



Planning for Growth and Opportunity from FASTC

Town of Blackstone and Nottoway County Virginia
Planning Next Steps and Considerations

June 14, 2016



INTRODUCTION

Growth is coming to the town of Blackstone, Nottoway County and beyond. The U.S. Department of State (DOS), working through the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is locating the new Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) at Fort Pickett, which is currently home to the Virginia Army National Guard installation and located near Blackstone, Virginia in Nottoway County. This major federal investment will create new jobs and spur additional economic development including local demand for housing, lodging and related services as the new FASTC facility becomes operational. This puts the local

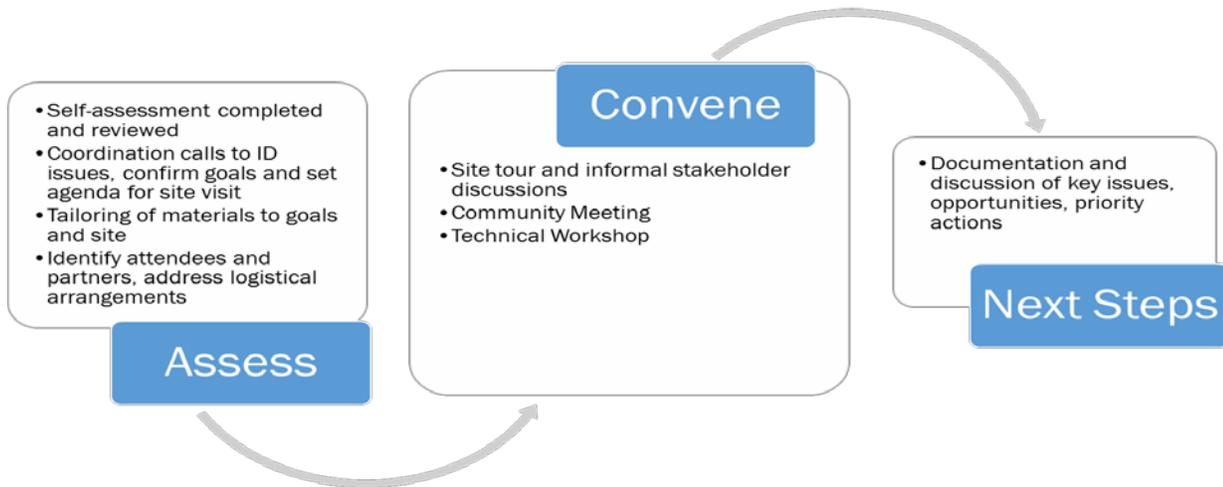


Main Street, Blackstone (Credit: Renaissance Planning)

community in a position to proactively plan for getting the kind of growth it wants—growth that reinforces the existing community values, contributes to the community’s historic character, creates efficient patterns of development and provides new economic opportunities for existing residents and businesses.

Recognizing the significant impact that FASTC will have on this rural community, GSA partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Sustainable Communities (OSC) to provide technical assistance to Blackstone and Nottoway County to help them prepare and plan for the opportunities and challenges associated with new growth and development. A central component of GSA’s vision is to better leverage the agency’s real estate decisions in support of local community development goals. The GSA’s Urban Development/Good Neighbor Program¹ exists to provide technical assistance, training and outreach resources to help execute GSA projects in ways that meet Federal needs while also supporting larger Federal and local development and sustainability goals. EPA’s OSC helps communities to reach development goals that create positive impacts on air, water, public health, economic vitality, and quality of life for residents. Together, EPA and GSA provided Blackstone and Nottoway County with a consultant team that conducted two rounds of stakeholder workshops, a series of coordination calls, a self-assessment, and a public meeting. The diagram on the following page illustrates the technical assistance process deployed by the consultant team provided by EPA and GSA.

¹ GSA Urban Development/Good Neighbor Program, <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21088>



THREE STAGES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (CREDIT: RENAISSANCE PLANNING)

The primary focus of the technical assistance included facilitated discussions about how the community wanted to grow and the role the public sector could take in shaping that growth. At issue are key decisions regarding how the future location and character of growth can support long term community goals and aspirations. For instance, will Blackstone and Nottoway County become pass-through communities for FASTC students traveling to and from base? Will the community become an attractive destination for students and new residents to live, shop, dine, and recreate? Will new growth contribute to the area's distinctive sense of place and rural character? Will new development look similar to other suburban areas near Richmond or Petersburg? Do local residents and elected officials want to invest in new infrastructure upfront to attract growth locally? Will the community rely on developers alone to fund needed infrastructure expansions incrementally? Will the community join forces with regional or state economic development interests to foster new job growth at the base beyond FASTC? These questions and many more were at the heart of some of the local discussions concerning how to best respond to future development in the region.

This next steps memorandum documents the key outcomes and potential next steps that came out of the Blackstone and Nottoway County technical assistance effort. Of note, residents and elected officials from the towns of Crewe and Burkeville, and Dinwiddie County also participated in some of the workshop discussions. While this memo focuses on specific actions for consideration by Blackstone and Nottoway County, many of the best practices and strategies described may also be relevant for communities across the region.



A high level of community interest in FASTC was evidenced by the full house at the April 25, 2016 Community Meeting (Credit: Renaissance Planning)

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Nottoway is a rural Virginia county of nearly 16,000 people in the heart of the Piedmont region. It is home to three towns that formed after the railroad was built in the 1850s. Blackstone, the easternmost town, (population 3,600) sits adjacent Fort Pickett. Like other towns in the county (including Burkeville and Crewe) the economy revolved primarily around agriculture, wood, timber, tobacco, and transportation. These towns began, and still continue to serve, as small but stable rural centers of commerce, trade, and transport.



Entranceway to Fort Pickett (Credit: Renaissance Planning)

Significant change occurred in the mid-1900s when, at the beginning of World War II, Camp Pickett became a major training base for the Army. In recent decades, the base has transitioned to an important training facility for the Army National Guard and law enforcement personnel. Both Nottoway County and Blackstone have long been culturally and economically linked to activities at Fort Pickett. Both communities embrace the military, and the importance of this facility to national security and prosperity. ² Fort Pickett currently occupies approximately 42,000 acres and operates several advanced maneuver and tactical training facilities, including a live fire range, a forward operating base, urban assault training, training villages, and more. ³

Today Blackstone is an attractive, rural, small town with numerous historic buildings. It hosts classic main street frontage with small shops and restaurants that are surrounded by quiet, tree-lined residential streets and neighborhoods. The town's tight street grid is in a pattern that is conducive to both walking and cycling, and provides multiple routes for moving cars through and around the community. Major assets of the community today are the motivated citizens, volunteers, and local staff that are committed to the vitality and prosperity of Blackstone. Downtown Blackstone Inc. (DBI) is the established organization in Blackstone with the duties of facilitating the Virginia Main Street Program and a mission to "preserve our historic downtown and cultivate its vibrant, thriving commercial mix that is a source of community pride for residents, a prosperous investment for businesses, and an attractive, lively destination for visitors who feel welcomed and are eager to return." ⁴ DBI staff attended the public meeting and workshop as did local businesses owners and residents.

² History and community context information obtained from both County and Town websites. <http://www.nottoway.org/> and <http://www.townofblackstoneva.com/>, as well as from interpretative signage located at the Fort Pickett Officer's club.

³ Information about Fort Pickett obtained from this website: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/fortpickett/mtc/garrison/history/history.htm>

⁴ Downtown Blackstone Inc Website. <http://www.downtownblackstone.org/about-downtown-blackstone-inc.html>

FASTC AS ECONOMIC CATALYST

Fort Pickett Under Construction

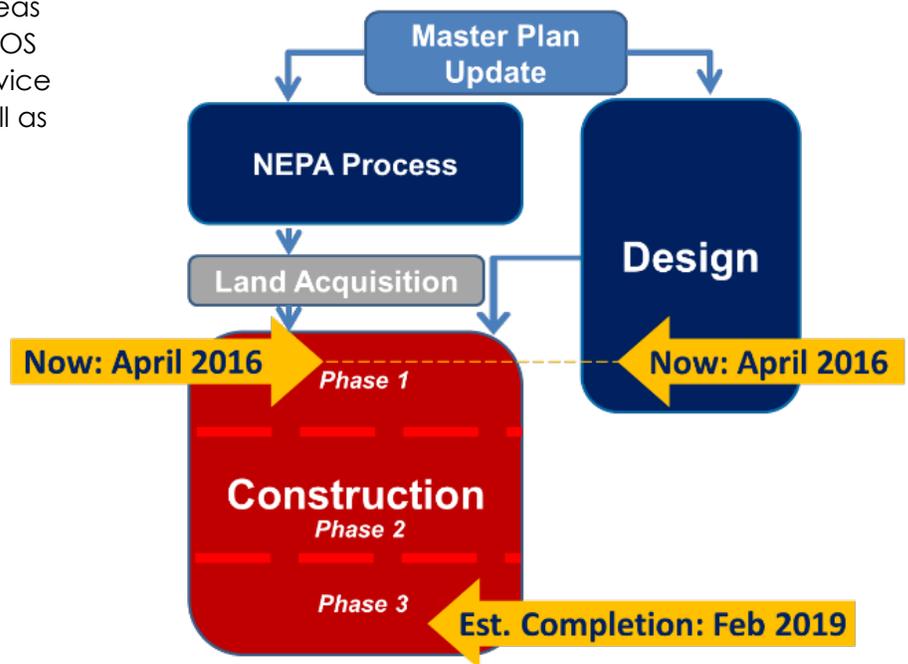
The arrival of FASTC at Fort Pickett will again position the base as an important national resource. Once completed, this facility will be dedicated to providing hard skills security and life-saving training to the foreign affairs community. The FASTC site will include classrooms, administrative offices, and simulation labs; driving tracks, a mock urban environment, firing ranges, explosive ranges, a fitness center, and recreation facilities, and the infrastructure appropriate for a secure facility. FASTC will consolidate existing dispersed hard skills security training functions into a suitable location that can provide effective, efficient training specifically designed to enable foreign affairs personnel to operate in today's perilous overseas environment. The students will be DOS employees and agents, Foreign Service personnel and embassy staff, as well as select foreign nationals.⁵



Tree clearing started in the early spring 2016 at Fort Pickett (Credit: GSA)

FASTC Timeline

Phase One of construction began in 2015 and will continue into February 2017. Phase Three of construction is expected to conclude in February 2019, at which time the facility will be fully operational. Students are expected to start using the facility, on a limited basis, as early as the completion of Phase One in early 2017. The facility is expected to reach full training capacity by the completion of Phase 3 in February 2019.



Excerpt of the timeline presented by GSA on April 25, 2016

⁵ U.S. Department of State, FASTC home page, <http://www.state.gov/recovery/fastc/> This site hosts the project details, EIS, contracting opportunities, employment opportunities, related links and contact information. Other FASTC information presented in this section also obtained from the presentation given by GSA staff at the Blackstone/Nottoway workshop on April 25, 2016. This presentation is available here: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/257149.pdf>

Economic Impact

The global security threats that have necessitated FASTC are not likely to be short-term problems. The FASTC facility will provide the necessary and required training in dynamic, nimble, physical, and agile skillsets for overseas personnel that will likely be needed for many years. The decision to locate the FASTC at Fort Pickett represents not a momentary, but a sustained economic engine for Blackstone and Nottoway, as well as other towns in the county and neighboring jurisdictions.

The most immediate impact may be the need to provide lodging and housing for temporary workers, students and long term permanent staff. It is expected that, at full operation, as many as 10,000 students per year could cycle through the facility, with an on-board student load of 450-1,500, or an average daily demand of 350 hotel/motel rooms. DOS will also transport students to their lodging, meaning they will be without personal vehicles during their stay at FASTC. DOS currently uses service contracts with multiple providers to provide lodging for students, and rooms will be procured on an as-needed basis. The decision about a room contracting plan for the full operation of FASTC is still to be determined. Currently, there are very few options for lodging in Blackstone, neighboring jurisdictions, or the county as a whole that meet federal travel lodging guidelines and accommodate the needed number of rooms. In order to meet some of the immediate lodging needs, existing hotels located as far away as Chesterfield County, just under an hour drive away, may accommodate near term demands. The table below, excerpted from the FASTC fiscal impacts report, ⁶ illustrates the dollar expenditures from trainees on lodging and meals which climbs to \$2.4 million in 2017 and then reaches \$4.4 million in 2018 and is sustained at well above \$4 million per year thereafter.

Table 3-6. Trainee Expenditures by County

County	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 ¹
Nottoway County	\$493,948	\$2,469,740	\$4,445,532	\$4,692,506	\$4,939,480
<i>Trainee Expenditures on Lodging²</i>	<i>\$144,900</i>	<i>\$724,500</i>	<i>\$1,304,100</i>	<i>\$1,376,550</i>	<i>\$1,449,000</i>
<i>Trainee Expenditures on Meals³</i>	<i>\$316,848</i>	<i>\$1,584,240</i>	<i>\$2,851,632</i>	<i>\$3,010,056</i>	<i>\$3,168,480</i>
<i>Trainee Expenditures on Incidentals</i>	<i>\$32,200</i>	<i>\$161,000</i>	<i>\$289,800</i>	<i>\$305,900</i>	<i>\$322,000</i>
Chesterfield County	\$967,932	\$4,839,660	\$8,711,388	\$9,195,354	\$9,679,320
<i>Trainee Expenditures on Lodging²</i>	<i>\$724,500</i>	<i>\$3,622,500</i>	<i>\$6,520,500</i>	<i>\$6,882,750</i>	<i>\$7,245,000</i>
<i>Trainee Expenditures on Meals</i>	<i>\$211,232</i>	<i>\$1,056,160</i>	<i>\$1,901,088</i>	<i>\$2,006,704</i>	<i>\$2,112,320</i>
<i>Trainee Expenditures on Incidentals</i>	<i>\$32,200</i>	<i>\$161,000</i>	<i>\$289,800</i>	<i>\$305,900</i>	<i>\$322,000</i>

Note: ¹ Estimate for 2020 represents steady-state trainee expenditures. This level of expenditures would be expected to continue annually for the foreseeable future.

² Trainee expenditures on lodging would be funded via federal contracts with hotels/motels within the ROI.

³ Some meals would be eaten on-site during the instructional day and funded via federal contracts with food services providers.

Overall, FASTC is expected to generate economic activity in the region that will create and sustain over 800 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs. In the near term, during the peak of construction, there could be more than 1,700 FTE jobs per year. As construction abates in 2019

⁶ See Appendix J: Economic and Fiscal Impacts Report, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/241088.pdf>

and operations increase, sustained operational jobs are expected to be in the range of 700-800, as shown in Table ES-1 from the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) fiscal report.⁷

Table ES-1. Total Impact – Annual Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Jobs

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Construction	254	1,633	1,130	525	463	36
Operations	0	78	392	705	744	783
Total	254	1,711	1,522	1,230	1,207	819

Note: Jobs directly attributed to FASTC employment plus jobs created through economic output in the region. Economic output is the total production and sales volume generated in the ROI as a result of the construction and operations of FASTC.

In the next few years, the largest job producing economic impacts will be related to contracting for construction including companies that bid on and win contracts or who are hired as sub-contractors. Some of the larger contractors may be national but they will likely seek local and regional vendors, suppliers, and skilled workers representing an immediate opportunity for new local jobs.



Stakeholder working sessions continued the following day, building on community feedback and planning for targeted strategies and opportunities (Credit: Renaissance Planning)

Full-time trainers employed by FASTC will not generally come from local labor pools, as they are specialist and career Foreign Service staff, special agents, or engineers. However, these individuals will be moving to the area, contributing to population growth and the increased demand for local services. As the construction phase concludes and ongoing FASTC operations-based needs increase, there will be numerous civil service positions available by application at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).⁸ A number of job types will be sought either as civil service or contractors for FASTC in the coming years including:

⁷ Eight-county region of influence (ROI) Nottoway, Chesterfield, Amelia, Brunswick, Dinwiddie, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, and Prince Edward.

⁸ Federal job opportunities are available through this portal: <https://www.usajobs.gov/>

- Program Officer
- Budget Specialist
- Administrative Specialist
- IT Specialist
- Visual Information Specialist
- Procurement & Logistics
- Subject Matter Expert Instructors
- Training Delivery Officer
- General Facility Support
- Groundskeepers
- Housekeeping
- Food Service/Catering
- Automotive Mechanics
- Instructional Systems Designer
- Maintenance
- Travel Coordinator
- Security Personnel

In addition to the direct economic opportunity of new jobs associated with the FASTC, there will also be a multiplier effect of growth as new residents and businesses seek to locate near the facility. These new residents and employees will patronize restaurants and other local businesses which in turn will spark more economic activity and potentially increase demand for housing, additional services, health care, recreation and high quality schools for their children. There may also be non-FASTC growth opportunities presented by the business expansion potential associated with the use of Fort Pickett's airspace for the testing of unmanned robotic technologies.

Combined, the influx of new people and jobs will not only create new economic opportunities, but it will also create new pressures on the public sector related to addressing transportation needs, parking, water and sewer, electricity, and broadband Internet associated with this new growth.



Main Street, Blackstone (Credit: Renaissance Planning)

COMMUNITY VALUES, ISSUES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

What is the vision for the future?

In May 2015, the technical assistance team held a preliminary stakeholder work session to discuss the broad aspirations and community values relative to future growth in the community. This work session was followed by conference calls and the completion of a community assessment to identifying some key goal areas for developing strategies and actions that would help the community plan for growth. Following the final approval of FASTC at the Fort Pickett location in early 2016, the study team returned to the community and hosted a three-day series of meetings that occurred April 25-27, 2016. The community meeting that opened the workshop was attended by over 100 people.



The Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center in Blackstone, Virginia announced it was ceasing operation in May 2016. It represents a potential reuse facility.

(Photo credit and source info:

<http://www.wcast.info/vumac/index.htm> and
<http://www.vumac.org/>

Community Values

Values are what motivate people. The technical assistance began with a community meeting to confirm the key values and aspirations of community members, relating to future growth and development in the community. Building on the list of values identified in May of 2015, the following list reflects statements from community members about why people value living in Blackstone and Nottoway County today, and what they would like to see maintained or strengthened in the future. Safety, comfort, history, and small town character themes all featured prominently in discussions, both in May 2015 and at the later meetings in April 2016. Values include:

- Safe neighborhoods
- High quality neighborhoods
- Vibrant downtown
- Jobs and prosperity
- Recreation and amenities
- Strong faith community
- Arts community
- Nice people
- History
- Low cost of living

Community Strengths

In addition to specific questions concerning community values, the workshop also prompted participants to identify the key strengths of the community. The following provides a summary of the community strengths as identified during the workshop process.

- Rich history with many stories from the different eras of activity at Fort Pickett
- Friendly, warm, and welcoming people
- Unique culture and beliefs
- Recently acquired water and sewer capacity
- Small town character and virtues, and it feels like home "to everyone"
- Abundant natural resources, clean air, and clean environment
- Great, thriving downtown
- Strong civic leadership in Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Blackstone Inc.
- Motivated people excited about new growth
- Existing walkable downtown
- Several existing buildings available for adaptive reuse (Armory, United Methodist Center, etc.)
- Several undeveloped lots near downtown
- Many outdoor recreational assets
- A military friendly community
- Existing good schools
- Strong faith-based community
- Strong sense of togetherness

- Rural character
- Good roadway and freight access to other parts of the region and state
- Low tax rate relative to peer jurisdictions
- Pro-developer mindset
- Several unique locally owned businesses

Community Challenges

During the community meeting, members of the public identified key challenges or barriers that they felt might present obstacles to positive growth or change in the community. Additionally, the study team and members of county and town staff also discussed key challenges prior to the meeting.

Understanding challenges (both real and perceived) is critical in crafting actions or strategies that will have a meaningful impact.

A summary of key challenges and issues is listed below.

- Aging infrastructure (sidewalks, roadways, etc.)
- History of low growth/little economic activity
- Perceived lack of open communication between local government and citizens
- Concerns about racial tensions and lack of diversity
- Limited bus transportation
- Minimum lot sizes requirements in A1 Agriculture areas
- Poor internet and intermittent cellular service
- Unengaged youth
- Some community members are risk adverse and resistant to change
- Too much truck traffic through Main Street
- Lack of adequate medical facilities, especially urgent care
- Need for more bike paths
- Lack of trained work force
- Industrial base is leaving/has left town
- Lack of local entertainment (movie theaters, sports venues) and recreation options (gyms, outdoor venues)
- Low wage paying jobs
- Large under-educated adult population
- Limited staff capacity and resources in town or at county to address increase growth demands



The market for housing demand is evidenced by the new Blackstone Lofts (one bedroom luxury apartments) (Credit: Renaissance Planning)

Opportunities

The workshop process also helped to identify the specific opportunities that could be realized in response to growth associated with FASTC. These are grouped into some similar categories below, and include:

Work on targeted opportunities

- Become a destination for an aging population/retirees.
- Gas pipeline is coming and represents new capacity for growth.
- Fiber optic lines already exist along highway 460, just need the last mile connection into towns.
- Capitalize on opportunities to reestablish airport or otherwise may better use of this resource.
- Develop a strategy to attract and retain millennials in the community.
- Tap into tobacco funding to support economic development and other community building efforts.
- Foster more tourism based business growth.
- Foster business growth associated with unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) business sector which is a one of a kind opportunity in the state.
- Utilize the GoVirginia initiative is coming, so be on the lookout. There will be funding for all areas of Virginia. At least \$3-6 million will become available in grants for activities that help make Virginia communities more economically competitive.
- Work towards attracting or building an urgent care health care facility.
- Build a YMCA/YWCA to expand recreation and fitness opportunities for locals and visitors alike.
- Promote the many opportunities sites that the county owns directly adjacent FASTC (see the opportunities map).

Transportation

- Respond to the captured audience as FASTC students would be car free, and would need shuttling or other means to get around. VDRPT has funding to study possible routes.
- Explore feasibility for taxicab service as a possible local business opportunity.
- Improve public transportation – particularly if many visitors will be coming to Fort Pickett without their own personal vehicles.
- Improve walking and biking connections between destinations in towns and developed areas. Trainees will want physical fitness options, access to trails and active transportation.

Prepare, Train Workforce, and be Proactive



Sign advertising 489-acre Cralle Place Inc. potential development site, north end of town adjacent 460 (Credit: Renaissance Planning)

- Study the demographics and market preferences of future FASTC employees and students, e.g., what is the average age, spending profile, etc.
- Build on the opportunities that new people, new demand and new energy that will arrive in the context of FASTC.
- Work now to get ahead of growth to plan for the growth we want.
- Invest in public education and new vocational training.
- Expand programs at community colleges to more directly link to likely businesses at Fort Pickett.
- Reinvigorate local high school technical programs to align with business growth at Fort Pickett in robotics, unmanned technologies.
- Foster and create opportunities for all members of the community to benefit from new growth through outreach and education and training programs.



The Harris Memorial Armory represents a locally popular renovation site and historic asset (Credit: Renaissance Planning)

Partner and collaborate

- Expand current businesses and create new businesses that provide jobs and strengthen local tax base.
- Capture a greater share of regional growth.
- Create new partnerships between local governments (towns and county) need to work together in planning and attracting growth.
- Encourage and welcome diversity, and ensure all groups in the community are represented in conversation about future opportunities.
- Create and demonstrate local partnership and cooperation to enhance competitiveness for federal funding opportunities. For example, USDA 2014 Farm Bill, and USDA Rural Development, rewards additional application points to those that demonstrate regional and multi-jurisdictional cooperation.
- Collaborate on opportunities for growth in neighboring towns – new residents or visitors may shop or work in Blackstone but live or stay elsewhere.

Strive for quality and compatible development

- Create new housing and compatible, well connected, walkable neighborhoods.
- Reuse of the Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center (VUMAC) campus for lodging.
- Redevelop the Harris Memorial Armory into productive, revenue generating use.
- Enhance what we have, don't build a brand new town.
- Review zoning code, land use plans, comprehensive plans and development review procedures to see if they currently support or direct growth to areas that support existing development and character.
- Proactively work with absentee landlords who are not maintaining their properties.

Enhance and grow local businesses

- Create an economy that supports small specialty shops like a bakery, butcher, produce, wine shop.
- Cultivate the local agriculture industry to bring local foods to town.
- Create new entertainment and dining options for people visiting Blackstone.
- Promote existing entertainment options to increase the awareness of these opportunities.
- Explore business opportunities related to expansion of outdoor recreation and experience-based tourism including excursions or tours such as hiking, fishing, biking, hunting, historic tours, farm tours/visits for people who may stay at the base for several weeks and over the weekends.

WORKING SESSIONS – PLANNING FOR GROWTH

On the second day of the workshop, the stakeholder working group engaged in a discussion that examined issues and opportunities associated with growth policies and the location of future development. From a smart growth perspective, location really matters. Accommodating new growth by adaptively reusing existing buildings and under-utilized lots, especially in ways that are supportive and enhance existing historic character, will serve to strengthen existing neighborhoods and commercial districts while also making more efficient use of existing infrastructure.

Encouraging new growth and a mix of land uses to locate into the existing historic core of the community can make Main Street more attractive to visitors, and entice people to stay longer because there is a concentration of things to do and places to go within close distance of one another. Creating compact areas of mixed use development with multiple destinations located within a one-quarter or one-half mile of each also fosters creation of walkable and bikable places that further reinforces the attractiveness of downtown and Main Street. Clustered development patterns also increases the feasibility for providing transit, or other coordinated transport services. In the case of future students of FASTC, these may be a particularly important strategies given that they will not have personal auto vehicles during their local stay while training at FASTC. Development occurring on properties that are farther away from existing uses will be inherently more dependent on auto-only transportation and may draw business and activity out of the existing core commercial districts or corridors of Blackstone and Nottoway.

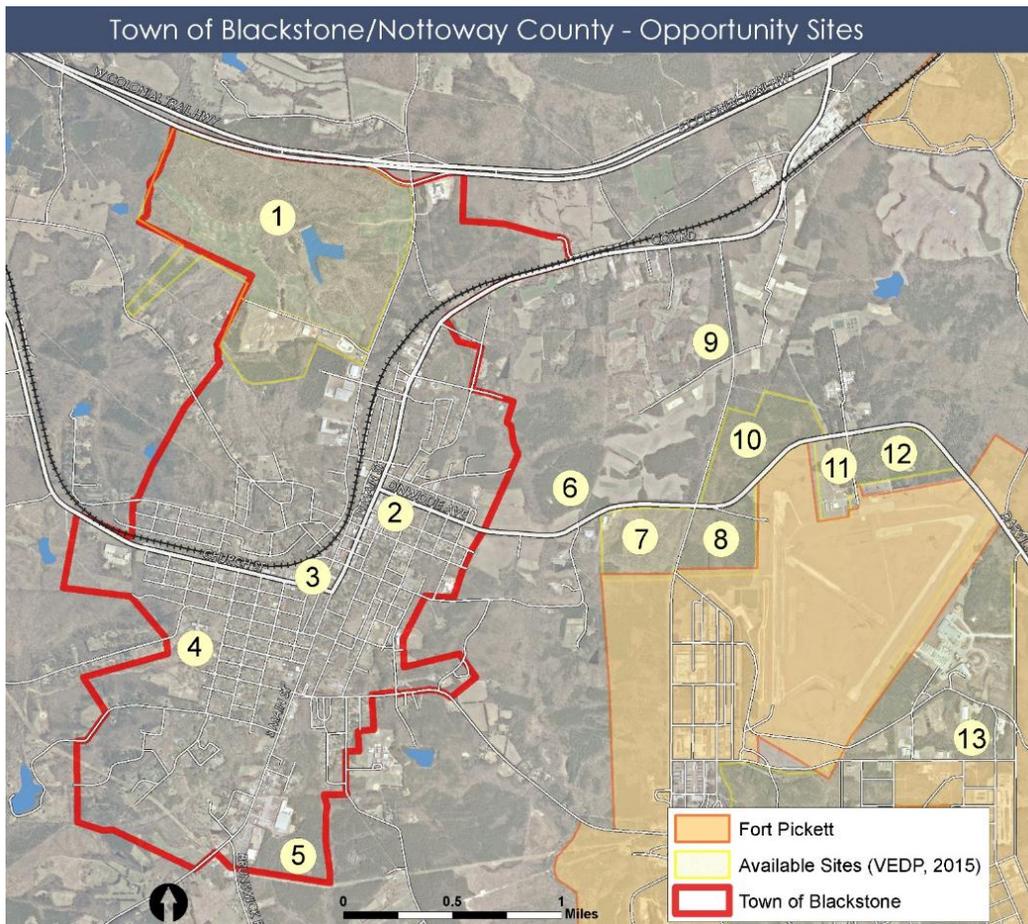


**Storefronts on Main Street, downtown
Blackstone (Credit: Renaissance Planning)**

Site Suitability Considerations Exercise

The workshop discussions included an exercise to identify potential sites for development and qualitatively compared them to each other relative to a range of development suitability factors. For each site, the discussion oriented around themes such as accessibility (walk, bike, bus or vehicular access to and from site), size (what could be accommodated), location (relative to downtown or FASTC location at Fort Pickett), physical features/barriers, neighbors, visibility, existing zoning, existing infrastructure and comprehensive plan compatibility.

The potential development sites and suitability assessment factors identified in the mapping exercise are shown in the following map and table. The table presents some of the findings of the suitability considerations exercise, but does not take the last step of drawing a conclusion about which sites might be best to prioritize for future development. This could be a potential next step for the Town and County's planning and development committees. Based on the community's desires, the committee could consider expanding the development review process to take into account site suitability criteria. For example, growth policies could be updated to prioritize new development within close proximity to downtown. This could then be a factor incorporated into site approval and permitting processes. Alternatively a community could weight each criteria differently and thereby signal to development interests if certain factors may be more desirable than others. Development projects that score high in those areas could then be given priority reviews and streamlined permitting.



Suitability Assessment Factor	Sites 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Currently has water/Sewer service		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
Water/sewer service accessible	✓				✓		✓		✓	✓			
Environmentally tested and clean					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Greenfield	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Proximity to downtown		✓	✓	✓		✓							
Proximity to Fort Pickett						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Infill or redevelopment/reuse		✓	✓	✓									✓
Large size	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

Policy Tools to Plan for Growth

The development of a Comprehensive Plan (and regular updates) is the primary method by which local governments and citizens can examine and plan for future changes in their community. In Virginia, state law mandates that every local government prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Plan.

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan, the County and its towns have additional tools such as the Land Use Map, Subdivision Regulations, Zoning, Capital Improvements Program, Form Based Codes, Historic Districts, and several other policies to help inform the location, character and intensity of growth over time.

The existing policy context (see Appendix) for both Blackstone and Nottoway County is one that is conducive to lower density, small town development in rural Virginia. In general, there are only very limited mixed-use districts, and districts tend to favor single or dominant uses. There are provisions to protect and promote working agricultural lands and limit any density in rural conservation or agriculture areas. It directs growth, particularly residential, towards the town or water/sewer service areas nearby. A site plan review is required for more intensive land uses. It is during the site plan review phase that local officials can work directly with the developer to explore opportunities for design or development details that benefit larger community goals and further enhance the existing character of the

“The Comprehensive Plan is the foundation for all decision-making in matters involving land use planning and growth management. Planning is necessary if a community wants to manage its future. In the absence of monitoring or guidance, change will occur haphazardly without any assessment being made of its impact on the whole community. Planning gives local government the means and opportunity to establish its own community development goals and objectives, and to enact policies, ordinances and programs necessary to attain them. The planning process also gives citizens an opportunity to participate in the development of local plans, thus increasing the likelihood that the plan reflects the ideas of the community.”

“The plan is intended to help guide and coordinate anticipated changes in the locality “by providing for: the wise use of land and resources; a suitable environment for people to live in; anticipated future needs; beneficial development patterns; and, the most cost-effective use of tax dollars.”

Excerpts from Managing Growth and Development in Virginia, APA Virginia Chapter, October 2015

community. The County and Town have not historically received high volumes of development applications and they affirmed that they generally wait for a proposal to be made and then work with that developer. The County has a development working group that keeps an inventory of publically owned sites suitable for development, but these are not published or widely known. The exercise of evaluating some of the opportunity sites in Blackstone, or in Nottoway County near Fort Pickett could be replicated by Town and County staff to anticipate potential future land use or zoning code changes needed before the development proposals come forward.

Policy Updates for Consideration

Given the demands likely to arise from new development associated with FASTC, Blackstone and Nottoway County might consider specific updates to existing plans and codes to ensure that new lodging, housing and supporting retail uses can be accommodated and occur in a manner conducive to supporting a vibrant Main Street and contributing to the existing historic and small town character. Specifically, policies could include:

- Modifying zoning to enable shared parking in lieu of the requirement to accommodate parking site by site.
- Creating more by right opportunities to vertically mix uses (retail on ground floor with upper story lodging or residential).
- Building more walking and biking infrastructure (sidewalks, crosswalks, bike racks).
- Creating new signage design guidelines to encourage new signage that reflects local historic character.
- Creating minimum/maximum building setback requirements to maximize the efficiency of building on the site and foster walkable streetscapes.
- Promoting more green infrastructure and low impact development to encourage storm water management on-site and reduced long term infrastructure costs/needs.
- Expanding the applicability of historic design guidelines.
- Establishing new gateway districts aimed at creating distinctive signage and building character at key entry points to Blackstone.

PRIORITY GOALS AND NEXT STEPS

The technical assistance work sessions focused on issues and opportunities related to the potential for new growth and development associated with FASTC. As a result of these discussions, community members focused on three priority goals areas for which additional actions or strategies might be warranted. The following summarizes each goal, and presents some best practices for consideration in small town planning. Each action is presented for consideration and provides guidance on potential next steps that the Town and/or County might take in moving closer to their goals. For each action, a potential lead role and supporting role was identified by workshop participants reflecting a preliminary commitment towards implementation.

Goal 1: Harness Economic Development Locally

FASTC will bring new economic opportunities to the region which includes the eight surrounding counties. Recognizing the potential wide dispersion of these opportunities, this goal focuses on actions and strategies that directly position Nottoway County and the towns of Blackstone, Crewe, and Burkeville to attract a significant share of that economic activity locally. This goal requires that local governments, local institutions and community members proactively reach out to create new partnerships, consider new infrastructure expansions and further invest in community building efforts to best position the area for growth.

Specific Actions/ Initiatives	Why is this important?	Immediate Next Steps	Timeline	Lead Role	Support Roles
Develop economic development strategy.	To better understand specific opportunities and target state, regional and local programs and investments to support local economic development.	Town has submitted grant application for economic impact study	Next 30 days to establish contact 3-6 months to complete study	Town staff	VAEDP County and Towns Growth Alliance Tobacco Commission
Expand partners in Economic Development Committee.	Expanding membership in the committee can help to identify common goals and partnering opportunities to target and attract desirable development opportunities	County staff to immediately brief existing committee and explore potential outreach	60 days	County staff	Community Colleges Growth Alliance

Revitalize and expand vocational-technical and community college programs.	FASTC and other business growth at Fort Pickett will require a trained workforce. To ensure those opportunities are available to local members of the community, a more tailored alignment between the local vocational/technical programs and Fort Pickett business may be warranted.	Work with Economic Development Committee and identify key educational partners that should be a part of the conversation.	60 days	Business Employer Services Team	Community Colleges School District
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Goal 2 – Plan for Sustainable Infrastructure Expansion

One of the biggest challenges for the County and Town in attracting growth to the area is providing needed infrastructure and maintaining it over time. Infrastructure includes everything that makes up the physical framework of a community, including: roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, lighting, utilities, community facilities (schools, libraries), broadband internet, sanitary sewer, stormwater and water lines, parks, trails, ball-fields, landscaping, open space, and natural areas. There is the potential for green infrastructure to play a role in reducing demand on water and sewer pressures from new development. This goal area acknowledges that the community will need to be proactive in finding creative funding options for potential infrastructure expansions to attract growth, planning efficient infrastructure expansions to reduce long term maintenance and operational costs, and negotiating with developers to ensure they can help pay their fair share of the costs. The following identifies some preliminary actions that both the Town and County might take to begin a more comprehensive infrastructure expansion strategy.

Specific Actions/ Initiatives	Why is this important?	Immediate Next Steps	Timeline	Lead Role	Support Roles
Initiate revenue study.	Paying for infrastructure comes in part from local taxes. Conducting a revenue study to look at potential funding increases associated with new development can help to identify the future revenue surpluses/shortfalls which can help inform developer discussions; the study can also help prompt discussions about creative financing options for funding needed infrastructure.	Brief elected officials and build support.	30-90 days	TBD	TBD

Reach out to local utility and broadband providers.	Improving local broadband internet and cellular service is seen as a key infrastructure need to attracting growth. There is a need to reach out to local providers to better understand timing of expansions and ensure they are aware of growing development demands associated with FASTC. Countywide strategy to set broadband goal.	Chamber of Commerce to make contact with local providers and provide feedback to County and Town staff.	30-60 days	TBD	Growth Alliance USDA USDOC
Initiate study with VDRPT on expanding public transportation system.	Many visitors will be coming to the area without personal vehicles. This presents an opportunity for expansion of the local bus system and the supporting bicycle, walking infrastructure in a way that supports FASTC operations as well as local goals.	Town has initiated conversation with VDRPT.	30-60 days make contact 6-8 months for study	Town staff	VDRPT GSA

Goal 3 – Encourage Sustainable Growth that Strengthens Existing Character and Revitalizes Existing Places

The walkable, welcoming, small town character of Blackstone is a valued asset of the community. This goal area focuses attention on how to ensure the long term economic vitality of downtown while also supporting new growth both within and outside of town. This includes being thoughtful allowing retail and restaurant uses outside of Main Street, as well as encouraging new growth that complements the historic charm and character of the existing built form.

Specific Actions/ Initiatives	Why is this important?	Immediate Next Steps	Timeline	Lead Role	Support Roles
Compile best practices for signage and parking.	Other communities have developed specific zoning codes and policies to encourage thoughtful signage design and efficient parking allocation. The community can draw on these best practices to refine existing policies.		1-2 months	Town staff	GSA/EPA Team

<p>Incorporate any relevant best practices into current county update.</p>	<p>The update of the County's comprehensive plan is occurring over the next year. A review of the best practices contained herein can help inform any relevant changes needed to address growth coming from FASTC.</p>	<p>Review of best practices by County staff (in concert with action above).</p>	<p>1-2 months</p>	<p>County staff</p>	<p>GSA/EPA Team</p>
<p>County Comp. Plan Committee and Town Council briefings on best practices</p>	<p>New ideas related to planning for growth need to be shared. Staff can provide regular briefings to elected officials and planning commission members to introduce new ideas and building support.</p>	<p>Identification of key best practices (shared parking, joint agreements, signage, etc.) and schedule briefings; disseminate this report.</p>	<p>2-3 months</p>	<p>County and Town staff</p>	<p>GSA/EPA Team</p>

In addition to the goals and actions cited above, Appendix B includes references to best practices in other areas to support small town planning for smart growth. Some additional funding resources and references also included in Appendix C.

CONCLUSIONS

Site clearing and construction is underway at FASTC and development inquiries are already coming in. In short, the development activity is already in motion and gaining momentum. Students will begin to arrive at FASTC in early 2017 and increase in the years thereafter. Neighboring jurisdictions are already thinking about the economic potential of FASTC and considering their own strategies to attract their share of the new growth. Therefore the time for Blackstone and Nottoway County to act and better position themselves to take advantage of these opportunities is now, lest growth occur elsewhere or in a manner that doesn't reinforce local development and quality of life goals. This community next steps to-do list is just a start. On-going meetings and coordination between towns and Nottoway County and continued engagement of the public in planning process is critical to realizing the positive potential of FASTC, and getting the type of development that fits the rural, small town character that many value and cherish. Below are some additional next steps for the Blackstone and Nottoway County, its leaders and citizens, to consider as it works to achieving its goals.

Continue to define success. Further exploration of what success really means in "getting the growth we want" for Blackstone and Nottoway County could be considered. For example, one measure of success related to fostering local economic development that supports broader community goals could be to target and recruit developers interested in building

new, renovating an existing facility or reusing an existing site in Blackstone to develop a hotel. Additional measures of success could be to establish local hiring and job growth goals that can be monitored over time.

Coordinate planning and leverage limited resources. The importance of coordination and leveraging limited public resources cannot be understated. All of the major needs, ideas and initiatives discussed will need successful cooperation between local governments and organizations, the public and private sectors. Bringing improved medical facilities to the area; finding a developer or active, productive tenant for VUMAC; developing programs that train and equip locals to fill FASTC and non-FASTC related job opportunities are all big effort items that will require on-going cooperation not just between local governments, but between local governments and private sector, state and federal partners.

Monitor FASTC development and needs closely, and foster good, on-going relations with GSA and DOS. There has been substantial federal investment in FASTC and there is a desire on the part of these federal agencies to be good community neighbors as well as provide agency staff the highest quality training and services as part of their experience. There are a host of logistical and system issues that have yet to be resolved. For example, transportation of students and trainers in and around the area is something that DOS has a vested interest in. There is the opportunity to improve local transportation options, including shuttles, taxis, biking, walking and trail systems, in partnership. Making sure lines of communication about timing and needs are open and on-going, both between the communities and the federal agencies will be critical as will the need to keep citizens informed.

Shift towards growth management. As a community that has seen little growth and development over the last several decades, the local approach remains one of reacting to new development proposals on a site by site basis. In order to optimize the positive opportunities associated with new growth as articulated throughout this plan, there may be a need for local governments to move into a position of growth management whereby there is a concentrated effort to guide new development rather than let the market alone drive the location and character of growth. This can be done through additional planning that could result in the establishment of design guidelines, updates to comprehensive plans and zoning. The key message here is to get out in front of development, anticipate needs, understand markets and demand, trends and impacts, and then act to structure local policies, investments and programs accordingly.

APPENDICES

Appendix A Existing Land Use Policy Context

Appendix B Additional Resources

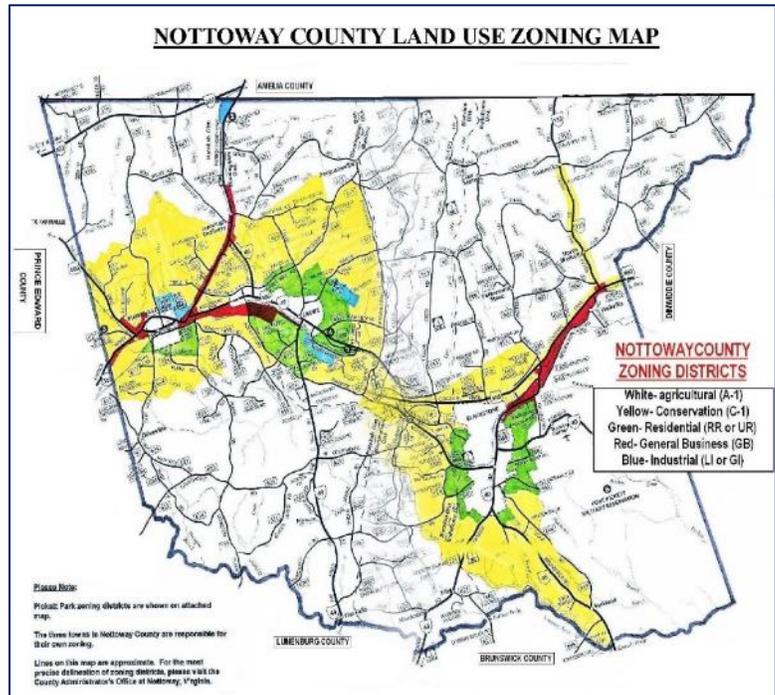
Appendix C Funding Sources

Appendix D PowerPoint Presentation Slides

Appendix A - Existing Land Use Policy Context

County Zoning and Land Use

The majority of Nottoway County is zoned for agricultural use, as shown in the white areas of the map to the right. A minimum lot size of five acres is required in the Agriculture District. The yellow regions are Conservation land use areas, which ring the three towns of Burkeville, Crewe, and Blackstone along U.S. 460. The priority in these areas is to maintain the County's rural character while also supporting uses that support the agricultural economy. Residential is allowed in these areas with minimum lot sizes of one unit per two acres. The green areas are the designated Residential zones, either Rural Residential or Urban Residential. These locations, adjacent to the three towns, are for generally low-density residential development patterns. Minimum lot size in Rural Residential is one acre, typically not served by municipal water and sewer. Urban Residential is generally for single-family uses, with minimum lot sizes of one-half acre, but lots must be served by public or community water and wastewater services. In general, the by-right zoning ensures a very low density development pattern typical of rural, southern Virginia, orienting residential towards towns, and with commercial (red) and industrial zones (blue) also near towns and highways. The county is currently in the process of preparing an update to their comprehensive plan, presenting an opportunity to reexamine these land use designations relative to some of the anticipated growth in the region, including FASTC.



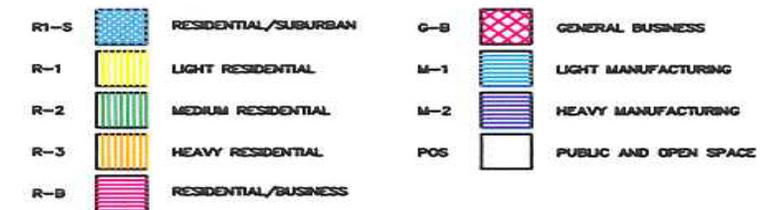
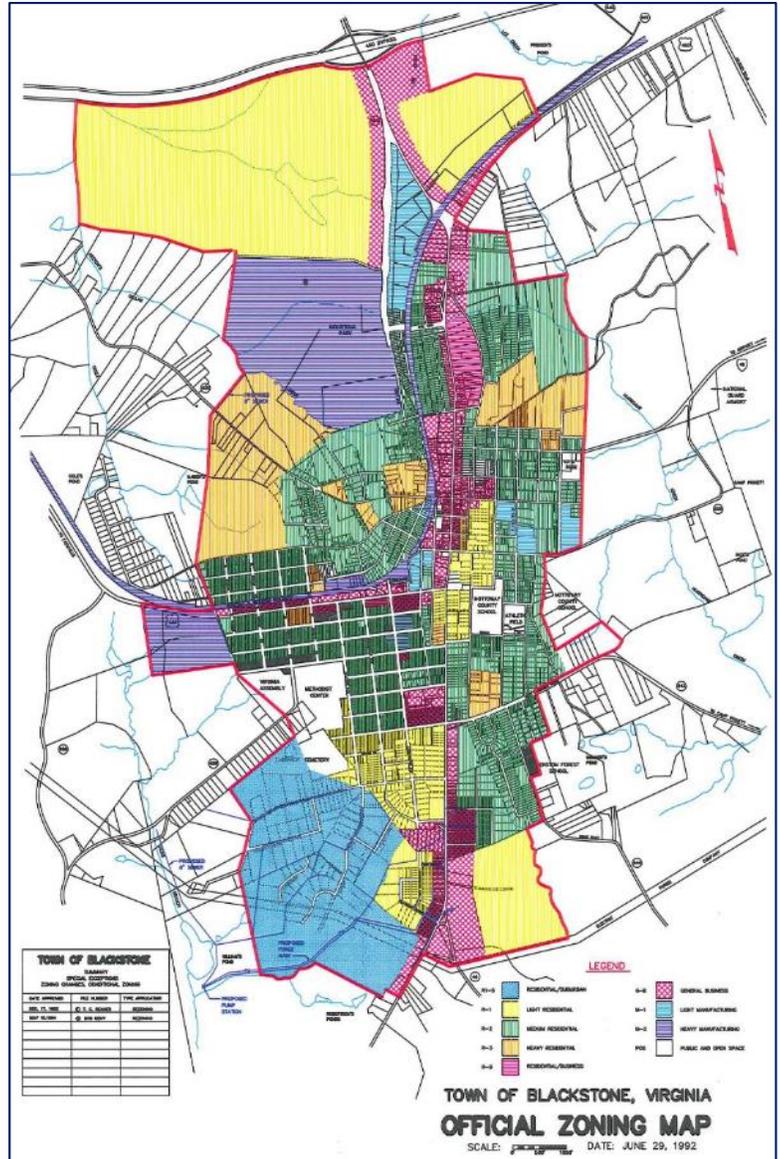
Nottoway County Zoning Districts (Credit: Nottoway County)

Town Zoning

Land use patterns in Blackstone are more diverse than in the county. Generally, the maximum height of all zoning districts is 35 feet (approximately three stories high) with some exceptions made for churches and schools. Below is a summary of densities and primary uses typical for each of the town's zoning districts. The Residential Business district is the closest to mixed-use in character but remains residential first and with some commercial second.

- RS- Residential Suburban: Residential; minimum one-acre lots; single-family; septic permitted.
- R1- Residential: 1-3 units per acre on 15,000 square feet or larger; single-family; septic permitted where suitable.

- R2 – Residential: 3-8 units per acre on 4,000-10,000 square foot lots or larger; single-family and two-family by right.
- R3 – Residential: Same as R-1 but multi-family permitted by-right; less intensive commercial permitted, but primary character remains residential.
- R-B –Residential Business: Allows for some commercial uses in typically residential neighborhoods; commercial uses need to provide off-street parking and retail is prohibited; only single-family and two-family are permitted by right; requires a site plan and buffering for commercial uses; still primarily a residential district, low density, with provision from some lower traffic generating commercial uses.
- B-G Business, General: Intended for businesses that require automobile access and have more frequent traffic trip generation; has special provisions to permit businesses traditionally located in the central business district; minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet for use.
- M-1 Industrial: Lighter industrial uses such as warehouses and wholesale activities; avoids uses that generate noise, smoke, dust or fumes.



Town of Blackstone Zoning Map (Credit: Town of Blackstone)

M-2 Industrial: Heavier industrial uses that tend to generate nuisances, for example stone or gravel operations, refining, asphalt or brick plants, or feed manufacturing, etc.; residential uses are highly discouraged.

In addition to the different zoning designations, the Town also has a designated historic district for the Main Street area which includes additional provisions aimed at preserving the historic character of downtown.

APPENDIX B ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Cultivating a Competitive Advantage in Rural Counties (2014)

This report highlights how rural counties are pursuing asset-based economic development initiatives that create jobs and build wealth while preserving rural landscapes, culture, and heritage.

- <http://www.naco.org/resources/cultivating-competitive-advantage-how-rural-counties-are-growing-economies-local-assets>

Defying the Odds: Sustainability in Small and Rural Places (2013)

This briefing paper offers short case studies and lessons derived from a minority of small communities who made strides protecting the environment and promoting local economic competitiveness and community revitalization.

- <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4568/issue-brief-defying-the-odds-sustainability-in-small-and-rural-places/>

EPA Grants Tutorial

Learn how to apply for, manage and complete an EPA grant with easy-to-follow steps.

- <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-grants-101-tutorial>

EPA Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure educational materials, ideas, tools, strategies and funding options from EPA.

- <https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure>

EPA Smart Growth

Information about EPA's Smart Growth program, which is housed in EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities

- <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth>

Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Rural Planning, Zoning, and Development Codes

This publication provides smart growth policy options that small towns and rural communities can implement to ensure that their development is fiscally sound, environmentally responsible, and socially equitable. This report is especially useful for rural communities on the fringe of fast growing metropolitan regions.

- <http://www2.epa.gov/smartgrowth/essential-smart-growth-fixes-communities>

Federal Resources for Sustainable Rural Communities (2012)

This publication highlights federal resources rural communities can use to promote economic competitiveness, protect healthy environments, and enhance quality of life. It provides information on funding and technical assistance opportunities from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), EPA, and

the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), as well as examples of how rural communities across the country have put these programs into action.

- <http://www2.epa.gov/smartgrowth/federal-resources-sustainable-rural-communities>

How Small Towns and Cities Can Use Local Assets to Rebuild Their Economies: Lessons from Successful Places (2015)

This report includes case studies of small towns and cities that have successfully complemented business recruitment by emphasizing their existing assets and distinctive resources. These case studies illustrate successful tactics that other communities can use.

- <http://www2.epa.gov/smartgrowth/how-small-towns-and-cities-can-use-local-assets-rebuild-their-economies>

Planning for Prosperity in Small Towns and Rural Regions (2015)

A clearinghouse of materials for rural regions and small towns, with publications, webinars, workshop materials and other information on a variety of topics including economic resilience, entrepreneurship, community engagement, downtown redevelopment, and food systems.

- <http://ruralplanning.weebly.com/>

Rural Planning Organization of America's website

Website of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Rural Planning Organizations of America network. Website includes resources, reports, and information about rural transportation events.

- <http://ruraltransportation.org/>

Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities (2015)

This tool is a comprehensive compilation of strategies that villages, towns, and small cities in rural areas can use to evaluate their existing policies to create healthy, environmentally resilient, and economically robust places. Hundreds of resources are included, organized by 11 common goal areas. This tool is identical to the self-assessment that communities use through the Building Blocks technical assistance.

- <http://www2.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-self-assessment-rural-communities>

Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities: Madison County (2015)

This report demonstrates why and how Madison County, New York applied the Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities. It includes a case study of Dryden, NY and useful resources in footnotes and citations.

- <http://www2.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-self-assessment-rural-communities-madison-county>

U.S. Department of Transportation's Rural and Small Community Planning page

One-stop shop for resources about transportation planning in rural and small communities on the Transportation Planning Capacity Building website. It includes links to publications,

legislation and guidance, recent peer events, upcoming calendar events, and related websites.

- https://www.planning.dot.gov/focus_rural.asp

APPENDIX C FUNDING SOURCES

U.S. EPA

Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)

The EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program is a federal-state partnership that provides communities a permanent, independent source of low-cost financing for a wide range of water quality infrastructure projects.

- <https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf>

Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program is a federal-state partnership to help ensure safe drinking water. Created by the 1996 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) the program provides financial support to water systems and to state safe water programs.

- <https://www.epa.gov/drinkingwatersrf>

Grant Community Program

Information for Source Reduction Assistance Program, Office of Sustainable Communities, Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Program, Environmental Justice Small Grants Program and the Urban Waters Small Grants Program.

- <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-grant-community-program-information>

Green Infrastructure

EPA's Green Infrastructure website contains educational materials, ideas, tools, strategies and funding options.

- <https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure>

Specific EPA Grant Programs

List of EPA grant programs and other funding opportunities.

- <https://www.epa.gov/grants/specific-epa-grant-programs>

USDA Rural Development

USDA Rural Development is committed to the future of rural communities. Our role is to increase rural residents' economic opportunities and improve their quality of life. Rural Development forges partnerships with rural communities, funding projects that bring housing, community facilities, utilities and other services. We also provide technical assistance and financial backing for rural businesses and cooperatives to create quality jobs in rural areas.

For more information, visit:

- <http://www.rd.usda.gov>

Business and Industry Guarantee Loan Program

The purpose of USDA's Business and Industry (B&I) Guaranteed Loan Program is to improve, develop, or finance business, industry, and employment and improve the economic and environmental climate in rural communities. Through this program, USDA provides guarantees on loans made by private lenders to help new and existing businesses gain access to affordable capital by lowering the lender's risk and allowing for more favorable interest rates and terms. Projects that are eligible under the locally or regionally produced agricultural food products initiative may be located in urban areas as well as rural areas. Locally or regionally produced agricultural food products are loan guarantees made to establish and facilitate entities that process, distribute, aggregate, store, and/or market locally or regionally produced agricultural food products to support community development and farm and ranch income. The term "locally or regionally produced agricultural food product" means any agricultural food product that is raised, produced, and distributed in the locality or region in which the final product is marketed, so that the total distance that the product is transported is less than 400 miles from the origin of the product, or in the State in which the product is produced. The Business and Industry Loan Guarantee program is available on a rolling basis throughout the year.

- <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-industry-loan-guarantees/>

Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program

USDA's Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant program provides infrastructure support in rural communities under 20,000 people. Assistance and loans have been used for commercial kitchens, farmers markets, food banks, cold storage facilities, food hubs and other local food infrastructure. Limited grant funding is available to public entities such as municipalities, counties, and special-purpose districts, as well as non-profits and tribal governments. Funding can be used to construct, enlarge, or improve community facilities and can include the purchase of equipment required for a facility's operation.

- <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>

Housing Assistance for Individuals

USDA provides homeownership opportunities to rural Americans through the Single Family Housing Direct Home Loans and the Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program. These programs assist very low through moderate income applicants obtain decent, safe and sanitary housing in eligible rural areas.

- <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-direct-home-loans>
- <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-guaranteed-loan-program>

Rural Business Development Grants

This new USDA-RD program essentially combines the former Rural Business Enterprise Grant program (RBEG) and the Rural Business Opportunity Grant program (RBOG). The competitive

grant program supports targeted technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas. Programmatic activities are separated into enterprise or opportunity type grant activities. Towns, cities, state agencies, and non-profit organizations are among the eligible applicants.

Enterprise type grant funds must be used on projects to benefit small and emerging businesses in rural areas as specified in the grant application. Uses may include:

- Training and technical assistance, such as project planning, business counseling/training, market research, feasibility studies, professional/technical reports, or product/service improvements.
- Acquisition or development of land, easements, or rights of way; construction, conversion, renovation, of buildings, plants, machinery, equipment, access streets and roads, parking areas, utilities.
- Pollution control and abatement.
- Capitalization of revolving loan funds including funds that will make loans for start-ups and working capital.
- Distance adult learning for job training and advancement.
- Rural transportation improvement.
- Community economic development.
- Technology-based economic development.
- Feasibility studies and business plans.
- Leadership and entrepreneur training.
- Rural business incubators.
- Long-term business strategic planning.

Opportunity type grant funding must be used for projects in rural areas and they can be used for:

- Community economic development.
- Technology-based economic development.
- Feasibility studies and business plans.
- Leadership and entrepreneur training.
- Rural business incubators.
- Long-term business strategic planning.

For more information, visit:

- <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants>

Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG)

The primary objective of USDA's Value-Added Producer Grant Program (VAPG) is to help agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of bio-based value-added products. VAPG grants are available to producers or

producer groups in urban and rural areas. Eligible projects include business plans to market value-added products, evaluating the feasibility of new marketing opportunities, expanding capacity for locally and regionally-grown products, or expanding processing capacity.

- <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants>

Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program

Provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas. This program assists qualified applicants that are not otherwise able to obtain commercial credit on reasonable terms.

- <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program>

Funding Programs in Support of Other Livable Community Projects

The programs listed below are popular resources that support a variety of livability projects. The publication “Federal Resources for Sustainable Rural Communities” is a useful guide from the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnerships for Sustainable Communities that describes several additional resources:

- <http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/partnership-resources/federal-resources-sustainable-rural-communities-guide>

National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grants

The National Endowment for the Arts’ Our Town grant program is the agency's primary creative place-making grants program. Projects may include arts engagement, cultural planning, and design activities. The grants range from \$25,000 to \$200,000. Our Town invests in creative and innovative projects in which communities, together with their arts and design organizations and artists, seek to:

- Improve their quality of life;
- Encourage greater creative activity;
- Foster stronger community identity and a sense of place; and
- Revitalize economic development.

For more information, visit:

- <http://arts.gov/grants/apply-grant/grants-organizations>

U.S. DOT's Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act)

The U.S. Department of Transportation passed a new bill, Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act or "FAST Act" which was signed into law on December 4, 2015. This Act allots \$835 million annually for biking and pedestrian infrastructure over the next two years, increasing to \$850 million annually for the following three years. A block grant has been created under this Act; walking, bicycling and road safety projects remain eligible activities. The former Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) was discontinued as a stand-alone funding source, but the funding source remains available moving forward as a set-aside of the Surface Transportation Program Block Grant. Programs including improvement of non-motorized travel options, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, environmental mitigation activities such as stormwater management, and Safe Routes to School are eligible for consideration.

- <https://www.transportation.gov/fastact/>

Funding Resources: State

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD) Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Funding through the Virginia Community Development Block Grant may be used by eligible units of local government to improve low- to moderate-occupied housing units. CDBG assistance is also available in support of the development of new single- and multi-family housing units targeted for low- and moderate-income persons. Assistance is targeted for a defined cluster of housing, not scattered site.

- <http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/index.php/housing-programs-and-assistance/housing-development/community-development-block-grant-cdbg.html>

VDHCD, Virginia Enterprise Zone (VEZ) program is a partnership between state and local government that encourages job creation and private investment. VEZ accomplishes this by designating Enterprise Zones throughout the state and providing two grant-based incentives, the Job Creation Grant (JCG) and the Real Property Investment Grant (RPIG), to qualified investors and job creators within those zones, while the locality provides local incentives.

- <http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/index.php/community-partnerships-dhcd/downtown-revitalization/enterprise-zone.html>

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)

- <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/CleanWaterFinancingAssistance.aspx>

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Stormwater Grant and Loan Program

- <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/CleanWaterFinancingAssistance/StormwaterFundingPrograms.aspx>

Virginia Department of Health Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program

- <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/odw/financial/dwfundingprogramdetails.htm>

Appendix D PowerPoint Presentation Slides (see separate PDF)

GSA Update on FASTC

Community Meeting

Workshop Day 2

Workshop Day 3