

- Develop cooperative undertakings with the Franklin Redevelopment and Housing Authority to encourage and assist single-family home ownership, to rehabilitate deteriorating neighborhoods, to encourage welfare to work and self-sufficiency programs, and to encourage and assist the conversion of public housing residents to owner occupants. (Funding depending on projects undertaken)
- Maximize participation in neighborhood revitalization projects such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), HOME and other programs that support the improvement of neighborhoods and housing.
- * • Continue to pursue interest in housing downtown.

Economic Development

Franklin Southampton Economic Development, Inc., formed in 2005, is a public-private economic development partnership between the City of Franklin, Southampton County, charitable community foundations, and the local business community. Franklin Southampton Economic Development is a member of the Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance, a regional organization dedicated to bringing businesses to the larger Hampton Roads region. The organization's mission is to help diversify the area's economy and attract high quality jobs. One of the ways in which Franklin Southampton Economic Development helps improve the local economy is through its management of the Franklin Business Incubator, which is located at 601 N. Mechanic Street in Franklin. The Franklin Business Incubator is a large, modern office building that provides office space, support staff and services, and programs (such as mentorships and training) for new and young start-up businesses.⁶ The Incubator is located in a historic building and is the result of efforts to revitalize the downtown area following the flooding from Hurricane Floyd in 1999. The Franklin Business Incubator opened its doors in May 2005 and was completed in 2011. Franklin Southampton Economic Development was brought on board to manage the Incubator in 2006, and since that time the number of resident businesses has grown considerably. Currently, the Incubator is home to twenty-eight (28) small businesses, ranging from pest control and information technology to counseling and graphic design. These businesses together employ nearly one hundred full-time employees and have total revenues of over \$9 million. The Incubator is an important resource to new businesses trying to establish themselves. Since January 2006, six businesses have started in the Incubator and then moved on to other locations in Franklin or Southampton County; an additional four have moved on to other locations in Hampton Roads.⁷

The Downtown Franklin Association (DFA) is a non-profit organization that promotes the downtown district as a "cultural, civic, historical, and commercial center."⁸ DFA heads Franklin's Virginia Main Street program, established in 1985. This program, managed by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, was established to help revitalize downtown commercial districts by introducing quality design into downtown environments, promoting downtown areas as destinations for commerce and tourism, restructuring downtown economies to capitalize on existing assets, and building partnerships between downtown stakeholders, both public and private.⁹ The national Main Street program is administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.¹⁰ Franklin is one of twenty-five Virginia Main Street communities.¹¹ In addition to the Main Street

6 <http://www.franklinsouthamptonva.com/page/franklin-business-incubator/>

7 Franklin Southampton Economic Development Inc. Franklin Business Incubator Accomplishments 7/27/12

8 <http://www.downtownfranklinva.org/>

9 <http://www.downtownfranklinva.org/page/about/>

10 <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/>

11 <http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/CommunityDevelopmentRevitalization/VirginiaMainStreet.htm>

program, DFA promotes the Downtown Franklin Farmer's Market and community events such as the "We Be Jammin'" summer concert series.

The Franklin Southampton Area Chamber of Commerce was established in 1954 and is a business organization dedicated to improving the area's economy. Over two hundred businesses are members. The chamber provides resources and networking opportunities to members. Many of these resources, including a searchable business directory, are available through the Chamber's website.¹² The Chamber also communicates with area legislators on issues of importance to the Franklin-Southampton business community.

Paul D. Camp Community College, Western Tidewater's Community College, has campuses in Franklin and Suffolk and a smaller center in Smithfield. The campus in Franklin is located near the intersection of Armory Drive and College Drive. The college offers associate degrees and certificates, workforce services and training, and special community interest classes.¹³ The Franklin campus is home to the Regional Workforce Development Center, which provides several services and opportunities to industry and business interests in Western Tidewater.¹⁴ Total enrollment for the college is over 2,600 full- and part-time students.¹⁵

Recommendations

- Continue to support the recruitment of businesses and industries, in order to build a diverse local and regional economy
- Promote industrial and business development within the city by assisting and supporting the Franklin Business Incubator, Franklin-Southampton Economic Development, the Downtown Franklin Association, and similar efforts
- Promote sustained business growth by designating areas for new or growing businesses
- Identify and designate locations appropriate for industrial, commercial, and office development
- Encourage cooperation between educational institutions and local businesses to provide professional development opportunities and career preparation to potential and existing workers
- Coordinate with local, regional, and state organizations to encourage sustainable economic development in a variety of fields, including industry, tourism, and others

¹² <http://www.fsachamber.com>

¹³ <http://www.pdc.edu/about/>

¹⁴ <http://www.pdc.edu/workforce-development/>

¹⁵ <http://www.pdc.edu/about/quick-facts/>

- Work with Southampton County and Isle of Wight County to promote tourism in Western Tidewater
- Work with Paul D. Camp Community College to identify and develop new programs to train and retrain local workers
- Focus on the downtown area as a site for office, retail, and mixed-use development
- Promote Franklin as a tourism destination for historic areas and natural resources throughout Western Tidewater

D. Planned and Recommended Improvements to the Transportation System

Most of the recommended improvements to the transportation system in the City consist of improvements to the roadway system. These and others are described below.

(1) Franklin Municipal Airport

Short, Medium, and Long Range Recommendations

1. Continue construction of T-Hangars as needed.
2. Build taxiway to Runway 9.
3. Install a Precision Approach Path Indicator on Runway 9.
4. Provide parallel taxiway to Runway 27.
5. Rehabilitate runway lights and asphalt on Runway 27.
6. Construct a new maintenance hangar.

(2) Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Recommendations

The City of Franklin Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2009) identified policies, programs, and recommendations for specific facilities. The recommendations are included here.

Short Term Projects (0 to 5 years):

1. Blackwater River Greenway Trail System (Initial Segments)
2. Armory Drive Restriping
3. Downtown Walking Route
4. General Bicycle Infrastructure Improvements (e.g. racks, maps)

Medium Term Projects (5 to 10 years)

1. Blackwater River Greenway Trail System (Additional Segments)
2. Shared-Use Paths
3. Bicycle Access to US 58 Bypass
4. Promote Construction of Northern Walking and Bicycling Activity Area

Long Term Projects (10 to 20 years)

1. Additional Shared-Use Paths
2. Blackwater River Greenway Trail System (Additional Segments)
3. Additional Network Links

(3) Roadways

VDOT has also developed a Franklin 2020 Transportation Plan which is made part of this Plan by reference, which includes recommended improvements to address the transportation and travel needs of the community through the year 2020 and is made part of this Plan by reference. The Plan is part of the agency's Small Urban Areas Transportation Plans project, which is an effort to update plans for towns and cities with less than 50,000 people. The study was based on traffic counts, accident reports, roadway geometric conditions, and a review of the City's tourism and goods movement issues. The Plan was presented to City Council on April 22, 2002 and approved on June 24, 2002. VDOT has recently advised the City it will begin the process of updating the 2020 Plan in 2014.

(4) Rural Long Range Transportation Plan

The Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization 2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan provides a blueprint for the development and maintenance of a rural multi-modal transportation system in the City of Franklin and Southampton County that supports existing and projected travel demands to the year 2035 and complements previously established metropolitan area plans throughout the State. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the region's rural transportation system and recommend a set of transportation improvements that could best satisfy existing and future travel needs. The study identified needs for all modes of transportation, and interaction between modes where a reduction in vehicle trips might be possible. Table 5-4 of the Rural Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRTP) which is hereby made part of this plan shows the location of various roadway system deficiencies and recommendations for the City of Franklin. These deficiencies and recommendations are outlined in the RLRTP. It should be noted that the Hunterdale Road project from Clay Street to the Norfolk & Southern Railroad was completed in November 2014. The 2 million dollar project improvements included pavement widening of 10', the travel lanes were widened to 11' with the shoulders extended 4' for each travel lane to allow for limited bike and pedestrian access. In addition, the turning lane radius on Hunterdale to Fairview was softened for larger vehicles and signal upgrades were made to include CT video detection at Hunterdale and Fairview.

medium to large businesses, and large non-commercial entities. The City also collects yard waste and bulk waste from single-family residences.

All solid waste collected by the City is hauled to a solid waste transfer station operated by the Southeastern Public Service Authority of Virginia (SPSA) on Virginia State Route 671 in Southampton County, from which it is transferred via contract trucks to a waste management landfill in Waverley (Sussex County). SPSA has an agreement to haul the City's refuse there until 2018.

Franklin had participated in automated curbside recycling service through SPSA. However, in 2010, SPSA ended curbside recycling. The City's current recycling program is contracted out through AVES, Inc., and only services residential customers.

F. Electric Utility System

As one of the sixteen municipality owned electric systems in the Commonwealth, Franklin Power and Light purchases bulk power from Dominion Virginia Power through the Virginia Municipal Electric Association (VMEA) and resells it to residential and business customers in the City and in portions of Suffolk and the counties of Southampton and Isle of Wight. The City serves approximately 5,500 customers within a 20 square mile area. The City system has 170 miles of distribution lines (150 miles above ground and 20 miles below ground) and three substations.

G. Planned and Recommended Improvements to Public Utility Systems

General

- Pursue continuous purchases or lease of replacement equipment as needed for Public Works Department and Electric Department.
- Lease or purchase a Geographic Information System (computer based mapping system) for use by the Public Works Department and other City departments as needed.
- Continue to charge a user fee for waste collection and make waste collection an enterprise fund.
- Explore the possibility of "stormwater fees" to help offset the cost of upcoming regulations. *for the pipes instead.*
- Enter into discussions with the staff of adjacent localities to determine their intentions with respect to future land use in the areas surrounding the City and their need for City utilities. Specifically, discuss with Isle of Wight County the opportunity to share its Reverse Osmosis Plant.

- Continue to study shared services system with Southampton County for water and wastewater systems and begin implementation based on the outcome of the study.

Stormwater Drainage System

- Improve the stormwater drainage system in the following areas of the City: Cobbtown, Hunterdale Road, Railroad Avenue, Stonewall Street, Morton Street, and Woodland Drive. In addition, stormwater upgrades will be conducted in any other portions of the City targeted for Community Development Block Grant revitalization.
- Exploration of the use of regional stormwater management facilities is a priority in planning for Franklin's future needs. The City's Office of Community Development as well as its Public Works Department will continue to encourage all development to be mindful of existing users and emphasizes that runoff should be reduced from pre-development levels as to have no direct effect on existing businesses or residents.
- The City should strongly pursue Federal and State assistance to lessen the impacts of flooding throughout the City, especially on the historically hardest-hit areas of the City that include downtown.

Solid Waste Management Stream

- Continue to pursue long-term, fair and equitable solutions to the current solid waste program by exploring landfill alternatives with other localities in the region.

Electric Utility System

The following are projects to be completed within the next five years.

- Install a new electric substation near the City generation facility in Pretlow Park to allow taking delivery at transmission voltage. This will reduce stress on our three existing delivery points, provide more reliable service to existing customers and prepare our system for future load growth and slightly reduce the City's wholesale power costs as well.
- Reconnector 20 miles of overhead circuits to upgrade capacity
- Continue replacing and upgrading aging sections of the system
- Relocate the Electric Department to a new facility to allow expansion of the department as well as provide more space to Public Works.
- Continue to work through the VMEA to obtain the lowest cost electricity for the City and its customers

Why?

Libraries

- Consider the expansion of library facilities within the City where feasible.

Parks and Recreation

- Explore funding that would allow the City to carry out a Main Street Improvements Plan and a Downtown Master Plan to include drainage, parking, and landscaping improvements to the Farmer's Market and areas in the downtown along the Blackwater River.
- Update the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.
- Investigate potential parklands in the Hunterdale area of the City in order to locate a future park facility there.
- Consider upgrades to facilities and expand programming at the King Center and National Guard Armory.
- Consider the construction of a new multi-functional recreation facility and gymnasium on the King Center property
- Pursue locations for walking and biking trails as provided for in the recently adopted City of Franklin Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan, including incorporating them into any adaptive reuse of the Hayden School building.
- Consider upgrades to the park on Bruce Street owned by the Franklin Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

Public Utilities

- W49
- Consider the future needs for new facilities for both the Department of Public Works as well as Franklin Power and Light.
 - Conduct a facility assessment of the adaptive reuse of the abandoned Franklin Residency owned by the Virginia Department of Transportation located on Pretlow Street.

Public Buildings

- Library: The Library located on College Drive is in need of a new roof. There are several trees in near vicinity of the building that should be removed before the new

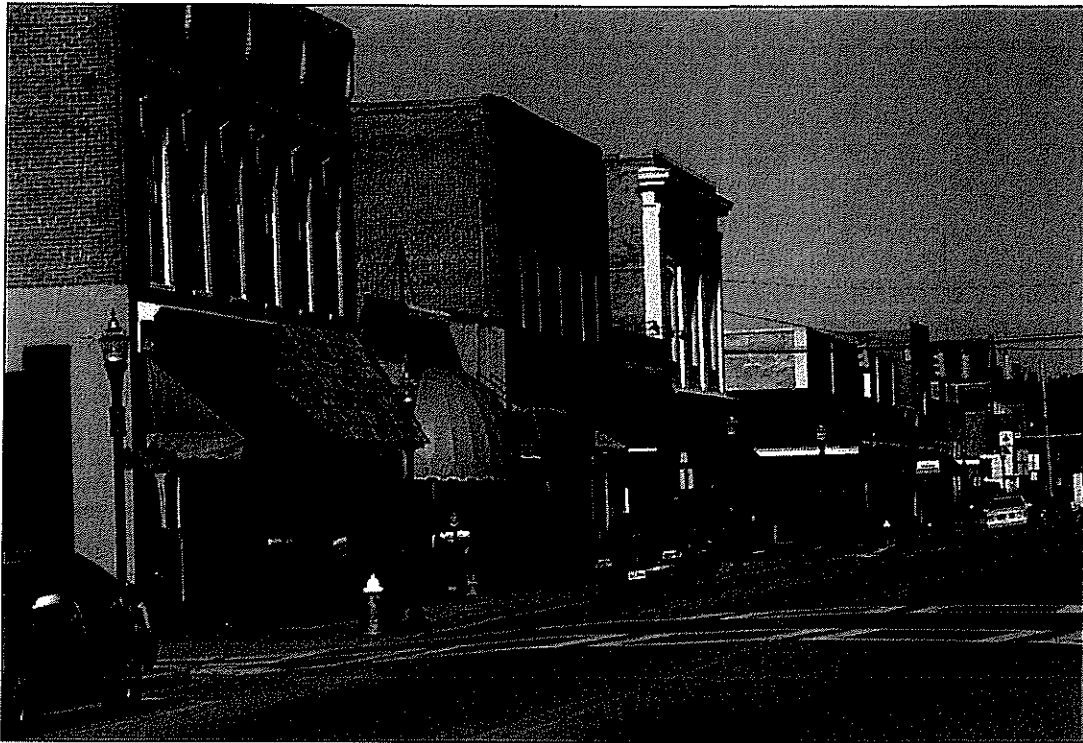
D. Downtown

The continued preservation and utilization of the historic downtown buildings is a critical aspect of capitalizing on the City's existing strengths. Map 8-3 shows the area encompassed by the Franklin Historic District and also outlines the 2000 Floodway and Special Flood Hazard Area boundaries downtown. Restoration efforts following Hurricane Floyd have been quite successful and today many businesses are thriving but the threat of future flooding remains. The City should continue to vigorously pursue Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding for flood proofing non-residential buildings in the downtown area and to elevate existing residential housing units in the special flood hazard area, so as to seek to minimize flooding in the downtown area. The City should also consider seeking brownfields assessment grant assistance through the US EPA to encourage redevelopment of vacant, underutilized, or blighted nonresidential properties in the downtown area, as well as elsewhere throughout the City.

Since 1985, Franklin has been a part of the Virginia Main Street Program. The Program, administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development in partnership with the Department of Historic Resources, ties historic preservation to economic development. As a designated Virginia Main Street Community, Franklin has access to state and national experts in efforts to promote investment in downtown. In addition, the Program provides assistance with design issues and marketing. The City should consider pursuing Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for a possible needs assessment planning grant and facade grants to help property owners further enhance the downtown streetscape.

In October 2006, City Council adopted a Historic Preservation Ordinance wherein exterior improvements and/or development in a designated historic district would require a Certificate of Appropriateness. At this time, an historic district has not been designated.

Following the adoption, the Franklin Historic Preservation Commission was appointed by Council who began working with MDM Historical Consultants, Inc. to develop the Franklin Design Review Guidelines and the new historic district boundaries; however, before this regulatory requirement can be implemented City Council must adopt the proposed boundary. It was recommended in 2006 that the existing downtown historic district boundary be expanded to include residential properties along portions of High Street and Clay Street. It was also recommended in 2006 that Local Historic District Design Review Guidelines be created. Both tasks have been completed, but the closure of the IP mill put the project on hold. The City Council should reconsider the adoption of this boundary so that the integrity of the historic district is maintained.



The introduction of additional housing in the downtown area is also an issue that should be considered. Housing as a mixed use component of downtown businesses would provide additional economic and security benefits for property owners, and would promote activity in the area outside of normal business hours. The city should consider revising the B-2 zoning district to allow mixed-use facilities that support the development of residential housing.

One issue that must be addressed in an analysis of the needs of downtown Franklin is the ability of residents to access the waterfront. The Blackwater River is a valuable asset to the City and should be both utilized and protected. Barrett's Landing Park is an example of the type of facility that can enhance residents' ability to enjoy the river. The use of the area along the river for recreational purposes should be a priority for the City's future. The downtown area is a prime candidate to attract tourism by expanding the existing pedestrian trails along the shoreline to offer greater opportunities for residents to access the riverfront while helping in the protection of wetland areas. The use of the area along the river for recreational purposes should be a priority for the City's future.

E. High Street Historic District

The residential neighborhood directly adjacent to downtown is historic and worthy of preservation efforts. The High Street neighborhood contains some of the City's oldest homes and expansion of the Franklin historic district to encompass this area has provided incentives for restoration and design integrity. Due to the large size of many of the houses, a number of them have been subdivided into rental units, presenting maintenance issues for the neighborhood. It is important to recognize the importance of the homes in this area to the character of Franklin

and take steps to ensure their preservation. The City Council should re-consider this area for adoption within the new historic district boundary so that the integrity of the historic district is maintained. Map 8-3 shows the boundaries of Franklin Historic District.

WHERE'S OLD BOUNDARY

MAP 8-3: FRANKLIN HISTORIC DISTRICT

