linear parks along greenways, and shaded seating areas can help address this need.

**PARKS INVENTORY**

**VINTON 2050**

| Facilities                   | M A Banks | Gearhart Park | W. E. Cundiff Elementary School | Herman L. Horn Elementary School | Glade Creek Park |
|------------------------------|-----------|---------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Playground                   | ✓         |               | ✓                               | ✓                                |                  |
| Picnic Shelter               |           |               |                                 | ✓                                |                  |
| Picnic Tables                | ✓         |               |                                 | ✓                                |                  |
| Basketball Court             | ✓         |               |                                 | ✓                                |                  |
| Water Fountain               |           |               |                                 |                                  |                  |
| Athletic Field               |           |               | ✓                               |                                  | ✓                |
| Restrooms or Portable Toilet |           |               |                                 |                                  |                  |
| Baseball/Softball Diamond    |           | ✓             |                                 | ✓                                | ✓                |
| Walking Trails               |           |               |                                 | ✓                                | ✓                |
| Grill                        | ✓         |               |                                 |                                  |                  |
| Horseshoes                   | ✓         |               |                                 |                                  |                  |
| Indoor Facilities            |           |               |                                 |                                  |                  |

# DOWNTOWN & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



# DOWNTOWN & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## NEEDS AT A GLANCE

Vinton is 3.2 square miles and mostly “built out,” meaning there are few large undeveloped lots with economic development potential. The Town’s future development is likely to occur through small-scale, piecemeal redevelopment of underutilized and/or older properties. Listed below are the top downtown and economic development related needs based on data analysis, focus groups discussions, and community input:

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

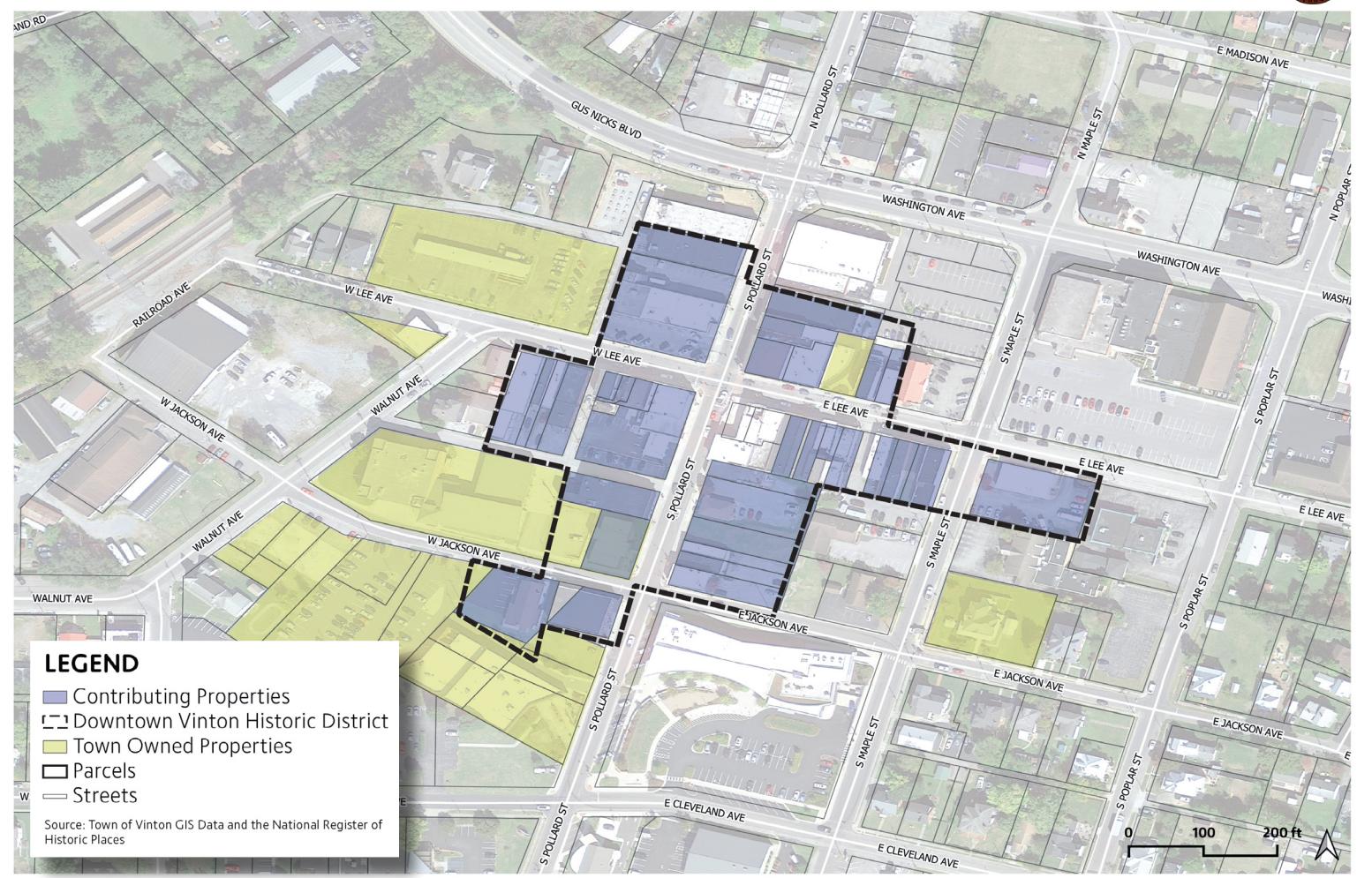
- Invest in Quality of Life as Vinton’s Economic Advantage** – One of Vinton’s greatest economic advantages is the quality of life that it can offer for residents and employees of local businesses. Investing in a higher quality of life can help the Town attract more small businesses and employees with work-from-home jobs.
- Expand Housing to Meet Demands from Job Growth** – Job growth in Vinton has dramatically outpaced housing growth over the last 20 years. The Town needs more housing for its workforce and people working in nearby jobs in Roanoke County and City.
- Grow Base of Non-Service Sector Jobs** – More than 50% of Vinton’s jobs are in the service sector, led by retail trade and food/accommodation jobs. These jobs are important, but do not grow the local economy as much as industrial, knowledge, or education and medical sector jobs. Diversifying the job base within the Town and the region is an important need.
- Grow Local Tax Base** – Investing in quality of life requires financial resources. Redevelopment of underutilized properties will help the Town make improvements in new parks, greenways, infrastructure, and more.

## DOWNTOWN NEEDS

- Support for Infill Development** – The Town’s economic future depends on infill development. Infill, especially new housing in and around the downtown area, can help the Town achieve its goal of a vibrant downtown with more shops and entertainment options. Infill in the downtown is also important for the Town’s fiscal future, as the downtown area is the most productive in terms of tax revenue per acre in Vinton.
- Strategic Planning for Town-Owned Property** – The Town owns several properties in and around the downtown area. These properties can support the Town’s goals for a vibrant downtown. The Town has a need for strategic planning around these properties to ensure their future use supports the Town’s goals.

“Infill” means the construction of new buildings on vacant or underutilized properties

## Downtown Vinton Historic District and Contributing Properties



## WHAT WE HEARD

I'd like to see more options for shopping and exploring in the downtown area.

Would love to see more walking paths/sidewalks that connect neighborhoods to the lovely downtown area.

Expanded economic development to fund Town projects.

## VINTON'S RESIDENTS INDICATED THE FOLLOWING DOWNTOWN & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS ARE MOST IMPORTANT:

1 = Not Important

3 = Important

5 = Very Important

More employers & jobs in Vinton



Increase the vibrancy of downtown



More downtown shopping options



Encourage redevelopment of aging commercial centers



## EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

Vinton's economy is based heavily on service sector jobs found in retail and restaurant establishments in the downtown area; and along the major corridors of Washington Avenue, Hardy Road, and Virginia Avenue. The Town also has industrial businesses, such as Precision Fabrics Group, Cargill, and entertainment businesses, such as Rosie's Gaming Emporium that help diversify the local economy. Further diversification is an important need for Vinton.

Vinton's greatest economic asset may be its downtown area, which is Roanoke County's historic and authentic downtown and a hub for culture and entertainment in the region. The Town recently secured historic recognition for the core of downtown with its addition to the Virginia Landmarks Register. Downtown Vinton is also unique as a downtown along a greenway, with potential to be a trail hub for long-distance connections throughout the region along the Tinker Creek, Roanoke River, and Glade Creek greenways. Given the shortage of large lots for development, infill within the downtown area is highly important for the Town's economic future.

The following maps, tables, and charts present existing conditions related to the Town's economy and its downtown that informed the needs.

## LAND USE MIX

Urban growth in the post-World War II era was dominated by single use development spread out along major roadways, which quickly became magnets for retail shops and inevitably congested with vehicles. Recent decades have seen a growing interest in the older mixed-use development patterns that place homes, shops, offices and parks within walking distance along a connected street network. The land use patterns in Vinton show the Town has both patterns of development.

The northeast and southeast portions of the Town are largely single-use residential while major corridors are largely commercial. The downtown area, and nearby neighborhoods, show a more traditional land use pattern with a wide mix of uses in close proximity, served by a well-connected street grid. These patterns are relevant to the Town's economic development and downtown vitality because the mixed-use areas have

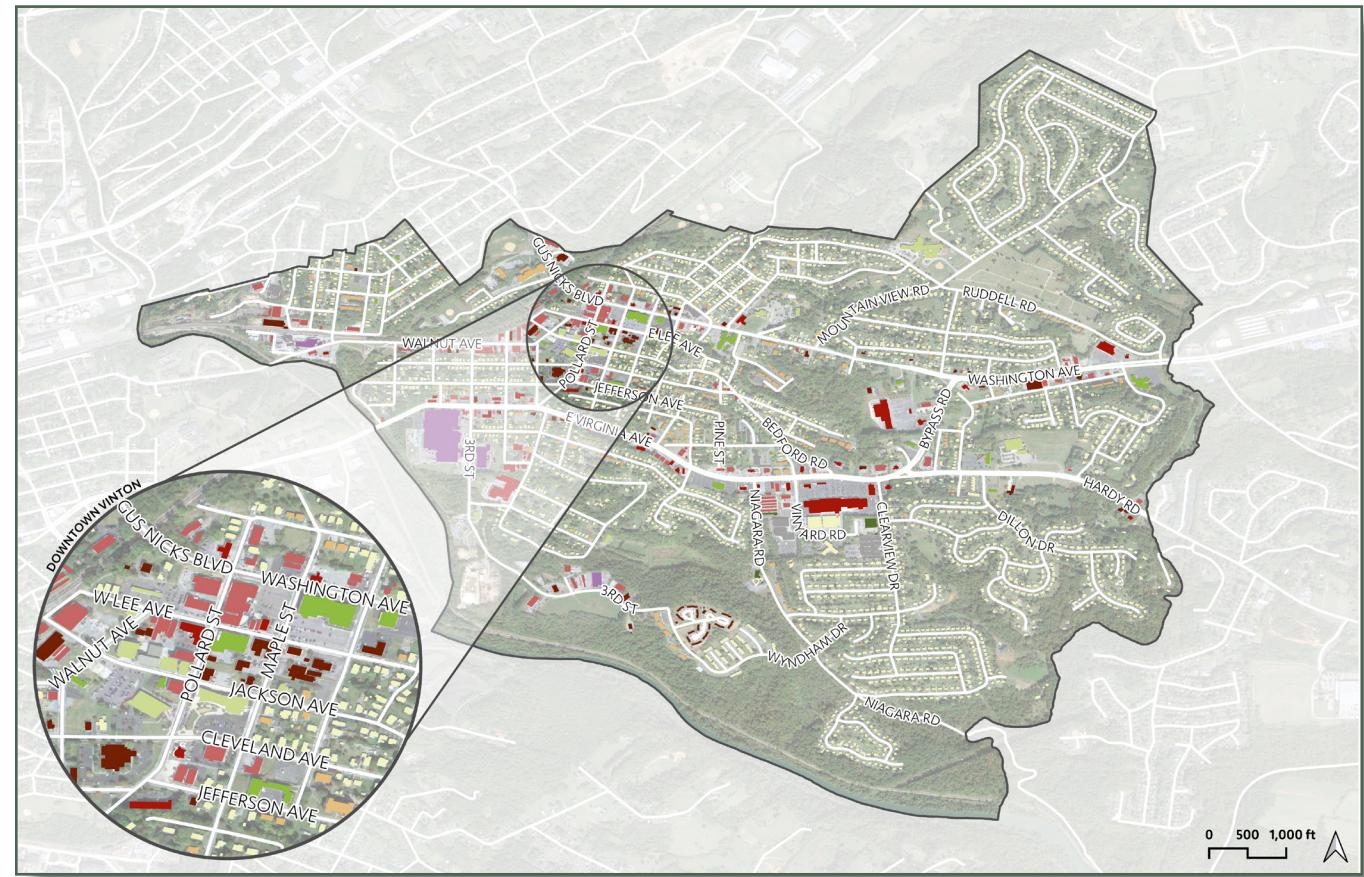


many of the Town's highest value parcels on a per acre basis, which means mixed use development is good for the Town's financial bottom line.

Mixed use development has also been proven to reduce vehicle travel by allowing for shorter trips and diverting vehicle trips to other modes of travel, such as walking. The land use by building footprint map shows the Town's pattern of land use mix, with the highest concentration of mixed use in the older, central parts of the Town.



## Land Use By Building Footprint Map

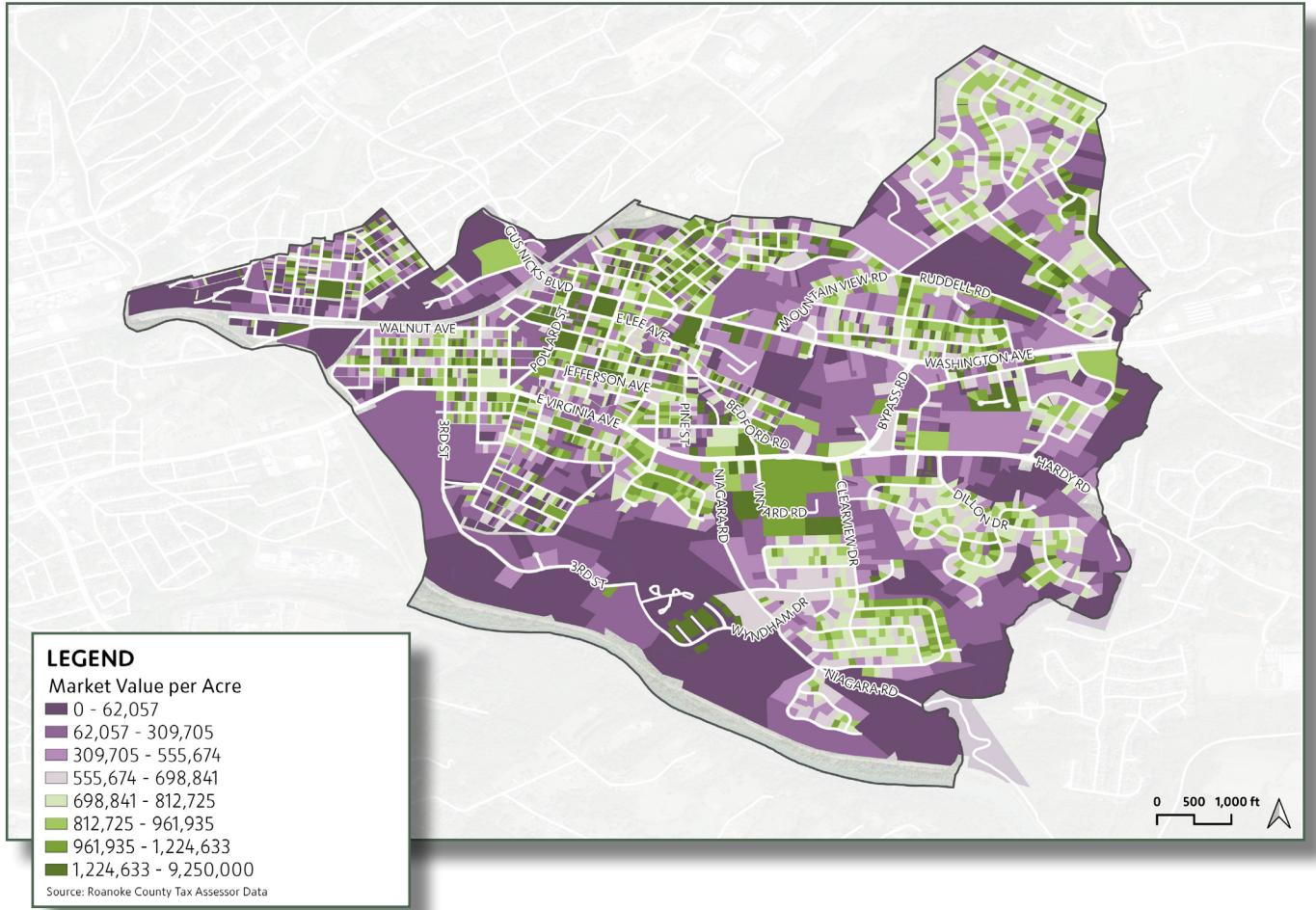


## MARKET VALUE PER ACRE

Mapping the Town's parcels on their value per acre is a useful way to study economic potential. This provides a simple way of comparing how productively land is used, regardless of the size of the parcels being compared. The map shows that the most economically productive land is in the downtown area, in terms of value and local tax revenue that is provided. This makes redevelopment of vacant, underutilized, or older properties in the downtown area especially important.

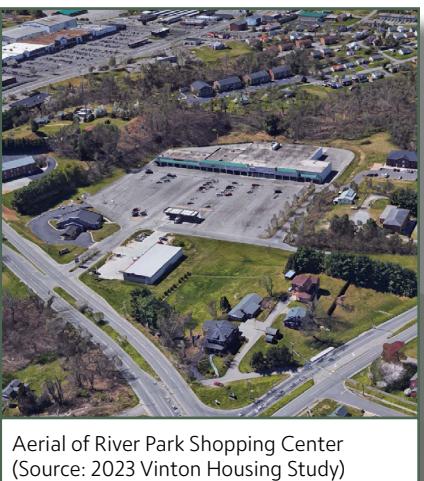
“There is a need for blending economic development and growth while maintaining sense of community”

## Market Value Per Acre Map

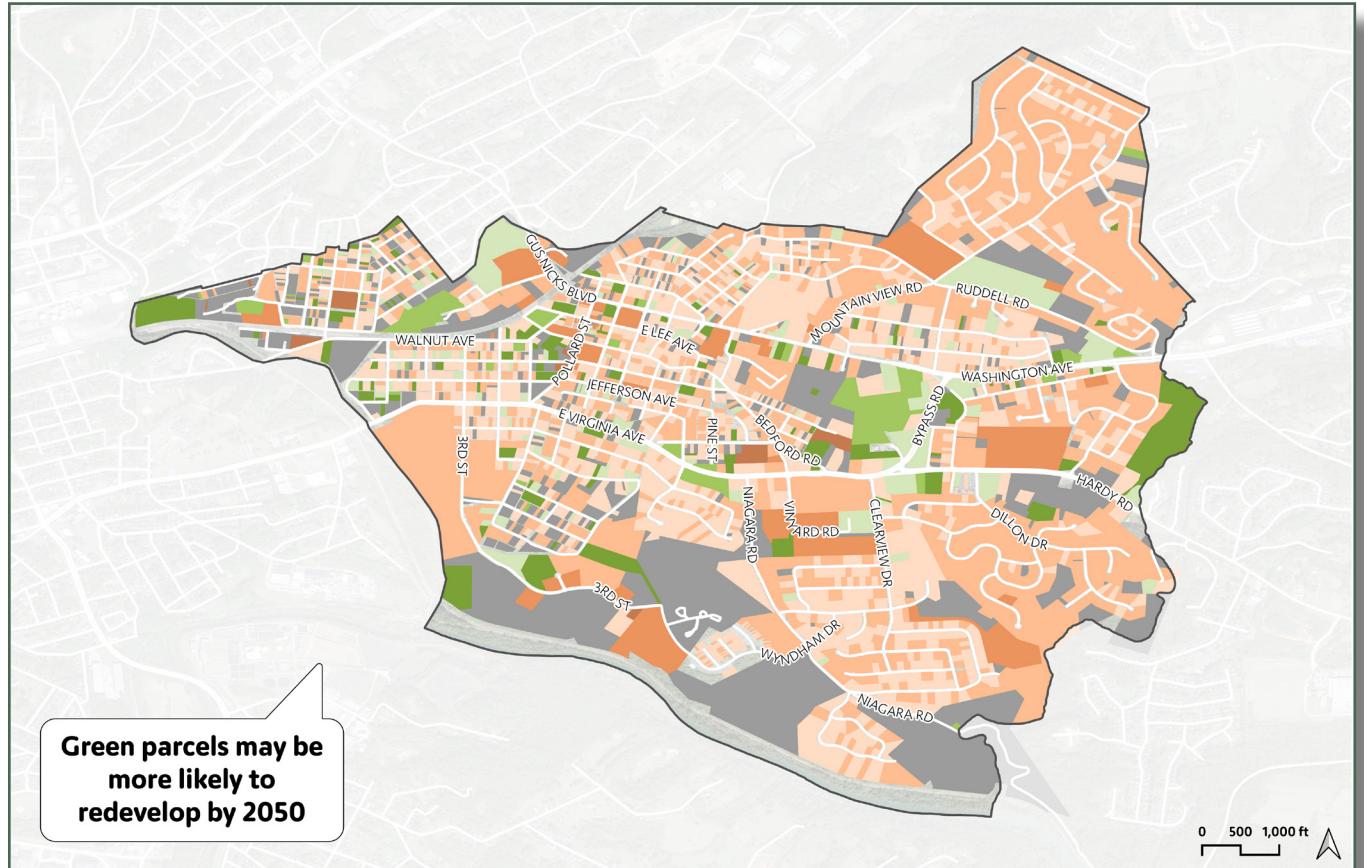


## REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The ratio between the value of a building and the value of the underlying land is a useful data point for estimating redevelopment potential. Properties where the buildings are worth less than the underlying land are more likely to see redevelopment by 2050. The map shows concentrations of properties with low building to land ratios concentrated in the residential and mixed-use neighborhoods close-in to downtown, and along the Town's commercial corridors.



## Building Value to Total Value Ratio



### LEGEND

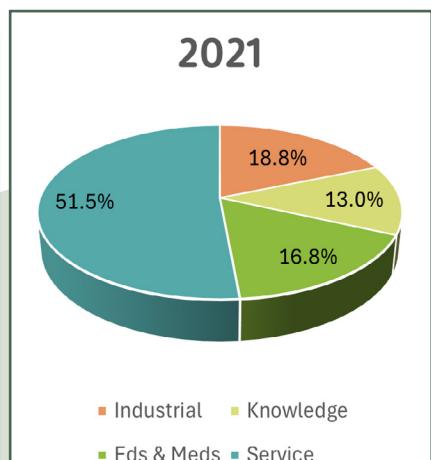
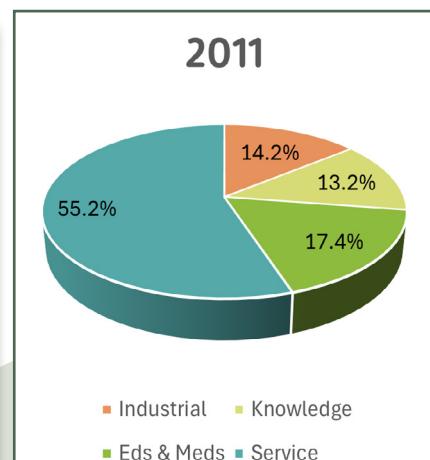
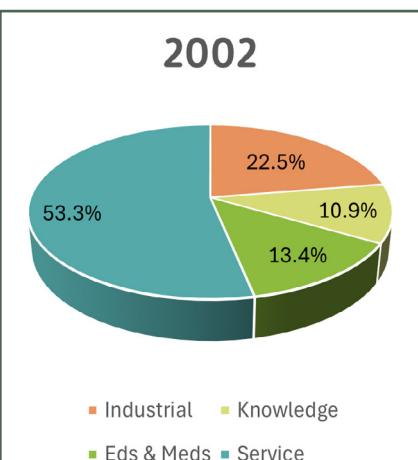
Building-to-Total Value

- Undeveloped
- Under 50%
- 50-60%
- 60-70%
- 70-80%
- 80-90%
- 90-95%
- 95%+

Source: Roanoke County Tax Assessor Data

## VINTON'S JOB BASE

Vinton's job growth has far outpaced its population and housing growth. There were 2,700 jobs in Vinton as of 2021, up about 10 percent from 2011 and up 25 percent from 2002. Despite an increase in jobs, the distribution of those jobs has remained about the same. The majority of jobs in Vinton are within the service sector, with retail trade and food/accommodation subcategories leading the way.



## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Income data from the United States Census Bureau paints a positive picture for Vinton. Vinton's household income increased more than 50 percent from 2012 to 2022, far outpacing its peers and becoming competitive with the region.

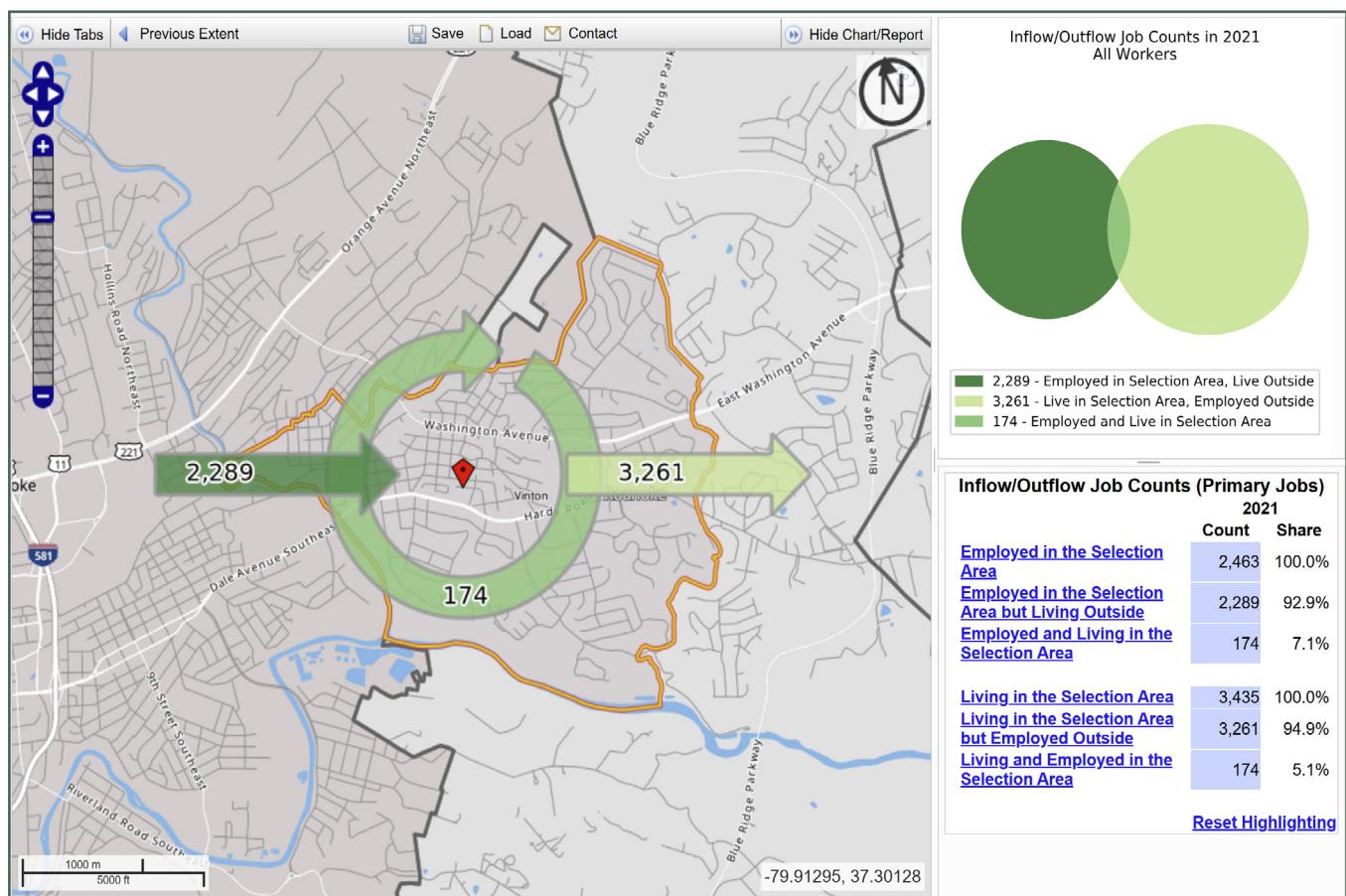


### HOUSEHOLD INCOME

| Median HH Income             | 2022            | 2017            | 2012            | 5-Year Change | 10-Year Change | Net Change      | CAGR        |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| <b>Vinton Town, Virginia</b> | <b>\$65,481</b> | <b>\$44,389</b> | <b>\$43,374</b> | <b>48%</b>    | <b>51%</b>     | <b>\$22,107</b> | <b>4.2%</b> |
| Roanoke County, Virginia     | \$80,872        | \$62,134        | \$61,686        | 30%           | 31%            | \$19,186        | 2.7%        |
| Roanoke, Va Metro Area       | \$65,687        | \$52,609        | \$49,264        | 25%           | 33%            | \$16,423        | 2.9%        |
| Roanoke City, Virginia       | \$51,523        | \$41,483        | \$38,265        | 24%           | 35%            | \$13,258        | 3.0%        |

## COMMUTING PATTERNS

Historically most employed people living in Vinton worked in Roanoke County, Salem, and Roanoke City. That trend is changing. Whereas a decade ago about 80 percent of the Town's working residents had jobs in one of those three communities, the figure from the U.S. Census Bureau was 66 percent in 2021. This may reflect longer commutes or more people working from home.



# HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

# HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

## NEEDS AT A GLANCE

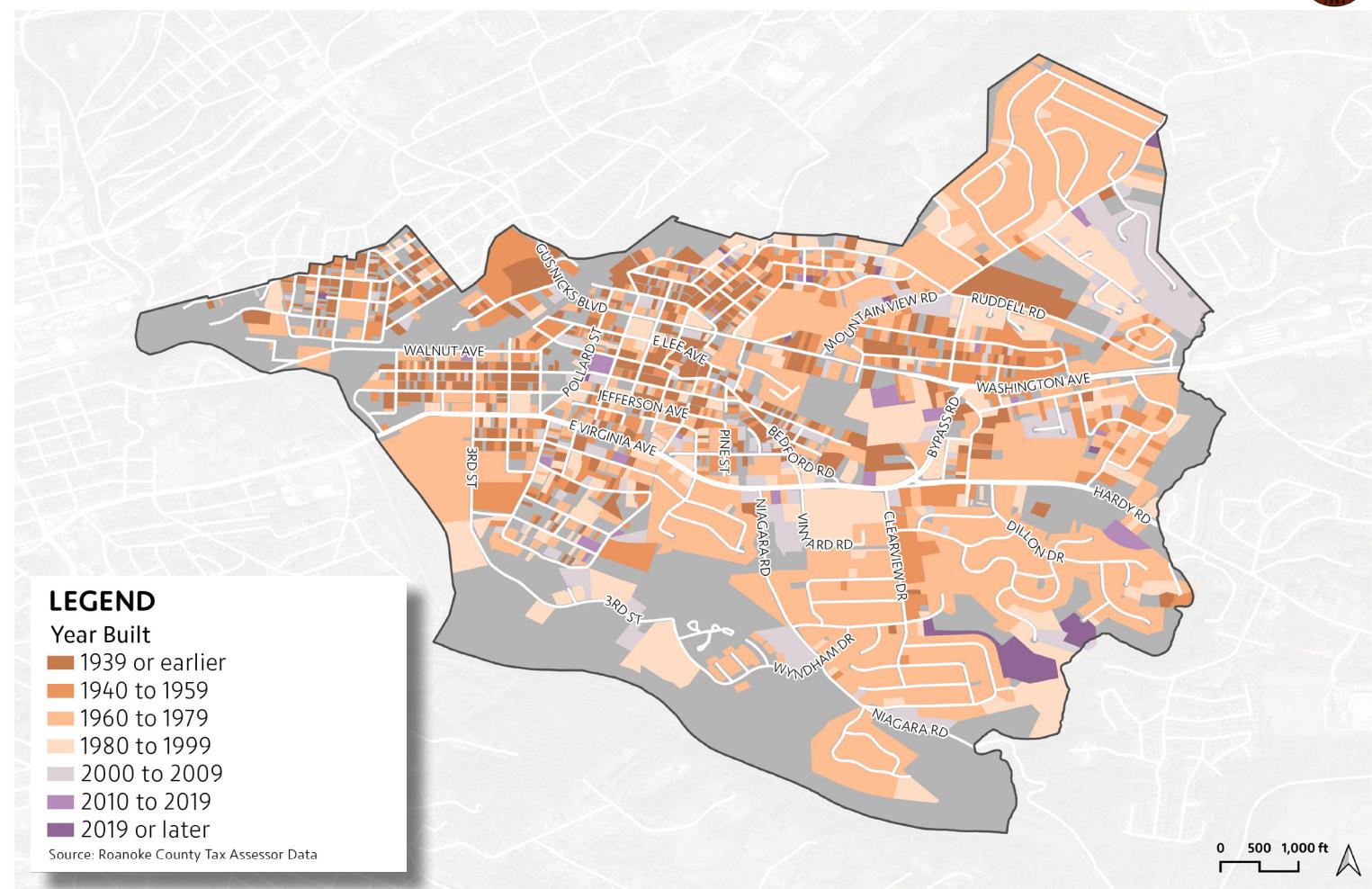
Nearly 90% of housing units in Vinton were built before 2000 which presents unique challenges for the community. An aging housing stock, combined with Vinton having very few undeveloped parcels, makes revitalizing existing neighborhoods essential. There is a need for upgrading infrastructure, improving housing options, and encouraging mixed-use development that fosters community engagement. Listed below are the top housing and neighborhood revitalization related needs based on data analysis, focus groups discussions, and community input:

## HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION NEEDS

- More Housing Units to Keep Up with Demand and Maintain Affordability** – Increasing the availability of housing units is crucial for meeting the growing demand and ensuring affordability in Vinton, particularly with a focus on housing options for an aging population, starter homes, and well-located housing for the Town's workforce. The zoning code should support diversity in housing options.
- Assistance for Housing Renovation in Vinton** – An aging housing stock presents livability challenges as older homes require renovation to meet modern standards and needs. Residents would benefit from financial support and resources such as Land Banks and low interest loans aimed at improving the overall quality of housing in Vinton.
- Comprehensive Regional Solutions for Homelessness** – The community survey identified a critical need for addressing homelessness. Working collaboratively with Roanoke County and City is needed to provide support to vulnerable populations.
- Better Gateways into Town from Roanoke City & County** – Vinton currently lacks effective wayfinding that distinguishes Vinton from its surroundings, leaving residents and visitors unable to differentiate the Town from the surrounding area. Establishing well-designed gateways and navigation infrastructure would help orient people in the space.
- Focused Strategy for Incentivizing Specific Housing Types in Appropriate Contexts** – With limited undeveloped parcels in Vinton, the Town needs to tailor their housing development efforts to meet the needs of the community and keep pace with housing demand.
- Reinforce Homeownership as a Wealth-Building Mechanism** – Building financial security is vital for economic development, highlighting the need to encourage residents to invest in their futures through homeownership.

A zoning code that supports diverse housing options is an important need.

## Community Needs Assessment | Building Age



## EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

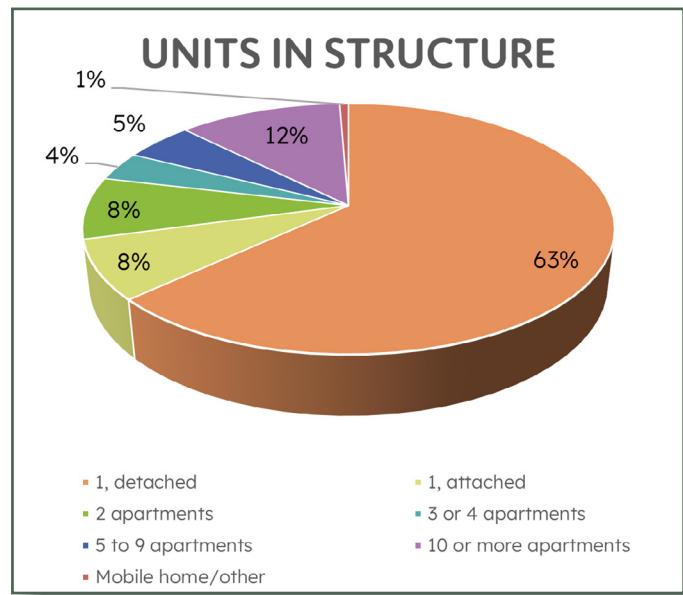
Housing and revitalization in Vinton is characterized by an aging housing stock and limited space for new development. As of 2022, there were 3,686 occupied housing units in the Town, with nearly 90% constructed before 2000s. The steady decline in residential building permits since 2008, coupled with a decreasing trend in renovation permits, indicates a slowdown in new construction and property improvements. Despite these trends, Vinton remains relatively affordable compared to the surrounding region, making it an attractive option for families and individuals alike. There is a need for ongoing maintenance and revitalization efforts to enhance the viability of the aging housing stock. Furthermore, with rising home prices in recent years, there is an increasing demand for diverse and affordable housing options that meet the needs of residents.

The following maps, tables, and charts provide an overview of the existing conditions related to Vinton's housing stock and the implications for community development and housing strategies.

### TYPES OF HOUSING

Housing in Vinton is primarily characterized by single-family homes, which account for approximately 70% of the total housing stock. This includes both attached and detached units. In contrast, multi-family housing, such as apartment complexes with ten or more units, makes up around 12% of the housing market.

Diversity in housing types caters to varying needs and preferences, providing options for families seeking single-family dwellings as well as individuals or smaller households looking for more affordable multi-family living arrangements. The variety of housing types in Vinton highlights the small-town, family-oriented lifestyle while also accommodating diversity in housing types.



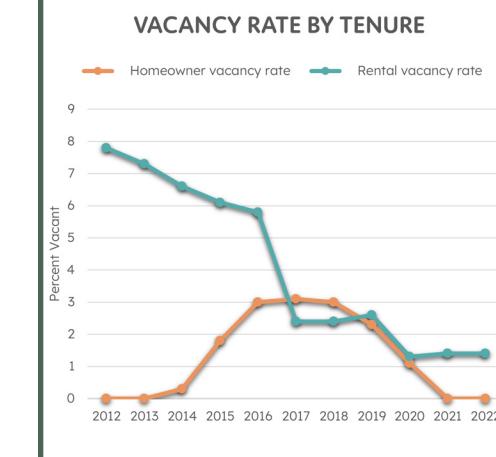
### HOUSEHOLD SIZE & HOUSING SIZE OVER TIME



**AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE**

|  | 2012 | 2017 | 2022 |
|--|------|------|------|
| Average Household Size of Owner-Occupied Unit  | 2.4  | 2.4  | 2.2  |
| Average Household Size of Renter-Occupied Unit | 2.1  | 2.2  | 2.0  |

Household sizes have been declining for years, affecting both owner-occupied and rented housing markets. This trend is evident in the County assessor data, which indicates that the average residential unit size is approximately 1,615 square feet. In contrast, the Realtor Data Center reveals that homes available for sale are generally larger, at or above 1,800 square feet over the past few years. This disparity highlights the evolving nature of housing demands and preferences.



### VACANCY RATE

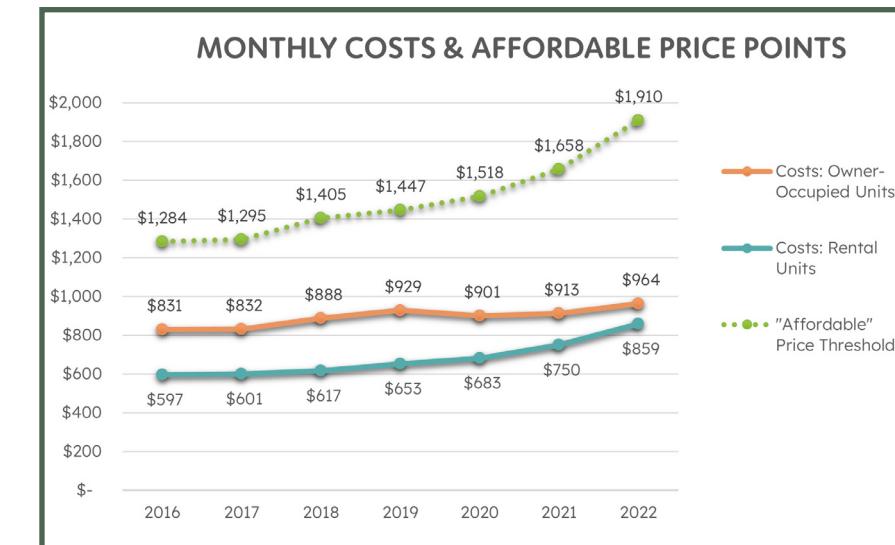
Occupancy rates are as high as they've been in a decade, with effectively no unoccupied units in the city.

### H+T COST BURDEN

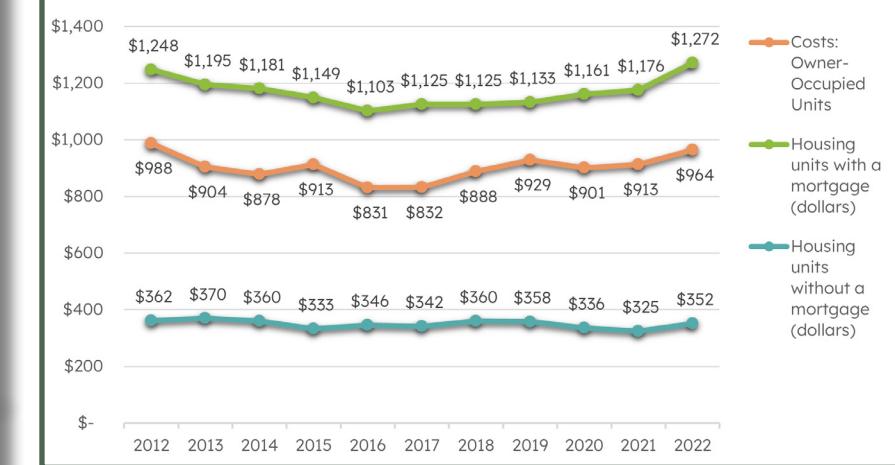
|              | 2022 |
|--------------|------|
| Vinton       | 37%  |
| Roanoke City | 47%  |
| Salem        | 41%  |

### AFFORDABILITY

The costs of home-ownership have been on the rise since the middle of the last decade, surpassing the levels seen in 2012 only recently. This increase in homeownership expenses has coincided with a rise in household incomes, which has reduced the number of cost-burdened households - those spending more than 30% of their income on housing. This shift indicates improved housing affordability for some of the population, despite the ongoing challenges posed by rising home prices.

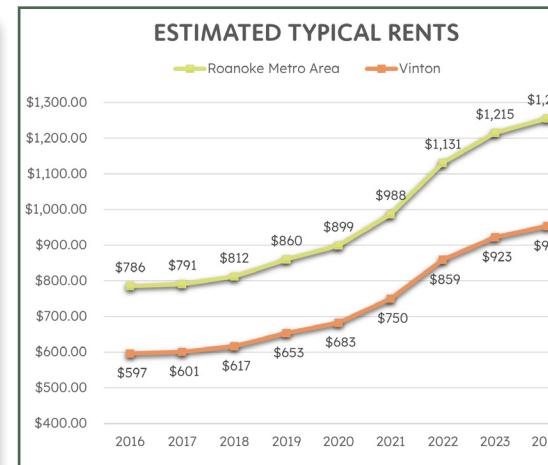
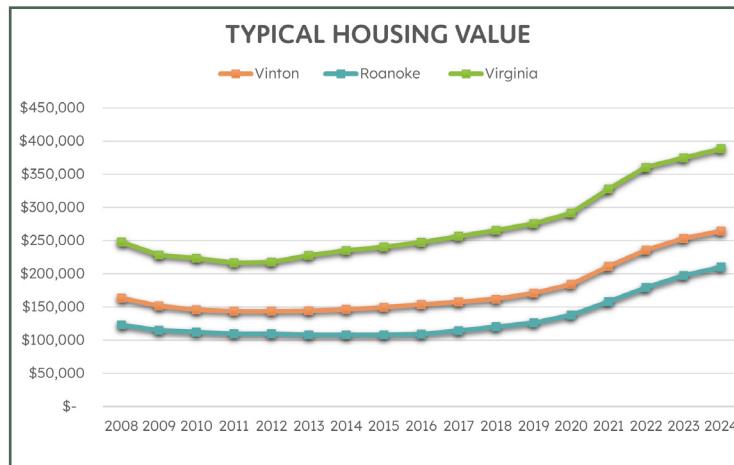


### MEDIAN SELECTED OWNER COSTS



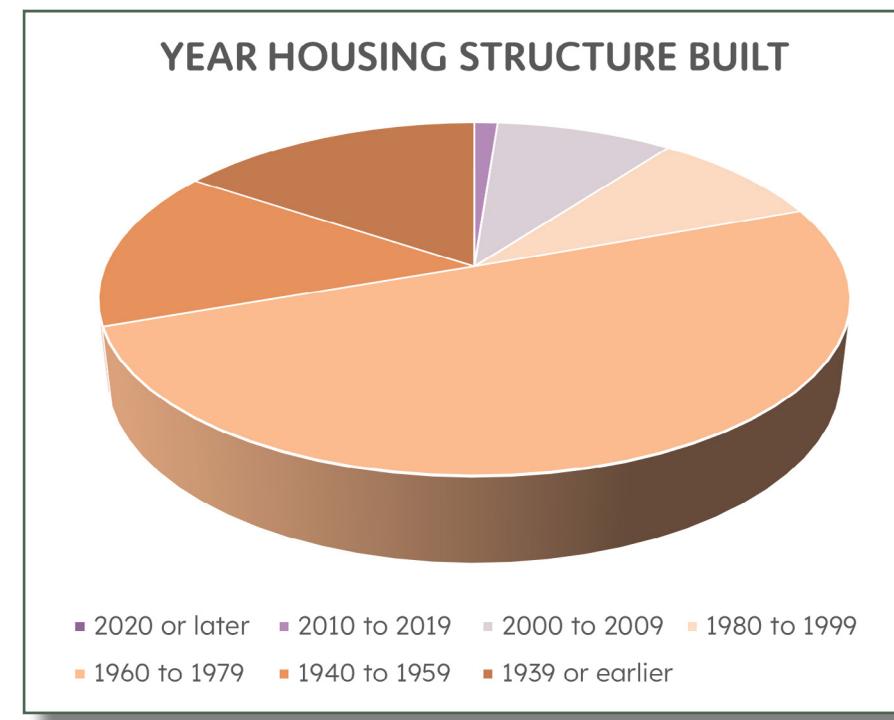
## HOUSING PRICES AND ASKING RENTS

Housing prices have been steadily rising since 2016, with Vinton's latest typical home price reported by Zillow at approximately \$264,000. This represents an increase of over \$100,000 in seven years. Prices are slightly behind the Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), but growth has been similar. While Vinton's prices lag slightly behind those of the Roanoke MSA, the growth rates have been comparable. Notably, both Vinton and Roanoke remain significantly below the overall prices in Virginia. Currently, equivalent data does not exist for rental prices in Vinton, however, rental data from Roanoke MSA points to an estimated current average rent of about \$950/month in Vinton.



## BUILDING AGE

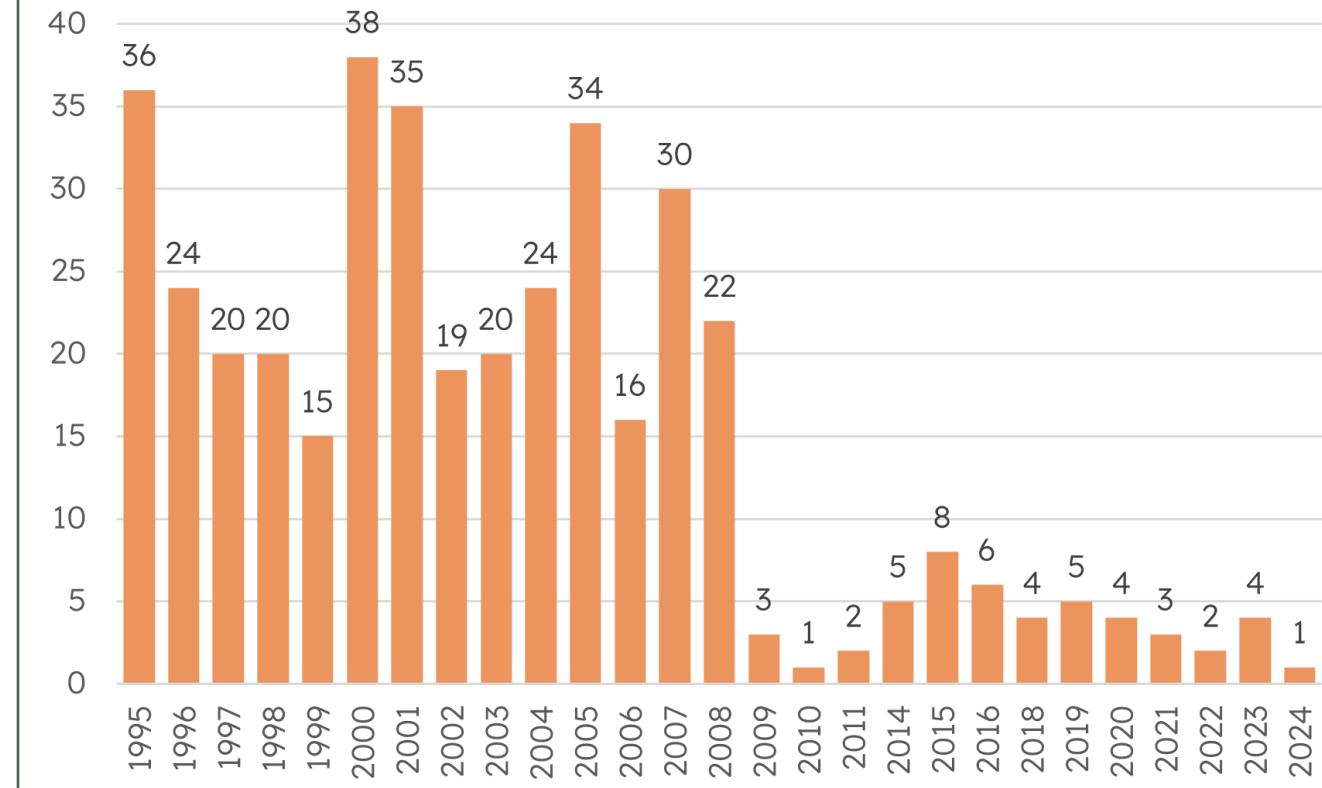
As of 2022, Vinton had a total of 3,686 occupied housing units, with 89.3% of these units being constructed prior to 2000. Approximately 80% of all housing units in the Town are forty years or older. These data highlight the need for ongoing maintenance and revitalization efforts to ensure the continued viability and appeal of these older properties. An aging housing stock presents opportunities for the Town to support enhancing the overall quality of housing in Vinton.



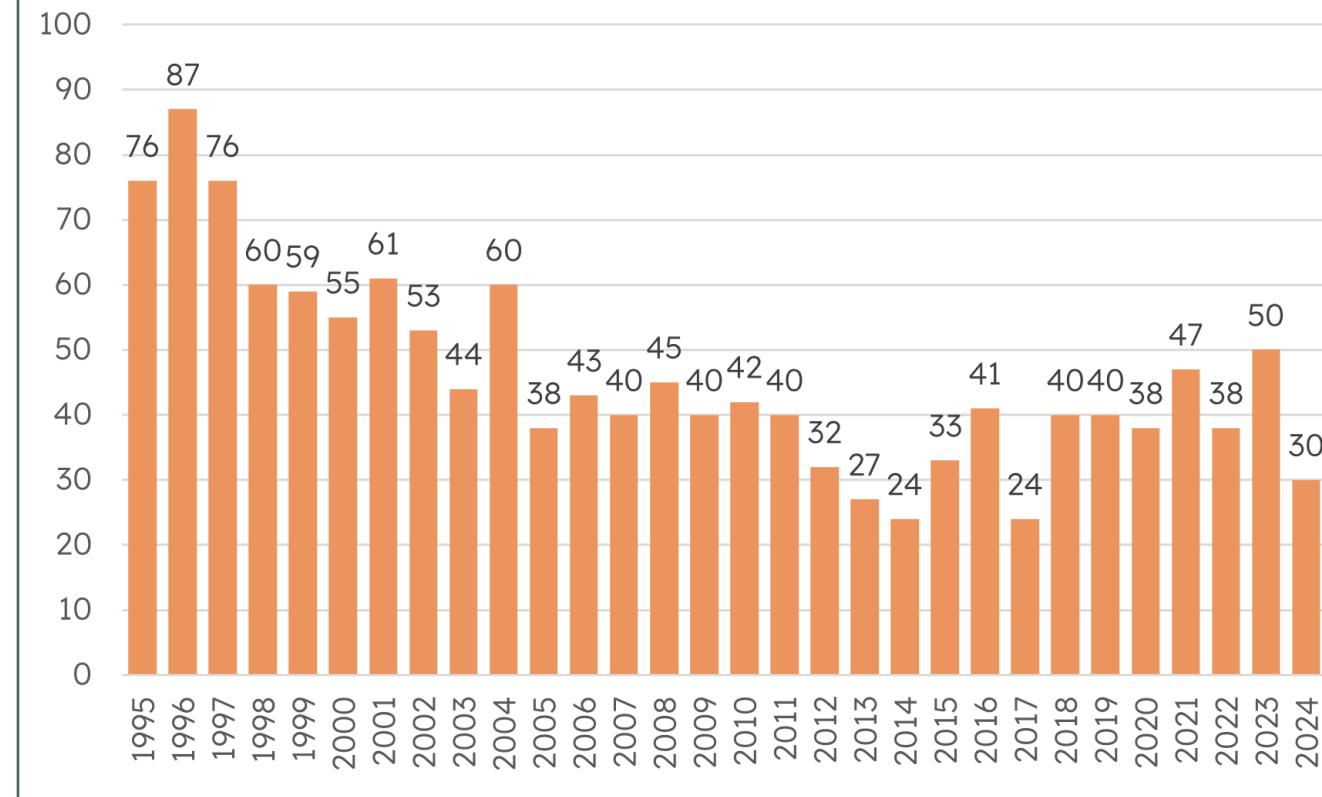
## HOUSING PERMITS

Since 2008, the number of residential building permits issued in Vinton has steadily declined, with two permits issued in 2022 and four permits issued in 2023. This decrease reflects a broader trend in the housing market and may be attributed to economic conditions and changing housing demands. Similarly, there has been a steady decline in residential renovation permits. The combination of these downward trends in housing permits raises concerns about Vinton's existing housing stock and points to a need for revitalization efforts.

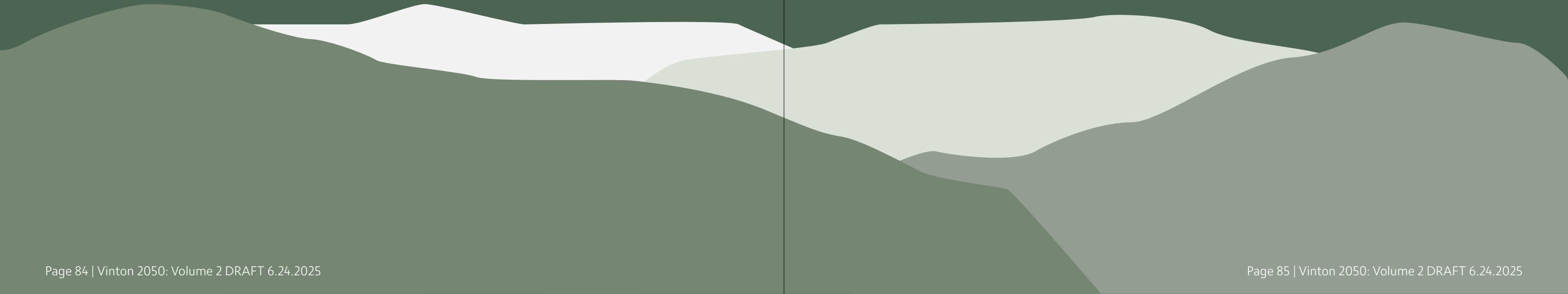
## RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS BY YEAR



## RESIDENTIAL RENOVATION PERMITS BY YEAR



# COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES



# COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

## NEEDS AT A GLANCE

Vinton's residents receive essential services from multiple entities including the Town of Vinton, Roanoke County, the Western Virginia Water Authority, and Valley Metro. These entities collaborate to manage key community facilities and provide Vinton residents with schools, parks, library, police, fire and rescue, public transportation, street maintenance, water and sanitary sewer, and more.

While the community survey indicated a generally favorable public view of these services and community facilities, there are needs for the Town and its partners to address. Listed below are the top community facility and service related needs based on data analysis, focus groups discussions, and community input:

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES NEEDS

### Future Planning for Schools

- Increased capacity at the schools to handle growth.
- Safer and more efficient drop-off and circulation patterns at the elementary schools.
- More outreach and connection to essential services for the growing population of new English learners enrolled in the local schools.

### Future Planning for Facilities

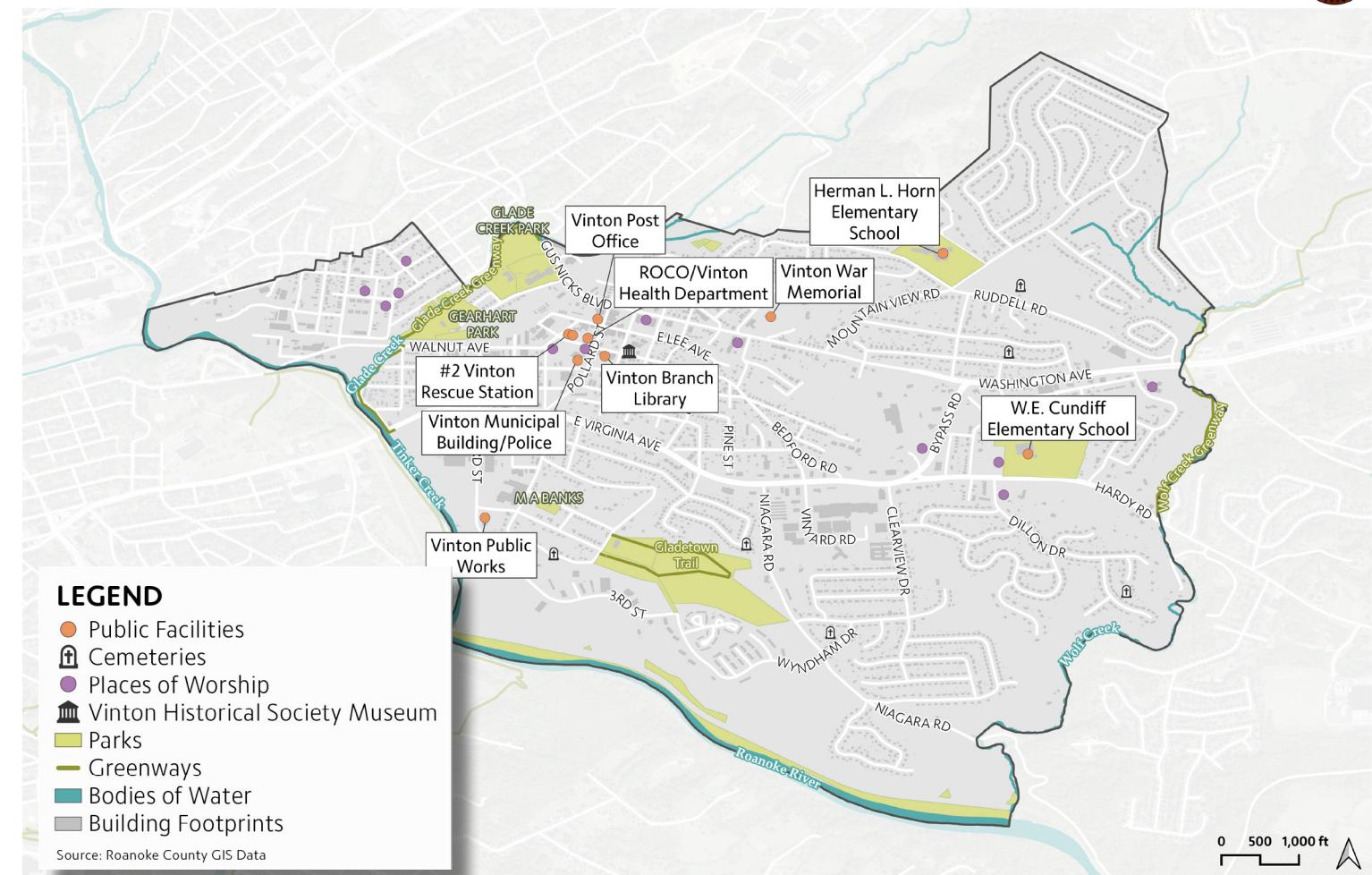
- Renovations are needed for existing Town facilities including the Charles R. Hill Community Center.
- Maintenance strategy for new Town facilities, such as greenways, bathrooms, and parks.
- Master planning for Town-owned properties, especially in the downtown area and around the War Memorial.
- Consideration of a centrally located fire and rescue station to serve both Vinton and the eastern portions of Roanoke County, where growth is expected.
- Expanded police station.

### Future Planning for Services

- Connecting the entire Town to the regional water supply from Carvins Cove to increase water pressure for fire hydrants and improve water quality.
- Preparation for increased emergency call volume from an aging population.
- Preparation for "forever chemical" regulation that may affect the landfill and increase costs for solid waste management.
- Litter management and reduction especially from commercial properties near waterways.

Maintaining the Town's existing facilities is an ongoing need.

## Community Needs Assessment | Community Facilities



## WHAT WE HEARD

The senior center needs a complete renovation.

“

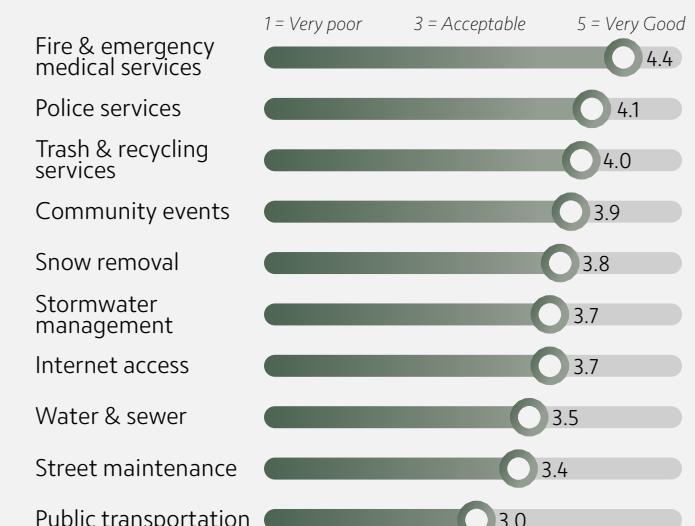
I would love to see more vendors and variety at the Farmers' Market. It's such a great space!

“

Larger containers to collect a larger variety of recyclables.

“

Vinton's residents rated several community services on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). The results of the survey are listed below by order of their rating. No service rated below a 3.0, which is "acceptable":



Vinton's residents also rated community facilities on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). The results of the survey are listed below by order of their rating. The only facilities to rate below a 3.0, which is the level for "acceptable," were sidewalks and bicycle facilities:



## EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

Vinton's services and facilities received generally favorable marks from the public through a community survey in September of 2024. However, there are several needs and issues to address by 2050. Some of these issues are the result of aging facilities and infrastructure, while others are the result of anticipated growth in the community and adjacent areas of the County.

Ownership and management of the services and facilities used by Town residents is important. The Town provides a portion of the services and facilities, while the County and regional authorities provide others. The table below shows who owns and manages the key services and facilities.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES**



| Service   | Provider                         |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Planning &amp; Zoning</b>  | Town of Vinton                   |
| <b>Police</b>   | Town of Vinton                   |
| <b>Public Works:</b><br>Refuse & Recycling Collection<br>Stormwater System Maintenance<br>Street Maintenance & Snow Removal | Town of Vinton                   |
| <b>War Memorial/Charles R. Hill Community Center/Farmers' Market</b>  | Town of Vinton                   |
| <b>Fire &amp; Emergency Medical Services</b>  | Roanoke County                   |
| <b>Health Department</b>  | State of Virginia                |
| <b>Library</b>  | Roanoke County                   |
| <b>Parks</b>  | Roanoke County                   |
| <b>Schools</b>  | Roanoke County                   |
| <b>Social Services</b>  | Roanoke County                   |
| <b>Public Transportation</b>  | Valley Metro                     |
| <b>Water &amp; Sewer</b>  | Western Virginia Water Authority |

Source: Town of Vinton and Roanoke County Data

## POLICE, FIRE, AND RESCUE

The Town provides police services while the County handles fire and rescue, supported by a volunteer First Aid Crew managed by the Town.

- The Vinton Police Department has 27 staff. The department handled more than 15,000 calls for service in 2023, a total that has been increasing each year since 2020.
- The Roanoke County Fire/Rescue Department has 18 staff assigned to Vinton. The station is staffed 24 hours per day. The department makes more than 3,000 runs per year from the Vinton Station.
- The Vinton First Aid Crew is a volunteer team that supplements the career staff of the County Fire/Rescue Department. It has a minimum staff of 2 people at all times.

Vinton's first fire department was established in 1929 as an all-volunteer unit. The volunteer Vinton First Aid Crew followed in 1939. Today the County operates the fire and rescue station in downtown Vinton with a career staff. The downtown station is 26,582 square feet and was built in 1977 and renovated in 2006.

Response times from the Vinton Station are the second fastest of the County's 12 stations, at 7.8 minutes on average. The Vinton Station handles more than 3,000 calls for emergency medical services annually. The County's plans call for maintaining the staffing levels at the Vinton Station for fire response but adding another medic unit supported by six additional staff by 2038.

A 2023 study of the County's Fire and Rescue Department found the Vinton Station to be the most resilient in the County, measured by its ability to "quickly recover from an incident or event, or to adjust easily to changing needs or requirements."<sup>1</sup> The presence of a station in the heart of Vinton is a benefit to the Town's residents and businesses.

Among the key issues shared by staff from the Town's Police Department and First Aid Crew, and the County's Fire and Rescue Department are:

- Roanoke County's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2024, anticipates growth in the eastern portion of the County, especially along Hardy Road east of Vinton. This raises a potential need for another fire and rescue station in the area or moving the existing station out of downtown Vinton to a more central location within the Town.
- The fire department's greatest concern is water pressure in parts of the Town. The downtown area has sufficient water flow for fire protection from hydrants, but pressure is insufficient in areas east of the Vinton War Memorial. The ideal water flow is at least 500 to 800 gallons per minute. Higher density development in areas below this threshold should not be permitted until the pressure is increased by moving to the regional Carvins Cover water supply. A project to move all customers to the regional water supply is in progress.
- The Town's aging population creates greater demand for more EMS services, but not necessarily more police calls. This needs to be considered in planning for future services.
- The Police Department is at capacity within Town Hall and a larger space may be needed.

## SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT



New garbage truck purchased by the Town in 2024

The Roanoke Valley Resource Authority (RVRA) serves the Town of Vinton and other local governments in the Roanoke Valley region. A four-person team from the Town of Vinton picks up solid waste weekly at the curbside. Solid waste is transported to the Tinker Creek Transfer Station in the City of Roanoke. From there it is hauled to the Smith Gap Regional Landfill in western Roanoke County. The RVRA owns and manages the 950-acre landfill site. The Town picks up recycling every two weeks and transports it to a service provider that processes it.

<sup>1</sup>Roanoke County Fire and Rescue. "Assessment of Facilities, Personnel, and Apparatus." August 2023.

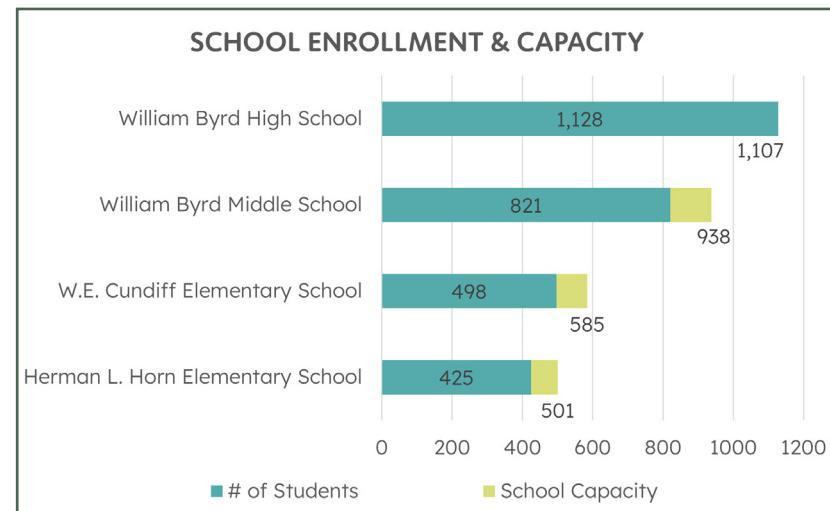
Among the key issues shared by the Roanoke Valley Resource Authority (RVRA) are the following:

- There is a member use agreement with localities, including Vinton, which allows the landfill to receive up to 330,000 tons of solid waste per year. The localities send about 320,000 tons as of 2024, so there is limited room to grow the amount of waste that gets sent to the landfill without amending the member use agreements.
- The RVRA anticipates that the United States Environmental Protection Agency will regulate PFAS or “forever chemicals” by 2030. The regulations may require the Resource Authority to separate PFAS from leachate before it is sent to the wastewater treatment plant, which would require significant investment from the RVRA. This will likely increase the landfill’s costs and subsequently the tipping fees assessed to localities, including Vinton.
- There is a need to prevent litter from entering water bodies and stormwater best management practices (BMPs), where it can pollute water and contribute to plastic buildup in water bodies.

## SCHOOLS

School quality has been among the attractive qualities of Vinton. Children living in the Town of Vinton attend either W.E. Cundiff Elementary School or Herman L. Horn Elementary School before moving on to William Byrd Middle School and William Byrd High School. Each of these schools performs at or above the state standards for academic achievement, achievement gaps, and student engagement and outcomes.

The two elementary schools are located within the Town, while the middle and high schools are just east of the Town off Washington Avenue in Roanoke County. Enrollment for each school during the 2023-24 school year is listed below. The source of school capacity is the Roanoke County Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2024.



The elementary schools have limited capacity. An increase in population may require increased capacity within the elementary schools. Herman L. Horn was last renovated in 2004 and is not in the County’s plans for upgrades. W.E. Cundiff will undergo a renovation starting in 2024, but it will not increase capacity. The high school capacity is an existing constraint. However, several schools within the County system have available capacity, so there may be opportunities beyond school expansion to meet future demands.

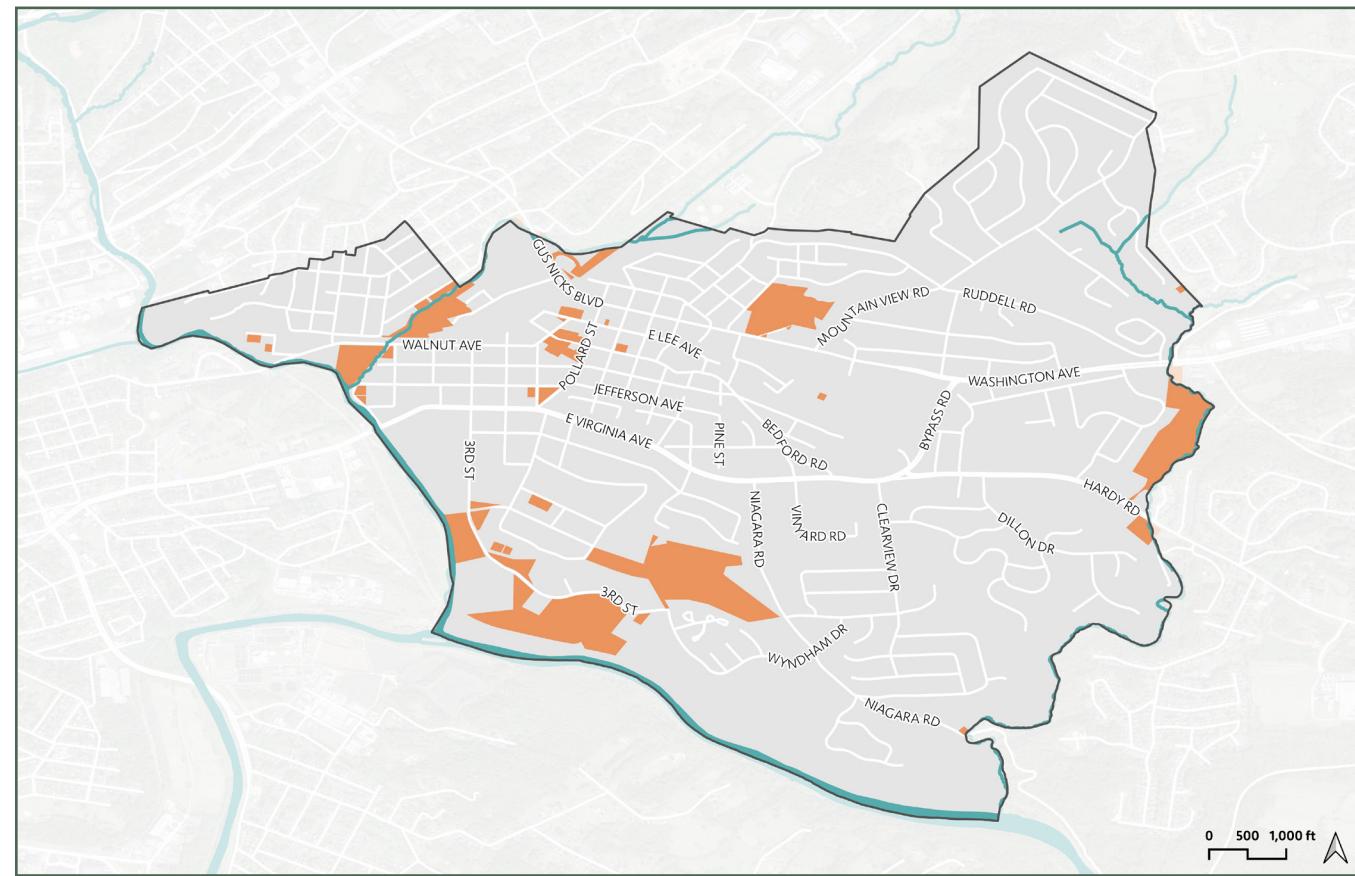
Among the key concerns shared by leadership of the Town’s elementary schools are the following:

- Elementary and high school classrooms are nearing capacity, and additional space may be needed in the future as Vinton grows.
- Schools have seen a large rise in new English learners and some of their families need assistance with accessing basic needs, such as healthcare.
- The student population needs more options for summer activities and more playgrounds.
- Pedestrian access and traffic congestion are concerns at both elementary schools. The lack of sidewalks and difficult crossing conditions of major roads make it difficult to reach the schools safely on foot. Meanwhile traffic backups from parents or guardians dropping off children creates intermittent congestion and safety concerns on streets near the schools.

## TOWN BUILDINGS/PROPERTIES

Vinton owns and maintains several buildings and properties around the Town including the Vinton War Memorial, Charles R. Hill Community Center, Vinton Farmers’ Market, and Vinton Municipal Building. The Town-owned properties are concentrated in the downtown area, around the War Memorial, and around the Public Works facility on the south side of Town. Most properties are adequately serving their intended purpose, although storage capacity is a concern.

### Town Owned Properties



The Vinton Library is an especially popular public space. The Roanoke County Public Library owns and maintains the Vinton branch, which is 21,820 square feet and was built in 2015. The role of the libraries has been changing across the country and the Vinton Library has adapted its programs to evolve into more of a community space. The Vinton Community Connection program is a good example of this shift. The program connects older adults in the community through a weekly Friday program, helping address what has been called the “loneliness epidemic.”

Among the key concerns shared by Town and County staff about buildings and properties are the following:

- The War Memorial is about to undergo renovations, but the Charles R. Hill Community Center also needs to be renovated and the police department needs more space. Maintaining the Town’s existing facilities is an ongoing need.
- The Town owns property in two significant nodes – downtown and about 11 acres around the War Memorial/Charles R. Hill Community Center areas. Both areas would benefit from detailed master planning to maximize their potential.
- The Farmers’ Market is somewhat underutilized and would benefit from more vendors.

- Vinton owns the W Jackson Avenue site where the Roanoke County Fire and Rescue Station 2 is located. Access and egress from the site for large trucks can be challenging, and with growth in the Town and East County, a more centrally-located station may be beneficial. Relocation of the station would allow the Town to repurpose the existing site for mixed-use development that enhances downtown vitality.
- Storage is a need across nearly all Town departments. A potential solution is to use space at Gearhart Park for storage of equipment once Roanoke County's lease on the site ends.
- The Town is investing in new bathrooms at the Wolf Creek Greenway and a new park facility behind the Vinton War Memorial (Multi-Generational Park). As the facilities expand, the maintenance needs will grow. Additional maintenance staff within the public works or buildings and grounds departments may be needed. Another options would be to create a park and recreation department within the Town.
- The Vinton Library is offering more educational and social programs that cement its role as a community center for the Town. However, there is still a gap in programs for teens. The Library would like to create more space geared towards teens within the building.



# STORMWATER, WATER, & SEWER

# STORMWATER, WATER, & SANITARY SEWER

## NEEDS AT A GLANCE

The Town's water resources are vital to life. Stormwater management, drinking water and wastewater management, and environmental protection of the Town's waterways are all important for Vinton's future. Listed below are the top water-related needs based on data analysis, focus groups discussions, and community input:

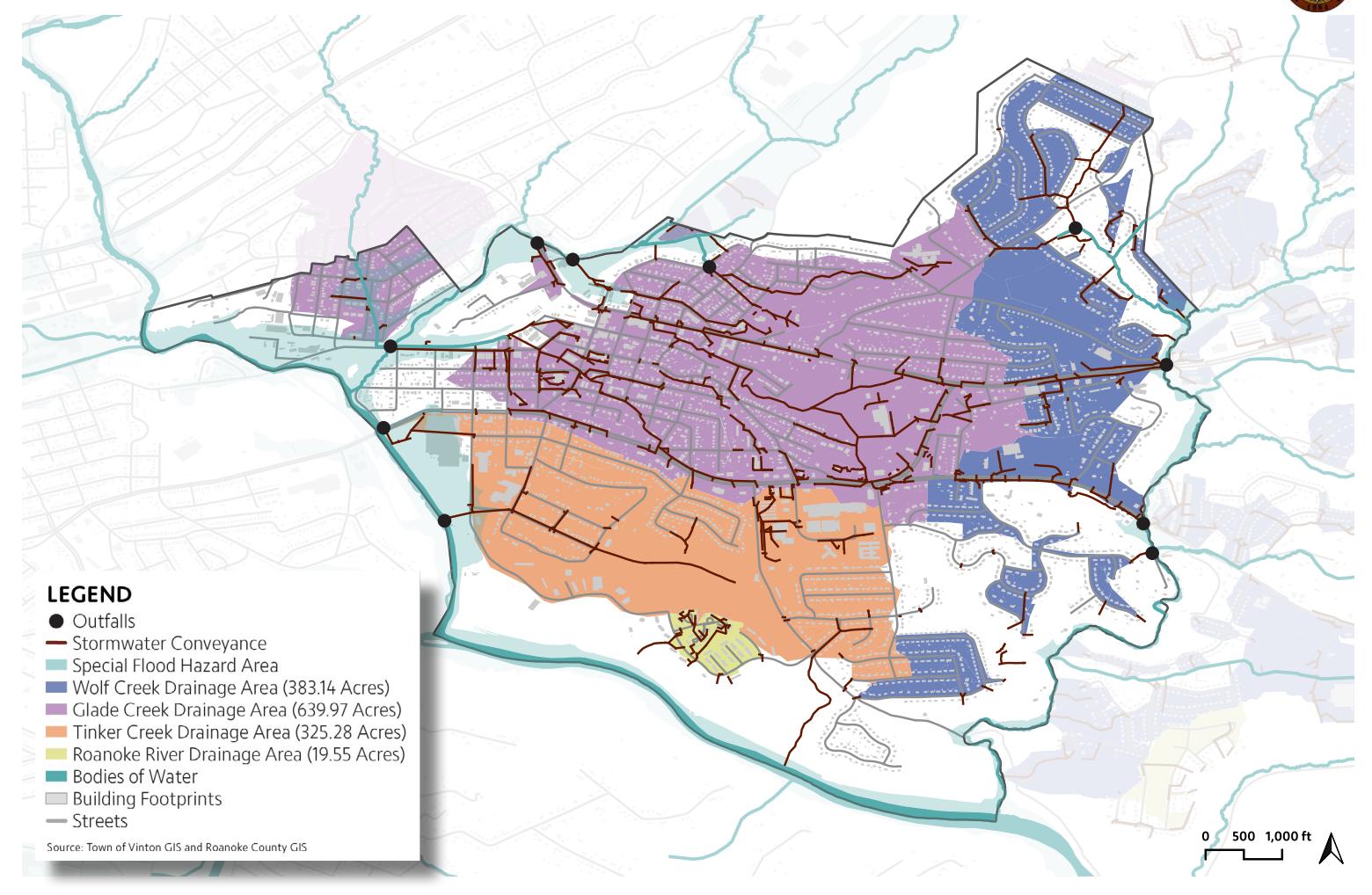
## STORMWATER NEEDS

- Stormwater System Data** – The Town needs more extensive and reliable data on the existing stormwater system in order to effectively plan for future storms and to pinpoint the most vulnerable components of the system.
- Increase System Capacity** – Portions of Vinton's stormwater system need to be upgraded to handle higher peak flows caused by more intense storms.
- Connect Stormwater Improvements with Community Goals to Obtain Co-Benefits** – Stormwater management should contribute to and be integrated with other community goals, such as improving water quality, providing more parks, and revitalizing downtown.

## WATER & SANITARY SEWER NEEDS

- Move Entire Town to Regional Water Supply** – The eastern two-thirds of Vinton need to move to the regional water supply to address concerns with water pressure and quality.
- Align Sewer Improvements with Growth Areas** – As the Western Virginia Water Authority continues work on its sewer master plan, the Town should coordinate with the Authority to ensure that growth areas are prioritized for sewer improvements.

## Community Needs Assessment | Stormwater System By Drainage Area



## WHAT WE HEARD

Trees are an important part of stormwater management; one tree alone can capture thousands of gallons of water each year!<sup>1</sup>

Fix and maintain pipes on water/drainage easements in neighborhoods.

Trash getting into stormwater BMPs and creeks has been a concern.

It seems like the waterline system is outdated and in constant need of repair.

“

“

“

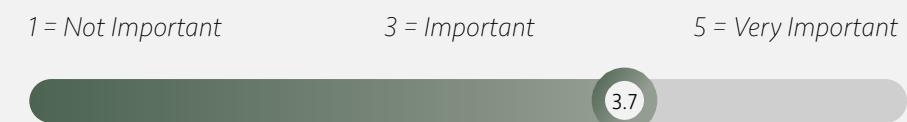
## VINTON'S RESIDENTS RATED STORMWATER, WATER, & SEWER SERVICES:

1 = Not Important

3 = Important

5 = Very Important

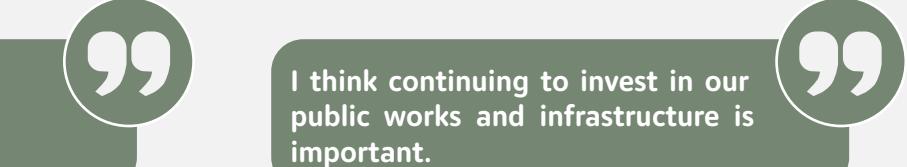
Stormwater management & maintenance



Water & Sewer



Improve water quality.



<sup>1</sup> Green Infrastructure Center - Trees and Stormwater (gicinc.org)



## EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

Water takes many forms in Vinton from running downhill in one of the Town's tributaries to the Roanoke River, draining to a stormwater pipe, flowing to our homes and businesses, and moving to the wastewater treatment plan. While each of these water resources has its own unique needs, it is important to recognize that water resources are connected and an issue with one will often affect the others.

Vinton's stormwater system contains about 950 outfalls, storm drains, and other structures, more than 20 miles of piping, and approximately 10 miles of conveyance channels. Vinton has four watersheds: Glade Creek, Tinker Creek Lower, Wolf Creek, and Roanoke River. Watersheds are land areas that channel stormwater and snowmelt to streams and rivers. The Glade Creek watershed is the largest by land area in Vinton.

More effective stormwater management is among the Town's greatest needs. The Roanoke Valley region is expected to face increasingly severe and frequent storms during the life of this Comprehensive Plan.<sup>1</sup> Vinton's stormwater system is aging and not equipped to handle the increased demands from severe storms.

Unlike stormwater, water and sewer service are now the responsibility of the Western Virginia Water Authority. Water pressure and quality are concerns in Vinton. Sewer service is available throughout the Town, but there are issues with aging pipes and stormwater intrusion of the sanitary sewer system. These issues contributed to a failed pipe on Niagara Road in 2024 that led to a lengthy road closure. Maintenance and upgrades to these systems are also vital.

## FORECAST FOR HEAVIER RAIN EVENTS

Communities in the Mid-Atlantic region should prepare for heavy rain events to increase by as much as 35% by 2050.<sup>2</sup> Virginia state code requires stormwater systems to convey a once every 10 years storm without flooding.<sup>3</sup> As the frequency and intensity of severe storms increases, Vinton needs to increase the capacity of its stormwater system to handle these increased flows. Older pipes were not built to handle current and predicted levels of rainfall. Even today major rain events can overwhelm Vinton's stormwater system causing problems such as sinkholes, broken pipes, washed out roadways, intrusion into the sanitary sewer system, and erosion and degradation of the Town's waterways.



## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AND IMPERVIOUS LAND COVER

The Town's stormwater conveyances have been installed over many decades, with varying methods and materials for conveying stormwater, and under differing regulatory and engineering standards. The age of

the system also means data are lacking, especially for older pipes and components. The most urgent need is to gather data on the system. This will enable the Town to model the more severe storms that are expected in the future and pinpoint which components in the system are most likely to fail. These data will feed into a more effective capital improvement program and allow the Town to identify the resources it will need to upgrade the system.

### Increase System Capacity

Even without complete data, it is known that portions of Vinton's stormwater system need to be updated to handle higher peak flows caused by more intense storms. Higher peak flows can result in erosion at outfalls to streams and in open channels. Pipes that are not designed for higher peak flows will be put under pressure and can cause additional problems such as surcharging (backups) and premature joint failure. These issues create unforeseen costs for the Town and can damage other vital infrastructure, such as streets.

### Connect Stormwater Improvements with Community Goals to Obtain Co-Benefits

Stormwater management should not be isolated from other community goals, such as improving water quality, providing more parks, and revitalizing downtown. Stormwater projects can contribute to each of these goals. Green infrastructure such as bioswales and rain gardens can provide flood protection and better groundwater recharge while also providing benefits to the larger community, including shade to mitigate heat island effects, increased biodiversity, enhanced value of downtown properties, and educational opportunities. Trees are also a critical component to stormwater management. Research from the Green Infrastructure Center shows that just one urban tree is able to capture thousands of gallons of stormwater each year.<sup>4</sup>

### Move Entire Town to Regional Water Supply

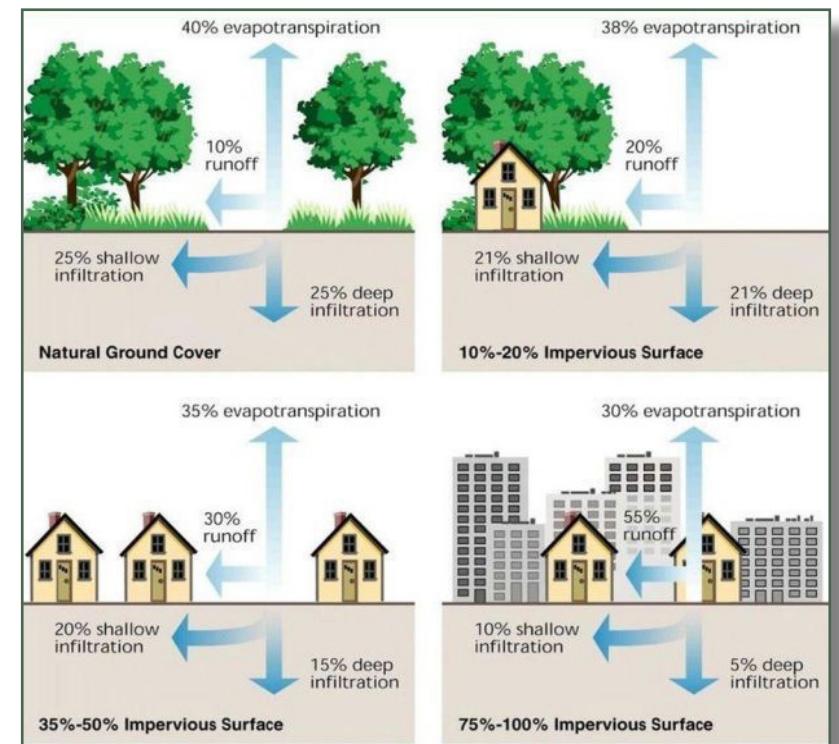
Water pressure is low in parts of Vinton, especially the eastern two-thirds of the Town. This limits some types of development, such as multifamily housing and commercial. The Western Virginia Water Authority needs to connect the eastern two-thirds of Town (roughly all areas east of the Vinton War Memorial) to the regional Carvins Cove water supply.

### Align Sewer Improvements with Growth Areas

The Western Virginia Water Authority is working on a sewer master plan to guide improvements to the system. The Town should coordinate with the Authority to ensure that areas where growth is likely or preferred are prioritized for sewer improvements.

### Stormwater Management and Impervious Land Cover

Impervious land cover contributes to stormwater runoff, which can cause problems in both water quality and quantity. Impervious land allows higher velocities of water while making it easier for that water to pick up various pollutants before joining a stream or river. This can cause erosion along streambanks, leading to more sediment and pollution entering the waterway.



<sup>1</sup> Community Climate Outlook Roanoke, VA (psu.edu)

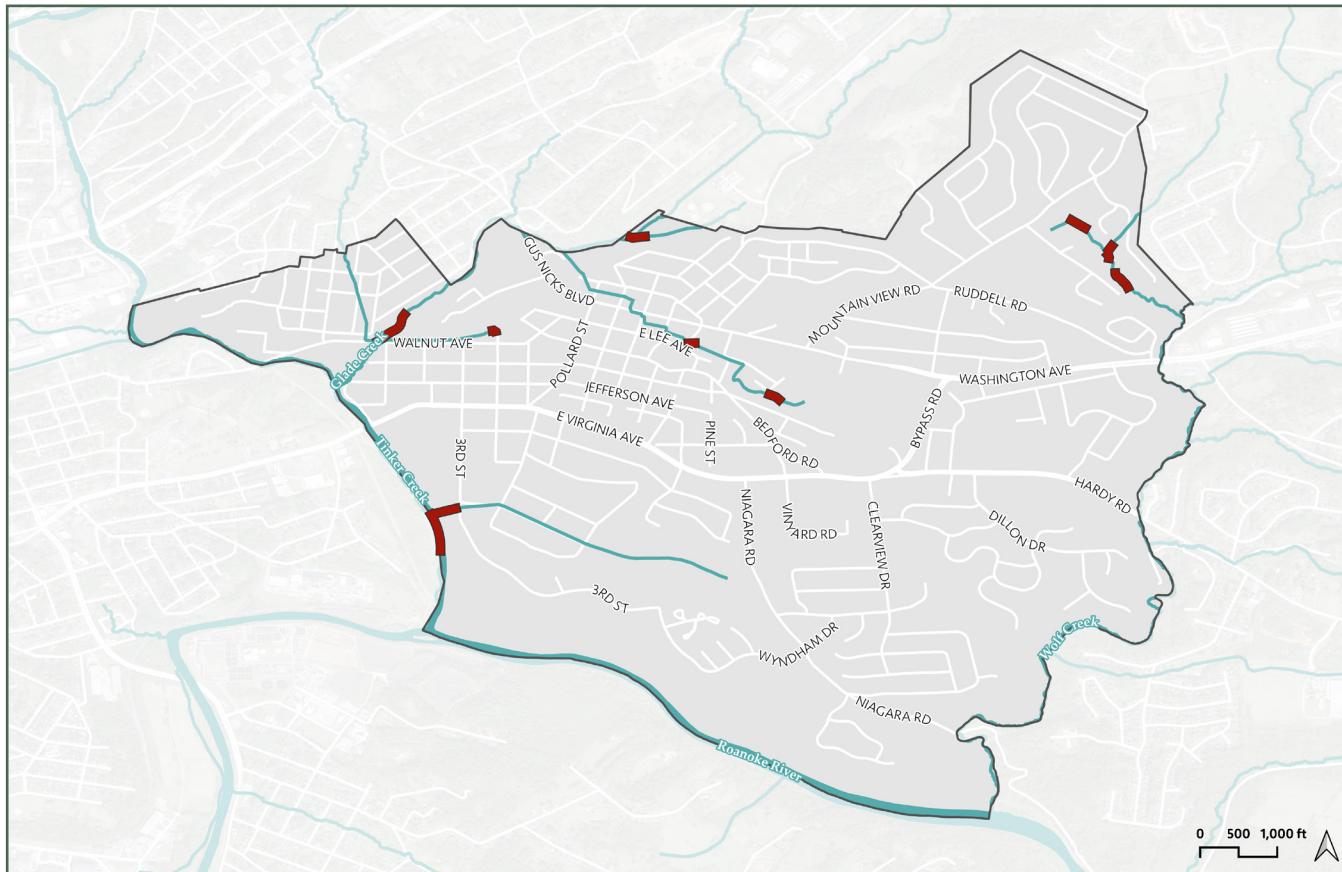
<sup>2</sup> Mid-Atlantic Regional Climate Impacts Summary and Outlook: Spring 2024 (midatlanticrisa.org)

<sup>3</sup> Virginia Stormwater Management Handbook (encodeplus.com)

<sup>4</sup> Green Infrastructure Center - Trees and Stormwater (https://gicinc.org)

The map below identifies eroding streambanks in Vinton and their priority ranking scores for restoration. Streambank restoration should be focused on high and moderate priority sections, most of which are found in the Glade Creek watershed. This watershed also has more impervious land cover than the rest of Vinton, leading to increased levels of stormwater runoff.

### Streambank Erosion

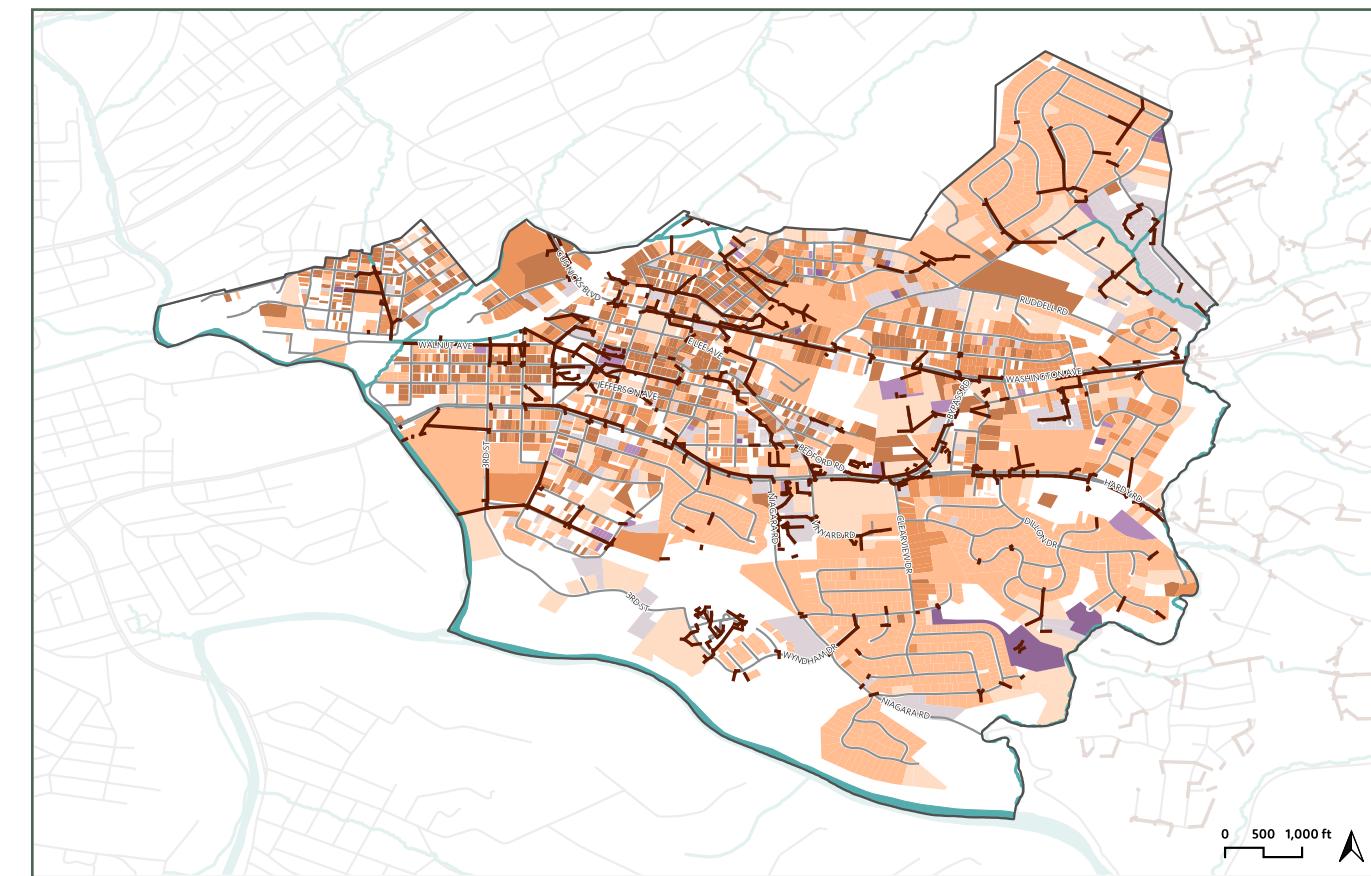


Natural and pervious land cover allows water to soak in and recharge the groundwater supply. Pervious land also helps water quality by naturally filtering out pollutants before they reach streams or rivers. This diagram shows how changes in the amount of impervious land cover impacts levels of stormwater runoff and infiltration.<sup>5</sup> Focusing development on existing urbanized areas, rather than spreading development outwards, preserves natural ground cover for stormwater management.

### STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE AND BUILDING AGE

Vinton's stormwater infrastructure needs to be upgraded. The map below shows stormwater pipes and building age, which gives an idea of where pipes may be outdated and in need of repair. Most of these areas fall within the Glade Creek watershed, which includes Downtown and older close-in neighborhoods. This area has an extensive piping system and older than average buildings, so it should be prioritized for upgrades. Factors that need to be considered in upgrading pipes include material, location, size, and cost.

### Stormwater System By Building Age



### LEGEND

- Piped Stormwater Conveyance
- Building Age by Year Built
- 1939 or earlier
- 1940 to 1959
- 1960 to 1979
- 1980 to 1999
- 2000 to 2009
- 2010 to 2019
- 2019 or later

Source: Roanoke County Tax Assessor Data and Town of Vinton Stormwater Data

### PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Public education and outreach campaigns are an essential part of improving water quality. Engaging and informing the public on water quality issues raises awareness and encourages people to adopt practices that protect water quality.

Vinton has many local and regional public education and outreach campaigns for water quality that target a wide range of audiences. The Town partners with Roanoke County and local environmental organizations to raise awareness of water quality and the impact of urban stormwater runoff. These educational campaigns are part of the Town's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit for discharging stormwater to local water

bodies. For example, Vinton collaborates with the Clean Valley Council on educational initiatives within the school system and they partner with the City of Roanoke and the County of Roanoke for regional education campaigns. The table below summarizes Vinton's current public education and outreach campaigns for water quality.

<sup>5</sup> Virginia Stormwater Management Handbook (encodeplus.com)



## PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS FOR WATER & ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

| Public Education Campaign   | Summary  |
|---|--|
| <b>Stormwater Programs Database</b>                                   | The Town of Vinton maintains a public database on its website that offers a wide range of educational resources and publications related to stormwater management, stormwater quality, and pollution prevention. The database includes educational videos, brochures, handouts, web resources, and guidebooks.                     |
| <b>Stormwater Newsletters for Residents</b>                           | The Town of Vinton and Roanoke County work together to distribute an annual stormwater newsletter to every resident of the Town and County. The newsletter covers both regional and local stormwater quality issues.   |
| <b>Vinton Stream Monitoring with the Clean Valley Council</b>         | The Clean Valley Council (CVC) is a nonprofit in the Roanoke Valley Region that collaborates with the Town of Vinton and the cities of Roanoke and Salem to provide environmental education programs. The CVC offers stream monitoring sessions and educational seminars to students and residents of the Town and County.         |
| <b>Stormwater Education for All Students</b>                          | The Town works with the CVC and WVWA to develop and implement stormwater education programs for all students in the Town and County.   |
| <b>Targeted Education Program</b>                                     | The Town of Vinton and Roanoke County send annual messaging to targeted audiences whose daily activities have higher risks of generating stormwater pollution. These educational messages are tailored to the specific stormwater issues of each target audience.  |
| <b>Storm Drain Stenciling Program</b>                                 | Vinton established this program through the CVC to engage residents and educate the public about stormwater pollution. The storm drains are stenciled with messages that increase public awareness of Vinton's stormwater systems.   |
| <b>Stormwater Public Events</b>                                       | Vinton helps to coordinate public, environmental events that raise awareness about stormwater pollution and engage the public.   |
| <b>MS4 Program and Pollution Prevention Website</b>                   | Vinton maintains a website about their MS4 Program for residents to access and engage with. Residents can leave comments on the documents and learn about the Town's efforts on stormwater pollution prevention.   |
| <b>Dog Waste Stations and Signage</b>                                 | Vinton is working to increase the number of dog waste stations and related signage on Town-owned properties and throughout the greenway network.   |
| <b>Public Education: Reducing Food Sources Accessible to Wildlife</b> | The Town of Vinton and Roanoke County use the Annual Stormwater Newsletter to inform the public about the risks of having food sources that are accessible to wildlife and how residents can take simple actions to help minimize these problems.  |
| <b>Stormwater Public Awareness Program</b>                            | Vinton's Public Awareness Program is focused on educating the public about stormwater pollution prevention and the ramifications of illegal discharges. The Program focuses on developing and distributing printed materials, signage, advertisements, radio and tv announcements, websites, and social media all around the Town. |

Source: Town of Vinton Data and the Town of Vinton MS4 Annual Report for 2022-2023

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Vinton's Comprehensive Plan is built on robust community engagement. The Town used a wide range of methods to ensure that all residents had the opportunity to be involved. This section describes the approaches and outcomes from each phase of engagement.

## PHASE 1 – ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The first phase began in April and concluded in June, 2024. The purpose of engagement activities during Phase 1 was to identify the town's assets, challenges, and opportunities. The main public engagement event during Phase 1 coincided with the Dogwood Festival on April 27, 2024.

Phase 1 also entailed listening sessions with Town leadership (staff, elected, and appointed officials); listening sessions with representatives of the City of Roanoke, Roanoke County, the Western Virginia Water Authority, and the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission; and the first meeting of the Vinton Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. These engagement activities provided valuable insights into the community's vision for Vinton's future, laying the groundwork for the comprehensive plan update.



The public gave high praise to the downtown area with special attention given to the library, murals, and the Farmers Market. Areas where people felt the Town could improve included multimodal transportation connectivity and streetscaping, downtown shopping and dining options, Roanoke River access and greenway connectivity, and improvements to various community facilities. The following were the major themes that emerged from answers to the question “What are your hopes for Vinton’s future?”

- Protect historic/cultural elements of the Town
- Make Vinton more walkable and bikeable
- Better mobility for all modes of transportation
- More shops, a hotel, and general attractions downtown
- More parks and recreation options
- A strong local economy
- More grocery and restaurant options
- Continue enhancing Town operations

## *Dogwood Festival Pop-Up*

The Town set up a station on Pollard Street during the Dogwood Festival on April 27, 2024 to capture input and ideas from the nearly 10,000 people who attended the festival. More than 100 people stopped and shared their ideas about the future of Vinton.



Post-It notes from Dogwood Festival, in April of 2024

Participants indicated treasured places and opportunities for improvement on a map of the town. Their input is summarized below.

## Dogwood Festival Summary



## WINTON 2050

## Opportunities for Improvement

| Treasured Places                    | Opportunities for Improvement   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| War Memorial                        | Move the post office  |
| Downtown                            | Renovate the Charles R. Hill Community Center                             |
| Lady Appalachia mural downtown      | Improve Gish Mill   |
| Gladetown Cemetery                  | Wolf Creek Greenway connectivity  |
| Library                             | Street trees and shade downtown   |
| Lancerlot Sports Complex (ice rink) | Greater bicycle/pedestrian connectivity                                   |
| Farmers Market                      | Complete the Gladetown Loop Trail   |
|                                     | Public access to the Roanoke River  |
|                                     | Continue sidewalk and lighting on Clearview Drive                         |
|                                     | Build the Multi-Generational Park   |
|                                     | Close gaps in sidewalk network, especially those connecting schools/parks |
|                                     | Map the Town's utilities  |
|                                     | Add street lighting throughout town                                       |

The Town's youngest residents also shared their ideas on a coloring sheet. They highlighted assets such as the library and schools, and their desire for more parks and playground, shops, and sidewalks.



## Town Leadership Listening Sessions

The Town's consulting team in May and June 2024 organized leadership interviews with each member of Town Council and Planning Commission. The purpose of these listening sessions was to gather their insights on Vinton's strengths, challenges, and opportunities. The themes that emerged from the listening sessions were as follows:

### Town Strengths

- Strong Town leadership from all sectors
- Effective and efficient Town operations
- A sense of community, community facilities, and events
- Diversified local businesses
- Greenways and outdoor recreation
- Downtown as a growing destination
- Regional management of water and wastewater

### Town Needs

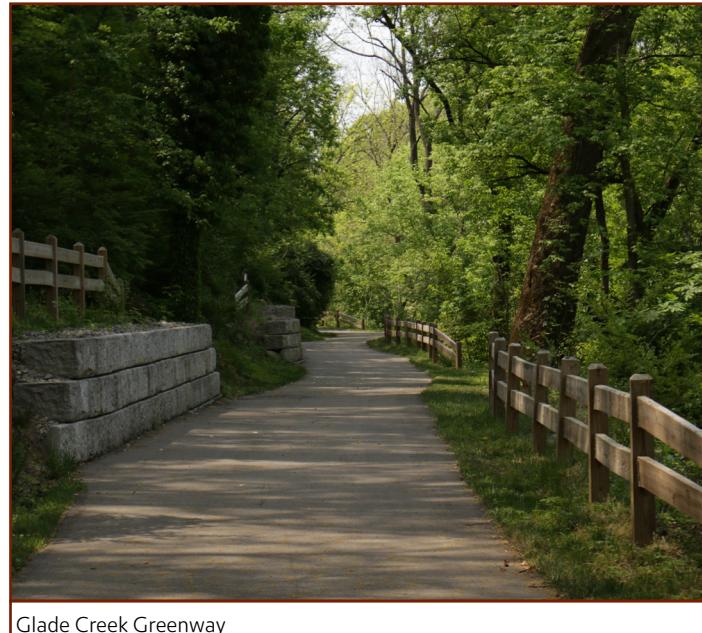
- Opportunities for people to stay and linger, especially downtown
- Greater walkability and placemaking
- Better connected green spaces and greenways
- More green spaces, trees, and shade for relief from excessive heat
- More activities for young families
- Upgrade stormwater management and infrastructure
- Use land wisely given the Town's nearly "built out" status and only 3.2 square miles
- Improve community appearance especially at gateways
- More downtown uses and activities including residential and a hotel
- More connections between the Town and schools
- Improve transportation for all modes and users
- More housing and a greater variety of housing types

### Vision for 2050

- A Destination Town
- Wide variety of dining, entertainment, and recreation options
- Residents have great access to parks and greenways
- A safe community that is friendly and welcoming
- Great appearance throughout Town and especially at gateways
- A full and thriving downtown
- Safe streets for all users
- Young people return for jobs after their education
- Known for great Town services

## Advisory Committee Meeting 1

The Vinton Comprehensive Plan Update Advisory Committee met for the first time on Thursday, June 20, 2024 (in-person) and Wednesday, June 26 (virtual). The purpose of the meetings was to build shared understanding of the Comprehensive Plan, clarify roles and responsibilities, and learn about Advisory Committee members' interests and concerns about the future of Vinton.



### Advisory Committee Members

- Anthony Conner
- Keith Liles, Town Council and Planning Commission
- Stephanie Brown Mead
- Jonathan Murrill
- Megan Noga
- Tiffany Rawling
- Ray Sandifer
- Kerry Werner
- Seth Wilkinson
- James Wright

### Advisory Committee Role

The role of the Advisory Committee was to share input to the Comprehensive Plan on topics such as draft Plan materials, draft recommendations, and community engagement approaches; share information within their networks and encourage public involvement; and provide input on recommendations to the Planning Commission and Town Council.

The Advisory Committee also focused on assets, opportunities, and challenges during its first meeting. A summary of their input follows:

## Assets and Opportunities

- Historic buildings
- Promoting outdoor recreation

## Needs and Challenges

- Hotel to accommodate the Town's many visitors
- More downtown retail to provide more reasons to visit and stay
- Redevelopment of vacant or underutilized buildings downtown
- Sufficient parking as the downtown area grows
- Modernization of underground infrastructure to attract more businesses
- Traffic calming especially on the perimeter of downtown to create a safe and inviting pedestrian district
- Improvement to the Town's gateways
- Updated zoning to reflect the Town's infrastructure capacities

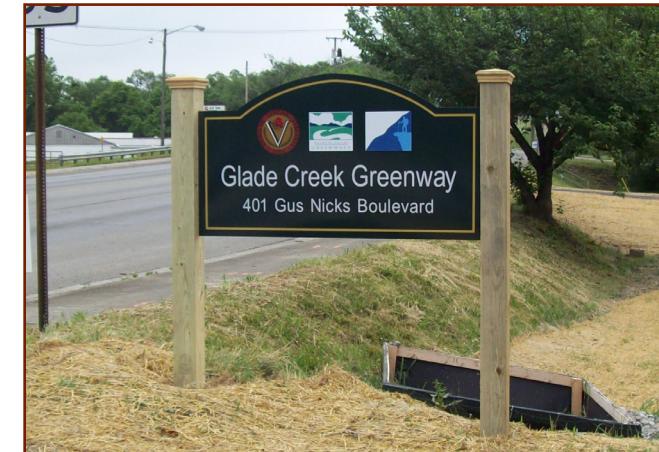
## Vision for 2050

- Downtown is a hub for the arts
- Proactive improvement of infrastructure has set the Town up for success
- Blue Ridge Parkway travelers visit Vinton in droves
- Traffic is calm on downtown streets, promoting walkability and a thriving retail district
- Western and eastern greenway trails are connected
- Major corridors, downtown, and aging commercial centers have evolved and grown
- Vinton is a destination for outdoor recreation enthusiasts who travel here and live here
- Post office has moved out of the downtown and the site is redeveloped as an anchor for the downtown



## Regional Listening Sessions

The Town's consulting team also interviewed leadership from the City of Roanoke, Roanoke County, the Western Virginia Water Authority (WVWA), the Roanoke Valley Resource Authority (RVRA), and the Roanoke Valley – Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC). The purpose of these listening sessions was to raise awareness of Vinton's Comprehensive Plan update, learn from adjacent and regional government bodies about their plans and projects that may affect Vinton, and their ideas for collaboration and coordination.



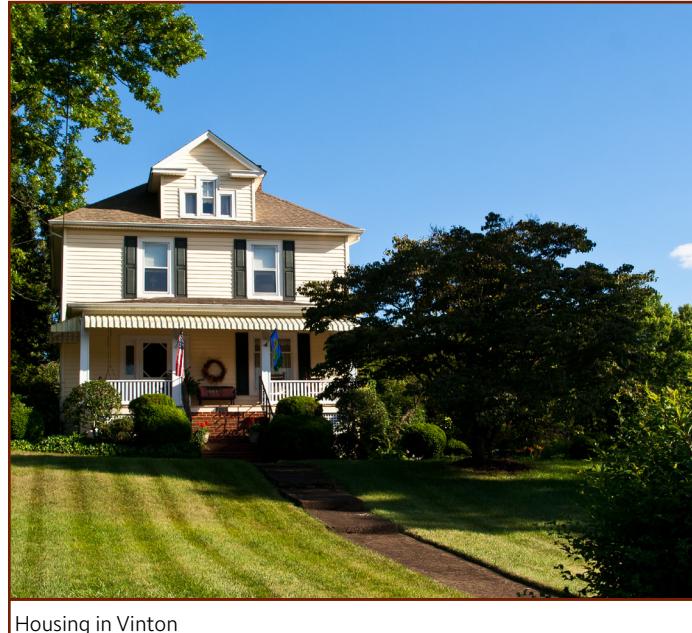
## Plans/Policies/Projects

The following plans, policies, and projects in adjacent jurisdictions or with the regional authorities were highlighted:

- The City of Roanoke highlighted the proposed Lick Run Greenway, which would connect downtown Roanoke more directly with Vinton; a development on Savannah Avenue NE that may provide for extension of the Glade Creek Greenway; a study of how the Jamison Avenue/Bullitt Avenue corridor could be improved and support new development in the 9th Street area; and the City's interest in regional collaboration on issues of housing, homelessness, and childcare.
- RVARC highlighted anticipated greenway planning that would look at how to complete the Roanoke River Greenway, build out priority trails such as the Tinker Creek and Glade Creek Greenways, and make on-street connections to close gaps. RVARC also highlighted its comprehensive housing study in 2021, which included a Roanoke County report.
- The Western Virginia Water Authority

(WVVA) is working on a Sewer Master Plan and Water Master Plan in 2024. These plans would cover the next 20 years, out to 2045.

- Roanoke County is updating its Comprehensive Plan; the area on Hardy Road just east of Vinton is identified as a proposed “activity center.” Roanoke County is also looking at how to improve its commercial corridors.



Housing in Vinton

### Issues & Opportunities

The regional listening sessions highlighted several issues and opportunities that may affect Vinton:

- Downtown Vinton is well situated for more development and activity given its location within a network of walkable centers.
- Commercial corridors around the region are being reconsidered as strip commercial developments age and interest in redevelopment increases. Among the solutions considered in Roanoke City and Roanoke County are allowing for a greater mix of uses, including residential.
- There may be opportunities for Vinton and the City of Roanoke to collaborate on major street improvements to ensure a consistent design across jurisdictional boundaries.
- The region's downtowns and neighborhood centers are unique and desirable. There are opportunities to add housing to them, including downtown Vinton.
- Major economic development is a challenge in Vinton due to a lack of large tracts of undeveloped land, but it is well positioned to provide housing and a high quality of life for the region's workforce.
- The Town can look to examples from the region



## PHASE 2 – COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The second phase began in July and extended through early November of 2024. The purpose of engagement activities in Phase 2 was to identify community needs, which are defined as “issues to address over the next 25 years to enhance public health, safety, and well-being.”

The main public engagement milestone of Phase 2 was a community survey. Phase 2 also included the second

for ideas to improve Washington Avenue. The City of Roanoke converted Brandon Avenue from 4 lanes to 3 lanes and saw improvements for vehicular travel time and walkability. The Town of Bedford had a similar experience with Route 122.

- Development along Route 460/Orange Avenue is an opportunity for Vinton; Amazon has built a facility in that area and hundreds of apartment housing units are in the pipeline.
- The Western Virginia Water and Sewer Authority (WVVA) is gradually upgrading water and sewer infrastructure in the Town; there is a need for more complete data, which they are gathering.
- Vinton historically has relied on well water. WVVA is gradually moving Vinton over to the regional supply from Carvin's Cove. Switching to the regional supply will improve the flow and quantity of water, which will support some land uses, such as apartments, that require greater water flow.
- Roanoke County is looking to make roadway improvements on facilities that connect to Vinton. Congestion near William Byrd High School on Route 24 is being studied. The County is also looking to build a new access road from Hardy Road to Explore Park.

Advisory Committee meeting and focus group discussions with people knowledgeable about the Town's infrastructure and services who could inform the community needs assessment.

### Community Needs Assessment Focus Groups

The Town organized 11 focus group discussions in August and September of 2024 covering schools; town facilities; recreation and quality of life; downtown and economic development; the library; environment and land use; transportation (two discussions); housing and neighborhood revitalization; police, fire, and rescue; and solid waste management. More than 40 people participated in the discussions. The key needs raised during these discussions are summarized below:

### Schools

Participants included Ashley McCallum - Principal, W.E. Cundiff Elementary School; Julie Sandzimier - Principal, Herman L. Horn Elementary School; and Town planning staff and the consulting team. The top needs identified during the focus group discussion were:

- Increased School Capacity
- Safe Walking Access to Schools
- Efficient Drop Off and Circulation Patterns at Schools
- More Youth Activities
- Outreach to New English Learners

### Town Facilities

Participants included Jamie Hurt - Town of Vinton Capital Projects Director; William “Bo” Herndon - Town of Vinton Public Works Director; Jill Acker - Town of Vinton Public Works Assistant Director; Amanda Payne - Town of Vinton, Vinton War Memorial; and Town planning staff and the consulting team. The top needs identified during the focus group discussion were:

- Renovation of Existing Facilities (such as the Charles R. Hill Community Center)
- Maintenance of New Town Facilities (such as the Multi-Generational Park)
- Master Plans for Town-Owned Properties

### Recreation and Quality of Life

Participants included Pete Eshelman - Roanoke Regional Partnership/Roanoke Outside Foundation; Frank Maguire - Roanoke Valley Greenways Coordinator; Renee Powers - City of Roanoke Parks; Liz Belcher - Roanoke Valley Greenways Commission/Pathfinders for

Greenways; Maggie Mace - Roanoke County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism; and Mandy Adkins - Town of Vinton Director of Cultural Placemaking & Events; and Town planning staff and the consulting team. The top needs identified during the focus group discussion were:

- More Parks & Playgrounds
- Parks that Provide Solitude & Restoration
- Bike Connection from the Blue Ridge Parkway to Town
- Close Greenway Network Gaps
- Safe Routes to Schools & Parks

### Downtown and Economic Development

Participants included Michael Venable - Boomtown CrossFit; Marshall Stanley - Town of Vinton Economic Development Specialist; Alexander Jones - Assistant Director of Economic Development, Roanoke County; and Town planning and administrative staff and the consulting team. The top needs identified during the focus group discussion were:

- Support for Infill Development
- Investment in Quality of Life
- Planning for Town-Owned Property
- More Housing to Keep Up with Job Growth
- Enhanced Gateways from Roanoke City and Roanoke County

### Land Use and Environment

Participants included Courtney Plaster - Executive Director, Clean Valley Council; Amanda McGee - Director of Community Development, Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission; and Town planning staff and the consulting team. The top needs identified during the focus group discussion were:

- Alleviating Urban Heat Island Effect
- Organized Environmental Stewardship
- Removing Invasives & Planting Natives
- Addressing Floodplain Properties
- Mixed-Use Development



Bench along Glade Creek Greenway

## Transportation

The transportation focus group involved two discussions to accommodate the large number of participants. Among the participants were Andrea Garland – TDM Director, Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission; Scott Hurt – Lieutenant, Vinton Police Department; Tori Williams – Director of Transportation, Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARA); William “Bo” Herndon – Public Works Director, Town of Vinton; Barry Trent – Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission; William Long – Director of Transit Planning, Valley Metro; Michael Gray – District Planner, VDOT Salem District; Megan Cronise – Assistant Director of Planning, Roanoke County; Dwayne D’Ardenne – Transportation Division Manager, City of Roanoke; and Town planning and administrative staff and the consulting team. The top needs identified during the focus group discussion were:

- Transportation for an Aging Population
- Connectivity for People Walking and Biking
- Modern Street Designs that Support All Modes and Reconnect Neighborhoods
- Safe Routes to Schools
- Safer Streets for All Users
- East-West Roanoke River Greenway Connection
- Town-City-County Coordination on Washington/Gus Nicks
- Town-City-County Coordination for Greenway Connectivity



Pedestrian crossing sign in Vinton at the Gish Mill

## Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization

Participants included Anne Marie Green – Council of Community Services; Chris Seth – Renovation Alliance; Frederick Gusler – Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority; and Town planning and administrative staff and the consulting team. The top

needs identified during the focus group discussion were:

- Funds for Housing Renovation in Vinton
- Right-Sized Housing
- Well Located Housing for the Town’s Workforce
- Zoning Code Supportive of Housing
- Regional Solutions for Assisting People that are Homeless

## Police, Fire, and Rescue

Participants included Charlie Rucker – Battalion Chief, Roanoke County Fire and Rescue; Chris Linkous – Battalion Chief, Roanoke County Fire and Rescue; Scott Hurt – Lieutenant, Town Police Department; Chris Sayre – Chief, Town of Vinton Volunteer First Aid Crew; and Town planning and administrative staff and the consulting team. The top needs identified during the focus group discussion were:

- Connect the Entire Town to the Regional Water Supply
- Consider a New Centrally-Located Fire and Rescue Station
- Expanded Police Station
- Preparation for Increased Call Volume from an Aging Population



## Solid Waste Management

Participants included Jon Lanford – CEO, Roanoke Valley Resource Authority (RVRA); William “Bo” Herndon, Town of Vinton Public Works Director; and Town planning staff and the consulting team. The top needs identified during the focus group discussion were:

- Preparation for “Forever Chemical” Regulation
- Litter Management and Reduction

## Community Survey

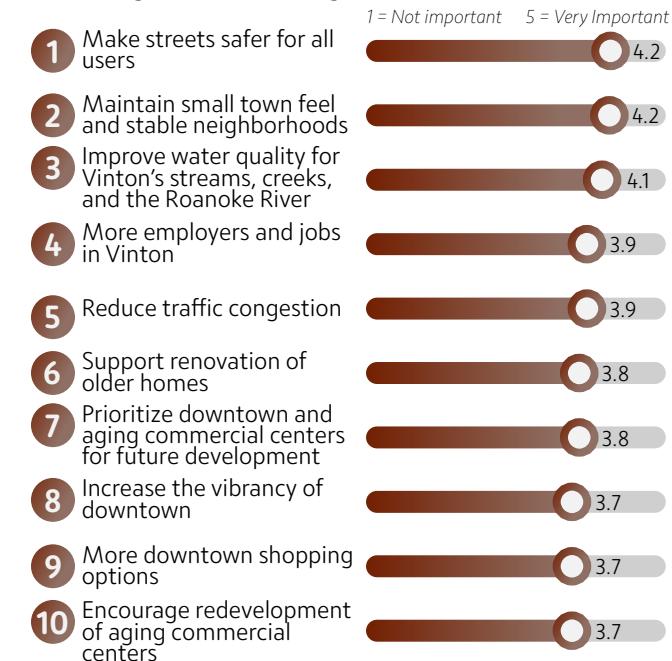
The purpose of the Vinton Comprehensive Plan Update community survey was to help the Town better understand public priorities and preferences for the future of Vinton. The survey included sections

on potential goals for the Comprehensive Plan, satisfaction with community facilities and services, and optional demographic questions.

The Town posted the survey online and it was available to the public between August 28 and October 4, 2024. 462 people participated in the survey. The results are summarized below.

## Top Goals

Survey participants rated several potential goals on a 1 (not important) to 5 (very important) scale. Among the 24 options for Town goals, the following were the 10 highest rated.



## Rating Community Services

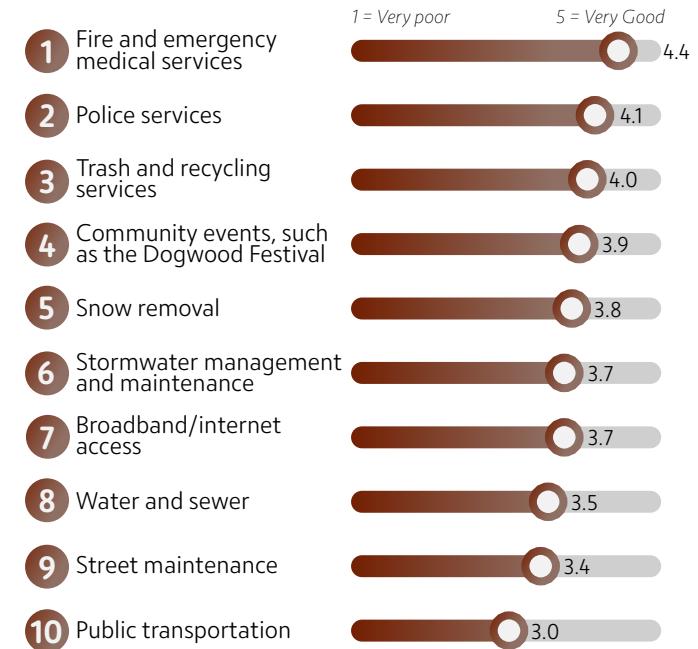
Survey participants also rated the quality of the services they receive from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). It is important to note that the services are provided by several entities: The Town provides police, trash and recycling, stormwater management, street maintenance and snow



Stormwater infrastructure

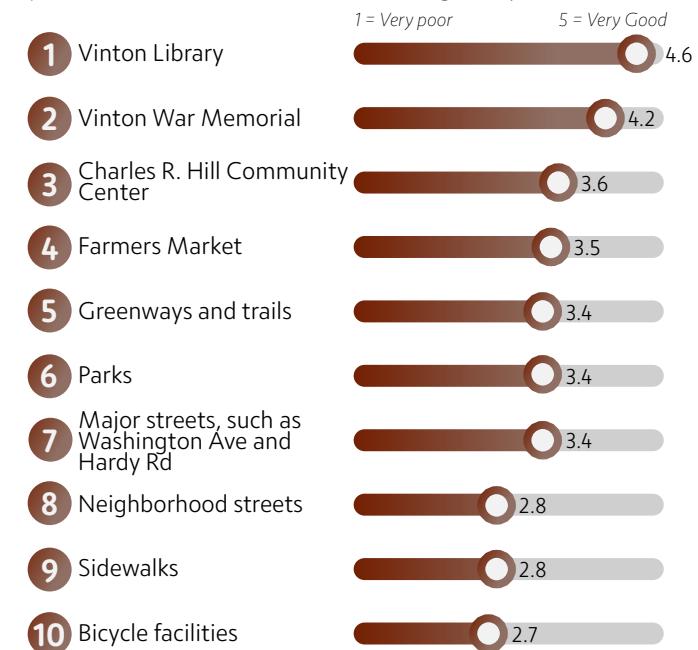
removal, and special events; Roanoke County provides fire and emergency medical services, public parks, schools, and libraries; regional authorities provide water and sewer services and public transportation; and private entities provide electricity, cable and internet.

None of the services rated below the acceptable (3.0) threshold. The ratings are below:



## Rating Public Facilities

Survey participants also rated the quality of community facilities from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). Like with services, some of these facilities are managed by the County (Vinton Library and parks) while the others are managed by the Town.



The survey included several open-ended questions. The responses to these questions are summarized below into a set of themes for each.

#### **How do you think the Town could enhance services and public facilities?**

- **Infrastructure & Service Improvements:** Replace outdated water lines on streets that suffer from frequent breaks and to improve water quality. Additionally, some respondents highlighted a need for improving recycling services, including larger bins and more frequent pickups.
- **Recreational Facilities:** Among the most frequent requests were for a public pool to return, and improvements and expansion of parks and playgrounds, with specific requests for splash pads or skate parks.
- **Safety and Accessibility:** Several respondents asked for speed bumps to be added in neighborhoods to slow traffic, and there were multiple requests for additional sidewalks along Washington Avenue and Hardy Road, which are heavily trafficked and inhospitable to pedestrians.
- **Public Transportation and Connectivity:** More frequent and accessible public transportation, particularly in underserved areas. Some specifically mentioned wanting a connection between the Wolf Creek Greenway and the Tinker Creek/Glade Creek Greenways.
- **Community Centers and Events:** The Charles R. Hill Community Center was identified for a complete renovation, and respondents expressed a desire for more family-focused events and a revitalized Farmers' Market.



Vinton War Memorial

#### **Regarding transportation, what are places you find difficult to access and would like to be easier to reach by car, walking, or bike?**

- **High Traffic Areas:** Washington Avenue and Hardy Road were repeatedly mentioned for their heavy traffic. Crossing these roads is particularly difficult for pedestrians, with many suggesting more crosswalks and better traffic signal timing. Virginia Avenue and Mountain View Road were also highlighted as inhospitable to pedestrians and bicyclists due to high vehicle speeds and lack of sidewalks.



- **Pedestrian Safety:** A significant number of respondents mentioned a lack of sidewalks along Mountain View Road, particularly between Washington Avenue and Town limits, where residents are forced to walk in the street. The need for sidewalks near Herman L. Horn Elementary School was noted to improve safety for students.
- **Parking Issues:** The downtown area and around Kroger were frequently noted for congestion and inadequate parking. The U.S. Post Office was flagged as problematic due to its poor accessibility.
- **Cycling Accessibility:** Some respondents asked for better bike paths connecting key parts of town, particularly the greenways.

#### **What actions could the Town take to improve quality of life in Vinton?**

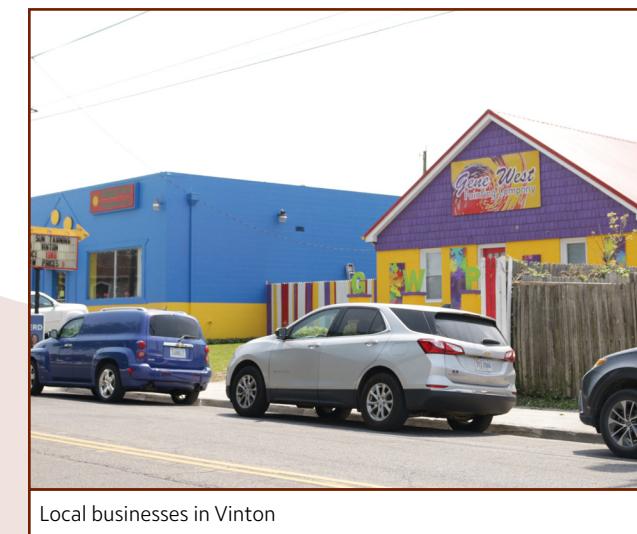
- **More Family-Oriented Activities:** Many respondents wanted more parks and recreational options for children and families, including splash pads at local parks, improved playgrounds, a community recreation center, a movie theater, arts venues, and more events downtown, like concerts.
- **Safety and Crime Reduction:** Increased police

patrols were suggested to reduce speeding and other traffic violations. Respondents also raised concerns about drug-related issues and the increased encampments in public spaces like the greenways.

- **Economic Development:** Many respondents wanted more restaurants and shopping options, including national chains like Chick-fil-A and Aldi, and local businesses downtown. There were calls for fewer stores selling tobacco and more diverse businesses to serve different age groups and interests.
- **Preserving Small-Town Feel:** Several respondents stressed the importance of maintaining Vinton's small-town feel while improving services. Some mentioned the importance of balancing development with maintaining the town's charm.
- **More Greenery:** Several respondents emphasized the need for environmental improvements in Vinton. A recurring suggestion was to plant more trees, especially in parking lots to provide shade and reduce the urban heat effect. Trees were also requested in parks to enhance shaded areas for families and recreational spaces.

#### **What is something the Town lacks that you'd like to see in Vinton?**

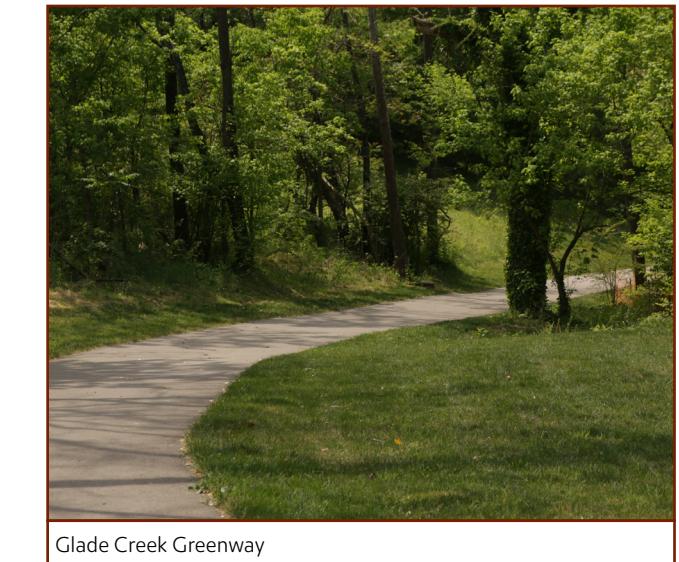
- **New Businesses and Restaurants:** Many respondents expressed a desire for more dining options, with Chick-fil-A and a steakhouse frequently mentioned. Respondents also wanted a hotel, a bakery, and a clothing store in town, along with a health food store or organic supermarket, such as Trader Joe's.
- **Recreational Facilities:** A splash pad was a recurring request. Others mentioned a



Local businesses in Vinton

desire for a performing arts center, a gym, or a dog park. Some respondents also called for a community pool.

- **Family and Youth Activities:** Respondents noted a lack of activities for teens and young adults, suggesting the addition of arcades, movie theaters, a skate park, and an indoor kids play space.
- **Improved Infrastructure:** Many responses asked for more sidewalks, particularly along Mountain View and Ruddell Road, to make walking to schools and parks safer.
- **Sense of Belonging for All:** Several respondents expressed a desire for the Town to continue focusing on helping create a sense of belonging for all groups, by including more events that celebrate various cultures and building more public spaces and activities that feel welcoming to all residents.



Glade Creek Greenway

#### **What other goals do you think are important for Vinton's future?**

- **Sustainability and Safety:** Several respondents emphasized the importance of environmental initiatives, including pollinator gardens and reducing chemical use. Additionally, there were calls for more action to address the issue of homelessness and drug-related issues.
- **Economic Development and Growth:** Respondents wanted to see downtown revitalization, with new businesses replacing vacant lots and underutilized spaces. Specific requests included revitalizing the area around Pollard Street with more shopping options and housing. Some respondents also called for better parking options downtown.

- **Preserving Small-Town Identity:** Maintaining the small-town feel was a common theme, with respondents wanting to avoid overdevelopment and preserve the Town's history. Several people expressed concerns regarding housing affordability.
- **Infrastructure Improvements:** Many respondents asked for better synchronization of traffic lights, particularly on Hardy Road and Washington Avenue, to ease congestion during peak hours. Others requested improvements to water infrastructure and roadway conditions for Virginia Avenue and Washington Avenue.

#### Advisory Committee Meeting 2

The Advisory Committee held its second meeting on Tuesday, August 13th. The purpose of the meeting was to share initial findings of the community needs assessment and obtain input of the Advisory Committee on what's important, what's missing, and what should be the priorities. They provided input to an initial set of draft community needs by topic.

#### Land Use and Environment

The Advisory Committee indicated "maintain small-town feel and preserve stable neighborhoods" as the most important need followed closely by "improve water quality of Vinton's streams and the Roanoke River." Among the main points of their discussion on this topic were:

- Desire to maintain single-family residential zoning.
- Interest in small-scale apartments in parts of Town. Design multi-family that will fit within the neighborhood.



- Interest in taller apartments (4 stories) in the downtown area. More density within walking distance of downtown supports downtown vitality.
- Find ways to get people to the Town from development on Route 460 in Roanoke City.
- Families want to live in Vinton due to the good school system.



#### Downtown and Economic Development

The Advisory Committee indicated "more housing units in the downtown area to support growth of retail, restaurant, and entertainment options" as the most important need followed closely by redevelopment of aging commercial centers and strip retail" and "maintain the local tax base." Among the main points of their discussion on this topic were:

- Interest in increasing revenue from sources other than property tax.
- Want to embrace change but without losing the small-town feel.
- Interest in expanding the downtown area, including north of Washington Avenue.
- Interest in slowing vehicular traffic on downtown streets.
- Need for housing for Carilion employees that need short-term housing.
- Avoid high-rise buildings that do not fit with the surrounding areas.
- Put energy/focus in the needed areas – be strategic for redevelopment activities.
- Embrace change where needed (Walnut Avenue, Washington Avenue, Gus Nicks Blvd, areas along the Norfolk Southern tracks) and maintain the applicable areas.

#### Transportation

The Advisory Committee indicated "safety improvements for all modes" as the most important need, followed closely by "safer mid-block crossings of major streets for pedestrians" and "close sidewalk gaps in areas with the most potential for walking." Among the main points of their discussion on this topic were:

- Better connection from Roanoke is important, but less about the infrastructure and more about feeling safer and secure while traveling between downtown Roanoke and Vinton.
- Interest in safer mid-block pedestrian crossings.
- Interest in better/safer bicycle facilities; can support the outdoor recreation economy.
- Interest in street standards allowing for 1-way streets; opportunity to increase tree canopy.

#### Recreation and Quality of Life

The Advisory Committee indicated "more playgrounds with easy access to residents" as the most important need followed closely by "connections between the existing greenway segments" and "better access to the regional recreational assets of the Blue Ridge Parkway and Explore Park." Among the main points of their discussion on this topic were:

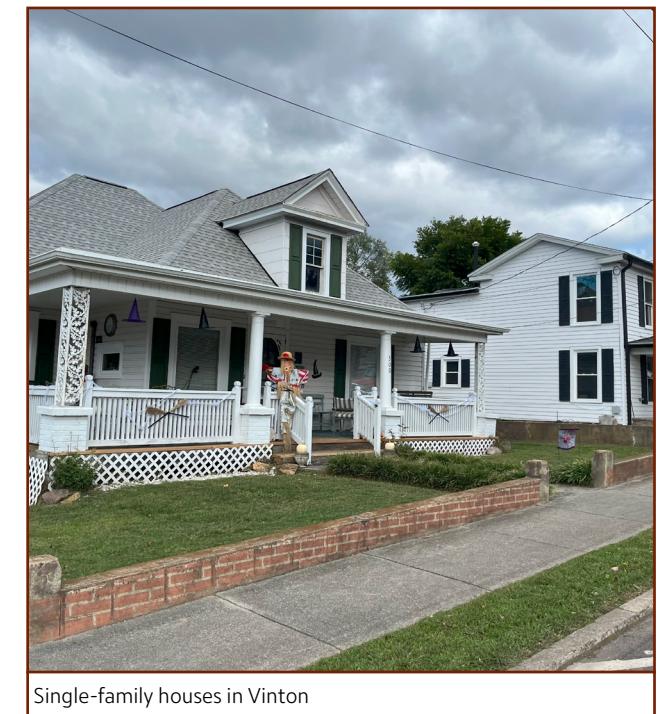
- Interest in using the old landfill as a park.
- Need for attractive and safe playgrounds and parks especially for young kids and families.
- Safe access and ADA accessibility to all parks are important.
- The Midway community needs attention.



#### Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization

The Advisory Committee indicated "renovation of aging housing units" as the most important need followed closely by "address housing in disrepair." Among the main points of discussion on this topic were:

- Town was awarded grants in the past to support home renovations/energy efficiency (Midway and Cleveland), but demand was low.
- Interest in increasing owner-occupied housing; renter-occupied housing percentage has been high (about 50/50) and some rental properties have not been well maintained.



- County handles home inspections. Building maintenance is an issue. Need building maintenance requirements/codes to address.
- Focus on areas within the town for homeownership.
- Building new apartments can alleviate market demand on single-family housing that has fallen into disrepair; these homes can be recycled into the market as owner-occupied.

## PHASE 3 – VISION AND POLICY SETTING

The third phase began in November of 2024 and extended into February of 2025. The purpose of engagement activities in Phase 3 was to identify a vision and goals for the community's future and identify key policies for land use, development, community design, and transportation systems. The main engagement event of Phase 3 was a community meeting at the Vinton War Memorial. This phase also included a pair of Advisory Committee meetings and a pair of joint meetings of the Town Council and Planning Commission.



Presentation at the November 2024 Community Meeting

### Community Meeting

Vinton held a community meeting to obtain input to the Town's vision for land use and transportation connectivity and share big ideas for improving quality of life over the next 25 years. The Vinton War Memorial hosted the meeting on November 12, 2024.

The format of the meeting was an open house with three stations and a presentation. The presentation covered existing conditions in Vinton, top needs established through the Community Needs Assessment, and draft vision principles for the Comprehensive Plan. The three stations included posters and opportunities for people to share their feedback on the community needs assessment, vision map and principles, and a visual preference survey.

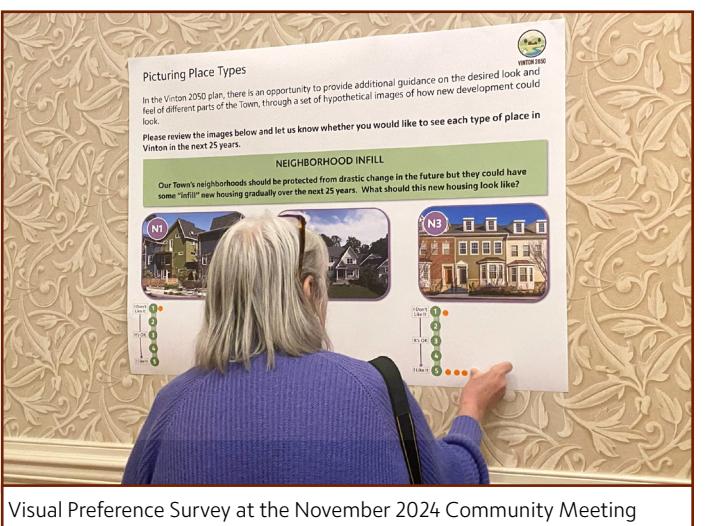
The community needs assessment station included a summary poster for each of the following categories: land use and environment; transportation; downtown and economic development; housing and neighborhood revitalization; recreation and quality of life; community facilities and services; and stormwater, water, and sewer.



Community Meeting, in November of 2024

About 25 attendees shared their ideas and feedback on the needs, which are summarized below:

- Address sidewalk network gaps. Bypass Road was cited as a specific example.
- More tree canopy on major corridors, such as Hardy Road.
- Better multimodal connectivity between neighborhoods, greenways, parks, and schools.
- Safety improvements and better multimodal access for major roadways.
- Snow removal for sidewalks.
- More general retail and filling gaps in the retail offerings.
- More year-round events, especially ones accessible for children.
- Better coordinated traffic signals.
- Housing and transportation options for an aging population.



Visual Preference Survey at the November 2024 Community Meeting

The visual preference survey station included three posters where people could share their input on the desired look and feel of future development through a series of hypothetical images. The images were organized by three distinct types of places found in Vinton - downtown, corridors, and neighborhoods.

Each poster contained three image examples for the respective place type and people indicated how much they liked the image on a 5-point scale from "I don't like it" to "I like it." The Town also posted the visual preference survey online in November and December 2024. The images for each place type are shown below in order of preference, from least to most:

### Major Corridors



### Downtown Area



### Neighborhoods

1 = Don't like      5 = Like

1 = Don't like      5 = Like

1 = Don't like      5 = Like

The main takeaways from the visual preference survey are:

1. There is a preference for more traditional forms and materials over more modern ones - in other words, architecture that is more compatible with existing buildings in the town.
2. There is support for mixed-use buildings, especially for the downtown area, but some concern about height outside of the downtown area.

The outcomes of the community meeting helped shape the draft goals, land use and transportation plan, and the implementation strategies contained in the comprehensive plan.

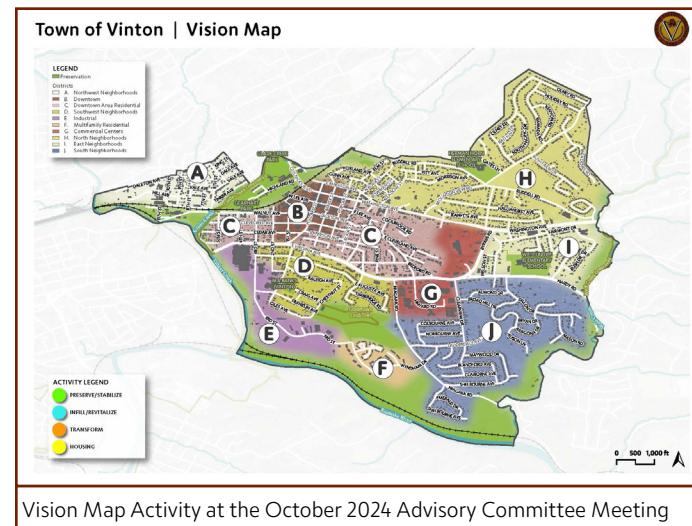
### Advisory Committee Meeting 3

The Vinton Comprehensive Plan Update Advisory Committee held its third meeting on Thursday, October 10th. The purpose of the meeting was to share results of the community survey, initial vision principles, and obtain input to the land use strategy and vision.

## Draft Vision Principles

Advisory Committee members shared their ideas on what they want for Vinton in 2050:

- Authentic character but not "Hallmark cute." The mural downtown has contributed to the area's character.
- Avoid drastic change but be adaptable. Set directions and policies for growth within the existing character.
- The new library is a good example where people initially did not like a more modern design, but over time came to like it.
- The new restaurants downtown are good examples of redevelopment and have been good for downtown area.
- Members strongly supported the "Connected and Collaborative with the Region" vision principle.
- Gateways need to be addressed; there should be a clear delineation between southeast Roanoke City and the Town of Vinton.
- Homelessness issues need to be addressed regionally.



## Land Use Vision

Advisory Committee members engaged in a discussion about the preferred land use strategy and vision for different areas within Vinton. The group identified parts of the Town suitable for preservation, infill and revitalization, transformation, and additional housing. Below is a summary of the group's input:

- All of the strategies apply to the downtown area. The historic structures should be preserved, vacant and underutilized sites should be revitalized, the gateways should be transformed, and additional housing should be added to

the downtown to support more businesses, restaurants, and retail.

- The greenways should be connected including an extension of the Glade Creek Greenway to downtown area, a greenway connection to the River Park Shopping Center, and connections to the Wolf Creek Greenway, such as along Fairmont Drive.
- Areas potentially suitable for residential development include Jackson Avenue, Virginia Avenue, Walnut Avenue, the River Park Shopping Center, downtown, and the Midway neighborhood.
- The River Park Shopping Center is an ideal location for a mixed-use development. It should be connected more seamlessly to the downtown area.
- Bypass Road is a key connection. It should be more pedestrian friendly.
- Vehicular traffic is too fast along Washington Avenue.
- The former landfill should be considered for recreational purposes.
- The Vinton Business Center could be an area for housing development as well.

## Advisory Committee Meeting 4

The Vinton Comprehensive Plan Update Advisory Committee held its fourth meeting on Friday, January 17th. The purpose of the meeting was to seek input to draft vision principles and goals, the future land use policies, and discuss mapping future land uses.

### Draft Goals

The Advisory Committee had the following comments on the draft goals:

- Be careful with goals regarding trees and tree canopy. Recommend appropriate species and consider the context. For example, certain trees are best in riparian areas while others may be



better as street trees.

- The Gladetown Greenway is a good idea, but future greenways will require the cooperation of private property owners, and this presents a challenge.
- The Town should seek easements for greenways with future drainage projects.
- Access to parks is important. Banks Park is difficult to access due to the steep hill and the lack of stairs.
- Proactive rezoning to make the desired form and type of development easier could be helpful, it needs to be done cautiously and in collaboration with property owners.
- Blacksburg has good examples of mixed-use development with retail on the ground floor and residential above, which would fit well in the Vinton context.
- The Town should "make use of what we have" and not let the perfect stand in the way of the good. There is a lot that can be done in the interim.



### Land Use Policy

The Advisory Committee provided feedback on the draft land use and transportation vision map and discuss land use goals for various parts of the Town.

- The Vision Map should show the Byrd apartments as a color besides green for "conserve"
- The core of the community, bounded by the major roadways of Washington Avenue, Virginia Avenue, Bypass Road, and Roanoke City should be medium density and walkable.
- Mixed-use development is harder to finance. It is important to have maximum flexibility. Public-private partnerships help



make mixed-use and walkable development happen.

- When prioritizing new sidewalks the Town should consider:
  - Bus routes and stops.
  - Locations where dirt tracks indicate people are walking.
  - Locations where mixed-use development is the goal.
- Regarding "big moves" focus on:
  - Projects that improve roadway safety.
  - Closing sidewalk gaps.
- Midway should be a focus area for new residential, but not commercial.
- A bridge over Glade Creek to connect Midway to downtown is expensive but desirable.
- Look for an alternative greenway connection between Niagara Road and Tinker Creek, such as Third Street; avoid going through Gladetown. Others felt that Gladetown would benefit from a greenway connection and that residents have asked for better access.
- The central part of Town would benefit from a new park; the River Park development could include a small park.
- Keep the core of downtown compact and mixed use; relax requirement for commercial use in the areas immediately surrounding the downtown core to get more rooftops that will support downtown revitalization.
- The residential areas within a short walk to downtown should be open to infill opportunities in the future for small single family, townhomes, duplexes and small-scale multifamily buildings.
- Make it easy to walk between downtown

- and River Park. This is a key connection.
- Look at opportunities for a small park in Midway; perhaps along the creek where the Town has bought property using hazard mitigation grant funds.

### Joint Town Council/Planning Commission Meeting 1

The Town Council and Planning Commission held a joint meeting on Tuesday, October 1st to discuss the Comprehensive Plan and the community needs assessment. A summary of comments is listed below:

- Housing supply challenge will require creative solutions.
- Older homeowners renting rooms to younger people looking for housing could be mutually beneficial. Need to look at the Town's regulations on this topic.
- Would like to see more housing for seniors. The Porter's Haven project has been a success. Would like to see more of that type of housing.
- Older homes and residents present a challenge. Need to find a way to help people afford repairs. Many instances of housing in disrepair are due to income and age limitations.
- Like the vision of "sociable/welcoming." The Town has this and could have more.
- Not many people are biking now and residents responding to the survey did not highlight it as a significant need. Part of the problem is that the Town's streets, like many towns and cities, are largely built to accommodate vehicles. As a result, people may not be biking because it is not safe or inviting.



Joint Town Council/Planning Commission Meeting 1, in October of 2024

### Joint Town Council/Planning Commission Meeting 2

The Town Council and Planning Commission held a joint meeting on Tuesday, February 4th to discuss goals and land use and transportation policies for the

Comprehensive Plan Update. A summary of comments is listed below:

- The goals regarding trees are good, but there are several sick trees around Town. It is important to plant the right species. Also, the Town may benefit from partnering with the volunteer tree steward program in the City of Roanoke.
- The Town has made a lot of progress towards having a thriving downtown. It is important to continue adding small businesses.
- The downtown would benefit from improved access and circulation; the signal at Pollard could use timing adjustments.
- The Town should continue to partner with downtown property owners to ensure there is enough parking downtown.
- It is important to better connect the downtown area with the River Park area; want to have a walkable connection.
- It is important to focus on the Midway area for investment.
- Would like to see better gateways and signage.
- Important to help people renovate dilapidated properties; Town should also consider buying properties in some cases.

### PHASE 4 – VISION AND POLICY SETTING

The fourth phase began in February of 2025 and extended into April. The purpose of engagement activities in Phase 4 was to identify specific actions for the Town to take to achieve its vision and goals. The main engagement events of Phase 4 were a pair of Advisory Committee meetings, a pop-up table at the Vinton Public Library, and roundtable discussions with local teens and older residents.

#### Advisory Committee Meeting 5

The Vinton Comprehensive Plan Update Advisory Committee held its fifth meeting on Thursday, March 6th. The purpose of the meeting was to obtain input to the draft future land use map, draft transportation network map, and brainstorm actions for achieving the Town's goals.

#### Draft Future Land Use Map

The Advisory Committee generally supported the draft future land use map as presented, and provided feedback on a couple key questions related to the draft:

- Areas along Ruddell Road are appropriate as medium density residential because that designation would be consistent with the existing development.

- Hardy Road east of Bypass Road is appropriate as residential rather than mixed-use. The area has not developed for commercial purposes and is an appropriate area for housing.

#### Draft Future Transportation Network Map

The Advisory Committee was generally in support of the draft as presented, and provided feedback on a couple of questions related to the draft:

- The Advisory Committee did not support including a greenway connection between Hardy Road and the Roanoke River. The area is steep and inaccessible, and access to the river would require crossing the railroad. A better path to the river is the proposed greenway along 3rd Street and the railroad tracks, which is a concept under consideration for closing the gap in the Roanoke River Greenway.
- Hardy Road east of Bypass Road is appropriate as residential rather than mixed-use. The area has not developed for commercial purposes and is an appropriate area for housing.
- The Town should require both bike lanes and sidewalks on new streets.
- The Fire and Rescue Station and Post Office should both be considered in the long run for moving towards the center of Town. This will help create space for redevelopment downtown and improve access to the services.
- Development should use low-impact development approaches for dealing with stormwater management. Off-site stormwater management should also be considered for more dense urban areas, such as downtown, if feasible.
- Green streets and parking areas should be considered for stormwater management.
- New medium and high-density residential development should include pocket parks or playgrounds.
- The Town should look for ways to incorporate play and recreation into as many elements of the public realm as possible. Public art along greenways was mentioned.
- Vinton should collaborate with other communities in the region to expand access to and from the Blue Ridge Parkway.
- Better access to parks is important; some are difficult to access for people with disabilities.
- The Town should identify areas where it could proactively rezone land to the uses that are preferred in the future.
- The Town should offer incentives for building owners downtown to expand upwards with new residential or office space above the storefronts.
- The Town needs a strategy for the development of new multi-family housing. It is challenging to build without some form of support or incentives.
- The Town should upgrade its wayfinding signage, which contributes to a sense of place.

#### Action Planning

The Advisory Committee members engaged in a discussion about possible actions for achieving the Town's goals. Their comments are summarized below:

- The Advisory Committee had an extensive discussion about the lane conversion test on Washington Avenue (4-lanes to 3-lanes). There were diverging views with some sharing their hope that the change could improve safety, walkability, and the Town's goal of making downtown more of a regional destination. Others shared concerns about hindering vehicular access to the downtown and spillover traffic into neighborhoods.
- New buildings on Washington Avenue



Advisory Committee Meeting 5, in March of 2025

should front the street with parking behind them. Creating a more walkable frontage will help slow down vehicles.

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#### Vinton Public Library Engagement Events

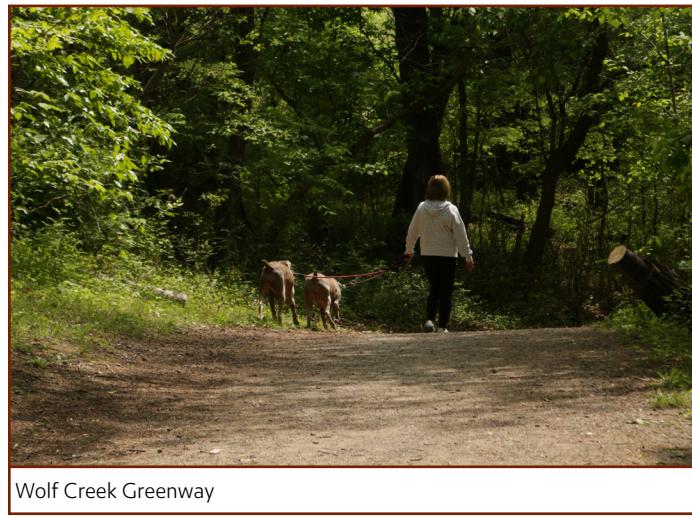
Vinton held three engagement events at the Vinton Public Library on Thursday, March 6th and Friday, March 7th. The first was a pop-up table at the library entrance where passerby shared their ideas on specific actions the Town can take to

improve quality of life. The second was a roundtable discussion with a group of teenagers to get their take on what younger people would like to see in the Town now and in the future. And the third was a roundtable discussion with a group of older residents, which focused on housing and transportation needs.

### Library Pop-Up

The Comprehensive Plan Update team staffed a table at the Vinton Public Library entrance during the afternoon of Thursday, March 6th. About 10 people shared their thoughts on the future of Vinton; their ideas are summarized below:

- The Town should plant more trees. They provide shade and add value.
- The Town should address invasive plants along the greenways.
- The greenways are a great asset, but in places they do not feel safe.
- The Town should improve lighting at the Charles R. Hill Community Center.
- Vinton should provide a shuttle to the events it organizes downtown.



Wolf Creek Greenway

### Teen Roundtable Discussion

A group of five teenagers that participate in the Vinton Public Library's teen volunteer program shared their ideas during a roundtable discussion:

- The Town needs more play areas for kids.
- The Town should address litter.
- The Town should grow larger with more housing and restaurants. It will make the Town more of a destination.
- The Town should build a new pool.
- The Town needs more entertainment options for youth.
- If the Town adds more development and places to visit it could become "everyone wants to go to Vinton."

- Safe streets and regional collaboration stand out as important vision principles. When services are coordinated regionally it serves the population better.
- Roundabouts are good for safety.

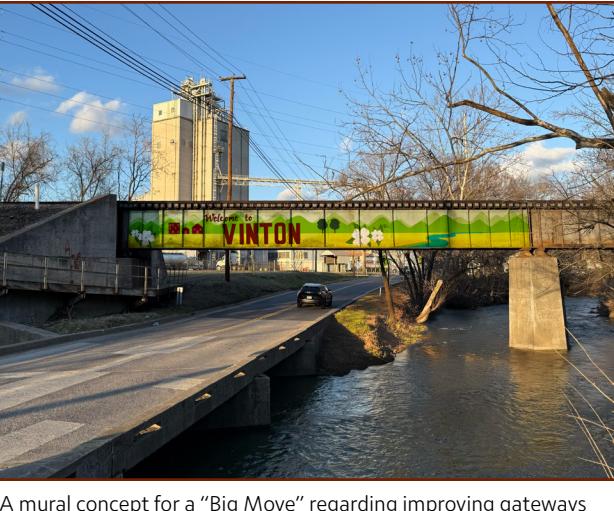
### Older Adults Roundtable Discussion

A group of three participants in the Vinton Public Library's "Vinton Community Connection" program for older adults shared their ideas during a roundtable discussion:

- The Gus Nicks Boulevard reconfiguration is a positive development; it slows traffic and improves safety. The Town should implement this project but also invest in traffic calming for neighborhoods.
- Some streets are too narrow to have cars parked on both sides. Some vehicles are parked for extended periods of time. The Town should look at ways to improve street safety and address long-term car parking. This is an issue in the Midway area.
- It is important to keep track of what is happening in the City and County; those developments generate traffic on Vinton streets.
- Vinton has potential to be a more walkable Town; some sidewalks in and near the downtown need improvement. Downtown traffic signals should have pedestrian signals as well.
- Downtown development has been good for the area; would like to see it continue.
- The Town should work with Post Office to move the station out of downtown.
- The area at the end of Vinyard is hidden away and needs more activity. Extending Vinyard Road to Clearview Drive may help.
- The Town should add trees to parks and the downtown to increase shade.
- The Town should add solar lights to parts of the greenway to increase safety.



More marked crosswalks would improve walkability in Vinton



A mural concept for a "Big Move" regarding improving gateways

### Advisory Committee Meeting 6

The Vinton Comprehensive Plan Update Advisory Committee held its sixth meeting on Wednesday, March 26th. The purpose of the meeting was to obtain input into "Big Moves," which are high priority actions for achieving the Town's goals.

### High Priority Actions

The Advisory Committee reviewed draft actions for each of the 10 vision principles and shared their view on which should be the top priority. The top vote-getter action is listed by topic.

- **Sociable and Welcoming Town**
  1. Master Plan for Town-owned properties.
  2. Thriving and Authentic Downtown
    1. Explore moving the post office and fire and rescue station to new locations.
- **Outdoor Recreation Hub**
  1. Build the Glade Creek Greenway between the Gish Mill and Vinyard Park
- **Housing for All Phases of Life**
  1. Reform zoning to make it easier to build housing.
- **Safe and Connected Streets for All**
  1. Fill the Gaps program for sidewalk construction
  2. Add sidewalks or a shared-use path on Bypass Road
- **Environmental Stewardship Leader**
  1. Landscaping, trees, and green infrastructure downtown to reduce stormwater runoff and heat.
- **Parks for All**
  1. Master Plan for Gearhart and Glade Creek Parks.
- **Adaptable**
  1. Update zoning to allow more flexibility in areas designated "revitalize" or "transform" on the vision map.

## PHASE 5 – ADOPTION

The fifth phase began in April of 2025 and extended into June. The purpose of engagement activities in Phase 5 was to share the Plan's recommendations and obtain feedback. The main engagement events of Phase 5 were a pop-up station at the Dogwood Festival, the final Advisory Committee meeting, and formal public hearings in advance of the Planning Commission and Town Council taking action on the proposed Comprehensive Plan.

### Dogwood Festival

The Comprehensive Plan team returned to the Dogwood Festival on April 26, 2025 to get public feedback to draft elements of the Plan including the vision principles, future land use map, future transportation network map, and Big Moves. The public feedback was generally positive. Below is a summary of the public comments:

- The public expressed support for the following Plan concepts:
  - » Moving the Post Office to a better location within Vinton.
  - » Improving downtown to be a pedestrian-first district.
  - » The Multi-Generational Park.
  - » Adding signalized crosswalks of major streets.
  - » Improving walkability and calming traffic.
  - » More activities, especially for families.
  - » Glade Creek Greenway extensions.
  - » More trees, especially native species.
  - » A water park or splash park.
  - » More murals, especially at the Town's gateways.
  - » More gathering spaces downtown with elements that bring people together such as fire pits and restaurants.



Dogwood Festival, in April of 2025

- The public expressed concern about the following issues:
  - » Tent encampments along the greenways.
- The public had mixed reactions to the following concepts:
  - » The proposed lane conversion project for Gus Nicks Boulevard and Washington Avenue. Most people expressed concerns, while a few expressed support.
  - » Roundabouts at major intersections including Hardy Road at Bypass Road and Washington Avenue at Bypass Road. However, most people were in favor of these improvements.



Post-it notes from the Dogwood Festival, in April of 2025

### Advisory Committee Meeting 7

The Vinton Comprehensive Plan Update Advisory Committee held its seventh and final meeting on Wednesday, April 30th. The purpose of the meeting was to obtain feedback on elements of the draft Comprehensive Plan.

### Plan Recommendations

- The Advisory Committee expressed broad support for the concepts in the draft Plan, including the draft Future Land Use Map.
- The lane conversion concept for Gus Nicks Boulevard and Washington Avenue was discussed at length. The Advisory Committee stressed the need for safety improvements, continued vehicle access to the Town and downtown, limiting cut-through traffic on local streets, and the need for education on the issues and possible solutions.
- The Advisory Committee supported the Big Moves, but raised concern that increasing parks, greenways, and green space will come with a need to patrol these areas to ensure safety.
- The Advisory Committee expressed interest in staying engaged and helping the Town implement the Comprehensive Plan.