

**Town Of Coeburn, Virginia
Comprehensive Plan**



February 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Data Accessed at: U.S. Census Bureau Website, Virginia Employment Commission Website, www.virginialmi.com.

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

In accordance with section 15.2 of the Code of Virginia, an elemental Comprehensive Plan “*shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general and approximate location, character and extent of each feature shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be...in use as the case may be. The plan, with accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter, shall show the locality’s long-range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan. It may include but need not be limited to:*

1. The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use...
2. The designation of a system of transportation facilities...
3. The designation of a system of community services facilities...
4. The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal or other treatment.
5. The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable ground water protection measures.
6. An official map, a capital improvement program, a subdivision ordinance, and a zoning ordinance and zoning district map...
7. The designation of areas for the implementation of measures to promote the construction and maintenance of affordable housing, sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents...

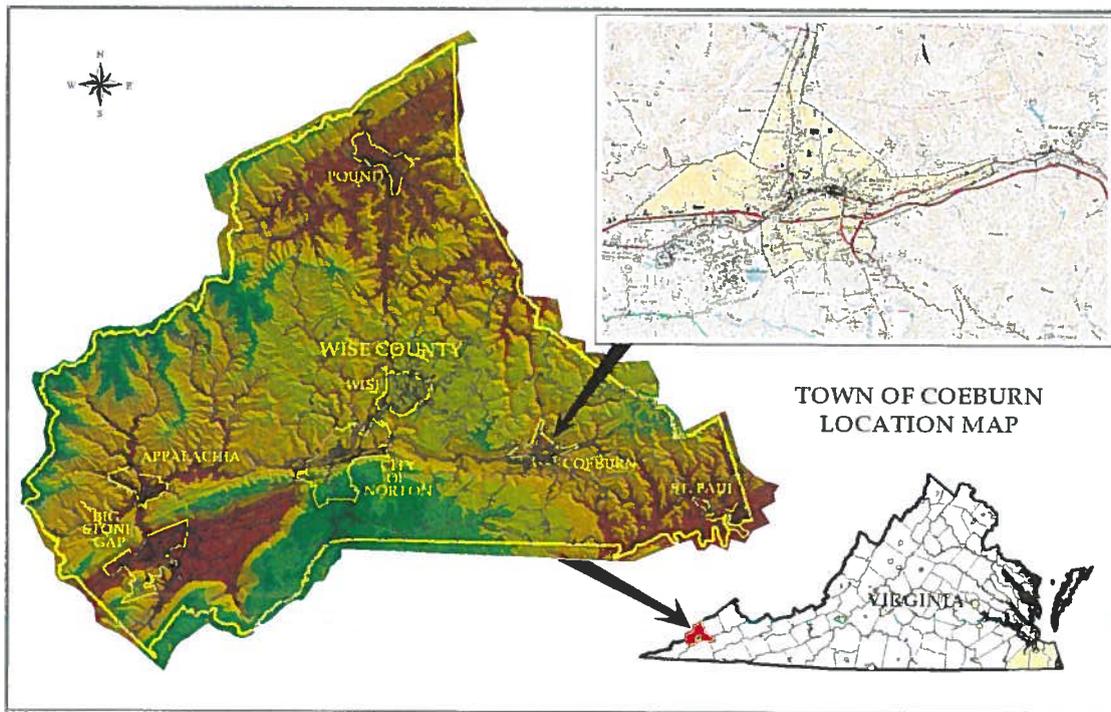
Fundamentally, a Comprehensive Plan should include an analysis of the existing conditions and problems within the municipality along with short and long-range strategies and recommendations for general growth and development. Under the Code of requirements, the Planning Commission should also review the plan at least once every five years to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan.

Ideally, after the development and presentation of the Plan to the public and the Town Council, a final document is adopted with the expectation that it will serve as a foundation for future decisions of the Town Council on issues of importance to the community.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Regional Setting

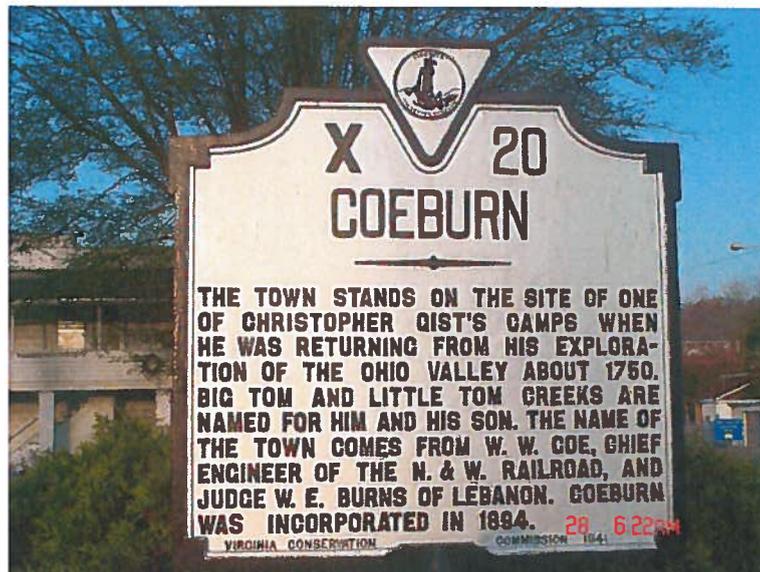
Coeburn is situated in the southeast portion of Wise County, which borders Dickenson County to the north, Russell County to the east, Scott and Lee Counties to the south, and the commonwealth of Kentucky to the west. Alternate Route 58 is the primary transportation route, although bypassing the downtown area. Nearby communities include the town of St. Paul which falls twelve miles to the east and borders the Wise County and Russell County lines, and Wise which is ten miles to the northwest of Coeburn and Home of the University of Virginias Collage at Wise, and the City of Norton which is eight miles to the west, and is the regional center of retail, services, and medical providers. And the Wise and Scott County lines seven miles to the South.



Historical Perspective

Coeburn stands on the site of a camp set up by Christopher Gist when he returned from his exploration of the Ohio Valley around 1750. Originally this camp was named Guest Station after Gist, and Tom's Creek and Little Tom's Creek were named after him and his son.

In 1892, after coal was first mined in Banner, a coal camp located just east of the town, the population of Guest Station began to grow. As a result, the land comprising Guest Station was surveyed, tracts were sold, and the name "guest Station" was changed to Coeburn, in honor of W.W. Coe, Engineer of the Norfolk and Western Railroad and Judge W.E. Burns of Lebanon, Virginia. Coeburn was incorporated as a town in 1894.



As mining activities in and around the town flourished, several sizable mining camps developed and grew as well. Banner, Cranes Nest, and most notably, Tom's Creek, were some of the larger camps. In 1898, George L. Carter bought a number of small coal operations and several hundred thousand acres of coal and timber lands and the following year made extensive improvements and built eight hundred coke ovens in Tom's Creek. In 1903, Mr. Carter organized these operations into the Virginia Iron Coal and Coke Company, also known locally as VICC, which became the economic lifeblood of Tom's Creek and Coeburn for many years.

The Virginia Iron Coal and Coke Company became so successful that the local labor force could not meet the needs of the company's labor demands and immigrants migrated to Tom's Creek for work. Workers in Tom's Creek were supplied the most

modern conveniences in housing, a hotel, schools, stores, a commissary, churches, a post office, a hospital, railroad transportation, and a theater.

Characteristic of the region, the prosperity of Coeburn and its surrounding communities fluctuated in relation to the market for coal. As expected in a resource-based economy, in eras when demand for coal was low, the local workforce was often forced to migrate to more urban areas for purely economic reasons. Significant population losses occurred in times such as the Great Depression in the late 1920's and early 1930's, the 1950's and the 1980's, when many thought the coal industry of southwest Virginia was all but over.

Such periods of widespread outward-migration had a predictably detrimental effect on the region. When a community or region loses a large segment of its youngest, most skilled, most marketable population, over an extended period of time, the negative impact is considerable and not easily overcome.

Physiographic Conditions

The Climate of the area is generally mild winters and warm summers, with a frost free season from early May to early October. Annually, the average daily high is about 63 degrees Fahrenheit with an average low of 43 degrees Fahrenheit.

The total annual precipitation of around 40 inches is reasonably well distributed throughout the year, but it can often be considerably drier in the late summer and early fall. The general area is located in the Guest River watershed and is subject to several types of storms capable of producing heavy rainfall. Because of the mountainous terrain and a small drainage basin the area is subject to high flood waters produced by high intensity rainfall associated with thunderstorm activity.

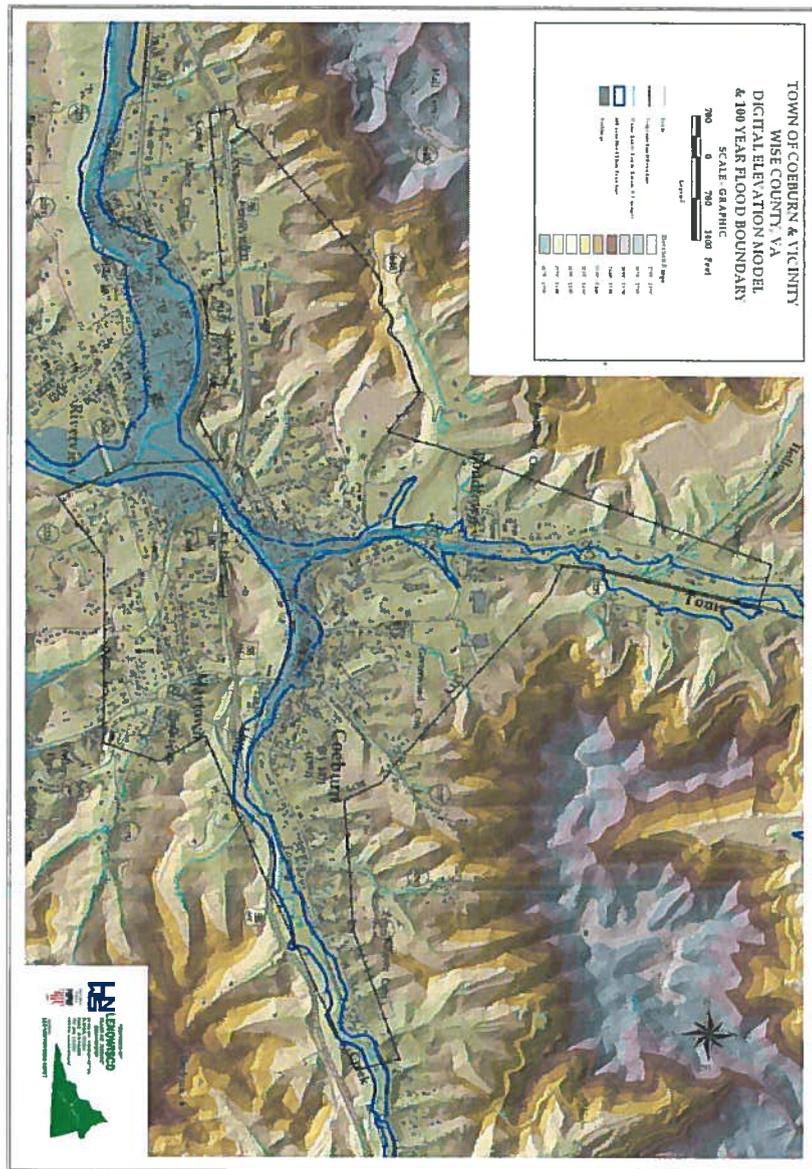
Although the summer season is the most likely time for such occurrences, a January 1957 flood was caused by high intensity rainfall resulting from thunderstorms set off by frontal movement and lifting. The typical winter storms that last for several days and are often producers of floods on the major rivers do not produce extremely high peaks on smaller rivers such as the Guest, unless accompanied by thunderstorm activity producing high-intensity rainfall. Severe flash floods produced by thermal-type thunderstorms in the summer are characteristic of this region, but typically have small aerial extends.

Another characteristic of the region and its high elevation is a fairly high snowfall rate of approximately 19 inches per year. In some instances a heavy snow cover can be a contributing factor to severe flooding, as exemplified in a January 1918 flood.

The Town of Coeburn and the immediate vicinity have experienced numerous floods since the early 1900's. Floodwaters from the Guest River have a tendency to back up in Coeburn (see included 100-Year Flood Boundary map) and create a pooling effect of calm water in the downtown area, which can damage homes, businesses, and other properties.

In order to alleviate some of the downtown flooding problem, the Tennessee Valley Authority has made some channel improvements to the Guest River, Tom's Creek, and Little Tom's Creek over the years, with the first occurring in 1967. This action, in conjunction with flood plain building regulations, has curtailed much of the annual flood damage to Coeburn and its downtown area. It should be noted, however, that despite the past improvements, the April 1977 flood, a "500-year event", exceeded all previously recorded flood levels in Coeburn and was the highest flood stage ever measured along Front Street in Coeburn.

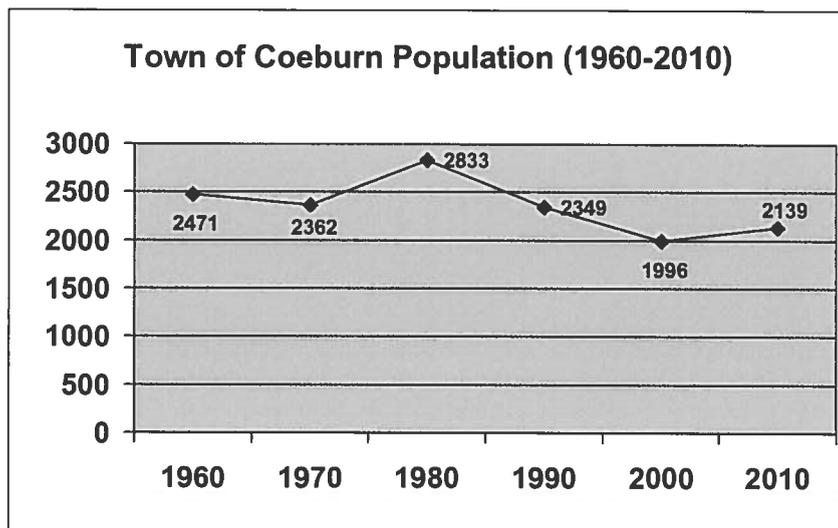
The Natural resources of the area – its forests, soils, and minerals – have historically been a major impetus for development. Strategic timber cutting in the region is still a part of the local economy but agricultural efforts in the Coeburn area are, for the most part, small-scale and not a major part of the local economy, employing many in the region either directly or indirectly.



Demographics

Population

The population fluctuations in the Coeburn area have historically reflected the socio-economic impact of the mining industry. For example, during the 1950's and 1960's, there was an out-migration of the young, more mobile segment of the population due to the lack of employment opportunities. A subsequent growth in population came during the 1970's when the coal industry was booming with a population peak in 1980 of over twenty-eight hundred. A steady decline since that time has seen the population of Coeburn dip below the two thousand mark to one thousand-nine hundred and ninety-six in the 2000 census. However, the 2010 census showed that the population indicated a slight increase to two thousand one hundred and thirty-nine. The slight up-tick in the population in the 2010 census should not be taken as an indication of anything other than a phenomenon due to a temporary boost in the coal industry, which has once again entered a bust period.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

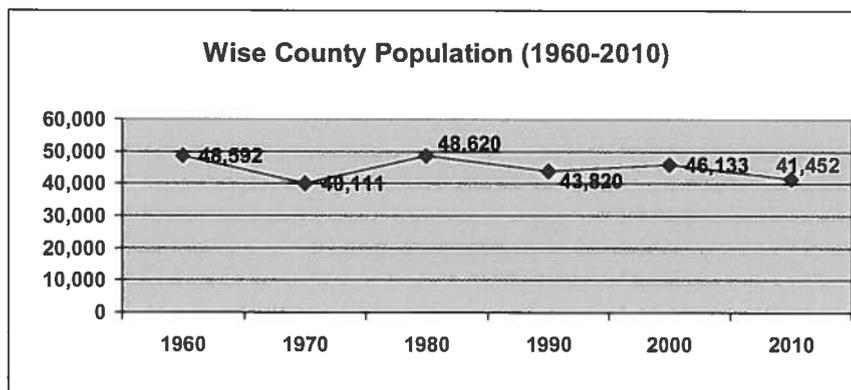
There has again been an indication of decline from the latest information in the census data. The 2011 and 2012 census estimates have shown a small decrease in population, showing a current population in the Town of Coeburn to be two thousand one hundred and twenty-three as of July 1, 2012.

Town of Coeburn Population Estimates (2010-2012)

	April 1, 2010	Population Estimates as of July 1, 2012		
	Estimates Base			
Census Year		2010	2011	2012
Total Population	2139	2140	2132	2123

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

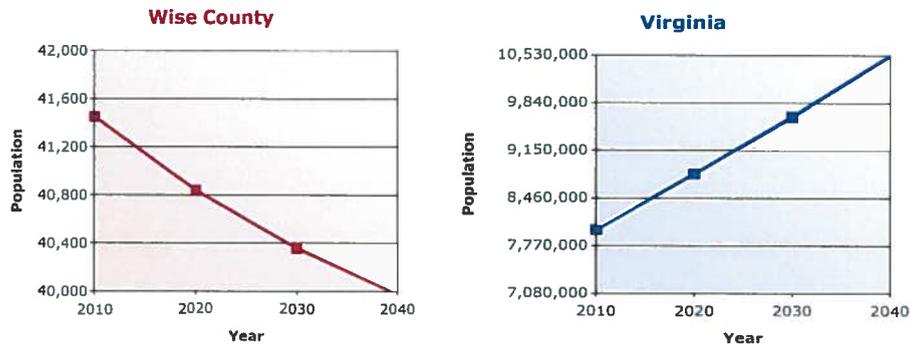
As proof of the Coeburn population numbers, the population trends in Wise County has largely mirrored the Coeburn tendencies with a loss in population in the 1960's, a gain in the 1970's, a peak around 1980 and a decline in the years following. However, the population loss in Wise County during the 1980's has been less dramatic than the loss in Coeburn and has shown some signs of stabilization in the last decade. It should be noted; however, per regulations of the U. S. Census Bureau, the 2000 population count of Wise County included the inmate populace of two recently constructed state prisons within the county. It should also be noted; that the City of Norton is the main business location within this region and you would not expect to see the same declines in those areas that you would see within a smaller less populated, and less business filled area like Coeburn.



Source U.S. Census Bureau

As the following chart indicates, the long term population projections outlook for the Wise County area shows that a steady decline is expected over the next thirty years when compared with the state of Virginia's steady growth during the same time frame. It is believed that this indicator is showing that the regional outlook is going to be bleak for our area for many years to come, and that we must do everything we can locally to entice our residents to stay here in the region and encourage growth ourselves.

Population Change



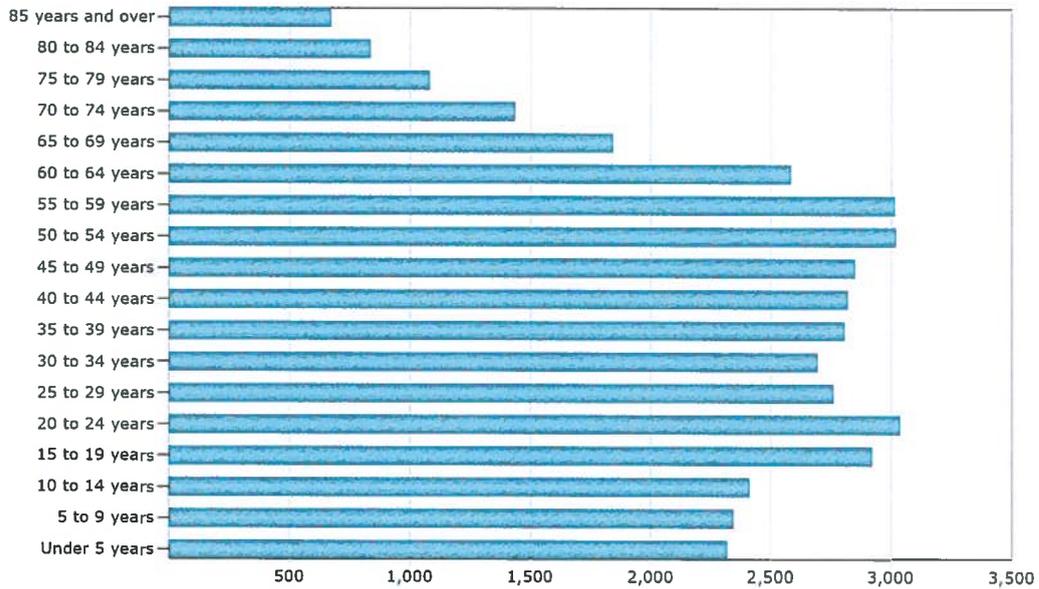
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Virginia Employment Commission.

Due to modern technology there is quicker access to population counts and such information. Therefore, one may be able to more accurately predict population losses and the like. A more measured decline would be the best we could hope for in the immediate future due to the previously stated reasons. Most recently, Coeburn, and more specifically, Wise County, has seen its population loss slowed somewhat. However, there has still been a slight decline in the population numbers according to the most recent census data. In an area such as ours, those slight declines can become problematic in just a very short time. With this in mind, we must act swiftly to stabilize the local economy as much as possible. We believe the recommendation given to Town Council in this plan, if utilized, will make a difference in the population loss we in Coeburn have suffered for so many years.

Age Characteristics

Age characteristics of a population can be used as a rough indicator of the level and types of services which are desired and needed in an area. Each of these age groups generally has certain needs and desires which are quite different from those of other age groups. The following chart shows the breakdown of the Wise County area population by selected age groups. While the trend indicates the sheer numbers locally are remarkable, the percentage of the local population under the age of 20 has dropped 40% since 1960's. While at the same time the percentage of the population over the age of 65 has nearly doubled. The interim estimates indicate that this trend continues.

Population by Age Wise County, Virginia



Source: Virginia Employment Commission

If the long-term projections of the Virginia Employment Commission are also examined, they depict the continued “squeezing” of the local population toward the over age 65 category, a clear indicator that out-migration will continue to greatly outpace in-migration absent a significant change in the regional outlook and economy.

Household Characteristics

Select Characteristics of a locality’s household data can be critical components of any planning initiative. The following tables highlight several significant elements of the households within Coeburn. For example, single person household’s impact public services to a smaller degree than traditional family households, and in 2010, such households numbered just over 23.7% percent of the total households in Coeburn. Conversely, married households, which typically impact public projects and infrastructure to a larger degree numbered 41.4% of the total population in Coeburn.

Town of Coeburn Household Characteristics (2000-2010)

	2000	2010	% of Change
Occupied Households	810	873	+7.225
Household Population	1978	1865	-5.7125
Persons Per Household	2.44	2.42	-.02
Vacant Households	113	130	+13.1
Female-Headed Households	132	145	+8.99
Married Households	407	361	-11.8
Single Person Households	211	308	+31.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

It should be noted that a national trend needs to be recognized at the local level as a factor in the shrinking population of Coeburn and Wise County. Persons per household throughout the United States have dramatically dropped over the past forty years. As a result, in localities such as Coeburn, where the amount of available housing has remained relatively constant over a long period of time, the overall population would be expected to decrease. There is indication that the person per household in Coeburn has dropped over 1.6 persons since 1960. Assuming that Coeburn had approximately eight hundred households in 1960, this alone accounts for a decreased population of over one thousand three hundred people.

Town of Coeburn Households Characteristics 2010

Subject	Number	Percent
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE		
Total households	873	100.0
Family households (families)	568	65.1
With own children under 18 years	234	26.8
Husband-wife family	361	41.4
With own children under 18 years	133	15.2
Male householder, no wife present	62	7.1
With own children under 18 years	24	2.7
Female householder, no husband present	145	16.6
With own children under 18 years	77	8.8
Non-family households	305	34.9
Householder living alone	261	29.9
Male	115	13.2
65 years and over	30	3.4
Female	146	16.7
65 years and over	71	8.1
Households with individuals under 18 years	296	33.9
Households with individuals 65 years and over	227	26.0
Average household size	2.42	(X)
Average family size	2.96	(X)

Housing

Adequate housing has historically been considered a problem within the Coeburn area for several reasons. Like much of the surrounding region, portions of the existing housing stock in and around Coeburn is aged and in need of repair or more active maintenance. In the table below, one can see that housing construction hasn't progressed any in several decades; which have caused a very stagnant market in the area for some time. This in turn affects the housing prices, and with a lower housing value comes a lower tax base for the town. It is in the best interest of all the citizens of the town for Town Council to help improve the housing market as much as possible. Also, encouraging new construction will help of course to build a strong tax base for the town as a whole.

Town of Coeburn Housing Occupancy 2010

HOUSING OCCUPANCY	Number	Percent
Total housing units	962	100
Occupied housing units	873	90.7
Vacant housing units	89	9.3
For rent	26	2.7
Rented, not occupied	3	0.3
For sale only	8	0.8
Sold, not occupied	7	0.7
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	4	0.4
All other vacancies	41	4.3
Homeowner vacancy rate (percent)	1.4	(X)
Rental vacancy rate (percent)	7.3	(X)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Very little new home construction has gone on within or near the corporate limits of Coeburn in recent years, whereas some surrounding localities have made a greater commitment to improving and/or developing new housing. This is evidenced by examining the information listed in the above table for the housing occupancy for 2010 which illustrates the housing stock of Coeburn in the housing data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

An increase of only 45 total Single Family Housing units since 1978, based on the 2000 census, is a fair indicator of a relatively stagnant housing market in the Coeburn area, and the market hasn't improved any since that time. In addition, areas of poorly maintained or substandard housing can be found in most any neighborhood and should be a focus of any potential improvement plans within the town.

As illustrated earlier within this document, the average number of persons per household is a continually dropping figure and if the Town of Coeburn hopes to increase its population over time and remain an attractive option for those looking for housing in the county and region, both the quality and number of housing options in and around the Town of Coeburn will undoubtedly have to trend upwards.

Economy and Income

For decades and decades, the overall economic well-being of the region was completely dependent on the demand and the ability to produce coal. The impact of this dependence has historically been a series of coal related economic fluctuations which are more commonly referred to as “booms and busts.” Typically, the boom periods were characterized by modest population growth and relatively low unemployment rates, while the bust periods saw considerable population loss and double-digit unemployment rates. Most recently, the local economy is seeing another bust period as far as the coal industry is concerned. And as might be expected, the unemployment rates in the area are high, rising a full percentage point over October 2012 to 8.7% in October 2013, and this in an even more divers’ economic climate in nearby areas.

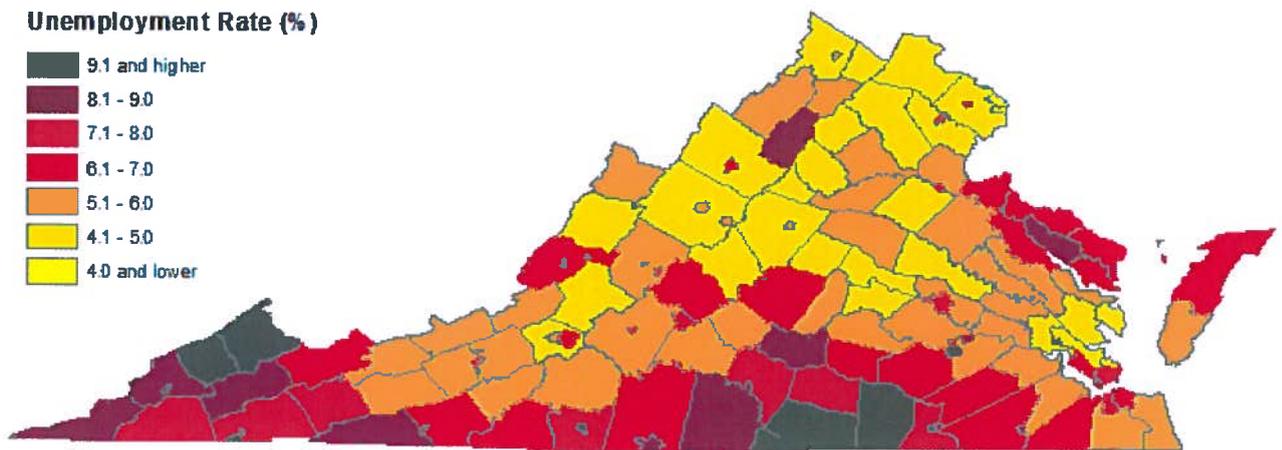
Area	October 2012	October 2013(P)	Net Change
Wise County, VA	7.7	8.7	1.0

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

As can be seen from the state chart shown below, our region of the state has one of the highest unemployment rates in the state. Although that information is not uncommon for this region, it does show that we have to help ourselves to recover from our current dilemma.

Unemployment Rates by County in Virginia

October 2013



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Employment

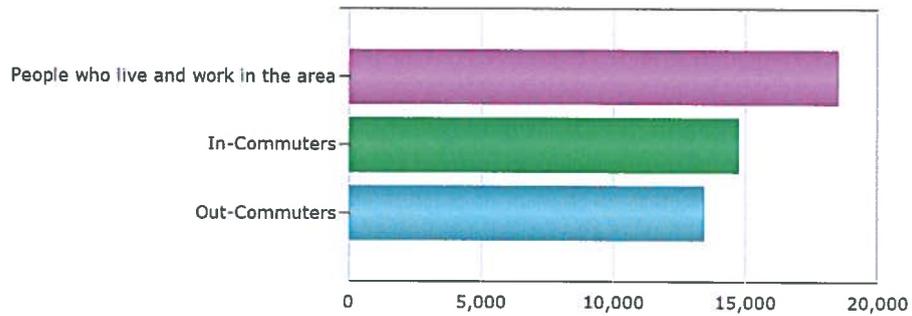
As of the time of this plan, the employment outlook is dim for the local area. The local coal industry is beginning to stabilize at this time, however, the industry doesn't show much in the way of recovery as of yet. As was previously reported, the coal industry isn't expected to regain the number of employees that it once had. This is merely because of a different way of do business on a day-to-day basis. While we see some change in the area in the way of diversification, in Coeburn, this has not yet taken a good hold.

Not all news is bad; there has been stabilization in other sectors of the local economy, the more recently developed government jobs; such as the state prison jobs, the employment gains in nearby Russell County, as well as the expansions at the University of Virginia's College at Wise. These items are potential positive impacts for the Coeburn economy. We must see the bright side of these issues and keep our focus there and move forward towards our recovery.

Another interesting set of data to examine is the commuting patterns of those coming to work in the region. According to the American Community Survey that has taken place from 2007-2011, the in-migration of workers coming to work in the areas of

Lee, Scott, and Wise Counties, out-pace those going out to other areas for work. This seems to be an indicator of a healthier economic environment; however, this isn't obvious in the Coeburn area due to the lack of proper opportunities or incentives.

Commuting Patterns: 2011



People who live and work in the area	18,497
In-Commuters	14,735
Out-Commuters	13,425
Net In-Commuters (In-Commuters minus Out-Commuters)	1,310

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Virginia Employment Commission, *Destination Employment Statistics, 2011*.

Future Employment

The future employment outlook for the entire region is not all bad. However, for the local area in and around Coeburn employment isn't good for the short term. If the growth occupations projections from 2010-2020 for the Virginia Employment Commission are analyzed, it shows that the regional outlook for growth in the areas of personal care to be over 75% by 2020. This only stands to underscore that the area is aging at an alarming rate and should be a focus of local leaders to insure the future of the local economy. We must provide a strategy that will show growth, and retention of our youth population in these hard times. The only way to accomplish that would be to encourage growth in areas that would provide jobs to those in need.

In examining those same publications for the declining occupations in the region, the mining industry and mining related fields are projected to decline by large quantities. When considering the current low numbers these projections are based on, the declines are expected to be tremendous.

The service industry, as well as the tourism market would be an area that great progress could be made. If our ideas and investment are targeted to these kinds of businesses, the payoff could be the saving of our local economy.

Income

While the per capita income of the area has grown over the last twenty years, when viewed in comparison to the statewide average the incredible influence of the Northern Virginia economy is apparent. In 1980 the statewide average per capita income was only 4 percent higher than the average in Wise County and the City of Norton, by 2004, the statewide average was over 62 percent higher than the local mean.

The following tables shows that in this area people find it harder to make ends meet because of the lower scale wages available in the employment sector of the area. The Per Capita Income in the Wise County area is at \$18,693. While the state Per Capita Income is at \$33,326. Also, in a second table below you can see that the median income is half of the state level.

Per Capita Income 2008-2012

Per capita money income in past 12 months (2012 dollars), 2008-2012, Wise County	Per capita money income in past 12 months (2012 dollars), 2008-2012, Virginia
\$18,693	\$33,326

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Median Household Income 2008-2012

Median household income, 2008-2012, Wise County	Median household income, 2008-2012, Virginia
\$35,120	\$63,636

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Land Use

There are seven general categories used to define current land use in the Coeburn area. They are:

- Residential: Land areas primarily devoted to residential usages. These areas may contain permanent single family units, multi-family units, and/or mobile homes not in mobile home parks.
- Residential Mobile Home Parks: Land areas primarily devoted to semi-permanent mobile homes and related facilities.
- Commercial: Land areas primarily devoted to the sale of goods and services. The principle components of this category are urban and central business district shopping centers; and retail, service, and wholesale development along highways.
- Public: Land areas primarily owned by public entities, such as utility sites, water treatment facilities, landfills, schools, and publicly-owned buildings.
- Semi-Public: Land areas, often owned by private, non-profit entities, or sites that are frequented by significant segments of the public. Examples would include churches, meeting halls, cemeteries.
- Industrial: Land areas primarily devoted to light manufacturing and industrial parks, heavy manufacturing and/or coal processing plants and related facilities.
- Vacant/Undeveloped: Includes undeveloped and vacant land, other barren areas of undetermined usage, and very low density residential areas in otherwise undeveloped land areas.

When examining the existing land use map provided, it is clear that much of the land inside Coeburn Proper is classified as Residential with fairly definitive areas of Commercial land along Front Street in downtown Coeburn, around and along the three-way intersection and further west, and along the U.S. Alternate 58 Corridor.

In considering any anticipated changes or developments within and around Coeburn, the Council, Planning Commission, and Administration would be well served in examining the existing land use map and whether such shifts would be problematic or advantageous to the town's long term well-being.

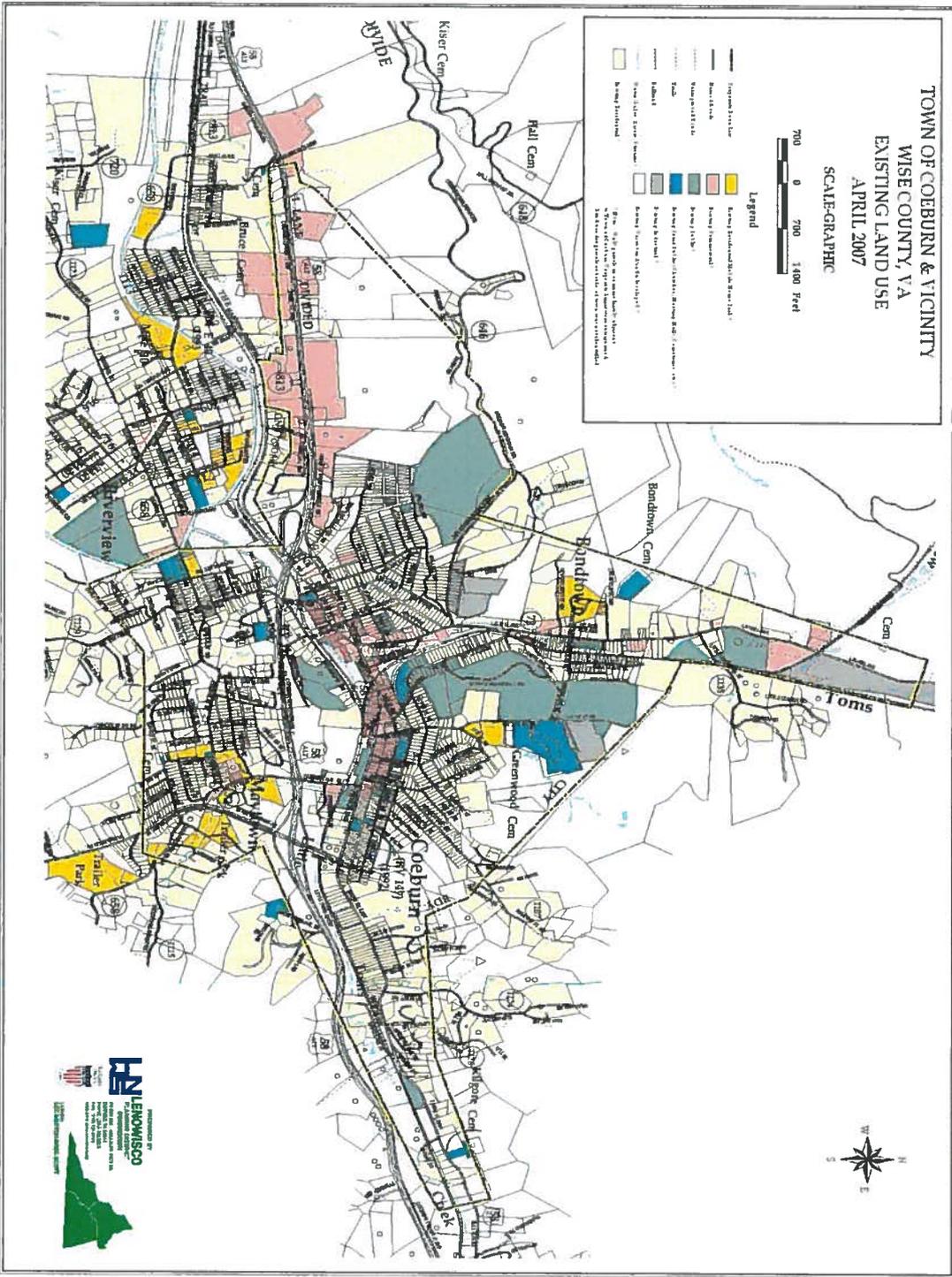
TOWN OF COEBURN & VICINITY
 WISE COUNTY, VA
 EXISTING LAND USE
 APRIL 2007
 SCALE:GRAPHIC



Legend

- Unimproved Parcel
- Water
- Forest
- Wetlands
- Agriculture
- Pasture
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public
- Other
- Empty

Fig. 1017 - Existing Land Use Map of the Town of Coeburn and Vicinity, Wise County, Virginia, April 2007. The map shows the existing land use in the Town of Coeburn and Vicinity, Wise County, Virginia, as of April 2007. The map is based on aerial photography and other data sources. The map is not to scale and is for informational purposes only. The map is not a legal document and should not be used for legal purposes. The map is the property of the Town of Coeburn and Vicinity and is not to be reproduced without the written consent of the Town of Coeburn and Vicinity.



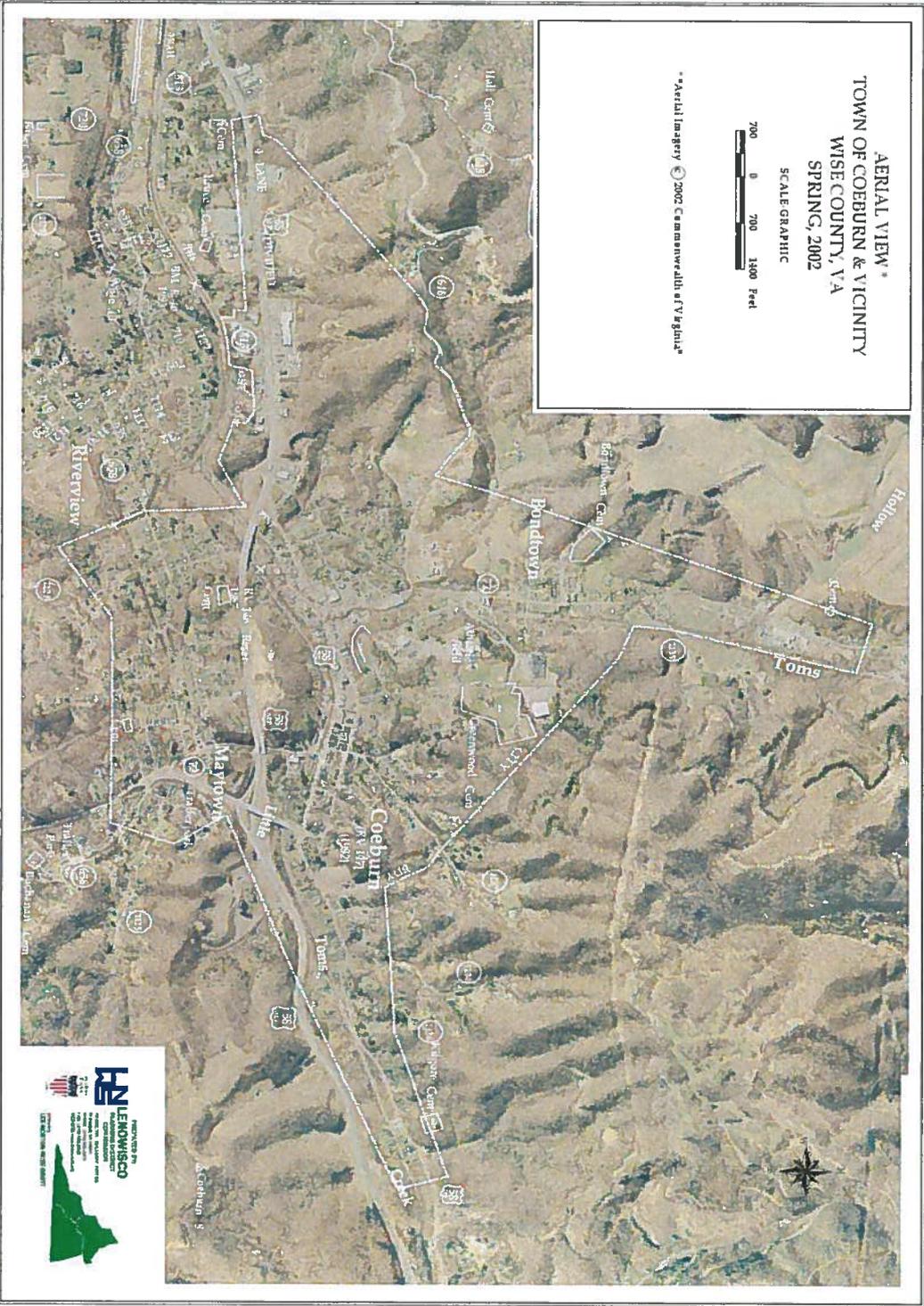
Transportation

Coeburn is bisected by both U.S. Alternate Route 58, a divided four-lane highway, traveling in an east/west direction, and Route 72, a two-lane north/south route. The completion of the "Coeburn By-Pass" as part of the U.S. Alternate Route 58 project in 1996 has had both positive and negative impacts on the Town of Coeburn. On one hand, it has alleviated the heavy flow of traffic through the downtown area; on the other hand, it has taken away the traffic we need to survive as a great business location. Now the only opportunity for a business in the downtown area is one which can function solely on the local traffic now available.

Due to the bypass, downtown traffic has become much more manageable, making several residential areas more attractive to potential homebuyers. Also, as U.S. Alternate Route 58 continues to be improved all along its statewide route, it becomes an increasingly busier commercial route. As a result of this consistent traffic, the commercial district along the western border of Coeburn continues to thrive and maintains its position as a focus of potential development.

There are currently an abundance of retail spaces available in the downtown area. The Coeburn Economic Development Authority is at present starting a new effort to help fill those locations, with that; I would refer you to the recommendations of the Planning Commission for additional information.

In numerous areas within town there is a need to widen streets and make certain changes to the traffic patterns to make some residential areas more easily accessible. This is an issue that can be discussed more in the future when those sorts of changes are more affordable.



Utilities

Coeburn is served by a waterworks system owned by the town, however, is currently operated by a facilities management company: i.e.: Veolia Water of North America, who also currently manage our complete public works division of the Town of Coeburn. It has recently been determined by the current Town Council that upon the expiration of their contract (May 15, 2014), they will NOT renew Veolia's contract, and that the town will make other arrangements for the operation of these services.

The supply for water is taken from the Tom's Creek Impoundment (a concrete dam structure) located above the Toms Creek watershed. During drought conditions, water is also pumped from the "Old" Jenny Mine, providing plenty of water for the residents of the town. The mine water is of a slightly lower quality than the raw water usually supplied from the dam; however it still meets regulation standards for use.

The capacity of the water plant is 1.2 mgd (or 1,200,000 gallons per day.) Relying on both surface and ground water, Coeburn's current average daily production is just over 636,000 gallons, with a permitted capacity of 1.152 mgd (or 1,152,000 gallons per day.)

There are 1,078 water connections within the town, but the system also serves customers outside the corporate limits into both Wise and Scott Counties for a total population served of just over 4,600. The daily water usage average for the month of December 2013 was 215,666 gallons.

In addition to the water connections, there are 996 sewer connections within the town, and 211 out of town sewer customers, for a total of 1207 sewer customers. The wastewater from these connections is treated by the Coeburn-Norton-Wise Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant or (C-N-W Plant.) We utilize 19% of the plant and pay a monthly fee of \$26,376.00 for the service.

There have recently been improvements to the infrastructure in the downtown areas water supply lines that were previously aged and damaged. Nearly all the streets in the downtown area has seen new waterline being laid for the last year prior to this report and plan being released. However, not all streets in the downtown have been replaced as of yet. The sewer lines however, are a project still in need. While aged these lines appear to be holding for now, but will need to be examined more closely to determine how quickly they will need to be replaced.

Community Facilities

A wide range of public services and accompanying facilities contribute to the quality of life in a community. In many instances, the services are mandatory, For example, the role of government is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its constituents and the result is the provision of police and fire protection, sanitation services, and education. Other services, such as recreational facilities, libraries, and public works services are so prevalent as to be expected by most localities residents.

While community facilities are traditionally constructed to serve the existing population, efforts should be made to anticipate and provide for future needs as well. The time required to plan and construct new and expanded facilities can result in a significant decline in the quality of life for citizens of our area. If needs are not identified and planned before the lack of the service becomes apparent it therefore becomes painfully obvious.

Educational Facilities

Secondary educational facilities located within the town are part of the county-wide educational system, operated by the Wise County School Board. Although, a recent change in the high school system consolidating the high schools within the county school system has taken high schools from neighboring towns, we in Coeburn have managed to keep our high school. However, the Coeburn High School, home of the Blue Knights, no longer exists; we are now home to the Eastside Spartans. By consolidating Coeburn High School, and the St. Paul High School into one school, the county now sends those students from St. Paul to Coeburn to attend school. However, this hasn't had the desired effect the school system had hoped for because the students from St. Paul have decided to attend Castlewood High School for their own convenience, and various other reasons. The following table indicates the number of students currently and previously enrolled at each grade level in each of the three Coeburn schools since the 2010 school year.

School Year	Division Number	Division Name	School Name	PK	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
2013-2014	96	Wise County	Coeburn	54	102	88	92	82	107	99	96	97	103	111	105	98	106	1,340
2012-2013	96	Wise County	Coeburn	36	96	97	96	107	95	96	99	100	107	103	100	115	114	1,361
2011-2012	96	Wise County	Coeburn	31	86	97	115	99	95	96	102	102	102	103	114	115	110	1,367
2010-2011	96	Wise County	Coeburn	49	92	127	105	97	103	102	110	99	99	102	107	101	82	1,375

Source: Virginia Department of Education

Since the consolidation of the county high schools; the Eastside High School in Coeburn has undergone a renovation. The Coeburn Middle School has enjoyed the completion of a new gymnasium. And the Coeburn Primary School has also had a new gymnasium built on site. Currently all the schools within the town are operating at below capacity rates. The Coeburn Middle School does have an auditorium on its campus and these facilities are often used for community events.

Higher education offerings near Coeburn include The University of Virginia's College at Wise, the only branch of UVA's home University. With enrollment of just over 2000 students and employing around 300, the impact of the University on the local area is substantial and still growing. We are also privileged to have within driving distance Mountain Empire Community College, a two year College in the Virginia Community College System that has partnered with other Universities to also offer four year degrees in certain fields.

Another educational alternative located just a few miles south of Coeburn is the Flatwoods Job Corps Center. This program, federally funded by the Department of Labor, is operated by the U.S. Forest Service and is designed for underprivileged young people between the ages of 16 to 24 to attain a high school diploma or equivalency (GED), learn an employable trade, and find a job once they have completed their course of study. The facility's service area ranges from Virginia, to West Virginia, Delaware, Maryland to Pennsylvania and has a capacity of 224 students. Many local organizations work with the local Job Corp Center to perform laborious tasks at a low cost while offering in return, on-the-job training opportunities for the students.

Library

Coeburn Community Library, a branch in the Lonesome Pine Regional Library System, is located just off Laurel Avenue and offers many services to the public. In addition to the books and periodicals provided, several other programs are offered to the public, such as children's programs for the preparation of students for school. There is a large meeting space on the top floor of the facility that is frequently utilized by community groups and individuals.

Public Safety

The Town of Coeburn's Police Department has recently gone through a change in leadership and now is fortunate to have a new Chief of Police. Chief Scott Brooks has joined our efforts to operate the Coeburn Police Department and has shown a tremendous capability in his field. Chief Brooks is working to rebuild the department from the ground up, and is operating fully to serve and protect the town with limited resources through these hard times. The department currently employs six full time and one part time Certified Police Officers, including Chief Brooks. Chief Brooks has also worked with the Town Council to replace the failing fleet of small and possibly unsafe police cars; with the current police cruisers, as well as two donated humvee's, we have a safer and more manageable, and reliable transportation fleet for the police department.

The Wise County Sheriffs Department has responsibility for the areas outside the town limits of the town of Coeburn and does a remarkable job with law enforcement in these areas. We do assist the county in a time of need, and the county likewise will assist the town if the need should arise for us.

The town is also very fortunate to have the Coeburn Volunteer Fire Department to serve the town and its outlying areas with fire protection. This department is an organization of dedicated firefighters that work with mostly donated funds to service the area in a very effective and efficient manor.

Both the Police Department and the Fire Department are housed in the Community Services Building located on Front Street in downtown Coeburn. Those facilities are currently serving the needs of the departments, and with a few minor repairs to the facility, can continue to do so for the near future.

While the Town of Coeburn no longer has a volunteer rescue squad, a privately-owned Emergency Medical Technician service is located within the town. In conjunction with the Coeburn Police Department, and the Coeburn Fire Department, these EMT's help respond to emergencies such as auto accidents, house fires, and the like.

Public Administration

Coeburn's Town Hall is located on the corner of Centre Street and Second Street and is in the former home of the Coeburn Community Library. This office houses the Town Manager's office and the administrative staff for the Town of Coeburn. This location has been recently remodeled and will serve the needs of its occupants for many years to come.



Health Facilities

Three Community clinics are located within the town limits offering the services of physicians, physicians' assistance, and nursing care. Urgent Care and hospitalization needs are met in the hospitals in the City of Norton.

Recreational and Cultural Facilities

Several options for recreational activity are located in and around Coeburn; however, these areas could be enhanced with more for the younger people of the town. Currently within the corporate limits of town is:

- Ringley Park, located in the eastern part of downtown and offering children's playground equipment, covered picnic area, and a gravel walking track;
- John McKilgore Park, which is located in the northern end of town and offers two tennis courts, a basketball court, Also located in this area is the Cultural Arts Building, which is a privately owned location that is available to the public for rental for private events. Coeburn had owned the property where the high school baseball and track facilities are located; however, this property was given to the Wise County School Board by previous Coeburn Town Council. The Wise County School Board now owns the local Eastside High School's baseball facility located in this park, as well as the field and track facility for the Eastside High School. The town owned Coeburn Swimming Pool is located here also. This facility is operated in coordination with the local school schedule and the facility

is open from the last day of school and thru the summer until school returns in August.

- Bondtown Park, also in the northern end of town, offers children's playground equipment and a gravel walking track.
- Lay's Hardware Building is a publicly owned building, owned by the Town of Coeburn and is located on Front Street in the heart of the downtown area. The commercial facility currently houses the non-profit organization known for its bluegrass performances and the occasional special event.
- The former Train Station Depot is also a publicly owned location that is owned by the Town of Coeburn. This property's current use is the site for the Town of Coeburn's Council Chambers, as well as a location the town rents to the public for private events. This location is also used for various community groups to meet.
- Located adjacent to the Train Station Depot is the Robert Hale Amphitheater. This is an outdoor theater venue with a covered stage area near the Train Station Depot with seating to accommodate approximately one hundred to one hundred and fifty people.
- In the spring of 2013 was the opening of the Coeburn Improvement Association's Farmers Market. In the first year of operation it was located in the downtown area adjacent to the Train Station. For the 2014 season, however, the Farmers Market will relocate to the corner of Front Street and Grand Ave. in the area designed for a Farmers Market. The Farmers Market is sponsored by the Coeburn Improvement Association, and has proven to be a success in its first year of operation. Ms. Shirley Cassidy is the person in Charge of this venue for the Coeburn Improvement Association, and has done a tremendous job in the opening and operation of this public service for the Town of Coeburn.
- Congregate Nutrition Program is one of the original services offered by Mountain Empire Older Citizens through the Older Americans Act. The service includes a hot nutritious noontime meal and a variety of activities designed to enhance the wellbeing of older adults. Each congregate nutrition center is part of the Wellness Is Now or "WIN" initiatives and activities focus on disease prevention and health promotion by offering a low impact exercise program, health screenings, nutrition and health education, as well as music, storytelling, quilting, crafts, games and recreational outings. Most WIN centers provide community group respite service during regular hours of operation. Sites are located at Norton, Coeburn, Pound, Big Stone Gap, Appalachia, Hiltons, Nicklesville, Ewing, and Pennington Gap. The WIN Center for the elderly in Coeburn is located next door to the Lay's Hardware Building in the downtown area.



Area outside of the town limits that are frequently use by citizens from around the region for recreational activities include locations such as:

- Guest River Gorge, a scenic hiking/biking trail along an old railroad bed overlooking the Guest River and just a few miles south of Coeburn in the Flatwoods area,
- Bark Camp Lake, a body of water frequently used by fisherman and boaters and is located west of the town in an area just across the Scott County Line,
- Also located in Wise County is Little Stony Falls. A hiking trail in within the Jefferson the National Forest. This trail is also in the southern part of the Flatwoods community.
- To the East of Coeburn in the Banner section is the Dan Hall Mountain Golf Course, Known to be “Virginias Highest Golf Course”. This facility offers a nine hole golf course, as well as a bed and breakfast lodge, and has breathtaking views of Coeburn from above.

Coeburn Comprehensive Plan Goals

The End of Business as Usual

A down turn in the mining industry as a whole has caused a loss of local Coal Severance Tax Funds for everyone around. It has hurt none more than it has Coeburn. The Town has also seen losses in the sales tax revenue, and other revenue sources that they normally could expect to depend on for funds to operate. In addition, Coeburn is faced with other local financial problems that are already being addressed.

There has been a diversification in other areas near Coeburn. So far diversification has yet to take place within the town. We in Coeburn still rely heavily on the coal industry or coal related fields. Even the service oriented areas of business struggle when the coal industry slows because of our dependence on coal. This makes it impossible for those without jobs to stay and find other work within the area. The coal industry has suffered a loss of orders and has again found itself in a very difficult situation with the slowing of local mining. This has once again affected the area negatively.

We have missed out on the previous opportunities available to us, that just a few years ago were within reach with proper guidance. The ability to gain from the new high tech jobs in Lebanon with CGI-AMS, as they opened a new call center. As well as the University of Virginias College at Wise as they invested in new capital improvement projects, and have shown a tremendous growth in their student population. Also, the new electrical power generation plant that has located in nearby St. Paul, Virginia, has created a number of jobs in the area, and is within commuting distance of Coeburn. That growth and those investments are benefiting the area as a whole. However, it has not helped locally, and Coeburn has not seen any gain from these projects.

With that having been said, now is the time to move forward and leave the past behind us, not forgetting the lessons learned from the current problems we now face.

A Good Place to Live

Undoubtedly, most residents of Coeburn already consider our town to be a good place to live. After all, Coeburn is known as the Home of Friendly People. That attitude needs to be enhanced and expanded so that the perception of a growing number of people not already living in Coeburn start to see the town in the same positive way. Currently others in the region and elsewhere shy away when they hear “The Town of Coeburn” because of recent events connected to our town. Hopefully, with the cooperation of ALL involved, WE, can vastly improve the image of our town as one of harmony, peace, friendliness, and tranquility, while we forge ahead to make Coeburn the best place to live and work in the entire region. Now we must begin our resurgent efforts as a functional business location. We need to put a better face on our town for everyone to see.

At the Base of the Housing Market

A foundation from which to build such an enhanced image of the town could be the development of new housing. In Coeburn there is room for improvement in this essential ingredient to a community’s quality of life.

There are no new housing units being built within Coeburn because of the current lagging economy. However, there is historical evidence from past economic down-turns that the local economy will begin to regenerate at some point and hopefully we can encourage the building of new homes within town limits at that time. Coeburn is currently endowed with aging homes and a number of mobile home parks. There is opportunity for progress in these areas with proper community enhancements upgrading the quality of housing inside the town limits. Keeping in mind that the resident’s financial capability is paramount to the regulations set in place for housing updates. If the Town of Coeburn makes these regulations so stringent that they are unattainable, then opportunity for progress has not been created. Actually just the opposite effect will be felt. We will continue to lose residents to other areas that do think of these factors when considering regulation for housing.

Adoption of the appropriate ordinances for the regulation of land-use could result in a very visible change within the town. Sidewalks, concrete street gutters, and dedicated space for recreation incorporated into site plans for new developments are potential examples. Requirements for decreased density might be implemented for existing mobile home parks as old units are replaced with new ones. This might be an appropriate change for future growth for the community as a whole.

Increased regulation of housing development does generally bring some increase in costs. The position of the Planning Commission is that a need exists to reevaluate the requirements for manufactured housing within the town limits. It would benefit residents

if there were enhanced efforts by the town to promote further development in this area for the future of the town.

There is a lack of sufficient housing units in the town of Coeburn of the type that would elevate the standards of the overall housing market in the town. The Planning Commission does advocate the prioritizing and development of these types of housing units within town. Also, we would advocate the development of multi-family style units such as condominiums. It is believed this type of housing units could invite a more favorable view of the town as a whole as well.

There are still areas available for new subdivision development and site home construction within the town. While limited in scope, these site areas would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, using the same criterion for each site. The appropriate land characteristics are capable of being developed with proper planning by the land owners, and regulations that allow the development to move forward. Of course, the Wise County Building Inspectors office is in charge of the general regulations as the town has opted to allow them to oversee these areas of code enforcement. They would only need our ordinances for guidance within the town limits.

Capital Improvement Plan

A jurisdiction without a vision of its future leaves that future in jeopardy. A popular quote from John Wooden, legendary Hall of Fame UCLA basketball coach and life guru says it this way; "Failure to plan is planning to fail." A logical next step for the Town of Coeburn would be to begin the journey to recovery from the current financial situation. For example, the steps which have already begun with the decision not to renew the current Veolia Management Systems contract and to decide what form of public works will be developed. For a town the size of Coeburn, this contract is just not a viable or sustainable option as determined by the Town Council. The cheaper and more reasonable option is for the town to run the public works department themselves. While this is an expensive venture from any approach to undertake, it is necessary, and there is no other option for the town at this point in time because of our current financial position.

Segregating those expenditures already taking place within the town's budget that are for capital projects is a starting point. Another is identifying those capital improvement projects in infrastructure that are needed for the town to continue to grow and become a viable part of the regional economy.

Recommendations

It is the recommendation of the Planning Commission, that the Town of Coeburn's Town Council determine as a matter of policy, what level of budgetary reserves are appropriate and desirable for the town. An official minimum target level could be stated as a percentage of the budget. Example: "100% of the town budget". So, if the town budget for a given fiscal year were \$3,000,000.00, then the minimum amount to be held in reserve would be \$3,000,000.00. If in fact the reserve falls below the amount set by official policy, it is understood by all members of the Council that any new or available surplus funds will go first directly to the replenishment of the reserve fund. This official policy should be clear in stating exactly what this fund would be disturbed for.

With the current projects at the University of Virginia College at Wise, and at Mountain Empire Community College have had a positive impact on the region as a whole, Coeburn has not yet seen any gain from these improvements. If the leaders of the Coeburn community would encourage our young people to attend these facilities, we could see a benefit from this in the future.

The Town of Coeburn's Economic Development Authority is currently marketing the empty business property located in the downtown area. The EDA recently developed a facebook page, as well as a brochure to help market these properties for the owners at no charge. This has been done in an effort to bring new business to the downtown area. The Planning Commission supports the steps taken in regard to this effort.

The Planning Commission recommends that Town Council should market the town as a friendly business location by possibly giving some incentives to those wishing to open a business within town. For example, providing tax breaks for the first year for entrepreneurs to come to the Town of Coeburn to start their new business.

There was recently an ordinance passed by Town Council that will allow All Terrain Vehicles' on some of the streets of Coeburn. These efforts by Town Council to bring Spearhead Trails into the downtown business district will help to encourage spending in the downtown area businesses. The Planning Commission fully supports this plan by council.

We have several untapped resources within town that have not been capitalized upon. One location is the Train Depot. This needs to be looked at as a source of a local tourism pull for the town. This location should be considered for a renovation project for a museum, and retail type facility. This is a project that we could possibly get the railroad involved in together with the town. The Train Depot could be a wonderful asset not only to the town, but also to local businesses. This would be a long term project, and could be accomplished with grants for the most part. However, this idea will mean sacrifice for a

few, as it would require a relocation of the current Town Council Chambers. We think this can be accomplished with a minimal amount of effort, and is a viable idea to pursue.

The Town of Coeburn owns several properties within town. Although there is a need for certain property for the functioning of the municipality, and the strength of borrowing power for the town, the excess property within the town should be disposed of. The disposal of these properties is a way of assisting in the recovery of necessary operating funds and to redevelop and increase the town's savings account, or "reserve fund." Also, these funds could be used to help reestablish the public works department.

As even the most recent U.S. Census data indicates, the population in the Town of Coeburn is of the ageing category with many citizens on a fixed and low income scale. For these reasons there needs to be some easing of town ordinance's that doesn't allow single wide mobile homes within the town limits, unless it is inside an approved mobile home park. This restriction can keep some from owning affordable housing inside the town limits. Easing current restrictions will help to retain our citizens and keep our population on an up trend which can help to attain more money for capital improvement funds for infrastructure through federal and state grants. The idea of easing these restrictions may alarm some; however, with proper zoning and ordinance regulations in place, and the improvements of the single wide mobile home industry as a whole, makes this another viable option for affordable housing within the Town of Coeburn. This will also help to build a robust tax base for the Town of Coeburn.

In direct relationship with the affordable housing previously mentioned, the current Planning Commission DOES advocate the building of new single family housing within the town limits of Coeburn; this is also reflected in the attitude of the current Town Council members as well. We as a Planning Commission also advocate the building of multi-family, and condominium style housing, to round out the housing market availability for all who seek out this type of housing.

Nice, affordable rental housing could be an area where Coeburn could encourage the rental property owners to be college student friendly as well as ATV friendly landlords, and the Town Council should advocate marketing to those segments.

The Town Council should consider looking at the area to the west of the Town of Coeburn along the route 58 Corridor for annexation into the town limits. This area appears to be the direction of growth for the business community wanting to locate here. Again, this would be a consideration for long term planning and would also be a quick return for the town. There are currently businesses located here to gain immediate tax revenue from. Annexation should not only be looked at from the stand point of the business corridor, but the out lying areas that surround the corridor that would be appropriate for housing off to the peripheries.

There needs to be a plan of action for the infrastructure of the Town of Coeburn. For example, the replacement of the remainder of the water lines, and the entire sewer line system that should be placed on a schedule for constant care with continual plans in place for constant update. This is so potential customers will be able to consider reliable utilities when they are deciding where to locate.

As a first step in the implementation of a CIP, the Planning Commission recommends that the town evaluates the remaining aging infrastructure of the town so that a strategic plan for improvements can be commissioned with a sensible and open list of priorities.

Town Council relies on the Wise County Emergency Management Office to adopt and implement an official Emergency Operations Plan of action for power outages, floods, snow storms, and the like. When these situations arise the town will be prepared to act immediately through the coordination of the Chief of Police and the Mayor with the Emergency Management Office. As a recommendation, the Town of Coeburn should consider a cadre of trained volunteers to respond to emergency events and to prepare shelters. (American Red Cross, Community Emergency Response Team, Faith Organizations, etc.)

A final recommendation for Town Council to consider is the development of improvement zones within the town. The Council could set-up a schedule and a plan for different areas to ask residents to make any improvements to their property that may be needed during a specified time frame, and offer to help with such things as trash removal during this time at no cost to residents, doing this with the hopes that improvement zones will help to improve the overall image of the town as a whole. A suggestion would be to begin this in the spring and summer of 2014.

It is further recommended that the Planning Commission, the Town Council, as well as other committees in the Town of Coeburn review this plan regularly for updating as needed for their guidance for future endeavors.