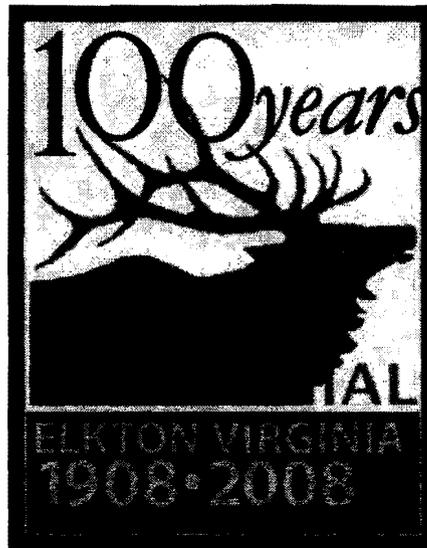


*Town of Elkton
Comprehensive Plan
2004-2024*

December, 2006



TOWN OF ELKTON
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

December, 2006

ELKTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Role and Content of the Comprehensive Plan

This Comprehensive Plan provides a general guideline for community development in the Town of Elkton. A comprehensive plan should be a community's statement of its future goals and desires, based on realistic assessment of both current and projected conditions. The plan typically is developed under the direction of the planning commission and is a process that causes the community to look closely at itself. Essentially, the community must evaluate 1) where it is now, 2) where it wants to be, and 3) how to get there. Once completed, the plan serves as a guide from which to develop the steps or implementation measures needed to reach the stated goals.

The scope and purpose of the comprehensive plan is described in the Code of Virginia, Section 15.1-446.1:

In the preparation of a comprehensive plan the [planning] commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of its territory and inhabitants. The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants.

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 extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be.

Such plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter, shall show the commission's long-range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan..., including the location of existing or proposed recycling centers. It may include, but need not be limited to:

1. The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, business, industrial, agricultural, conservation, recreation, public service, flood plain and drainage, and other areas;

2. The designation of a system of transportation facilities such as streets, roads, highways, parkways, railways, bridges, viaducts, waterways, airports, ports, terminals, and other like facilities;
3. The designation of a system of community service facilities such as parks, forests, schools, playgrounds, public buildings and institutions, hospitals, community centers, waterworks, sewage disposal or waste disposal areas, and the like;
4. The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal or other treatment;
5. The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable groundwater protection measures;
6. An official map, a capital improvements program, a subdivision ordinance, a zoning ordinance and zoning district maps, and agricultural and forestal district maps, where applicable; and
7. The designation of areas for the implementation of measures to promote the construction and maintenance of affordable housing, sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district in which the locality is situated.

The exact composition of the plan is left open to the locality, except that such topics as the following must be surveyed and studied (Section 15.1-447):

1. Use of land, preservation of agricultural and forestal land, production of food and fiber, characteristics and conditions of existing development, trends of growth or changes, natural resources, ground water, surface water, geologic factors, population factors, employment, environmental and economic factors, existing public facilities, drainage, flood control and flood damage prevention measures, transportation facilities, the need for affordable housing in both the locality and the planning district in which it is situated, and any other matters relating to the subject matter and general purposes of the comprehensive plan.

However, if a locality chooses not to survey and study historic areas, then the locality shall include historic areas in the comprehensive plan, if such areas are identified and surveyed by the Department of Historic Resources.

2. Probable future economic and population growth of the territory and requirements therefore.

The plan also must recommend methods of implementation. These can include an official map, a capital improvements program, a subdivision ordinance, and a zoning ordinance and map.

Development of the Plan

The plan is developed by the planning commission, which then forwards it to the governing body for official approval. At least two public hearings must be held, one when the planning commission considers the plan and another when the governing body considers it (unless these hearings are held jointly).

The Code specifies that the community must review its Comprehensive Plan every five years. In the interim, amendments may be made to the plan, following due public notice and a public hearing.

Legal Status of the Comprehensive Plan

Once the plan is adopted by the Town Council, development proposals can be approved or disapproved based on whether they are compatible with the plan. It also is the document on which other, more specific planning documents, such as subdivision and zoning ordinances, a capital improvements plan, and the official land use map, should be based.

The Code of Virginia states in Section 15.1-456 that a comprehensive plan adopted by the governing body of a locality "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 ... no street or connection to an existing street, park or other public areas, 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 commission as being substantially in accord with the adopted comprehensive plan or part thereof."

PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

This is Elkton's second comprehensive plan. The first plan was developed in 1977 as part of the overall Rockingham County comprehensive plan and included the area surrounding Elkton. It was produced by county staff with the help of an Elkton Area Citizens' Committee. The 1977 plan consisted of two parts: 1) Existing Conditions: Background for the Comprehensive Plan and 2) the Comprehensive Plan, including land use recommendations for specific areas.

The 1977 plan was very detailed and thorough. To the extent that certain natural features such as soils have not changed over this time, the 1977 Existing Conditions section will remain the most detailed source of information. However, because the 1977 plan was developed by the County and covered a significant area beyond the Town limits, these sections have been summarized and tailored to include only the Town itself.

CHAPTER 2 HISTORY

HISTORY OF THE ELKTON AREA

Early Settlement

The Elkton area was one of the first in the Shenandoah Valley to be settled by colonists. Before the 1700s, migratory Indians ranged throughout the Valley and were its only human inhabitants. In the 1700s, European settlers began branching farther westward. General Alexander Spotswood and the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe crossed the barrier of the Blue Ridge Mountains in their famous 1716 expedition and claimed the area for Great Britain. They apparently crossed at Swift Run Gap, so their first views of the Valley would have been of the area near Elkton.

The first influx of settlers to the Valley, however, were German immigrants, who followed the Valley south from Pennsylvania. Adam Miller (Mueller), born in 1703 in Shreisheim Germany, is credited with establishing the first permanent settlement in the Shenandoah Valley. He settled first north of Elkton near the Rockingham County-Page County line in approximately 1726, but later moved to the banks of the Shenandoah River near the current Town. His cabin was still standing in 1958. Miller lived until 1783 and his descendants held the homestead well into the twentieth century.

The Millers and two other families, the Harnsbergers and the Kites, each held large land grants near Elkton. For several generations, there was not much additional settlement in the area. William Kite's land grant contained what is today the center of Town. The Millers held the land to the north and the Harnsbergers to the south. The Harnsbergers, originally from Switzerland, were living in the area by 1751. The Kites also were an influential family. The land grant to William Kite was dated 1801 and contained the Lithia Springs, which are still owned by descendants and serve as a partial water source to the Town.

Growing Settlement of Conrad's Store

It was not until 1821 that there were enough settlers to warrant building the Elk Run Liberty Meeting House. By the mid 1800s, the area was called Conrad's Store. The store was run by

Stephen Conrad, who had married a descendant of Adam Miller. This two-story log building still stands on business Route 33, at the corner of Shenandoah Avenue and Spotswood Trail.

The settlement received its first post office in 1866. Called Roadside, it stood just east of the current Town limits. From 1870 to 1880, the post office was called Elk Run. Finally, in 1881, the name was changed to Elkton.

Early Business and Industry

The Shenandoah River was the early transportation route. Boats carried goods down the river to Georgetown or to Harpers Ferry. These boats, typically 9 1/2 feet wide and 76 feet long, would be sold for lumber at the end of the trip and the crew would walk home. The last known boat trip from the area was in 1889.

Milling and tanning were two prominent early industries. From approximately 1841 to 1869, a tan yard was operated on Elk Run. The tan yard, built by Will Kite, was destroyed by Union troops in 1864 but rebuilt the next year.

Conrad Kite, son of William Kite, operated a woolen mill just outside the current town limits on the western banks of the Shenandoah River near the bridge. This mill manufactured uniforms for the Confederate forces. In 1866, Dr. S.P.H. Miller operated a sawmill on the banks of the river near the bridge.

In 1870, a terrible flood caused much damage in Elkton. The following year, John Cover, from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, started a tannery that became the Town's first major industry. The tannery stood on Rockingham Street. It was expanded in 1917 and a year later was processing 300 hides a day and employing 200 people. It was sold to Continental Shoe Company in 1923, but burned in 1925 and was never operated again.

Civil War

In the spring of 1862, Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign brought the war close to Elkton. At that time, the settlement contained only a few homes and other buildings. In preparation for the coming battles, the Confederate army camped near Conrad's Store, with General Jackson headquartered at the Kite homestead and General Ewell at Dr. S.P.H. Miller's. Troops set up camp at a number of sites, including near the Town spring and near the current Elkton Middle School. The Elk Run Meeting House (dismantled in 1910) was used to keep prisoners.

Jackson chose this strategic location at the foot of Swift Run Gap and flanked by Massanutten Mountain because it would enable him to fend off attack from much larger Union forces, yet threaten their rear if they tried to advance south toward Staunton. Several battles were fought in eastern Rockingham County. Just before the battles of Cross Keys and Port Republic, Jackson ordered the bridge over the Shenandoah at Conrad's Store burned. After Jackson left the Valley, Union troops continued the destruction in the area, burning Kite's woolen mill, Jennings' flour mill, and numerous barns.

Like the rest of the Valley, Elkton had much to recover from when the war ended. Industrial and farming structures had been destroyed. Money and materials were scarce. Not until the coming of the railroads did new opportunities open up to the Valley.

Railroads

The railroad sparked much of the development of Elkton. Starting in the late 1860s plans were made to provide rail service from the Potomac River to Salem, Virginia. This program, however, was thwarted by the financial depression in the 1870s. Dr. S.P.H. Miller was influential in promoting the development of a railroad to transport agricultural goods and iron ore from the deposits which had recently been discovered in the area. In 1881, the line from Hagerstown, Maryland, to Waynesboro, Virginia, was opened. In 1897, the Chesapeake and Western opened track from Elkton to Bridgewater. After 1938, the service was expanded to Staunton on the old Southern Railway lines.

Springs

The Elkton area is noted for its springs. In the late 1800s, as health resorts and medicine shows became popular, people flocked to the springs. Captain H.A. Kite capitalized on the excellent waters that flowed from the spring on his property and which could now be shipped by railroad. The Elk Lithia Water Company was formed in 1891. Business faded after the turn of the century, however, and the rights to the spring reverted to the Kite family. In 1928, the Town acquired the water rights. Bear Lithia Spring, on land sold by Adam Miller to Jacob Bear, supported a hotel and provided water sold far and wide by the Bear Lithia Spring Company (1906-17), later named the Great Bear Company.

The Boom Era

The coming of the railroad brought a swarm of speculation up and down the Shenandoah Valley in the late 1800s. Development companies formed and prospective towns were laid out. Many of these "boom towns" never came to pass. Others, like Elkton, were built, but on a less grandiose scale than planned.

The Elkton Improvement Company, chartered in 1890, took as its goal the conduct of mining and business operations in Rockingham, Page, Greene, and Albemarle counties, the laying out of towns, and the establishment of governments for these towns. Largely through the diligence of the company's president, Dr. S.P.H. Miller (1835-1895), Elkton took shape. The 1890 plan for Elkton drawn by A.C. Walker contains many identifying features of the Town today, although not all of the plan was developed. For example, the plan calls for a "Riverside Park" just south of where Spotswood Avenue crosses the river. The plan envisioned a densely populated town laid out in grids punctuated by diagonal thoroughfares and accommodating the curves of the Shenandoah River and Elk Run. These tiny lots are the basis for today's tax parcels.

The 1890s saw a profusion of industries in the Town, including mills, factories, machine shops, wagon works, tanneries, and canneries. A manganese mine was operated from 1891 to 1902 approximately two miles east of Elkton. In addition, Marshall's mill, built in 1876 and powered by steam, produced everything from flour and feeds to apple butter. The mill stood on the banks of Elk Run and its mill race gave Water Street its name. The first Town newspaper, "the Elkton Index," was published in 1891.

Like many boom towns, Elkton featured a major hotel. "The Elkton," opened in 1891, was designed by the famous New York architect Stanford White and had 120 rooms. It became a popular summer resort. The opening of the Shenandoah National Park in 1936 and a new name, "the Golden Horseshoe Tavern," extended the hotel's popularity beyond the resort era. In 1941, the hotel was modernized and renamed "the Gables Hotel." It was closed in 1956 and razed two years later. The Route 33 bypass cuts through the location where this hotel stood.

Religion

The first church in the town was Elk Run Liberty Meeting House, which was open to all Christian denominations. In 1821, leaders of the community, including Henry Miller, Sr., Jacob Conrad, George Baugher, Henry Miller, Jr., and Jacob Harnsberger directed that a log building be

erected with dimensions of 30 feet by 36 feet. George Conrad, Jacob Miller, Sr., and Jacob Bear were the trustees, and Henry Monger was hired to build the building. This building became the First Methodist Episcopal Church.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, a number of churches were established in Elkton. A second church was built on the site of the First Methodist Church in 1896 and was remodeled in 1921. The Presbyterian Church organized in 1898 and erected a building in 1899. The United Brethren organized a Sunday School in 1894 and built a church in 1910. The Free Pentecostal Church was built in 1931 and the Catholic Church was built in 1953. Mennonites had settled in the western part of Rockingham County by this time and pursued missionary service in the eastern part of the County near Elkton in 1948. As part of their mission, they built an evangelical church on Stuart Avenue.

Early Twentieth Century

When the boom ended in 1896, one citizen in particular became the driving force for continued progress in Elkton. James E. Leebrick helped to form the Bank of Elkton and was its first president and pushed successfully for the incorporation of the Town in 1908. At the time, the Town had approximately 400 residents and contained one of the Valley's foremost health resorts.

The Elkton Lithia Bottling Company formed in 1907 as a soft drink bottling company. It was the forerunner to the 7-Up Bottling Company, which operated until the early 1980s, and the current business, Flory Beverage Distributors. In 1921, the Maryland Company opened a garment manufacturing company, which later became the major employer Blue Bell. In the early 1920s, Water Street was known as "tenpin alley" because of the tenpin alley and pool halls operating there.

In April 1922, a fire destroyed most of the Town's business district. In the aftermath, it was clear that the water system, which had proved inadequate for fighting the fire and would not support much more growth, needed to be improved. In November 1923, the Town issued \$35,000 in bonds to purchase the water rights from Elkton Lithia Water Company and improve the water system. In 1925 another terrible fire struck, this time taking the tannery that was Elkton's major industry. Elkton's volunteer fire department was formed in 1927.

In 1930, construction on Route 340 was completed to Elkton. The dedication of the Shenandoah National Park in 1936 brought Franklin D. Roosevelt to Elkton.

In 1941, Merck and Co. located a plant just south of the Town and has been a major employer for the area ever since. East Point Turkey, Inc., was established in Elkton in 1944 by Chester Housh. This local venture was a harbinger of what was to become the major industry for Rockingham County. By 1957, East Point was growing 500,000 turkeys annually. In 1956, Elkton Milling Co. moved into new quarters in the first fully pneumatic equipped flour mill in the country. This mill had a long history in Elkton, starting across the river as Marshall's woolen mill. It was converted to a flour mill after the Civil War. In the 1920s and 1930s it was run by E.P. Louderback, who also ran a small milling operation in Town beside the railroad. In 1956 the two operations were combined into the new building in Town.

Civic and Cultural Events

From 1909 to 1912, Elkton held an annual Athletic Field Day, with participants from the surrounding counties. A wild melee during the 1912 events caused the demise of this competition, but the event was reborn later as a carnival-style Field Day. In 1958, the Elkton Golden Jubilee was held to celebrate the Town's 50th anniversary of incorporation. Singer Patsy Cline, who spent part of her childhood near Elkton, was the Grand Marshal of the parade. Similar celebrations were held in 1976, for the Bicentennial, and in 1983 (Elkton's Diamond Jubilee).

Today, the Elkton Historical Society, the successor to the Diamond Jubilee Committee, sponsors such events as the annual Elkton Horse Show. Proceeds from the Horse Show go to the renovation of the Miller-Kite House. Other annual civic events are a Fall Festival and Autumn Days (a two-day arts and craft fair), Christmas Home Tours, and a golf tournament.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN OF THE TOWN

In the earliest period of its settled history, the Elkton area was a sparsely populated farming community. Early industrial activities such as flour mills, sawmills, and tan yards were located on the banks of the river or Elk Run.

The Town itself was laid out in 1890. The major thoroughfare (Spotswood Avenue) paralleled Elk Run, with smaller streets in tight grid patterns. Terrace Avenue and other features also are recognizable today, although much of the plan never came to fruition. In general the street pattern has held, but the tiny lots that were platted have been combined into varying sized lots for actual construction. Throughout the Town, original farmhouses can be identified among the more

recent suburban development. The early platting of streets probably aided in this gradual infill, so that streets contain houses of a variety of ages.

Many of the buildings of downtown date from around the turn of the century when Elkton became an incorporated town and experienced its boom era. Early twentieth-century commercial buildings line the streets of the downtown. These primarily two-story frame and brick buildings reflect the growth of the Town in this period and are essential for maintaining a sense of the downtown core. A number of row houses on Wirt Avenue also are good examples of this period. The central business district has been susceptible in the past both to fires and to flooding, so that many buildings have been destroyed.

The older residential districts, particularly the Fourth Street area, have a good variety of late nineteenth and early twentieth century homes. More recent development projects, particularly apartments, have been constructed across vacated streets and so have deviated from the 1890 town plan.

In January 1977, the Town annexed 331.94 acres north of town, including 304 acres called Elkwood. Several streets of suburban-style residences have been built, but the bulk of the annexed area remains undeveloped.

Notable growth factors near Elkton include the Merck plant, which continues to be a dominant employer, the Adolph Coors plant, and Massanutten resort. Today, the Town is primarily a bedroom community, as residents can commute easily to nearby Merck and Coors, as well as to Harrisonburg, Waynesboro, and Charlottesville.

Many of these changes have put pressure on the downtown as the traditional retail center of Town. The intersection of Routes 33 and 340 now is a busy hub for auto-oriented businesses. In addition, two shopping centers nearby, one just inside the town limits and the other west of Town, as well as the regional Valley Mall in Harrisonburg, all provide competition to the downtown businesses.

While the bypass improved traffic flow through the county, it reduced the Town's visibility and opportunity for travel trade. The 1976 Comprehensive Plan projected that the Town of Elkton would have between 4,000 and 9,000 residents by the year 2000. Although Elkton outpaced the growth rate in the rest of Rockingham County in the last decade, the Town's population remains far short of this projection. In the 2000 census, Elkton had 2,042 residents. In 2004, the Town of Elkton annexed 790 acres, which added 770 residents for a total population of 2,797.

CHAPTER 3 NATURAL FEATURES

LOCATION

The Town of Elkton is the primary settlement in northeastern Rockingham County (Map 1 on page 13). Located approximately 14 miles east of the City of Harrisonburg, the Town lies on the eastern bank of the South Fork of the Shenandoah River and straddles the junction of primary highways 33 and 340. Route 33, the main east-west artery through Rockingham County, crosses the Blue Ridge Mountains just east of Elkton and provides the Town good access to the City of Charlottesville, 38 miles southeast, as well as to Harrisonburg. Route 340, also a major road, connects Elkton to Page County to the north and the City of Waynesboro to the south.

Elkton lies at the junction of two rail lines. The Norfolk and Western (N & W) Railway (now part of Norfolk Southern but operated as an independent railroad) runs north and south through the western half of Town, adjacent to the river. The Chesapeake Western Railway (CHW) crosses the river near Elkton, intersects the N & W tracks near Roland Avenue and Fifth Street.

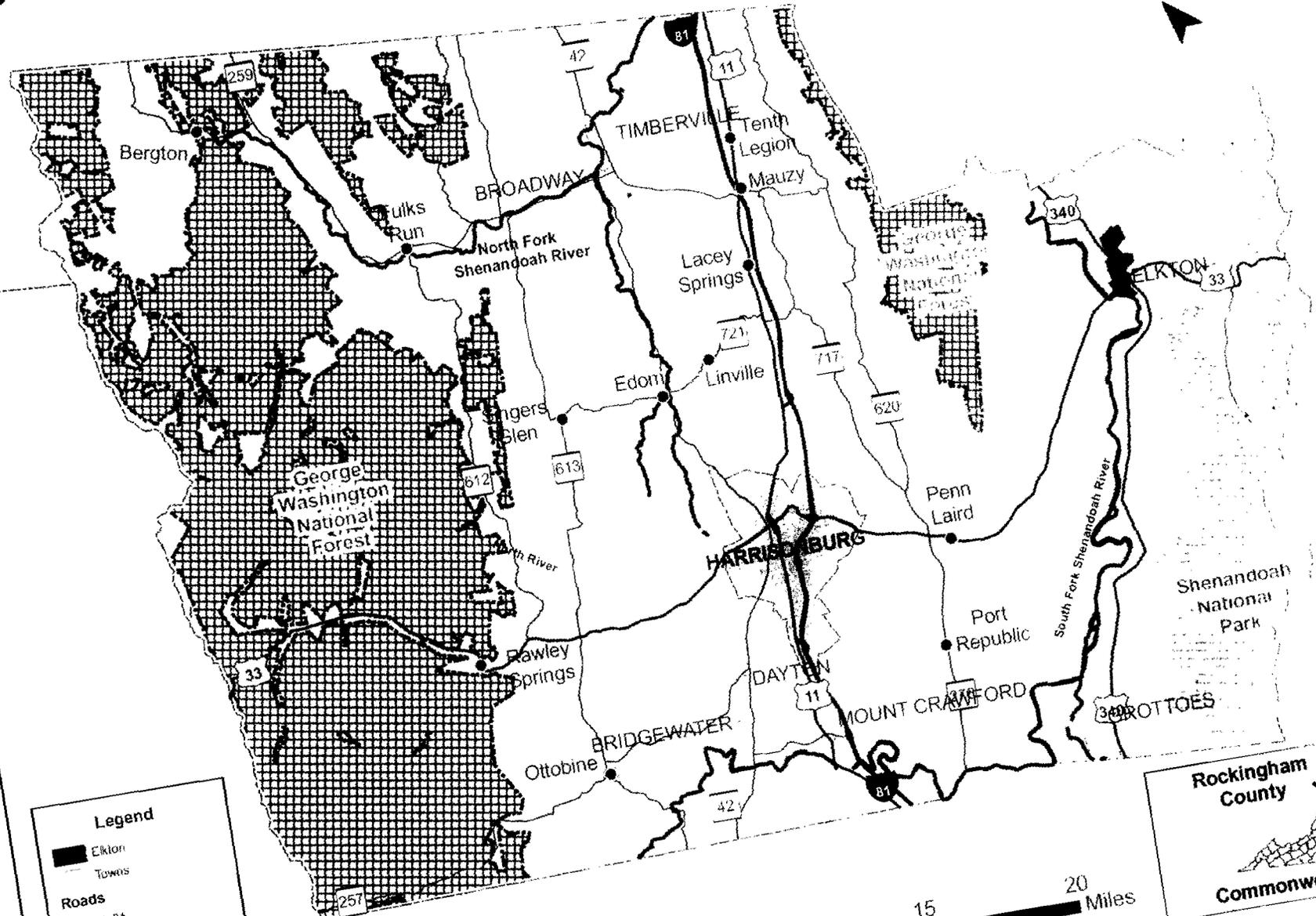
GEOLOGY

In geologic terms, the Town lies on a valley landform, part of the Valley and Ridge Province, which in turn is part of the Appalachian Valley topographic province. The Town is underlain by sedimentary rocks. Most of the Town lies on Elbrook Dolomite, a thick-bedded dolomite (estimated thickness 3,000 feet) with beds of blue limestone and some shale. Although there are a few strong outcrops near Town, much of this belt is covered by alluvial deposits of sand and gravel. These formations contain solution channels that are potentially good aquifers.

The eastern edge of Elkton lies on the Rome (Waynesboro) formation, approximately 1,700 feet deep and consisting of red and brown shale and some sandstone and limestone. The western edge of Town abuts a Conococheague limestone formation, a thick-bedded bluish limestone (typically 2,500 feet deep in Rockingham County) with some dolomite and sandstone.

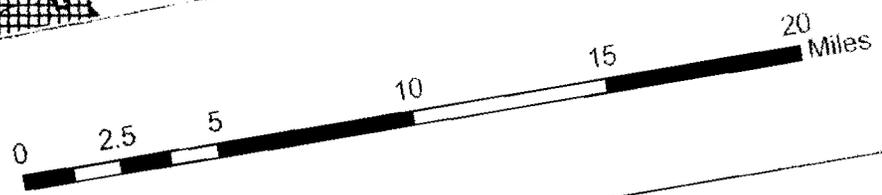
Geology influences land use planning primarily in three areas: mineral resources, geological hazards, and groundwater resources. Each of these aspects is discussed below.

MAP 1
Town of Elkton
Area Map



Legend

- Elkton
- Towns
- Roads**
- I-81
- Secondary Road
- US Highway
- State Boundary
- Rockingham
- Public Land**
- National Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Streams



Rockingham County

Commonwealth of Virginia

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission
Source: US Census Bureau, March 2004

Mineral Resources

The geologic formations near Elkton have attracted mining companies in the past, although no mines are being operated now. Fox Mountain Mine, 3.5 miles northeast of Elkton, opened about 1836 and was in the height of production in the 1880s. The mine was the largest producer of iron ore in the area. Hanse Mountain, one mile south of Town, supported several manganese mines between 1888 and 1915. Luck Stone, Inc., operates a quarry for crushed stone and agricultural stone at a site approximately three miles northwest of Town. Copper mineralization occurs southeast of Elkton, but it is unknown whether it would warrant mining.

Geological Hazards

Because Rockingham County is in an area underlain by soluble rock (limestone and dolomite), sinkholes and caves are common. This "karst" topography carries three types of potential problems: sinkhole subsidence, in which the void created by the dissolution of the bedrock causes a gradual or sudden collapse of the surface materials; 2) flooding, if the sinkholes, which provide drainage to underground streams, become plugged; and 3) pollution, because any materials deposited in the sinkhole can enter the groundwater system undiluted through the underground drainage routes. Neither the geology map nor the U.S. Geological Survey map shows sinkholes near Elkton, but research for the previous Comprehensive Plan (map entitled "Soils: Septic System Limitations," September 1975) indicates a wide band of sinkholes on the western bank of the river across from the Town as well as a few sinkholes within the Town limits.

No faults are delineated in the immediate vicinity, although there is an approximate fault noted above Elkton Spring near Dolly's Knob, a sharp peak north of Route 33 just east of Town. A fault can potentially carry pollution into the groundwater.

CLIMATE

The climate of Rockingham County, and hence Elkton, is moderate. Daytime temperatures average approximately 80 degrees (F) in the summer and 42 degrees (F) in the winter. The average temperature is approximately 54 degrees (F). Temperature extremes in the cold season range from highs in the mid-70s to lows of approximately -16 degrees. Extremes during July and August range from 100 degrees to less than 45 degrees. The growing season averages approximately 166 days,

with the last frost usually occurring near April 30 and the first frost occurring near October 10. May 25 and September 21 are the record frost dates.

According to a 1988 planning bulletin prepared by the Virginia State Water Control Board, prevailing winds in the Valley are southerly to northwesterly at an average velocity of 10 mph. Storms, however, can bring wind velocities of 80 mph.

The Elkton area, because of its proximity to the western edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains, receives significantly more rainfall than the county as a whole. Elkton's average annual rainfall is approximately 45 inches, compared to 35 inches annually for the county.

TOPOGRAPHY

Elkton is fairly flat compared to many settlements in the Valley region of the state. Most of the Town is flat and low, ranging from approximately 920 feet along the banks of the Shenandoah River to a high point of 1,168 feet at Elkwood. The other area of definite slope is along Terrace Avenue which, true to its name, runs along a bluff overlooking the park and the fields by the river. Almost all of the area west of Route 340 is both below 1,000 feet and less than 8 percent slope. Elkwood is the only area in town with slopes greater than 25 percent.

In the immediately surrounding area, Hanse Mountain directly southeast of Elkton has very steep slopes and rises to a height of 2,153 feet. The Town reservoir is on the foothills of this mountain. The area south of Route 634 would be prohibitively steep to develop and the peak of Hanse Mountain itself lies within Shenandoah National Park.

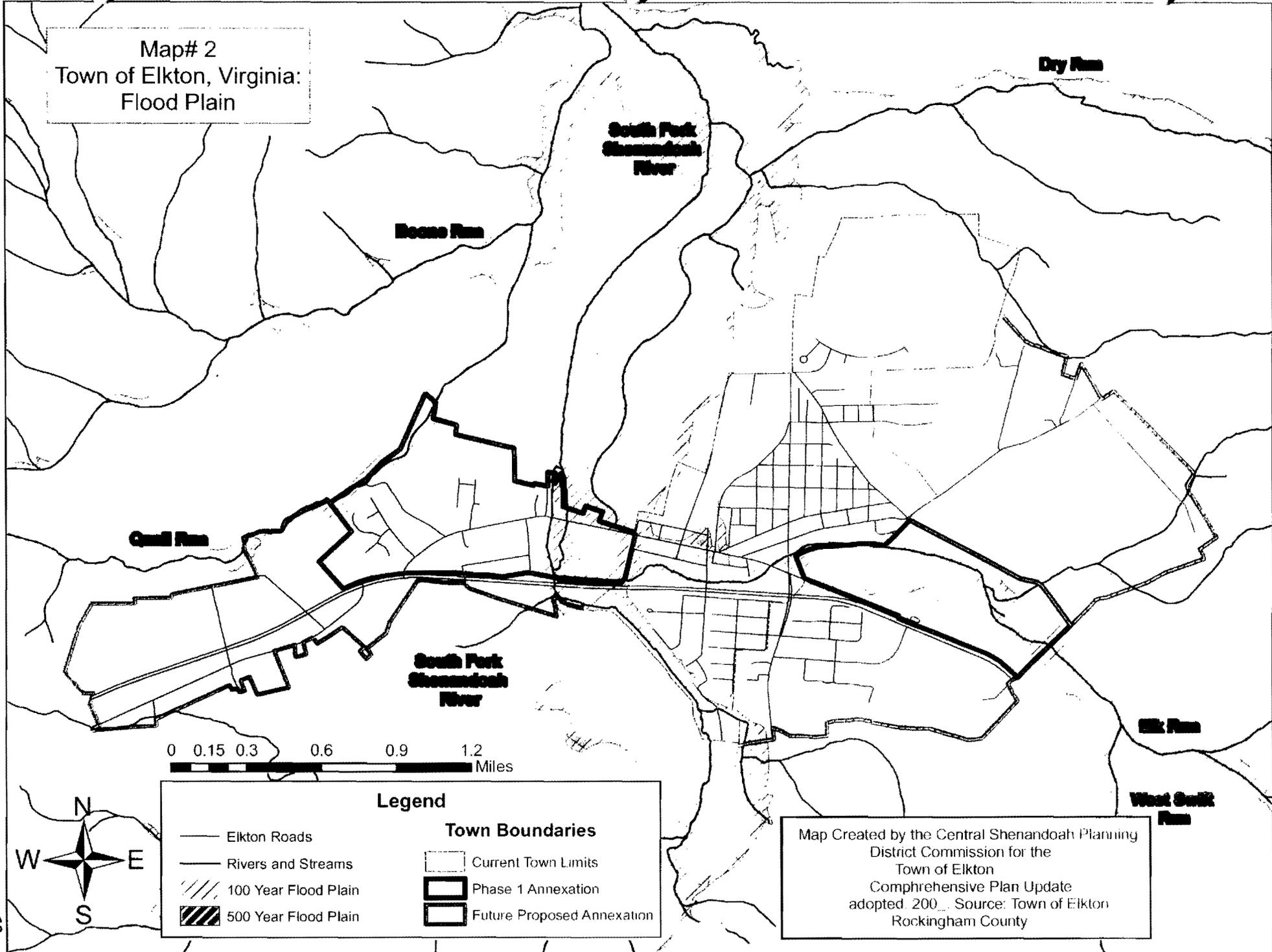
Otherwise, slope by itself would not hinder development. The river lies within a flat area, and the slopes rise fairly gently away both to the east and west along the Route 33 corridor.

HYDROLOGY

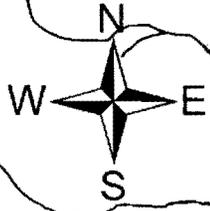
Floodplains

Much of the Town of Elkton lies within the 100-year floodplain as delineated by the Federal Insurance Administration's Flood Insurance Rate Map completed in 1978 and updated in September 1992 (Map 2 on page 16). Much of the downtown area lies in the floodplain of Elk Run. According to the map, flooding from 100-year or greater storms could bring flood waters from the creek into almost all of the area between the Rt. 33 Bypass and Spotswood Trail west of the N & W Railway and into the back yards of the houses and businesses on the south side of Rockingham Street.

Map# 2
 Town of Elkton, Virginia:
 Flood Plain



0 0.15 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Miles



Legend

Elkton Roads	Town Boundaries
Rivers and Streams	Current Town Limits
100 Year Flood Plain	Phase 1 Annexation
500 Year Flood Plain	Future Proposed Annexation

Map Created by the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission for the Town of Elkton Comprehensive Plan Update adopted 200_. Source: Town of Elkton Rockingham County

The Shenandoah River floodplain stretches along the western corporate limits. Elk Run and Shenandoah River share a common floodplain near the Town limits. The worst flooding occurs when both streams overrun their banks. Generally most of the flooding occurs from Elk Run, which is susceptible to intense, short-duration storms that cause rapid runoff from the steep slopes at the stream's headwaters.

The 1985 flood caused major flooding from the River, just as identified by the map, but not very much flooding from Elk Run. One factor is the Route 33 bypass. The new roadbed improves the flow of Elk Run into the river and lessens its potential to back up into the Town.

Drainage

Elkton lies within the drainage basin of the South Fork of the Shenandoah River. A portion of the Town drains directly into the river, but most of it drains into the tributary of Elk Run, which joins the river at the Town limits.

Drainage and sewage normally are designed on the basis of watersheds. Sewers are most efficient when they are contained within a given watershed to allow gravity flow throughout the system. A slight drainage divide parallels C Street from the eastern edge of Town and then cuts north along Rt. 340. This divide is too slight to pose serious problems for the design of drainage and sewage systems. The Elkwood property lies north of this divide but the sewage is pumped back to the Town system for treatment. Likewise, the Town is able to supply water to the Elkwood area despite the topography. For future expansions, the Town might consider putting an additional well at Elkwood to supplement its water system and efficiently supply new development on the hill.

Drainage improvements and erosion and sediment control must be sized to handle all upstream runoff. If drainage is too slow, flooding can result. Conversely, if water drains too fast, serious erosion can result from the increased momentum and pollutants can be borne into surface waters. Runoff is especially a problem on large areas of impervious surfaces.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in November of 1990 issued regulations to control discharges of storm water. These regulations do not apply to towns.

The Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Law, adopted in 1973, requires all localities to administer programs to reduce sedimentation of streams, basically through regulating land-disturbing activities associated with urban construction. Rockingham County administers the program for Elkton.

The Town has major problems with inadequate drainage and storm water runoff, particularly in the areas of Stonewall Memorial Park, Spotswood Avenue from North Street to Stuart Avenue, and the downtown. The Town has completed many drainage improvement projects in the last 15 years, including the recent installation of a pump in the Park to help pump out excess water, but more remains to be done.

Some areas outside Town also have drainage problems. Among these are Little Egypt (west of the bridge on business Route 33), Pentecostal (Chicken) Hill, and Route 623 (Tanyard Bridge Road).

Water Resources

Quantity

Elkton is blessed with a plentiful supply of water. The Town lies on alluvial soil of the Central Valley Province, which generally coincides with the areas of highest groundwater potential in Rockingham County and one of the best groundwater-producing areas in Virginia west of the Coastal Plain. This high quantity of groundwater is caused by the geology of the area, namely the wide band of alluvial and terrace deposits of gravel and sand that mark the past and current floodplains of the Shenandoah River. These sediments receive great amounts of runoff from the steep Blue Ridge Mountains and also infiltration from the river. In effect the land flanking the river as it courses through the County acts like a large sponge.

Wells in Elkton and vicinity generally are from 100 to 200 feet deep and yield small to moderate supplies of water. Wells with large yields have been drilled south of Elkton at the Merck plant, with depths varying from 70 feet to 330 feet.

There are four springs in the Elkton area: 1) Mundys Spring (flow undetermined) near Rt. 602, 2), the town-owned Bear Lithia Spring (100 gallons per minute) west of Rt. 340, 3) Samuel Spring (flow undetermined) on Rt. 340 south of Town, and 4) Elk Lithia (or Kite) Spring just east of Town.

Public water is supplied by a 353-foot well on the Memorial Park property. Elk Lithia Spring serves as a secondary source.

Quality

Most of the groundwater in Rockingham County is generally of good quality, with only isolated problems. Hardness is a widespread characteristic, but Elkton's water appeared to be below the county mean, measuring as only relatively hard in a 1976 Rockingham County Groundwater study by the State Water Control Board. As described further in the Community Facilities chapter, the water pumped from the well contains sand and silica particles.

SOILS

Urban uses of land are affected by the soil characteristics of permeability, structural conditions, and depth to bedrock. Of particular concern is suitability for septic systems, although this is not as important in areas served by public sewer. The 1975 planning map "Soils: Septic System Limitations" for Elkton based on soils data shows the Town as an oasis of slight and moderate limitation bounded by areas of severe limitation. Within the Town, these severe limitations generally reflect the floodplains of the river and Elk Run.

The area receiving a rating of "slight" limitation contains the portion of Town that is west of the Norfolk and Western Railroad, plus a small wedge of Rockingham Street and Spotswood Avenue. Much of the downtown is on the best soils in the area in terms of septic suitability.

For information on specific sites, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service Soil Survey for Rockingham County should be consulted or a field test undertaken. In general terms, however, as indicated on the soils map, development limitations due to soil characteristics within the Town limits are as follows:

Moderate Limitations for Development

- southeast of Terrace Avenue and north of Spotswood Avenue
- western section of Town, west of the Norfolk and Western Railroad tracks and south of the U.S. 33 bypass

Severe Limitations for Development

- northwest of Terrace Avenue in the parks
- land adjacent to Elk Run

The most dominant soil type in the Town limits is Unison fine sandy loam (71B2), which is gently sloping and well drained. This soil is moderate in terms of permeability, water capacity,

shrink-swell potential, and erodability. Surface runoff is medium. Natural fertility and organic matter tend to be low.

Permeability rates that are unacceptable for septic tanks are a severe limitation for development unless a public sewer line is available. Also, most soils with slow percolation rates carry a shrink-swell potential that makes them poor sites for construction. Much of the land surrounding Elkton is unsuitable for septic systems. This makes development potential partially reliant on sewer service.

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

Slopes:

Few areas in Town have slopes severe enough to limit development. Elkwood is the steepest area.

Drainage:

Elkwood's location entails minor obstacles for providing water and sewer for development. The Town's susceptibility to major flooding increases the importance of effective storm water management, floodway protection, and sediment and erosion control.

Floodplains:

Elkton has severe potential for flooding. Much of the traditional downtown is susceptible to 100-year floods, as are the areas along Elk Run.

Sinkholes/Faults:

No areas within the Town limits have been identified as having geologic hazards such as sinkholes or faults. These formations are indicated, however, in certain locations in the surrounding area.

Soils:

Most of the area in Town carries moderate limitations for development based on soil characteristics. The floodplains carry severe limitations, as do some areas surrounding the Town.

Springs:

Elk Lithia (Kite) Spring serves as a backup water source for the Town. Potential for pollution of this spring should be considered in land use decisions in the surrounding area.

CHAPTER 4 CULTURAL/RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

HISTORICAL SITES

Elkton has a number of historic buildings dating from the early 1800s to the early twentieth century. The oldest buildings are two antebellum houses and Conrad's Store, which dates from 1845-60. These buildings attest to the period in Elkton's history when the area was a sparsely populated farming community. During the Civil War, the Jennings House (Town Hall) served as a hospital, while the Miller-Kite (now being restored by the Elkton Historical Society) was Stonewall Jackson's headquarters. There has been renewed nationwide interest in the Civil War battlefields in the Shenandoah Valley. The nearest battlefield with tourist facilities is New Market.

Elkton's downtown has a variety of older buildings, most of which were constructed before World War II. The commercial buildings range in style from mid-to-late Victorian to Art Deco or Moderne. In 1992, Elkton was designated a Virginia Main Street Community, which demonstrates its commitment to building on the historical and economic value of the downtown.

Many buildings were destroyed in the fires of 1922 and 1925 and to make way for modern development. Among the latter are the Blue and Gray Hotel and the Hale building. Also lost are physical examples of the Town's industrial past. The tan yard and the mills on Water Street and on the west side of the river survive only through the names of roads.

The Town has not undergone an architectural survey sponsored by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR). Many of the older buildings, particularly the downtown commercial structures, have not been inventoried. The buildings currently on file with the VDHR are listed below.

216-1 Miller-Kite House: Dwelling/Museum: 1827 2-story brick I-house with rear ell. Built for Henry Miller, Jr., with carpentry and joinery by Rockingham craftsman Samuel Gibbons. Interior decoration illustrates German decoration popular in area. Military: headquarters of Stonewall Jackson in 1862. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

216-2 Conrad's Store: Store/dwelling: 1845-60 2-story log, 2-room store; gable end entry, gable roof, remodeled into dwelling; some original finish; late ell addition.

216-3 Elkton Library (Jennings House): Dwelling/Town Hall: 1850s 2-story plus basement, 5-bay Italianate design; remodeled into town hall & library, porches added to back. Military: hospital during Civil War.

216-4 Blue and Gray Hotel (destroyed): Hotel: late 19th century, 3-story frame, common local form for late 19th century. Rectangular building with long side along the road and full 2-story porch (Razed).

216-5 Hale Building: Store: 1890s 2-story brick burned in 1920s-30s; divided into 2 stores typical of late 19th early 20th century commercial architecture (destroyed because in path of highway).

(Source: Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks, The Valley Regional Preservation Plan: Evaluation of Architectural, Historic, and Archaeological Resources in Rockingham County, Virginia, 1985)

Because of the lack of a complete survey, these should not be taken as the only buildings worthy of recognition.

RECREATIONAL SITES

Town Parks

Elkton has an extensive park below Terrace Avenue-(Stonewall Memorial Park). This park serves well for area athletic events. In addition to baseball and softball diamonds, it contains bathrooms, a picnic shelter, tennis courts, and "Fort Stonewall" playground.

The town has purchased undeveloped land situated east of the town limits for future recreational facilities.

There is much potential for additional smaller parks to be developed. For example, a waterside park could be made on Elk Run on 4 acres owned by the Town near Shenandoah and Wirt. The triangle formed by Rockingham Street and Spotswood Trail or some other site also might be used as a park for pedestrians downtown.

Stonewall Riverside Park, deeded to the Town by Merck and Company, is on the southwestern side of Town.

Shenandoah River

The Shenandoah River, which forms the western border of Elkton, provides exceptional opportunities for recreation. Canoeing and fishing are available along its entire length. A riverfront park was envisioned in the 1890 Elkton Town Plan, but was never built. A canoe slide was built at this site. Although the Town border on Route 33 is east of the River, the Town does own additional land adjacent to the River that possibly could be developed into a park.

Shenandoah National Park

Elkton is the closest incorporated town to the Route 33 crossing of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Shenandoah National Park lies directly southeast and east of Town. Both the park and the Skyline Drive, sited along the ridge top to provide panoramic views, are national draws, particularly as one of the closest recreational spots to the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. In the past, "tourist camps" or groups of small cottages met the demand for tourists coming to the area to experience the mountains. All of these have closed down and deteriorated over the years.

Massanutten Resort

Massanutten Mountain, a few miles west of Elkton, has been developed as a successful ski and recreational resort. The Massanutten area has extensive time share units that have been built in the last 20 years as well as a community of year around homes. Elkton is the closest incorporated community.

TOURISM POTENTIAL

Elkton's proximity to nationally recognized recreational and historic sites indicate that the Town has substantial potential to provide services to these visitors. Enhancement of the Town's own historic, cultural, and natural assets (particularly the River) would be important to this effort.

The large number of visitors using Shenandoah Park suggests that there might be a market for tourist facilities or shopping areas. Park users may need provisions for fishing, camping and other outdoor recreation. Skyline Drive tourists may desire overnight lodging or family-oriented recreation, none of which is currently provided in Elkton. Likewise, expanded shopping opportunities in Elkton might serve the Massanutten residents and visitors.

CHAPTER 5 DEMOGRAPHICS AND POPULATION

The size and characteristics of the population of Elkton will greatly influence the services that will be needed. An understanding of the demographics of the Town is therefore essential to planning future demands on Town resources.

POPULATION TRENDS

Population Growth

In the past 60 years, the population of Elkton has increased 84.3 percent, from 1,050 in 1940 to 2,027 in 2003 (Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service Estimate). This growth has been sporadic rather than steady. In fact, between 1960 and 1980 the Town stayed at essentially the same population. In the recent decade, however, population surged. The Town annexed vacant land in 1977 and a substantial number of houses have been built there since. The bulk of this growth, however, can be attributed to several large apartment complexes built within the former Town limits. The Town's population growth between 1980 and 1990 was 415 people or 27 percent; between 1990 and 2000 the growth was 107, a 5 percent increase. The 2004 annexation brought in 770 more residents for a total of 2797 persons, resulting in a 37.0 increase from 2000 (See Table 1).

As a Percentage of County Growth

In 1940, Elkton contained 3.36 percent of the population in Rockingham County. In 2000, the ratio had decreased somewhat (3.02 percent). However, after Elkton annexed land in 2004, the ratio increased to 4.01 percent.

Population Density

According to the U.S. Census, the Town of Elkton in 2000 encompassed 1.4 square miles, which yielded a population density of 1,490 persons per square mile. After annexing 790 acres in 2004, the total area of the Town increased to 2.63 square miles, which, with the additional 770 residents in the annexed area, yields a population density of 1,064 persons per square mile. Rockingham County had 79.6 persons per square mile in 2000.

**TABLE 1
POPULATION CHANGE
1940 - 2004**

Census	Elkton	% Change	Rockingham County	% Change	County/ City	% Change	Planning District	% Change
1940	1,050	-	31,289	-	40,057	-	134,954	-
1950	1,361	29.6	35,079	12.11	45,889	14.6	151,265	12.09
1960	1,509	10.9	40,485	15.41	52,401	14.2	166,585	10.13
1970	1,511	0.0	47,890	18.29	62,495	19.3	186,306	11.84
1980	1,520	0.6	57,038	19.10	76,709	22.7	208,344	11.83
1990	1,935	27.3	57,482	0.80	88,189	15.0	225,025	8.00
2000	2,042	5.53	67,725	17.82	108,193	22.7	258,789	15.0
2003	2,027	-0.73	69,700		112,700	4.2	262,600	1.5
Annexed	770	-	-	8.74	-	-	-	-
Adjusted	2,797	38.0	-	9.52	-	-	-	-
2004 Est.	2,797	38.0	69,700	-	112,200	-	-	-

NOTE: In its most recent annexation, Harrisonburg annexed an estimated 4,984 people from the County on January 1, 1983. Without this annexation, the County's population would have increased by 9.5 percent for the decade.

Source: U.S. Census; 2003 Estimates of the Population of Virginia Counties and Cities, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, 2003.

Area Population

According to the latest Rockingham Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2004, the area around Elkton is expected to experience a moderate amount of the future development and population growth during the next several decades.

Population Projections

To provide an estimate of the likely population of Elkton in future years, the Virginia Employment Commission population projections (2003) were used. Rockingham County is projected to reach a population of 73,899 in 2010, based on annual growth rates of 1.8 percent between 1990 and 2000 and 0.9 percent from 2000 to 2010. Assuming that Elkton maintains the same proportion of County population (4.0 percent) as it held in 2004, Elkton's population would be 2,948 in 2010, a gain of 151 persons. With two major proposed developments, however, the population should increase by 2,800 over the next five to seven years. This will give a total population of about 4,900 in 2010. Rockingham County is projected to grow to 79,899 by 2020, for an annual rate of 0.8 percent; Elkton would grow to 3,187 by 2020 at the same rate.

Harrisonburg is expected to grow at 1.5 percent between 2000 and 2010, and 0.9 percent between 2010 and 2020. This yields a projected area (county and city combined) growth rate of 1.1 percent and 0.9 percent each decade. If Elkton experienced these growth rates, its population would be 2,982 in 2010 and 3,236 in 2020.

The accuracy of this projection will depend on a number of factors. Among these are the amount of vacant land in the Town, attractions to growth both in the area and in the Town specifically, additional annexations, and disincentives to growth in the area and the Town. Larger trends for the state and the country, such as increasingly smaller households, also will influence population change.

OTHER POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Age

A breakdown of the age of the population of Elkton in 2000 is shown in Table 3. By these figures, approximately 5.9 percent of the residents of Elkton were less than 5 years old, 17.0 percent were school aged (5-17 years), 67.3 percent were working age (18-64), and 18.9 percent were older than 65 years.

**TABLE 2
TOWN OF ELKTON
2000 POPULATION**

AGE RANGE	# OF PERSONS	AGE GROUPS	# OF PERSONS	PERCENT
<1	22			
1-2	53			
3-4	46	<5	121	5.9
5	28			
6	21			
7-9	81	5-9	130	6.4
10-11	64			
12-13	57			
14	17	10-14	138	6.8
15	25			
16	21			
17	33			
18	26			
19	31	15-19	136	6.7
20	20			
21	34			
22-24	76	20-24	130	6.4
25-29	150			
30-34	146	25-34	296	14.4
35-39	173			
40-44	155	35-44	328	16.0
45-49	126			
50-54	121			
55-59	111	45-59	358	17.5
60-61	41			
62-64	59	60-64	100	4.9
65-69	80			
70-74	81	65-74	161	7.9
75-79	75			
80-84	33			
85+	36	75+	144	7.1
	2,042		2,042	100.0

**TABLE 3
SUMMARY OF AGE GROUPS**

AGE GROUP	# OF PERSONS	PERCENT
<5	121	5.9
School Age (5-17)	347	17.0
Working Age (18-64)	1,374	67.3
65+	385	18.9
TOTAL	2,042	100.0

SOURCE: 1990 U.S. Census.

In comparison to the figures for Rockingham County and the Central Shenandoah Planning District, Rockingham County and the district, respectively, have 6.27 and 5.57 percent of the population under 5 years old and 13.9 and 14.0 percent were 65 years or older. Elkton's elderly population increased from 301 (15.7 percent) in 1990 to 385 (18.9 percent) in 2000, which represents a greater percentage than the other localities experienced.

Race and Sex

In 2000, 52.8 percent of the residents of Elkton were female. Elkton has only a small minority population, but it increased slightly from 1990 to 2000. In 1990, 97.8 percent of the population was white; blacks made up 1.5 percent and other races less than 1.0 percent of the population. Less than 1.0 percent of the citizens were of Hispanic origin. In 2000, 96.7 percent of the population was white; blacks made up 3.0 percent and other races less than 1.0 percent of the population. About 1.8 percent of the citizens were of Hispanic origin.

Household Size

In Elkton as across the nation, family size declined in recent decades. In 1990, the number of persons per occupied unit was 2.4 in Elkton, compared with 2.77 and 2.72 for the County and the district, respectively. In 2000, the number of persons per occupied unit in Elkton was 2.4 for owner-occupied units and 2.2 for renter-occupied units. In Rockingham County the figure was 2.7 for owner-occupied units and 2.45 for renter-occupied units. For the district the figure was 2.6 for owner-occupied and 2.4 for renter-occupied units.

Population Stability

The population in Elkton is fairly stable. The 2000 Census revealed that 40.1 percent of the population was living in the same house five years previously. Even so, the national trend toward greater mobility is reflected by a comparison to the same data from the 1990 Census. Then, 52.3 percent of Elkton residents had lived in the same house five years previously.

CHAPTER 6 HOUSING

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Housing Trends

The Town had 836 housing units in the 1990 census, compared to 644 a decade earlier. This represents a 29.8 percent increase in housing stock between 1980 and 1990. In 2000, the Town had 884 housing units, which represents only a 5.7 percent increase. However, between 2000 and 2004, the Town annexed 790 acres with an additional 295 housing units. Within the next few years, developers intend to build over a thousand more units within the Town.

**TABLE 4
HOUSING SUPPLY
TOWN OF ELKTON: 1990 & 2000**

	1990	2000
Single-family units	548	594
Multi-family units	248	283
Mobile Homes & Other	40	7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2000.

**TABLE 5
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS AND TENURE
TOWN OF ELKTON: 1990 & 2000**

	1990	2000
Housing Units	836	919
Occupied Units	789	862
Owner-occupied	458	492
Renter-occupied	331	370
Vacant units	47	57

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2000.

The vacancy rate increased from 5.6 percent in 1990 to 6.2 percent in 2000. Of the 919 housing units in Elkton when the 2000 Census was taken, 862 were occupied. By percentage of the total units (862), 42.9 percent (370) were rented, 57.1 percent (492) housed homeowners, and 6.2 percent (57) were unoccupied. This exceeds the proportion of renters in the planning district (29.6 percent) and the County (22.0 percent).

The median value of units increased almost fifty percent between 1990 and 2000, from \$63,900 to \$94,800, while rent increased at an even greater rate, rising from a median of \$293 in 1990 to \$435 in the recent census. The value of housing in Elkton as represented in the 2000 Census is similar to surrounding areas. This compares to \$107,700 and \$485 for the County and \$103,806 and \$473 for the planning district.

As for the age of housing, units have been constructed in Elkton at a fairly even pace over time. As of 2000, a total of 201 units (22.7 percent) were constructed before 1940 and 384 units were built between 1940 and 1980 (43.5 percent). A jump in construction in the last two decades resulted in the addition of 299 units (27.3 percent) between 1980 and 2000. The annexation of 2004 added about 295 units to the total, but the exact age of these units is not available.

**TABLE 6
AGE OF HOUSING STOCK
TOWN OF ELKTON**

Year Structure Built	Elkton	%	Rockingham County	%	City of Harrisonburg	%
1999 to March 2000	27	3.1	981	3.6	292	2.1
1995 to 1998	17	1.9	2382	8.7	1602	11.7
1990 to 1994	58	6.6	2970	10.9	1384	10.1
1980 to 1989	197	22.3	4151	15.2	2675	19.5
1970 to 1979	97	11.0	4985	18.2	2985	21.8
1960 to 1969	62	7.0	3324	12.2	1466	10.7
1940 to 1959	225	25.5	3731	13.7	2109	15.4
1939 or earlier	201	22.7	4804	17.6	1176	8.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Although single-family housing fell from 80.6 percent of all units to 67.0 percent between 1980 and 1990, the percentage stayed even between 1990 and 2000 (from 67.0 to 67.2 percent). The most important general trend between 1980 and 2000 was toward multi-family housing. In 2000, Elkton contained 253 multi-family units (28.6 percent), nearly double the 122 units (18.9 percent) in 1980. Almost all of these increases were in apartment buildings containing more than four units (164 units or 18.6 percent, compared to only 2.3 percent in 1980). The remaining 7 units (0.8 percent) were mobile homes or categorized as "other" in the Census.

A land use survey conducted in the summer of 1991 revealed information on housing types in terms of acreage. Single-family detached units used 78.48 percent of the Town area, while apartments with more than four units used only 2.51 percent and apartments with two to four units used only 1.06 percent of the land in Town.

Public water and sewer services are available to all Town properties. A small number of households have chosen not to hook up. Some areas experience low water volumes, which are sufficient for residential use, but problematic for fire fighting.

HOUSING INVENTORY

Elkton offers a range of housing types. Single-family homes, by far the largest component, range from large older homes to modest twentieth-century neighborhoods. Newer developments have tended to contain larger homes. Multi-family options have increased greatly in the last two decades, with the construction of several large apartment complexes. Townhouses have been constructed as well.

Most streets contain only single-family homes. Most of the large apartment complexes are set off from existing neighborhoods. The smaller apartment buildings tend to be within neighborhoods. Each neighborhood has a fairly consistent style of houses. There are few lots to build on and none currently for sale.

Some areas of Town contain housing that is in deteriorated condition. The 2000 Census revealed that more than almost half (48.2 percent) of the units were constructed before 1960.

CHAPTER 7 ECONOMY

BUSINESS SECTOR

Elkton is a center of employment and services for the northeast quadrant of the County. It shares markets to some extent with the Town of Shenandoah, which lies approximately six miles north, in Page County. Two major employers south of Town, Coors and Merck, together employ more than 1,000 workers and are a significant force in the local economy.

Within Elkton, most of the businesses are located in the traditional downtown, especially on Business 33 (Spottswood Trail) and Spotswood Avenue and Rockingham Street. Newer businesses have tended to locate along the Route 340 Corridor and a new shopping center was built in 1978 in the previously undeveloped northwestern corner of Town. In the last 5 to 6 years, the Town has averaged approximately 100 business licenses. Approximately 25 percent of these are home occupations and professional licenses.

Elkton's downtown has some commercial vacancies. However, considerable reinvestment has occurred in recent years as private individuals have purchased empty buildings, refurbished them, and begun new enterprises. After years of decline, the downtown area is attracting strong local support. The efforts of the Elkton Downtown Revitalization Corporation and enrollment in the Virginia Main Street program are described under economic development efforts at the end of this chapter.

Individual sectors of employment for Elkton and the surrounding area are described below:

Manufacturing

Elkton has a long industrial past. Many of these traditional businesses have faded, however, and the industrial output within the Town limits is not as great as in the past. Many residents work in manufacturing but the majority of these workers commute to other locations, including nearby Merck and Coors.

Industries in the Elkton Area

Augusta Mills	Linens
Adolph Coors Brewing Co.	Brewery
Blue Stone Concrete	Concrete
JACO Racing Products	Tires for Remote Control Cars
*K & K Machining, Inc.	Machine Shop
Luck Stone Corp.	Crushed Stone & Lime
Lorry Direct Monuments	Stone Monuments
Merck & Company	Pharmaceuticals
Rockingham Redi-Mix, Inc.	Concrete
Shen-Valley Drywall	Drywall Installation
*Tru Kut Door Corp.	Wood Products
Universal Plastics	Plastic
*X-High Graphic Arts	Printing & Design

* within Elkton Town limits

Retail and Professional

Most of the stores and businesses in Elkton are small, locally owned enterprises. These stores provide for the daily needs of local residents, but must compete for business with the Elkton Plaza just west of Town and with the Valley Mall and other stores in Harrisonburg, just 14 miles away. Charlottesville also is less than 40 miles away. The downtown contains mostly specialty stores and services. The ShenElk shopping center has spaces for a few small stores.

In a 1991 survey, 37 of the 66 businesses in the Main Street Project Area were retail establishments. An analysis of the Town's downtown by the National Main Street Center noted that one of downtown Elkton's strengths is the concentration of service businesses, including retail and other businesses with strong service or repair departments. The report cited two particularly important business "clusters" or groups of related businesses: 1) sporting goods/outdoor equipment related to hunting and fishing and 2) home improvement, with a possible sub-component of garden and yard products.

Professional services, such as banks, medical and dental offices, insurance agencies, and law offices all are represented in Elkton.