

2  
0  
2  
2



## **Town of Pennington Gap, Virginia Comprehensive Plan**

**Town of Pennington Gap  
528 Industrial Drive  
Pennington Gap, Virginia  
24277**

**(276) 546-1177**

**Adopted by the Town Council of  
Pennington Gap on:**

**TOWN OF PENNINGTON GAP,**

**VIRGINIA**

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**YEAR 2040**

**VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

**Prepared for the Town Council of the Town of Pennington Gap, Virginia by  
the Town of Pennington Gap Planning Commission with technical assistance  
provided by the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission**

**Town of Pennington Gap  
Mayor and Council Members**

Larry W. Holbrook, Mayor

Jill Carson  
Gary McElyea  
Jeff Martin  
Terry Pope  
Jimmy Warner

**Town of Pennington Gap  
Planning Commission**

Thomas Beck  
Tim Carpenter  
Rev. John Grimm  
Jeff Martin  
Loretta See-Chairman

# Town of Pennington Gap, Virginia Comprehensive Plan

## Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Section I- Profile of Community	6
Community Facilities	6
Related Plan Activities	15
Environmental Characteristics	17
Population Characteristics	18
Economic Characteristics	20
Family Characteristics	21
Housing Characteristics	22
Social Characteristics	23
Section II- Goals and Objectives	25
Environmental Goals and Objectives	25
Transportation Goals and Objectives	25
Housing Goals and Objectives	26
Public Facility Goals and Objectives	26
Economic Growth Goals and Objectives	27
Implementation Goals and Objectives	27
Land Use Goals and Objectives	28
Section III- Implementation of Plan	29
Section IIII- Existing and Future Land Use Map	34

# INTRODUCTION

## LOCATION/HISTORY

The Town of Pennington Gap is located in far southwestern Virginia. The Town is situated in central Lee County, the southwestern most county in the Commonwealth, tucked between the neighboring states of Kentucky and Tennessee. The Town of Jonesville, the county seat of Lee County, is located six miles west of Pennington Gap, while the Town of Big Stone Gap, in adjacent Wise County, is 16 miles to the east. U.S. Highways 58 and 421 and numerous secondary roads serve the Town.

The Town of Pennington Gap came into existence with the extension of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad's Cumberland Valley Division in 1890. The Town is named for the mountain pass situated nearby. As far as can be determined, the name "Pennington" came from an early settler to the area. Soon after the coming of the railroad, the Town was incorporated in 1892.

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

In accordance with section 15.2.2223 of the Code of Virginia, "The comprehensive plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or 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...Such plan, with accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter shall show the planning commission's long range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan. It may include, but need not be limited to:

- The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use...
- The designation of a system of transportation facilities...
- The designation of a system of community service facilities...
- The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal...
- An official map, a capital improvement program, a subdivision ordinance, and a zoning ordinance and zoning district map.

Further, as a minimum "in the preparation of a comprehensive plan, the local commission shall survey and study...use of land, characteristics and conditions of existing development, trends of growth or changes, natural resources, population factors, employment and economic factors, existing public facilities, drainage, flood control and flood damage prevention measures, transportation facilities, the need for housing..."

The Comprehensive Plan is prepared for design year 2040 for the Town of Pennington Gap. The Plan is intended to reflect current conditions and the current objectives of local officials and citizens of Pennington Gap, but will also set forth a series of long range objectives to allow for anticipated conditions occurring within the next twenty years.

## **PLAN ORGANIZATION**

The Pennington Gap Comprehensive Plan consists of three major sections.

The first section presents a profile of the community, including a brief review of related plans and activities that may have an influence on planning for the Town, physiographic and natural features, population characteristics and trends, local economy and employment data, and a housing and neighborhood analysis. The community profile serves as a basis for analysis of the physical development potential and the social economic well-being of the Town.

The second major section of the Plan presents the goals and objectives as determined by the existing land use, transportation, utilities and community facilities, and summarizes major findings of the background analysis in terms of planning factors that influence future development.

The third major section of the Plan deals with specific implementation of Plan recommendations through the zoning and subdivision ordinances and capital improvements program.

## **SECTION I - PROFILE OF COMMUNITY**

### **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

#### **Parks and Recreation Areas**

Leeman Field offers numerous recreational opportunities. The park has basketball, tennis and volleyball courts, a walking path, swimming pool, skate park, pavilions, picnic tables and public restroom facilities. The park also has Little League baseball fields, ATV trail access, and RV park. The Town of Pennington Gap is responsible for the daily upkeep and maintenance of the park.

Nearby recreational opportunities are also available at Cumberland Bowl Park, located in the Town of Jonesville, and at the Wilderness Road State Park and the Jefferson National Forest.

#### **Libraries**

Libraries provide an important recreational and educational service for the public. These facilities can be used at no charge and are enjoyed by all age groups. Pennington Gap is served by the Lee County branch of the Lonesome Pine Regional Library System. The Lee County branch houses the second largest number of hardback volumes in the Lonesome Pine Regional Library network. The library also contains a large number of paperbacks, periodicals, records and CD's, microfilm and videos for public use. The library has seven full time employees and is open 54 hours per week.

#### **Town of Pennington Gap Water Treatment Plant**

The Pennington Gap water system is owned and operated by the Town. The principal source of water is the Powell River. The Town has a plant capacity of 2 million gallons per day.

The present system has approximately 1,300 connections located within the Town's boundaries. The system also provides water service to areas outside the Town's corporate limits, and wholesales water to Woodway, Dryden, St. Charles and the Lee County Public Service Authority.

#### **Town of Pennington Gap Wastewater Treatment Plant**

The Town of Pennington Gap has a wastewater treatment plant with a design capacity of 600,000 gallons per day. The system serves roughly 1,000 connections, both within and outside the corporate limits, plus handling effluent from Dryden, St. Charles, and the Lee County PSA.

#### **Public Safety**

The residents of Pennington Gap are served by three law enforcement agencies – the Pennington Gap Police Department, the Lee County Sheriff's Department, and the Virginia State Police. All three focus as separate law enforcement bodies, but exhibit complete cooperation in any situation calling for interdepartmental assistance.

The Pennington Gap Police Department has jurisdictional responsibility over all areas within the Town's corporate limits. The Department answers approximately 225 calls per month.

The Town is also a member of the Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority, which allows housing of inmates to take place at the regional jail facility in Duffield, in neighboring Scott County.

Pennington Gap also has a 20-member volunteer staffed fire department funded by the Town. The department answers an average of 150 calls per year within the Town's corporate limits and outside the town limits and is also primary agency for the Woodway and St. Charles areas as well. Pennington Gap Fire Department has a current ISO rating of Four inside the town limits and a Four B outside the corporate limits within a five-mile radius of both Pennington and Woodway.

The Town is also served by several different Volunteer Rescue Squads and one private Emergency Medical Service. These include C-Trans Medical Services and the Jonesville, St. Charles, Keokee, and Dryden Volunteer Rescue Squads.

### **Medical Services and Facilities**

Lee County health care facilities consists of a newly-reopened county hospital located in Pennington Gap, a county health department, and several private medical practices and health clinics. These include: Dr. Maloney Pennington & Jonesville Offices, Dr. Litton of Litton Family Medicine, Stephanie Purvis FNP, Mona Speak FNP of Family First Medical, ARH, Hopkins Medical, Stone Mountain Health Services, and Dr. Bell in Rose Hill.

In April 2014, the Lee County Board of Supervisors formed the Lee County Hospital Authority (LCHA) to head the effort to secure a new health care facility for the County. LCHA with overwhelming support from the citizens, municipalities, and elected officials began the laborious and lengthy process of trying to achieve this goal. Attracting a health care provider that could envision the benefit of serving a rural area was quite challenging. After a number of attempts and 8 years, their persistence was rewarded when Ballad Health agreed to reestablish a hospital in July 2021. The Lee County Hospital Authority now exists to help facilitate community concerns and needs with the hospital.

Since its opening in July 2021, the Lee County Community Hospital has provided crucial services for the residents of the county. The facility is a critical access hospital with 10 Emergency Rooms, 10 Inpatient/Observation Rooms, Radiology (to include CT, Ultrasound, and Digital Radiography), and a Laboratory.

The Lee County Health Department was built in 1971 and is located in Jonesville. It is one of three health departments in the LENOWISCO Health District. The Health Department is staffed with physicians, nurse practitioners, public health nurses, environmental health specialists, dentist, nutritionists, and support staff. They play a major role in protecting the health of all of the residents of Lee County. This is accomplished in a variety of ways, including preventative health measures, primary care services, and health promotion and education.



St. Charles Health Council Inc., doing business as Stone Mountain Health Services, provides primary health care for Pennington gap and Lee County, Virginia. Its patients include Medicaid and Medicare patients, private insurance patients, private pay patients, uninsured patients, and has a sliding fee scale for qualified low income persons. St. Charles Health Council, Inc. currently employs 5 doctors and 7 nurse practitioners in additions to benefits counselors, respiratory therapists, and behavioral health counselors to provide services. The Health Council services include:

- Routine, primary medical services for all ages.
- A Pharmacy Connect program which is a medication assistance program that provides cost-effective medicine for qualified persons who cannot afford medications.
- Behavioral Health Services
- The only federally funded Black Lung Clinic in the Commonwealth of Virginia to help miners and their families with health issues.
- A Layperson Legal Representation program that has helped miners and their families receive benefits in Worker’s Compensation claims.

There are clinics in Jonesville, Ewing, and St. Charles which operates the Black Lung Clinic.

### **Education**

Lee County is served by six elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools. Lee County also has one career and technical school.

Dryden Elementary School	Jonesville Middle School
Elk Knob Elementary School	Pennington Gap Middle School
Elydale Elementary School	
Flatwoods Elementary School	Lee High School
Rose Hill Elementary School	Thomas Walker High School
St. Charles Elementary School	

The Lee County Special Education program offers classes for educable mentally challenged, learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, speech- and visually-impaired, and also has a program designed for the hearing impaired.

### **Business Establishments**

The Town of Pennington Gap, though a small town, has a vast array of commercial establishments, businesses and local merchants. The Town is unique in that it has such a variety of commercial and retail establishments while still able to maintain a “small town” feel.

<b>Accounting/Tax Preparation</b>	
Bledsoe Bookkeeping & Tax Service	6413 Highway 421
Britton's Tax Service	106 Britton Drive
Diana Pope, CPA	116 Rogers Street
H&R Block	119 S Lakewood
Livesay Tax & Business Advisors	185 Redwood Ave
Parsons Accounting	42225 E Morgan Ave
<b>Auction</b>	
Fannon Land & Auction Company	42115 E Morgan Ave
Lee Auction Company	41091 Morgan Ave
<b>Banks</b>	
Farmers & Miners Bank	41526 W Morgan Ave
Powell Valley Bank	42180 E Morgan Ave
Lee Bank & Trust	41371 W Morgan Ave
<b>Beauty Salons</b>	
Envi Hair Studio	112 S Johnson Dr. Suite 101
Halos Hair Salon	41574 W Morgan Ave
Modernette	282 Westgate Mall Cir Ste 126
Sonny's Hair Care	5181 Highway 421
The Hairquarters	42065 E Morgan Ave
Valarie's Beauty Shop	41790 E Morgan Ave
<b>Car Repair/ Carwash/ Purchase</b>	
Central Automotive	41045 W Morgan Ave
Cumberland Automotive	42328 E Morgan Ave

Davis Transmissions	213 N Main St
Discount Motors/ Williams Towing	41279 W Morgan Ave
Family Tire & Wash House	40848 W Morgan Ave
Mark's Alignment & Wrecker Service	40578 W Morgan Ave
Xpress Carwash	40480 W Morgan Ave
<b>Child Care</b>	
Stepping Stones Academy	282 Westgate Mall Cir
<b>Churches</b>	
Beech Hill Baptist	299 Media St
Calvary Baptist Church	136 Westgate Mall Cir
Calvary Temple Church of God Mountain Assy	240 Forest Ave
First Baptist Church	41851 E Morgan Ave
First Christian Church	41481 W Morgan Ave
First United Methodist Church	41880 E Morgan Ave
Harber's Chapel Pentecostal Church	645 Joslyn Ave.
Pennington Church of Christ	282 Westgate Mall Cir Ste 121
Wells Chapel Church	224 Leona St
<b>Entertainment</b>	
Family & Friends "Friday Night Music"	116 Westgate Mall Cir
Lee Theatre	41676 W Morgan Ave
<b>Financial Investments</b>	
Edward Jones	41854 E Morgan Ave
<b>Fitness</b>	
Alter-Fit, LLC	282 Westgate Mall Cir Suite 102

Fusion Fitness	282 Westgate Mall Cir Suite 124
The Body Shop	218 Woodway Rd
<b>Florist</b>	
Norton Floral	40814 W Morgan Drive
<b>Funeral Homes</b>	
Mullins-Sturgill Funeral Home	298 Harrell St
Province Funeral Home	42098 E Morgan Ave
<b>Furniture Store</b>	
American Rental	40494 W Morgan Ave
EZ Rentals	205 River Bend Dr, Suite 106
Home Appliance & Furniture Company	41685 W Morgan Ave
<b>Gas Stations</b>	
Black Diamond #29	40554 W Morgan Ave
Lee's Food Mart	42149 E Morgan Ave
Food City Gas-n-Go	42164 E Morgan Ave
<b>Grocery Stores</b>	
Food City	205 River Bend Dr.
Grabeel IGA #3	41815 E Morgan Ave
<b>Insurance Agencies</b>	
Belcher, Doss & Williams	282 Westgate Mall Cir, Ste 125
C Group Insurance	42065 E Morgan Ave
Herndon Insurance	103 N Johnson Dr
InsurePro Nationwide Insurance	40539 W Morgan Ave

<b>Laundromat</b>	
Tidy K Laundromat	42106 E Morgan Ave
<b>Law Offices</b>	
Kinser Law	41342 W Morgan Ave
Williams Law Office	282 Westgate Mall Cir. Ste 124
<b>Hospital</b>	
Lee Regional Medical Center	127 Health Care Dr
<b>Medical Offices/Health Services</b>	
Family First Medical	41718 W Morgan Ave
Lee Family Dental	41830 E Morgan Ave
ARH Pennington Clinic	121 Stacy Dr
Cornerstone Therapy Services	40480 W Morgan Ave
Drs. Botts and Botts Optometrist	41372 W Morgan Ave
Haynes Chiropractic	123 N Johnson Dr Suite 202
In Home Care, Inc	185 Redwood Ave Suite 102C
Lee Health & Rehabilitation Center	208 Healthcare Dr
Moving Forward Physical Therapy	282 Westgate Mall Cir. Ste 104
Southern Home Respiratory & Equipment	205 River Bend Dr. Suite 104
Watson Dental Care	128 S Kentucky St
<b>Mental Health/ Counseling</b>	
Family Preservations Services	103 N Main Street
<b>Motel</b>	
Convenient Inn	171 Industrial Dr

<b>Other Establishments</b>	
American Concrete Group	631 Industrial Dr
American Tree Experts	171 N Kentucky St
East End Flea Market	42225 E Morgan Ave
Gap Mini Storage	200 N Kentucky Ave
Intoxalock	42328 E Morgan Ave
Lee Driving School	41670 W Morgan Ave
Lee School of Driving	316 Kentucky St
My County Radio	134 Main St
Old Dominion Power Co.	42311 E Morgan Ave
Powell Valley News	41798 E Morgan Ave
Thrift Shop	41633 W Morgan Ave
U. S. Post Office	41610 W Morgan Ave
USA Custom Solutions	134 Main St
Vacuum Outlet	6413 Highway 421
WSWV Radio Station	208 Westgate Mall Cir. Ste 101
<b>Pharmacies</b>	
John C. Marion Pharmacy	156 Combs Rd
Food City Pharmacy	205 River Bend Dr.
Pennington Pharmacy	41692 W Morgan Ave
Walgreens	5261 Highway 421
<b>Restaurants</b>	
Charly's	41751 W Morgan Ave
El Centenario	205 River Bend Dr.

Hardees	712 E Morgan Ave
Hong Kong	205 River Bend Dr, Suite 101
Huddle House #628	1526 West Morgan Ave
McDonalds	42357 E Morgan Ave
Nana's Country Kitchen	191 Industrial Dr
Pizza Hut	42585 E Morgan Ave
Rooster's Pub	131 Harrell St
Subway	42134 E Morgan Ave
Taco Bell	42487 E Morgan Ave
<b>Stores</b>	
Advance Auto Parts	42216 E Morgan Ave
American Ink	41822 E Morgan Ave
Antiques And More	41685 W Morgan Ave
Cuz's Tanning LLC	282 Westgate Mall Cir Suite 128
D&D's Smoke Shack	137 N. Johnson Dr, Suite 101
Family Dollar	205 River Bend Dr. Suite 103
First VA Pawn & Gold	41618 W Morgan Ave
Fur, Feathers & Fins	282 Westgate Mall Cir
Gab Shak Boutique	282 Westgate Mall Cir Ste 128
Kun Tree Apparel	109 N Main Street
Liberty Sport & Pawn	42259 E Morgan Ave
Look Twice	282 Westgate Mall Cir. Ste 118
O'Reilly Auto Parts	42216 E Morgan Ave
Pennington Armory	41709 W Morgan Ave

Pennington Yard Sale Store	282 Westgate Mall Cir Suite 119
Planet Vapor	40480 W Morgan Ave
Pullin Ink	179 N Kentucky St
Rise and Shine Spa and Boutique	282 Westgate Mall Cir Suite 117
Smokin' Guns	42244 E Morgan Ave
SoVa Gardens	42454 E Morgan Ave
Spears Drone Photography	283 Church Ave
The Dusty Monkey Auction House	41699 W Morgan Ave
Tri-State Metal	42454 E Morgan Ave
Verizon Wireless	41738 W Morgan Ave
Warner's Tobacco Outlet	282 Westgate Mall Cir Suite 128

## **RELATED PLANS AND ACTIVITIES**

Current and future planning efforts for the Town of Pennington Gap are influenced by planning activities of neighboring jurisdictions, Lee County, and regional agencies and authorities. Planning activities that affect the future development of Pennington Gap may range from the general, comprehensive plans of neighboring jurisdictions to the more specific site plans of industries or commercial developments. A brief review of related planning efforts and activities that may affect recommendations contained in the Town of Pennington Gap Comprehensive Plan is outlined as follows:

### **Lee County Comprehensive Plan**

The current Lee County Comprehensive Plan was prepared by the Lee County Planning Commission with assistance from the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission and was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in 2003. Updated in 2022, county-wide statistics on physical characteristics, natural resources, the economy and population, land use and land use suitability, housing, public water and sewer, community facilities, and transportation form a basis for goals and objectives. These goals for development in the County, including its incorporated towns, provide a foundation for specific comprehensive plan recommendations.

### **Town of Pennington Gap Industrial Development Authority**

The Town of Pennington Gap established the Industrial Development Authority in 2012. The Town felt that an organization that focused solely on the needs and desires of the citizens of Pennington



Gap was greatly needed. The purpose of this organization is to provide assistance and financial support in order to attract businesses to locate or expand in the corporate limits of Pennington Gap. The IDA has been highly successful in helping to establish new businesses, provide support for existing businesses, and has been a catalyst for downtown revitalization. The IDA is currently in the planning stages for additional projects that will improve services and create new employment opportunities.

### **Lee County Economic Development Authority**

The Town of Pennington falls within the service area of the Economic Development Authority of Lee County Virginia. The Town of Pennington Gap Industrial Development Authority granted the County entity blanket authority for investment within the municipality as it sees fit. The purpose of the Authority shall be to promote and facilitate economic growth and development in Lee County by persuading manufacturing, industrial, and commercial enterprises to locate or remain in Lee County. Further, the Authority shall work to further the economic well-being of the citizens of Lee County by increasing their commerce and promoting their safety, health, welfare, and prosperity. The purpose shall also be to achieve the objectives established by the Authority to provide additional employment for all sectors of the Community, to promote economic stability and growth in the Community, and to assist the County in meeting its development objectives.

### **LENOWISCO Planning District Commission**

LENOWISCO was organized as a Planning District Commission in 1969 and currently operates under the Regional Cooperation Act, Title 15.2 of the 1950 Code of Virginia. Its primary purpose is to promote the orderly and efficient development of the physical, social and economic elements of the district by planning and assisting its three counties, one city and 15 incorporated towns to plan for the future. The Commission's Board of Directors is appointed by their respective localities. LENOWISCO is a multi-purpose association of its constituents for mutual benefits, and as such, operates a broadly based planning and economic development program for the region. The Commission formally plans for the orderly growth in the towns and surrounding areas of the District, while pursuing programs for the economic and social development of the entire area. LENOWISCO serves as the communicator between local governments and federal and state agencies, provides technical assistance and acts as a clearinghouse for public funding applications. The Commission also acts as a data bank, collecting and analyzing economic and environmental data for the region.

In compliance with the Regional Cooperation Act, one of the Commission's primary duties is the preparation and adoption of strategic plans for the region. These have included the 1970 Regional Land Use Plan, unanimously adopted by its local government in April 1973, and recently been updated. The Regional Water Quality Management Plan serves as a major policy document regarding water quality issues in the region. From 1972 to 1978, the Commission had special authority to implement the Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP) that promulgated a growth center concept. The district's counties and city organized the Duffield Development Authority to implement the industrial park at Duffield, a designated growth center. The LENOWISCO Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, successor to the OEDP, helps guide regional community and economic development efforts and strategies. Over the years, LENOWISCO has been instrumental in providing direct services to the Town of Pennington Gap

in the procurement of federal/state funds for utility system, recreation and other improvements.

### **Virginia Department of Transportation**

The Virginia Department of Transportation revises its six-year plan each year. The Town of Pennington Gap is a participant in the Department's Rural Program and maintains projects on the list for implementation. The Virginia Department of Transportation 2020 plan outlines solutions and specific land use suggestions to relieve current traffic problems. The most up-to-date information regarding transportation project priorities for the Town of Pennington Gap can be found on the Virginia Department of Transportation web site at [www.vdot.gov](http://www.vdot.gov).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS**

Pennington Gap's natural resources include topography, climate, and geological, natural and hydrological features. Development activities are often influenced by natural resources. For example, steeply sloping areas may make roadway construction too costly, and soils may have insufficient bearing capacity for buildings. Likewise, natural resources are affected by intensity of development. Effects may include increased surface drainage, soil erosion, or air and water pollution.

#### **Climate**

Pennington Gap's climate is characterized by a moderate, continental climate, with fairly cool winters and warm, moist summers. The winters are short and cold, with occasional moderate spells; the summers are warm, with occasional very hot days. Summer evenings and nights are usually cool and pleasant. The average frost-free season is 165 days. The prevailing winds are westerly (from the west and southwest).

#### **Geological Features**

Pennington Gap is located near the dividing point between the Valley and Ridge physiographic province of Virginia, a region characterized by linear east-west to northeast tending valleys and parallel mountain ridges, and the Cumberland Mountain section of the Appalachian Plateau. The Cumberland Mountain section is distinguished by its relief and altitude and is higher than the Cumberland Plateau farther to the west. Stone Mountain is underlain by sandstone that has resisted weather. In contrast, much of the intermountain area is underlain by shale and limestone, both of which are less resistant to weathering than sandstone.

#### **Natural Features**

Pennington Gap is located in a valley formed by Poor Valley Ridge and Stone Mountain at the north and a series of smaller ridges to the south. Most surrounding topography is extreme, with elevations ranging between 1,300 and 1,600 feet above sea level. The median elevation is 1,400 feet.

Air pollution is presently not a significant problem in Pennington Gap. There are no major facilities

located within the Town that adversely influence air quality.

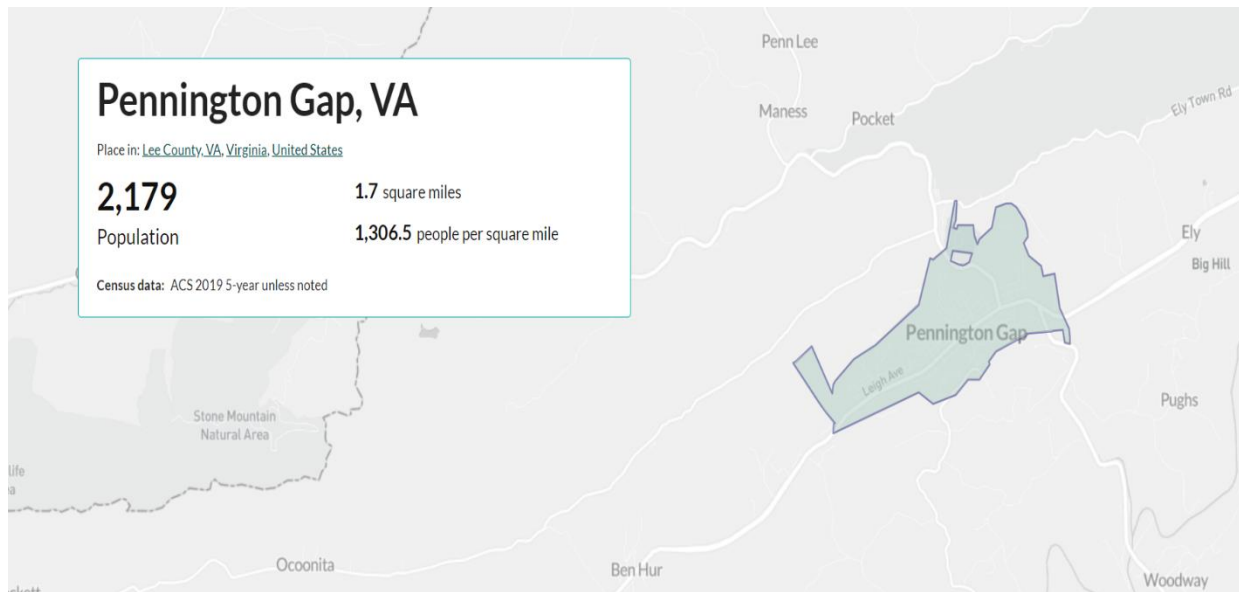
### **Hydrological Features**

Pennington Gap is located in the North Fork Powell River watershed. A smaller drainage basin present in the town is Cane Creek, originating above Ben Hur and flowing in a west-to-east direction through the southern portion of the town. Water that flows from the town's rooftops, streets, paved and open areas eventually reaches these systems.

Floodplains are normally dry land areas, adjacent to a body of water, that are subject to flooding. The extent of Pennington Gap's floodplains has been determined by the National Flood Insurance Program and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The NFIP offers property owners federally subsidized flood insurance. Flood insurance is required before obtaining federally related financial assistance from just about any federal agency and/or program.

### **POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS**

A summary of the Town's population is shown in **Figure 1**.



*Fig. 1 (U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Pennington Gap, VA)*

**Figure 2** outlines the age group and racial distribution of the population of the Town of Pennington Gap.

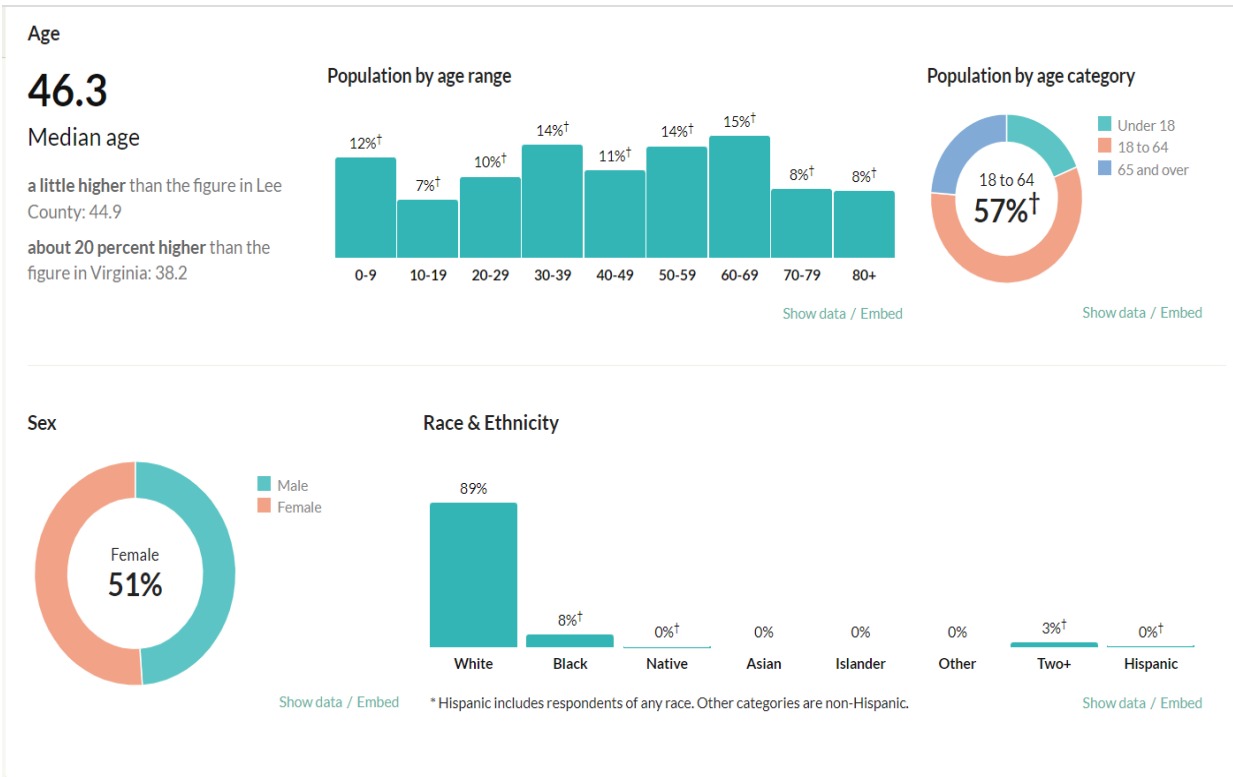


Fig. 2 (U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Pennington Gap, VA)

## ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

**Figure 3** provides an overview of income, poverty rate, and transportation to work for the Town.

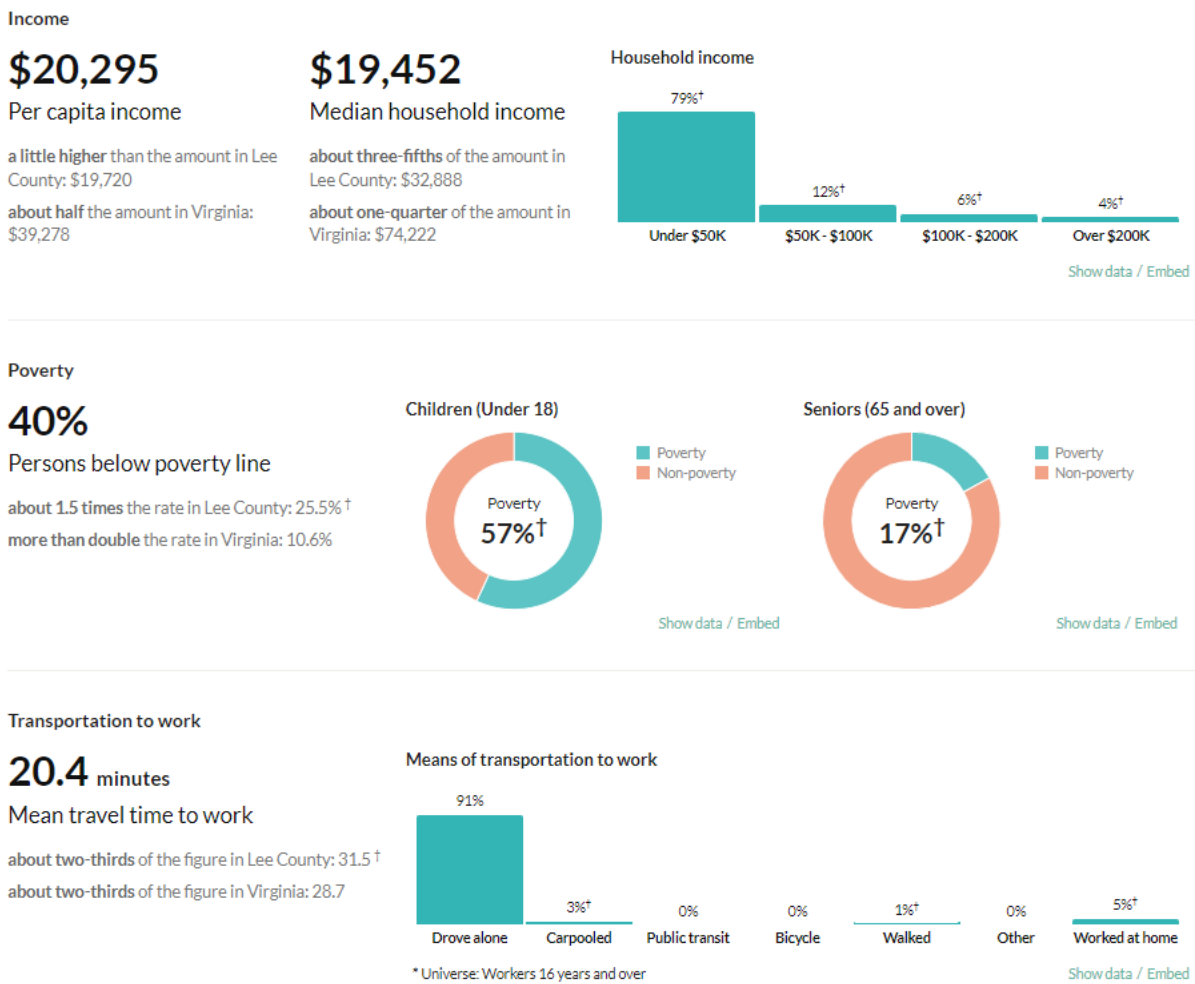


Fig. 3 (U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Pennington Gap, VA)

## FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

**Figure 4** provides an overview of family statistics in Pennington Gap.

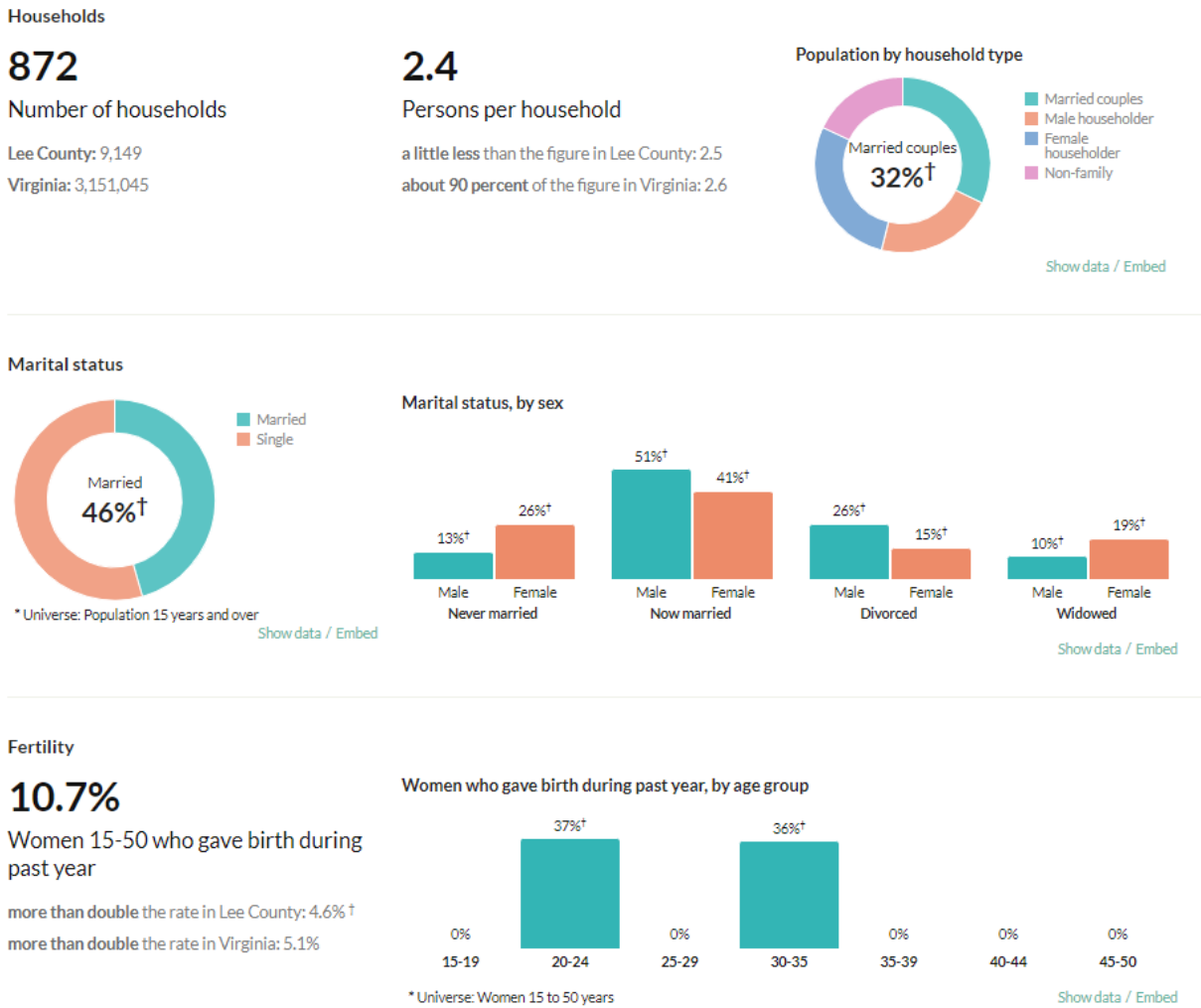
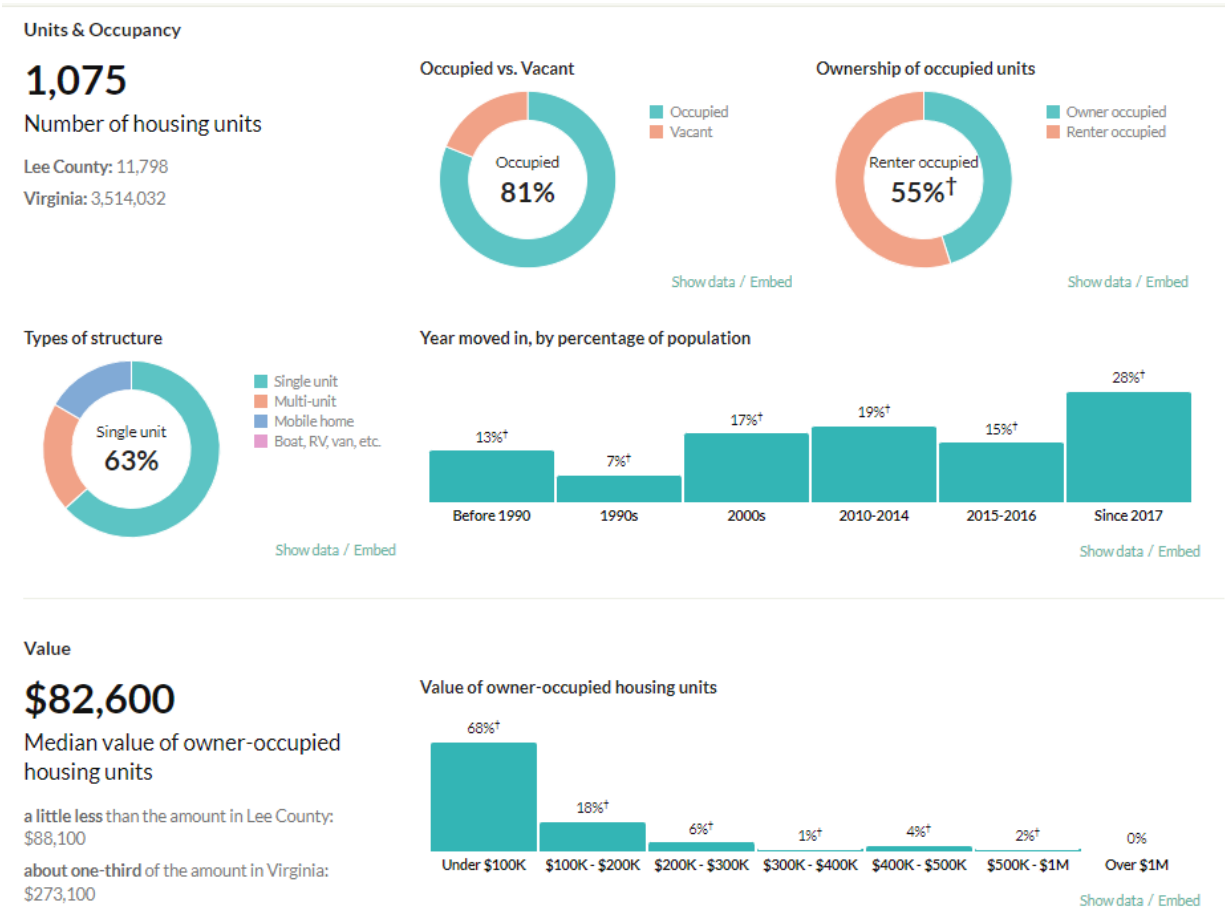


Fig. 4 (U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Pennington Gap, VA)

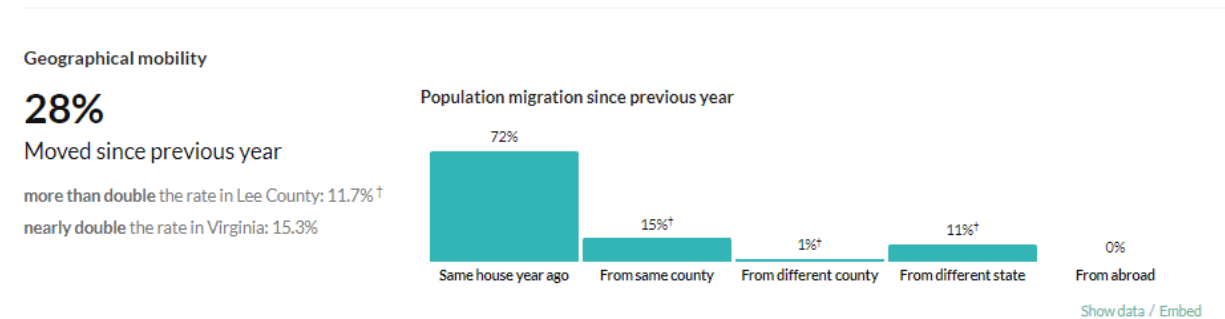
## HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

**Figure 5** presents information about housing statistics in Pennington Gap.



*Fig. 5 (U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Pennington Gap, VA)*

**Figure 6** gives an overview on geographical mobility and population migration of the Town.



*Fig. 6 (U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Pennington Gap, VA)*

## SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

**Figure 7** outlines educational attainment for the citizens of the Town of Pennington Gap.

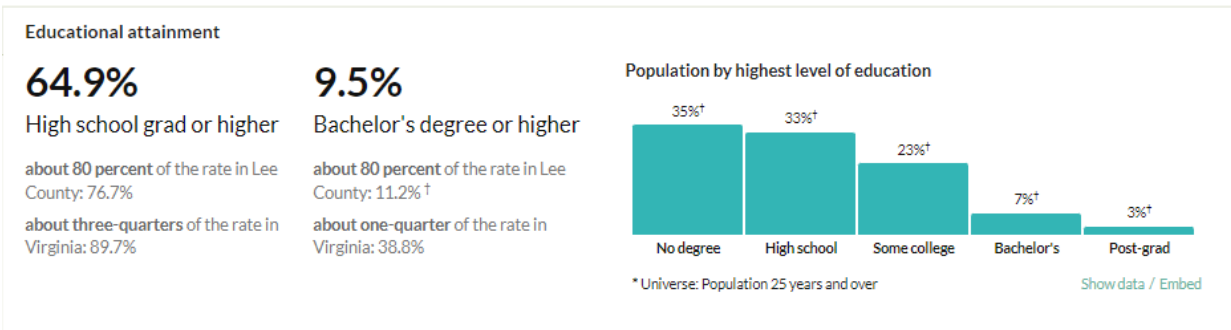


Fig. 7 (U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Pennington Gap, VA)

A summary of the Town's language statistics and foreign-born population is shown in **Figure 8**.



Fig. 8 (U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Pennington Gap, VA)



**Figure 9** shows the number of citizens who are veterans in Pennington Gap and their wartime service.

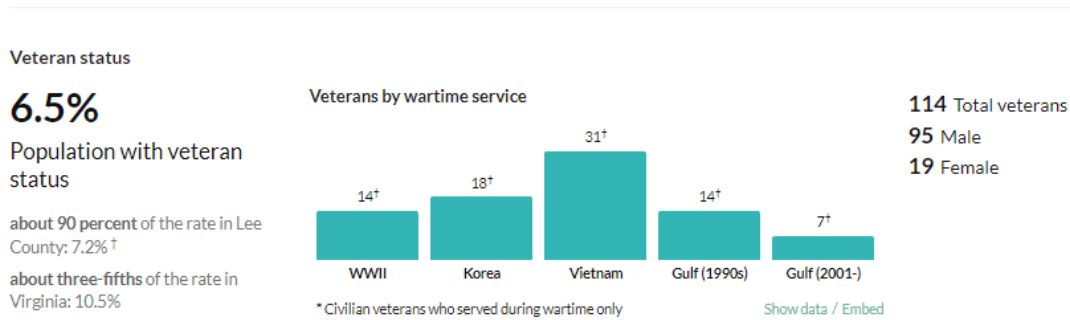


Fig. 9 (U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Pennington Gap, VA)

## SECTION II - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The long-range goals and related short-range objectives presented below serve as the centerpiece for this planning document. Such goals and objectives build upon opportunities and problems identified through analysis of background materials and provide guidance for the adoption of specific policies to implement plan recommendations.

### Environmental Goals and Objectives

#### **Goal:**

Enhance the natural setting of the Town; promote a greater awareness of the natural beauty and positive attributes of the area.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Actively promote appreciation and use of scenic and surrounding areas in the town through development of passive recreation opportunities.
2. Promote environmentally sound and aesthetically pleasing development through judicious review of proposed site and building plans.
3. Promote inclusion of "green" areas in development plans in conjunction with commercial development.
4. Promote inclusion of the installation of signage welcoming visitors to the Town and that promote the character and history of the Town.

5. Encourage and support clean-up efforts of area streams and rivers, including educating residents on the need for removal of straight pipe waste disposal. This could include taking steps necessary with the Virginia Department of Health and other local and state agencies to implement mandatory hook-up to the Town's wastewater system where no other approved alternative exists.

### **Transportation Goals and Objectives**

#### **Goal:**

Promote solutions to relieve current traffic problems and support specific land use objectives as outlined in the Virginia Department of Transportation 2020 Transportation Plan.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Coordinate ingress-egress of all development plans with future highway improvements.
2. Work closely with VDOT officials in planning new routes and making improvements to existing routes that will alleviate traffic congestion and vehicular conflicts in coordination with future transportation planning.
3. Provide new access roads into appropriately zoned areas to stimulate planned potential residential and commercial development.

### **Housing Goals and Objectives**

#### **Goal:**

Provide opportunities to increase the supply, quality and affordability of housing for residents.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Encourage the construction of new middle class single-family and multi-family housing in designated areas suitable for such development through the provision of utilities and roads.
2. Examine potential areas for boundary adjustments to facilitate future housing development.
3. Develop a set of specific design standards to be applied in the future development of subdivisions.
4. Encourage the general maintenance and upkeep of existing residences through the enforcement of local housing code, as well as the ordinance on abandoned vehicles and yard maintenance.
5. Provide incentives for general neighborhood improvements and individual property

rehabilitation by targeting comprehensive public improvement programs in neighborhoods of greatest need.

6. Adopt neighborhood revitalization programs for blighted areas.

### **Public Facilities Goals and Objectives**

#### **Goal:**

Expand and develop existing and future public facilities to improve quality of life for citizens and visitors of the Town of Pennington Gap while focusing on the Town's heritage and history.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Continue to develop recreational/cultural facilities for residents and visitors of the Town, such as the recent redevelopment of the Lee Theatre and the Pennington Gap Community Center.
2. Study the potential for a Downtown Main Street Coordinator position to help develop the downtown area with emphasis on the rich history of the Town.
3. Determine the viability of renovation or replacement of the existing fire hall and other public facilities as needed.

#### **Goal:**

Provide facilities and events commensurate with the needs of the present and future population.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Begin a campaign to create a "brand" for the Town of Pennington Gap that can be used to market the area for tourism.
2. Change or find a new identity or image for the Town to move forward into the next 25 years.

### **Economic Growth Goals and Objectives**

#### **Goal:**

Facilitate economic growth and diversification in and around the Town.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Begin to use the natural heritage and environment as economic development tools. Primary focus should be place on "ecotourism"-type businesses that can capitalize on what Pennington Gap already has (e.g., ATV trails, RV park, ATV safety training area, farmers market).

2. Assess the need for additional lodging/motel facilities in the Town to better capitalize on visitors to the area.
3. Assist and encourage the Lee County Economic Development Authority to focus on Pennington Gap as an area that can be a leader in the development of economic recruitment.

### **Implementation Goals and Objectives**

#### **Goal:**

Make effective use of implementation tools provided to carry out plan goals and objectives.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Continue to review and revise the Comprehensive Plan at least every five years, so it can continue to be a useful guide for future growth and development.
2. Establish a set of procedures that will encourage systematic reference of proposed improvements to standards, goals and objectives set forth by the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Develop and use zoning and subdivision ordinances that establish practical land use regulations, standards for design, and environmental quality.
4. Develop a priority list of proposed major capital improvements and recommended program for accomplishment based on a fiscal forecast of the Town.

### **Land Use Goals and Objectives**

#### **Goal:**

Encourage harmonious and wise use of land through future development decisions.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Whenever practical, require aesthetic improvements such as trees, landscaped buffers and underground utilities to provide attractive divisions between conflicting land uses.
2. Study compatible areas within Town boundaries for building sites.
3. Consider the expansion beyond present corporate boundaries into areas most suitable for land development, which will strengthen the Town's tax base.

## **SECTION III - IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN**

### **Administration of the Plan**

The Pennington Gap Comprehensive Plan document represents the continuation of formal, organized planning for the Town and immediate planning area. The Plan should serve as a foundation for addressing local problems and recognizing future needs and demands of growth. The Plan offers an opportunity for Town leaders to apply appropriate controls and direct both public and private investments in a logical manner to achieve short-range objectives and long range goals.

The following sections address legal status, policy and administration of the Pennington Gap Comprehensive Plan required to promote an efficient application of plan provisions.

### **Legal Status of the Plan**

The following excerpts are taken from Title 15.2, Chapter 22 Code of Virginia, 1950 and support the legal foundation for the comprehensive plan.

15.2-2232 - Whenever the local commission shall have recommended a comprehensive plan or part thereof for the municipality and such plan shall have been approved and adopted by the governing body, it shall control the general or approximate location, character and extent of each feature shown on the plan. Thereafter, unless such feature is already shown on the adopted master plan or part thereof no street, park or other public area, public building or public structure, public utility facility or public service corporation facility other than railroad facility, whether publicly or privately owned, shall be constructed, established or authorized, unless and until the general location or approximate location, character, and extent thereof has been submitted to and approved by the local planning commission as being substantially in accord with the adopted comprehensive plan or part thereof. In connection with any such determination the commission may, and at the direction of the governing body shall, hold a public hearing after notice as required.

### **Plan Adoption**

The following provisions taken from Title 15.2 Chapter 22, outline the general procedures to be followed by the Town of Pennington Gap in adopting the Comprehensive Plan.

15.2-2225 - Notice and Hearing on Plan. Recommendation by local commission to governing body. Prior to the recommendation of a comprehensive plan or any part thereof, the local commission shall give notice and hold a public hearing on the plan. After such public hearing has been held the commission may approve, amend and approve, or disapprove the plan. Upon the approval of the plan, the commission shall by resolution recommend the plan to the governing body.

15.2-2226 - Adoption or Disapproval of Plan by Governing Body. After certification of the plan or part thereof, the governing body after a public hearing with notice as required shall proceed to a

consideration of the plan or part thereof and shall approve and adopt, amend and adopt, or disapprove the same within ninety days after date of adoption of such resolution.

15.2-2227 - Return of the Plan to Commission; Resubmission. If such governing body disapproves the plan, then it shall be returned to the local commission for its reconsideration, with a written statement of the reasons for its disapproval.

The commission shall have sixty days in which to reconsider the plan and resubmit it with any changes to the governing body.

15.2-2228 - Adoption of Parts of Plan. As the work of preparing the comprehensive plan progresses, the local commission may, from time to time, recommend, and the governing body approve and adopt, parts thereof, and such part shall cover one or more major sections or divisions of the municipality or one or more functional matters.

### **Maintenance of the Plan**

15.2-2229 - Amendments. After the adoption of a comprehensive plan, all amendments to it shall be recommended, and approved and adopted, respectively. If the governing body desires an amendment it may direct the local commission to prepare an amendment and submit it to public hearing within sixty days after formal written request by the governing body.

15.2-2230 - Plan to be Reviewed At Least Once Every Five Years. At least once every five years, the comprehensive plan shall be reviewed by the local commission to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan.

Significant new developments, i.e. state highway proposals; location of new industry, shopping center, or residential subdivision; expansion of major public/private uses, etc., should trigger a re-evaluation of the adopted comprehensive plan. Review and appropriate revisions to the plan ensuring consistency with major proposals should be made to maintain it in a current condition. Changes in the plan should only be made in the best interest of established goals and objectives. Development proposals, which are contrary to the plan, require serious consideration within the contact of the plan's provisions. The end result of unwarranted plan revision would be to leave the Town without any enforceable plan.

### **Plan Implementation**

Private property development and public improvement efforts can be coordinated with the plan through the use of applicable regulatory measures - zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, building and housing codes. An adopted Capital Improvement Program also provides a mechanism for the local governing body to schedule public improvements in accordance with the plan over both a five-year period and on an annual basis.

15.2-2239 - Local Commissions to Prepare and Submit Annually Capital Improvement Programs to Governing Body or Official Charged with Preparation of Budget. A local commission may, and at the direction of the governing body shall, prepare and revise annually a capital improvement program based on the comprehensive plan of the municipality for a period not to exceed the

ensuring five years. The commission shall submit the same annually to the governing body, or to the chief administrative officer or other official charged with preparation of the budget for the municipality, at such time as it or he shall direct.

Such capital improvement program shall include the commission's recommendations, and estimates of cost of such facilities and the means of financing them, to be undertaken in the ensuing fiscal year and in a period not to exceed the next four years, as the basis of the capital budget for municipality. In the preparation of its capital budget recommendations, the commission shall consult with the chief administrative officer or other executive head of the government of the municipality, the heads of departments and interested citizens and organizations and shall hold such public hearings as necessary unless otherwise required.

15.2-2240 - Municipalities to Adopt Ordinances Regulating Subdivision and Development of Land. The governing body of any locality shall adopt an ordinance to assure the orderly subdivision of land and its development.

15.2-2280 - Zoning Ordinances Generally. Any locality may, by ordinance, classify the territory under its jurisdiction or any substantial portion thereof into districts of such number, shape and size as it may deem best suited to carry out the purposes of this article, and in each district it may regulate, restrict, permit, prohibit, and determine the following:

The use of land, buildings, structures and other premises for agricultural, business, industrial, residential, flood plain and other specific uses;

The size, height, area, bulk, location, erection, construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, maintenance, razing or removal of structures;

The areas and dimensions of land, water, and air space to be occupied by buildings, structures and uses, and of courts, yards, and other open spaces to be left unoccupied by uses, structures, including variations in the size of lots based on whether a public or community water supply or sewer system is available and used;

The excavation or mining of soil or other natural resources. For the purpose of zoning, the governing body of a municipality shall have jurisdiction over the incorporated area of the municipality.

The Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations for the Town of Pennington Gap accompany this plan document. Legal enforcement is explained within the text of these regulations. The comprehensive plan must be used as the reference by which zoning requests, development proposals and the zoning of subdivision regulations are reviewed for approval or disapproval. Zoning and subdivision regulations are the tools intended to accomplish the plan's objectives.

### **Regional Review and Coordination**

Local town planning requires coordination with other adjacent jurisdictions: Lee County, regional, state and federal development proposals and plans. Without coordination among these jurisdictions, the danger of planning efforts being duplicated or conflicting will result in ineffective

programs and unnecessarily high development costs. The LENOWISCO Planning District Commission is the most appropriate agency to provide regional coordination and review of related plan.

### **Level of Professional Planning Assistance**

Planning assistance is presently provided to the Town of Pennington Gap by the staff of LENOWISCO and through contracted services of private planning consultants for special projects. Communities with less than 10,000 in population typically do not require an in-house planning staff to administer daily planning functions. Special needs of the local planning commission which may warrant additional planning assistance from LENOWISCO and/or a planning consultant in order to implement the adopted comprehensive plan may include the following:

1. Maintenance of the Comprehensive Plan - Unforeseen changes in development trends, population growth or effects of economic changes resulting from new industrial or commercial development, annexation or consolidation; all would have a major impact on long range community planning which would need to be reflected in the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Expansion of Major Elements of the Comprehensive Plan - The need for neighborhood studies, a plan for the central business district, housing need analysis, economic development studies may evolve from the recommendations contained in the Comprehensive Plan. Such special studies should be used to expand on plan generalities and be treated as amendments to the adopted Comprehensive Plan.
3. Review and Administration of Housing, Building, Zoning and Subdivision regulations and Development proposals which affect provisions of the Comprehensive Plan.
4. Assist in determining the most appropriate state and federal assistance programs through which Pennington Gap may participate to aid in implementing proposed community improvements.
5. Promote local citizen involvement in planning by conducting public education programs on the Comprehensive Plan and related planning process.

### **Public Education and Community Involvement**

The Town of Pennington Gap should continue to expand a public awareness program to inform local citizenry, including local commission members, on local planning efforts and issues. The intent of such program is to solicit citizen participation in making planning decisions and to promote public support for existing and future community improvement efforts. A classroom-type program could be offered to adult and student groups through the Lee County Career and Technical Center or through a series of lectures of citizen advisory groups, civic organizations and other interested individuals. Local planning commission members should be encouraged to attend Planning Commissioner Institute training sessions offered periodically throughout the year by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD). Educational materials are also available from VDHCD, which should be distributed to local planning commissioners.



*Additional measures, which can be promoted by the Town to increase public awareness of local planning, include the following:*

1. Development of a brochure or graphic foldout depicting the Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Plan on one side and an executive summary of major plan elements on the reverse.
2. Exhibits and displays of important Plan elements placed in Town Hall, local bank lobbies, public schools, etc.
3. Newspaper coverage of the comprehensive plan adoption process, highlights of land use and special zoning issues, in-depth series of articles on land use problems and opportunities in and around Pennington Gap, series of interviews with individuals in responsible positions in local and regional governmental agencies, business and industry who influence future land use decisions.