



TOWN OF OCCOQUAN

Town Hall, 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125
www.occoquanva.gov | info@occoquanva.gov | (703) 491-1918

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

August 25, 2021 | 6:30 p.m.

REVISED

1. Call to Order
2. Citizen Comments
3. Approval of Minutes
 - a. July 29, 2021 Meeting Minutes
4. Action Items
 - a. ~~Request to make Recommendation to Town Council on Occoquan Beer Garden Site Plan (SP-2021-005)~~ *Removed; to be scheduled for future meeting*
5. Discussion Items
 - a. Comprehensive Plan Update
 - Comprehensive Plan Draft
 - Community Plan Addendum
 - b. Planning Commission Priorities Update
 - Strategic Relationship Building
 - Alpine X/North Woodbridge Town Center
6. Adjournment

Eliot Perkins
Chair, Planning Commission



TOWN OF OCCOQUAN
Town Hall – 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125
MEETING DATE: 2021-07-29

MEETING TIME: 6:30 PM

Present: Chairperson Eliot Perkins, Commissioners Darryl Hawkins, Ryan Somma

Absent: Commissioner Ann Kisling

Town Staff: Kirstyn Jovanovich, Town Manager; Bruce Reese, Town Engineer

1. Call to Order

The Planning Commission Meeting was called to order by Eliot Perkins on 2021-07-29, at 6:31 p.m.

Secretary for Meeting

Ryan Somma took minutes for the meeting.

2. Citizen Comments

Patricia Braswell, 124 Poplar Alley, inquired on the status of the Occoquan Beer Garden project planned for 200 Mill Street. Ms. Jovanovich advised that the site plan is currently under review and offered to meet with Ms. Braswell to discuss the planning process and project in more detail.

3. Approval of Minutes April 28, 2021

Ryan Somma motioned to approve the minutes. Darryl Hawkins seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

4. Action Items

a. Request to make Recommendation to Town Council on 102 Poplar Lane Site Plan (SP-2021-006)

Bruce Reese gave a presentation on the site plan.

Darryl Hawkins moved to recommend approval of Site Plan SP-2021-006. Ryan Somma seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

5. Discussion Items

a. Comprehensive Plan Review/Update

Kirstyn Jovanovich explained an initiative to create a Community Plan, an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan, that would serve as the framework for developing specifics on how to achieve

the Vision laid out in Occoquan 2026. Bruce Reese will assist with developing the plan, as well as creating exhibits to assist in visualizing elements of the plan. The Plan will give Town Staff a clear direction to seek and obtain grant funding. Bruce Reece said a vision for the Town that can be established through this collaborative effort is important to the Comprehensive Plan so that as money becomes available priorities are already defined. Once complete, the Community Plan will assist in identifying where to focus funds and efforts. Kirstyn Jovanovich provided a document to the Planning Commission that listed the areas of focus for the Community Plan. She asked the Planning Commission members to look over the list and advise if there are any elements missing that needs to be included.

Ryan Somma said he will update the Comprehensive Plan document and communicate changes via email.

6. Chairperson Report

Eliot Perkins thanked the Planning Commission members for their efforts on the Mill at Occoquan project's SUP process and said he will be working on getting an additional member or two for Planning Commission.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Eliot Perkins: Perkins
Chair, Planning Commission

Submitted by Ryan Somma, Planning Commission Secretary

TOWN OF OCCOQUAN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
VISION 2026 - 2021 UPDATE

2016-2026

ADOPTED **DATE**



DRAFT

Town Council

Earnest W. Porta, Jr., Mayor

Jenn Loges, Vice Mayor

Krys Bienia

Cindy Fithian

Laurie Holloway

Eliot Perkins

Planning Commission

Eliot Perkins, Chair

Ann Kisling, Vice Chair

Ryan Somma, Secretary

Darrell Hawkins

Town Staff

Kirstyn Jovanovich, ICMA- CM, Town Manager

Technical Support

Legacy Engineering, P.C.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction and Overview	4
Purpose and Intent	4
Scope of the Plan	4
The Planning Process	6
Assessment Survey Leading Comp Plan Concerns and Issues	7
Plan Themes.....	8
CHAPTER TWO: Occoquan Yesterday and Today.....	9
Our Location/Setting.....	9
Our History.....	10
Our Numbers - Population Characteristics.....	12
Our Existing Footprint and Land Use	15
CHAPTER THREE: Occoquan 2026: Imagining Tomorrow Today	19
Our Vision.....	19
Our Goals - Comprehensive Plan Themes	19
Our Plan for 2026	20
CHAPTER FOUR: Community Character & Community Life.....	21
Goal.....	21
Overview.....	21
Housing and Housing Affordability.....	21
Neighborhood Preservation and Revitalization.....	22
Community Services and Facilities	22
Parks, Open Space, Public Space	23
CHAPTER FIVE: Circulation and Mobility	24
Goal.....	24
Overview.....	24
Traffic.....	28
Parking	29
Sidewalks	30
Gateways.....	34
Emergency Evacuation Planning.....	35
CHAPTER SIX: Economic Vitality & Diversity.....	36
Goal.....	36

Overview	36
Commercial Areas	37
Economic Catalyst Sites	38
Historic Preservation and Appearance.....	39
CHAPTER SEVEN: Environmental Stewardship	41
Goal.....	41
Overview and Vision.....	41
Chesapeake Bay and the River Connection	41
Environmental Programs and Regulations.....	48
Trees and Landscaping	52
Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling.....	53
Green Building, Noise and Lighting.....	53
CHAPTER EIGHT: Regional Coordination.....	55
Goal.....	55
Overview and Vision.....	55
Shared Border Area Plans – Prince William County	55
Shared Border Area Plans – Fairfax County.....	56
Shared Border Area Plans – Lake Ridge Parks and Recreation Association	58
CHAPTER NINE: Implementation & Accountability	59
Overview and Vision.....	59
Annual Plan Accountability Report.....	59
Action Plan.....	59

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Purpose and Intent

Successful communities do not just happen; they must be continually shaped and guided. A community must actively manage its growth as well as respond to changing circumstances if it is to continue to meet the needs of its residents and maintain the quality of life that initially attracted those residents to the community. Successful communities know the future is not something to be wished for or left to chance. Successful communities know the future must be a matter of choice, and becoming a community of choice connotes a commitment to planning for tomorrow as well as for today.



This document is an update to the 2003/2013 Town of Occoquan Comprehensive Plan. This plan provides a vision for how Occoquan should grow and change in the future, maintain public facilities and programs in response to growth, and successfully manage new development and redevelopment actions. The Occoquan 2016-2026 Comprehensive Plan, by design, touches on a wide range of issues related to land use including transportation, housing and neighborhoods, parks and open space, community services, economic development, as well as community character and community identity.

Once adopted, the elected and appointed officials of Occoquan should use the Comprehensive Plan as a guide for their decisions related to development, redevelopment, growth and the provision of town services. While it discusses and describes land uses, the Comprehensive Plan does not regulate actual land uses. Other tools, such as zoning, subdivision and site plan standards, are the primary means by which Occoquan will implement the vision and goals featured in this plan. Accordingly, this plan features an implementation strategy that is action-oriented and designed to bring the vision and goals featured in this document to life.

Scope of the Plan

The Commonwealth of Virginia mandates the Town of Occoquan prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Plan for the physical development of the land within its jurisdiction. The specific mandate is found in section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia which states the Comprehensive Plan is to guide and accomplish 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, including the elderly and persons with disabilities. In

meeting this objective, the Plan must assess existing conditions and examine trends of growth, as well as project future conditions likely to impact the locality.

Responsibility for drafting and preparing a Comprehensive Plan rests with the Occoquan Planning Commission. Responsibility for adopting a Comprehensive Plan rests with the Occoquan Town Council. To meet the requirements featured in section 15.2-2223 of the Virginia Code, the Occoquan Planning Commission is required to designate the general and approximate location, character, and extent of each feature shown on the Plan. In addition, the Virginia Code mandates that a Comprehensive Plan feature the following elements, themes or chapters:

1. Long-range recommendations. The Comprehensive Plan must show the long-range recommendations for the general development of the locality.
2. Transportation plan. The Comprehensive Plan must include narrative that designates a system of transportation infrastructure needs and recommendations that may include the designation of new and expanded transportation facilities including roadways, bicycle accommodations, pedestrian accommodations, bridges, waterways, and public transportation facilities that support the planned development of the territory covered by the plan.
3. Road and transportation map. The Comprehensive Plan must feature a map showing road and transportation improvements. In meeting this requirement, the plan must take into account the current and future needs of the residents of Occoquan while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which Occoquan is located.
4. Affordable housing. The Comprehensive Plan must designate areas in the locality 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 income levels in the locality while considering current and future needs of the planning district within which Occoquan is located.
5. Traditional neighborhood design. If urban development areas are designated in the Comprehensive Plan, the Plan must reflect principles of traditional neighborhood design which may include but are not limited to:
 - Pedestrian-friendly street design,
 - Connectivity of street and pedestrian networks,
 - The preservation of natural areas,
 - Mixed-use neighborhoods including mixed housing types, and
 - The reduction of front and side yard building setbacks, and the reduction of subdivision street widths and turning radii at street intersections.

The Planning Process

The Code of Virginia mandates that a comprehensive plan, once adopted by the local governing body, must be reviewed at least once every five years. In response to this requirement, the Occoquan Town Council, with the support of the Occoquan Planning Commission, agreed to underwrite an assessment exercise designed to secure the insight, opinion and perspective of persons most familiar with Occoquan's Comprehensive Plan. To this end, a survey was designed and distributed to all members of the Occoquan Town Council, as well as members of the Occoquan Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and the Architectural Review Board. In addition, a cross-section of community business leaders, as well as members of the Town staff, were asked to complete the survey that was distributed in October of 2015.

The survey participants were asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses featured in the existing Occoquan Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the respondents were asked to identify the top three land use issues currently facing Occoquan, as well as the top three land use issues Occoquan will likely face five years into the future. The assessment exercise also inquired as to the continued relevance and utility of the goals and policies featured in the existing Occoquan Comprehensive Plan.

The assessment survey was distributed to a total of 63 individuals; 33 of whom served on the Town Council and Town Boards and Commissions, as well as Town staff. The remaining 30 surveys were sent to several business and community leaders. A total of 31 surveys were completed and returned. Of this total, 23 were received from the local government focus group noted above; a 70 percent response rate. A total of eight surveys were received from the community business leader focus group; a 25 percent response rate. When combined, the aggregate survey response rate of 49.2 percent is quite laudable.

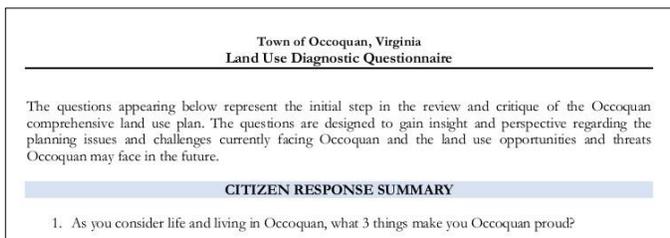
The results generated by the assessment survey yielded valuable insight regarding Occoquan's existing Comprehensive Plan. Chief among the findings was the positive impact the 2003/2013 Comprehensive Plan had generated throughout Occoquan over the past decade. Of equal importance, the assessment survey results indicated that many of the goals and policies featured in the current Comprehensive Plan remain relevant and timely for the present, as well as Occoquan's immediate future.

As might be expected, the assessment exercise also uncovered Comprehensive Plan weaknesses and shortcomings. This is not surprising considering Occoquan has had considerable growth and development since 2003, when the Comprehensive Plan was last substantially reviewed and adopted. The shortcomings and deficiencies associated with the current Plan, which are listed below, provide ample evidence for why the Occoquan Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed and revised on a regular basis. Indeed, the range of planning concerns and challenges makes clear Occoquan's next Comprehensive Plan must address traffic mobility and circulation issues, development and redevelopment challenges in the Town's business/historic district, the character and intensity of desired future

development, as well as how Occoquan intends to secure a positive connection with the river while sustaining the town's natural environment.

Assessment Survey Leading Comp Plan Concerns and Issues

1. Traffic and traffic management.
2. Needed zoning revisions to reduce residential density in downtown.
3. Parking management strategy.
4. Property upkeep, maintenance and appearance strategy.
5. Capitalizing on the river as a development asset, while sustaining the river as an environmental asset.
6. Diversifying the mix of businesses in the downtown area, in addition to bringing about greater mixed-use development.
7. Strengthening stormwater regulations and related environmental standards.
8. Incorporating a commitment to redevelopment in the revised Comprehensive Plan.
9. Developing strategies that will protect prized Occoquan properties and parcels.
10. Developing a Comprehensive Plan vision statement.



Once the assessment survey results were available, a series of community forums were sponsored in November and December of 2015. The initial two forums in November were designed to share the results of the assessment survey with the previously identified local government

focus group and the community business leader focus group. In addition to sharing the survey results, each focus group was asked to identify, through a mapping exercise, specific land use adjustments or changes Occoquan will need to make in order to accommodate anticipated future growth and development over the next five years. A third forum was held for the general public in November of 2015. This forum utilized the same format used with the two focus groups, including the land use mapping exercise.

In early December, a fourth community forum, which was open to the public, was held at the Occoquan town hall. This forum focused on the assessment exercise findings regarding land use issues currently facing Occoquan and land use issues Occoquan will likely face 5 years into the future. In addition, a consensus future land use map (a byproduct of the initial November community forums) was shared. It is important to note the persons attending the December forum embraced the consensus future land use map as being a reasonable and rational representation of how Occoquan could accommodate future growth and development the town will likely experience over the next 5 to 10 years. Upon linking the assessment survey list of comprehensive plan issues and concerns with the proposed future land use map, a template for revising and updating the Occoquan comprehensive plan was clearly established and embraced.

Plan Themes

From its founding, Occoquan has purposely maintained its small town charm and feel. It is not surprising that the desire to sustain Occoquan's character and sense of place continues to resonate as a community planning goal. As noted in the Comprehensive Plan update section above, the update process yielded important insight regarding the range of issues Occoquan will likely face over the next ten years. In turn, this information played a central role in the design and development of six overarching themes which collectively constitute the framework upon which the 2016-2026 Occoquan comprehensive plan is predicated. The respective planning themes are as follows:

- Sustain Occoquan's community character and distinctive quality of life.
- Enhance Occoquan's circulation and mobility with an emphasis on pedestrian safety.
- Sustain and enhance Occoquan's business/historic district while diversifying the town's economic base.
- Witness environmental stewardship by living in harmony with our diverse natural environment.
- Partner with neighboring localities to coordinate planning and governance matters of mutual interest.
- Commit to developing a comprehensive plan implementation schedule and accountability metric.

CHAPTER TWO

Occoquan Yesterday and Today

Our Location/Setting

The Town of Occoquan is located along the Occoquan River in the northeastern portion of Prince William County. The Town occupies approximately 125 acres, including 25 acres of the Occoquan River. While the built portion of the Town is located along the southern shore of the Occoquan River, the Town boundary actually extends into the Fairfax County portion of the river. The Town is situated at the “fall line,” which delineates the Piedmont and Coastal Plain geological provinces and

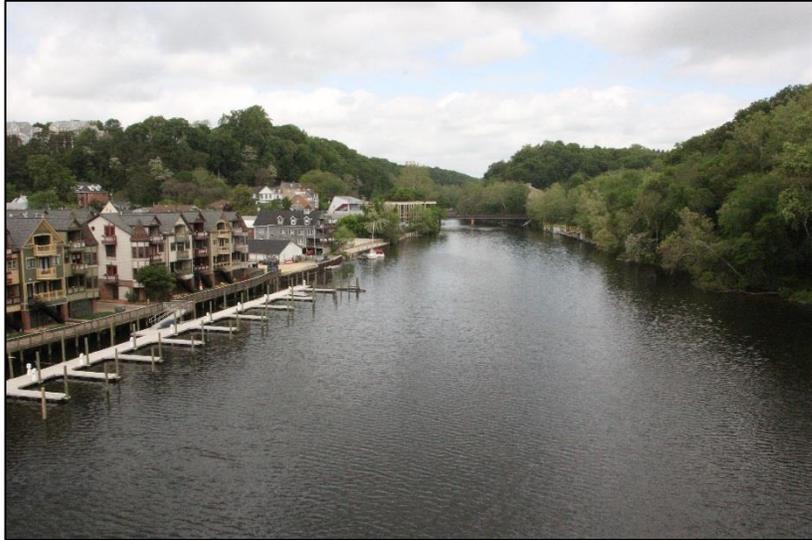


Figure 1 View of Occoquan River from Route 123 Bridge, 2015

represents the end of the navigable waters of the Occoquan River. The downtown and Poplar Lane portions of Occoquan are on a relatively level and low-lying plain adjacent to the river. To the southwest of this low-lying plain is a ridge underlain by mostly granite rock. The ridge is dissected by several small streams that empty into the river. The largest stream is Ballywack Branch. The other streams are Furnace Branch, Boundary Branch, Phelps Creek, and the tributary of Boundary Branch designated as Edgehill Creek. High ground is generally rolling with some very steep slopes and rocky outcrops adjacent to streams and the river plain. While Occoquan has successfully maintained much of its small-town charm, surrounding areas of Prince William differ significantly in terms of scale, density, and design. Within a one mile radius are several automobile-oriented shopping centers and a commuter parking lot – all starkly in contrast to the Town’s pedestrian friendly atmosphere. The surrounding unincorporated areas of Woodbridge and Lake Ridge have populations of [68,081¹](#) and [44,716²](#) respectively, dwarfing the Town’s population of [1,174³](#).



Map 1 Early map showing the location of Occoquan Flour Mill, 1879

¹ [2020 Prince William County Annual Population Estimates](#)

² [2019 American Community Survey](#)

Our History

Occoquan established its commercial and residential successes long before Virginia was a colony when Captain John Smith traveled the Occoquan River to establish trade routes between the Dogue Indians and English settlers. The rolling hills, strong water falls, and

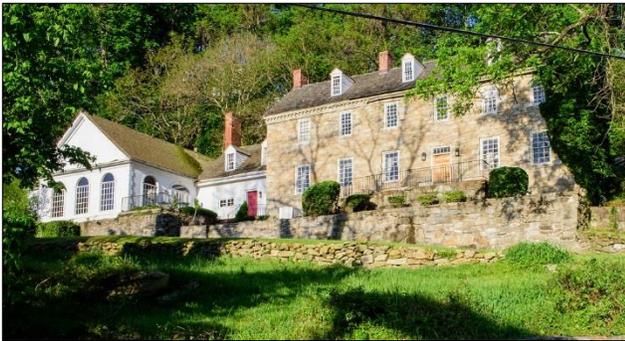
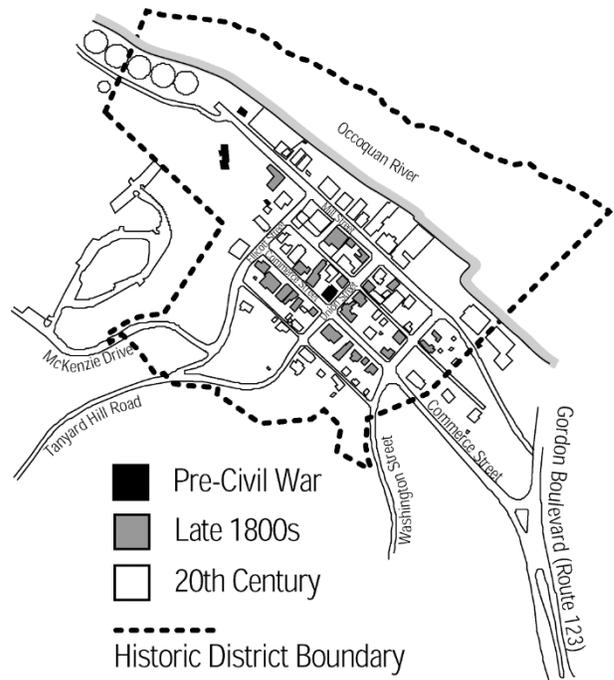


Figure 2 Rockledge Mansion, 2016

natural beauty of the area attracted entrepreneurs like John Ballandine. During the late eighteenth century, he established Occoquan as a full service town with mills, forges, stores, tolling points, and multiple residences.

The most famous of these residences is Rockledge Mansion, built circa 1760 with stone from Occoquan’s own quarry of Virginia blue stone. Supposedly designed by the famous

William Buckland, the home still sits perched above the town as Ballandine requested. It was this residence that served as the town’s bakery, ice house, and spring well. Ballandine also built one of the most internationally famous mills of the late 1700s. The structure, also designated the first automated mill in North America, now serves as the Occoquan Historical Society’s Mill House Museum. The success and beauty of eighteenth century Occoquan attracted more entrepreneurs. Its most successful gentleman, Nathaniel Ellicott, came to officially settle the area after establishing Ellicott City, MD. The town was formally platted in 1804 and its original boundaries form the basis of the current Historic District. The 1800s proved quite prosperous for Occoquan – multiple residences and storefronts established an attractive stopping point for those journeying to the Nation’s Capital. Many of the buildings constructed during this era are still intact along Mill and Commerce Streets.



Map No. 2 Occoquan Historic District and Age of Structures

Map No. 2 indicates the location of older buildings in the central area of Town and their periods of construction. The map also shows the Town’s Historic District, as adopted in August 1999, which roughly mirrors the boundaries established in the 1804 charter. In 2014, the Town’s boundary was extended westward to include Fairfax Water’s one-acre parcel, which has since been converted into parkland managed by the Town.

In 1916, a major fire destroyed a number of commercial structures on Commerce, Union, and Mill streets. Other fires over the years have destroyed significant buildings, including the flour mill in 1924 and Ebenezer Church in 1923. The Church was rebuilt the following year on the same site where it still stands.

The progression of the twentieth century proved difficult for Occoquan, but the town has persevered none the less. Heavy silting of the River and the water authority's takeover of the river's dam proved damaging for water transportation and recreation. Multiple fires and hurricanes raged through town destroying many of its original buildings. The construction of Route 1 and I-95 deemed Occoquan temporarily obsolete. But Occoquan's endurance, positivity, and proactive mindset have resulted in the town becoming popular and successful once again.

In 1984, Occoquan secured its status as an official Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Landmarks. Inside the boundaries of the District sit a multitude of individually registered buildings and sites that still lend the town a quaint appearance. Zoning ordinances allow for a combination of residential and commercial buildings that keep Occoquan both profitable and attractive to its citizens and visitors.

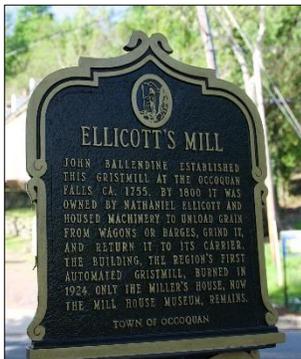


Figure 3 Refurbished historic marker at the Mill House Museum, 2016

The Architectural Review Board establishes and monitors the historically accurate appearance of the town in order to persistently attract visitors from all over the world. Occoquan is working toward obtaining the Main Street America designation from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, while simultaneously improving streetscapes, properties, and parks.

In the early 2000's, the Town took steps to better emphasize its rich historical heritage through the establishment of a walking tour and the placement of commemorative markers throughout the Town. The markers are cast with a description on one side and an etched image of the site from historic photographs on the other. A total of 14 markers

have been placed and are currently being refurbished through an adopt-a-sign program offered by the Historical Society of Occoquan. There has also been discussion over whether a Historic District buffer area, which would restrict growth and development in areas immediately adjacent to the district, should be established to provide the Town with a tool to address preservation and architectural issues outside of the Historic District.

Historic Preservation Issues

- Preservation/maintenance of historic buildings/streetscapes and the historic character of Occoquan.
- Rehabilitation of historic structures that are substandard or in a derelict state.
- The impact of infill development and redevelopment within and adjacent to the Historic District.

- Funding projects to expand, promote and protect properties of historic significance, including the Mill House Museum.
- Update the ARB guidelines and adoption by the Town Council.
- Identify whether a Historic District buffer area should be established [to protect the district](#).

Our Numbers – Population Characteristics

Our Demographics

Demographic statistics and trends provide an important backdrop for evaluating land use, public service needs and infrastructure requirements in a community. Demographics also serve as an indicator regarding a locality’s well-being and attractiveness as a place people are drawn to or a place to be avoided. As such, understanding a locality’s numbers is an important component of responsible community planning.

Our Growing Numbers

According to data supplied by the US Bureau of the Census, Occoquan is a community on the move demographically. Beginning with census year 1980 and continuing to [2019](#), Occoquan’s population increased from 241 people to [1,174](#) residents. The addition of [887](#) people translates into a staggering [324](#) percent increase in Occoquan’s population over the [39](#) year period. By comparison, Prince William County’s population for the same time period increased from 144,703 residents to [470,335](#) total people. The addition of [325,632](#) citizens represented an aggregate population gain of [225](#) percent. By contrast, Virginia’s total population gain for the same [39](#) year period of time was slightly more than [59](#) percent. Accordingly, it is readily evident Occoquan’s rate of population growth from 1980 to was substantially ahead that of Prince William County as well as the Commonwealth of Virginia. Table one reflects the numbers.

Table No. 1 Population Changes in Occoquan, Prince William County and Virginia

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2019 (Estimate)	Percent Change (1980-2019)
Town of Occoquan	241	338	759	934	1,174	324 %
Prince William County	144,703	215,686	280,813	402,2002	470,335	225 %
Virginia	5,346,818	6,187,538	7,078,515	8,001,024	8,535,519	59.6 %

Our 2019 Numbers

[With the 2020 census data yet unpublished at the time of the latest comprehensive plan update, The-the](#) 2010 census is the last year detailed information pertaining to Occoquan’s population attributes and specific characteristics is available. Accordingly, reviewing the 2010 data, and when appropriate, -comparing it with data from prior census years, will provide Occoquan’s elected and appointed leadership with important insight regarding the pace and character of

Occoquan’s changing population. This insight, in turn, will influence Occoquan’s future land use pattern. To this end, the following table features topically oriented data drawn from the census for 1990, 2000, ~~and 2010~~, and 2019 estimates.

Table No. 2: Occoquan Population Characteristics 1990-2010 and 2019 Estimate

	1990	2000	2010	<u>2019</u> (Estimate)
Town Population	338	759	934	<u>1,174</u>
Age Cohort Percentage Under 19:	10.9%	13.1%	12.3%	<u>14.7%</u>
Age Cohort Percentage 19-62:	76.7%	72.5%	72.9%	<u>68.3%</u>
Age Cohort Percentage Over 62:	12.4%	14.4%	14.8%	<u>16.9%</u>
Race-Percentage White	87.3%	85.5%	80.9%	<u>57.8%</u>
Race-Percentage Black	9.8%	8.2%	11.6%	<u>14%</u>
Race-Percentage Asian	2.4%	1.6%	3.3%	<u>17.2%</u>
Race-Percentage Hispanic/Latino	0.6%	6.5%	4.0%	<u>9.4%</u>
Percent Family Households	71.0%	44.7%	42.9%	<u>52.8%</u>
Percent Married Family Couple	23.4%	35.6%	33.7%	<u>42.1%</u>
Non-Family Households	29.0%	55.3%	57.1%	<u>47.2%</u>
Average Household Size	1.98	1.82	1.78	<u>2.22</u>
Total Household Units	230	443	569	<u>530</u>
Vacancy Rate	24.8%	5.6%	7.7%	7.3%

Table 1 above clearly delineates Occoquan’s emergence as a community of choice. The town has witnessed a 247 percent increase in population from 1990 to 2019 according to statistics assembled by the US Bureau of the Census and the American Community Survey. Of particular interest from Table 2 is the growth in the percentage of the town’s population under the age of 19. As can be discerned, the increase in the number of persons in the under 19 population age cohort from 1990 to 2014 grew by 45 percent, but the 2019 estimate reduces that increase to 35 percent. This increase is still significant, and could be indicative of Occoquan’s growing attractiveness for families with children. If this trend continues over the next decade or so, subtle changes may be experienced in Occoquan relative to the mix of business and economic activities that will be needed to respond to younger persons.

Table 2 also details the extent to which Occoquan’s population by race has diversified from 1990 to 2019. In 1990, the percentage of Occoquan’s population characterized as white was 87.3

percent. By [2019](#), the percentage characterized as white was estimated to be [57.8](#) percent. The percentage decline in the town's white population was offset by an increase in the percent of the town's population characterized as Black, Asian and Hispanic/Latin. The aggregate increase in the percent of Occoquan's population non-white went from 12.8 percent in 1990 to [40.6](#) percent in [2019](#). This percentage shift, assuming it continues, could produce a change in the mix of economic activities much as the increase in the percentage of persons found in the under 19 age cohort.

Occoquan's dramatic increase in the total number of household units is also reflected in Table 2. In 1990, the US Bureau of the Census stated Occoquan was home to 230 total household units. By [2019](#), the number of household units was estimated to be [530](#). The raw increase is commensurate with the town's substantial gain in population. ~~Table 2 also reveals the percentage increase in the number of married family couples as well as the nearly one hundred percent increase in the percentage of non-family households in Occoquan. Once again this statistic is witnessed across the town in the form of new multiple family housing units that have been built in Occoquan over the past decade or so years.~~ If the demand for new households in Occoquan continues over the next decade, the town will experience real challenges as to where the new housing should be located. This, in turn, will place stress on the platting of subdivisions as well as the carrying capacity of the town's residential zoning districts. In fact, the zoning challenges generated by an increase in demand for housing is already present in Occoquan's downtown business district.

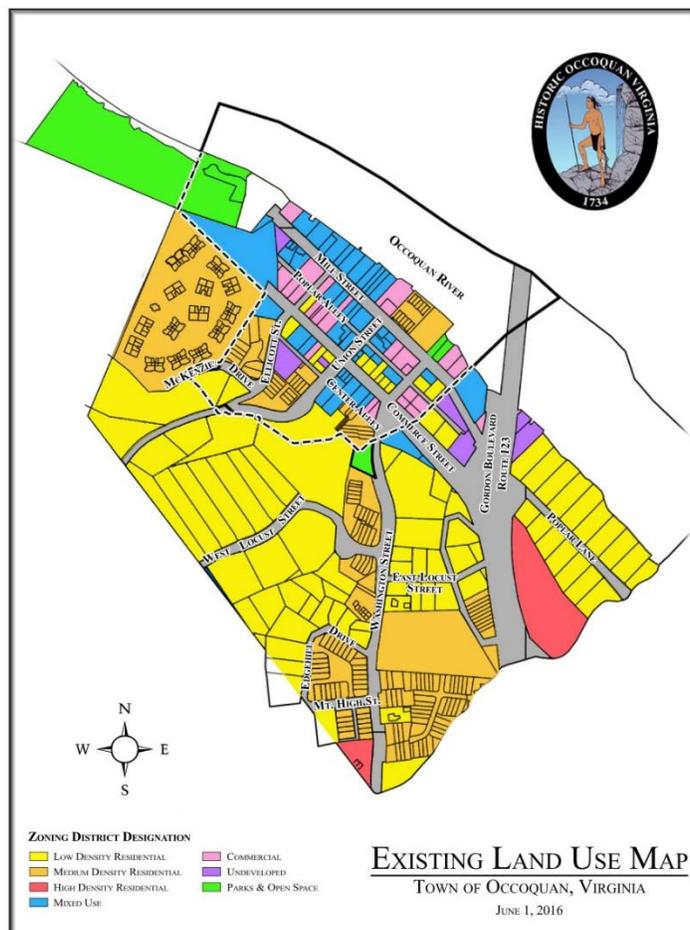
~~Note that between 1990 and 2019, there were slight-census-changed changes in the Census age and race demographic categories. -slightly. As a result, in order to continue to compare categories, the numbers for 2019 shown in Table 2 are the result of combining categories to best match the 1990 categories. for comparison purposes.~~

Our Numbers Since 2014

~~Although the census of population, by statute, is administered on a decennial basis, recent innovations in technology and data gathering techniques have resulted in the creation of data sets that calculate population changes and population estimates on an annual basis for the nation, the 50 states and most local governments across the land. The American Community Survey is a recognized service leader in this arena and their efforts have won the endorsement of the US Bureau of the Census who is their parent sponsor. As such, it is possible to secure Occoquan's estimated population as of July 1, 2015 which is 1,036. This figure will not be characterized as a valid estimate until Occoquan's estimated population for July 1, 2016 is released later this year.~~

What the Population Numbers Mean for the Future

The town of Occoquan has undergone a rapid transformation over the past quarter century due to a sharp increase in population. Although it is impossible to forecast what the future will hold for Occoquan, it is a reasonable assumption the town will continue to be an attractive “community of choice” where people will want to live, work and enjoy life. Occoquan’s proximity to I-95 and the nation’s capital practically guarantees this will happen. As such, Occoquan should view this comp plan update as the initial foray in deciding how the town will accommodate an additional 150 to 200 people while respecting the locality’s existing boundaries. Issues to consider will include housing, transportation and circulation, utility and infrastructure impacts and demands for public services. Adjustments will also be needed with respect to Occoquan’s zoning ordinance and development regulations. Enhanced dialogue with Prince William County focused on land use planning issues that may impact the Town of Occoquan will become an essential requirement.



Map No. 3 Existing Land Use Map, 2016

In summary, with continued population growth on the horizon, Occoquan’s future can be bright and dynamic if prudent and responsible planning strategies are crafted and implemented.

Our Existing Footprint and Land Use

Currently, the “heart” of Occoquan is its central business district located along the entire length of Mill Street and on Commerce Street from Washington Street to Ellicott Street. No commercial activities are located outside this general area. The types of businesses found in Occoquan are generally of the specialty retail variety, interspersed with restaurants and service businesses.

The business district and the immediately adjacent residential area are laid out in a grid pattern which was established in a plat recorded in 1804. The Historic District is rather compact and orderly, preserving the quaint character and atmosphere not found in sprawling shopping centers and strip commercial developments of modern times. This old-fashioned ambience and

town scale is what makes Occoquan a popular attraction for tourists and shoppers upon which the Town's economy depends.

In the early 1990s, the town completed the Mill Street Enhancement Project, which included the installation of gas street lights, brick sidewalks, and new curb and gutter intended to improve the aesthetic appeal of the Town's business district. As part of the Town's annual budget process, an infrastructure maintenance plan has been developed in order to identify and schedule future improvements within the Town, as well as on other main thoroughfares outside of the Historic District, including brick sidewalks, intersection improvements, and maintenance of town streets. Improvements to these thoroughfares would serve to announce to visitors that one is entering a "small town" and would help to distinguish Occoquan from surrounding areas of Prince William County.



Figure 54 Section of Riverwalk behind Gaslight Landing
Opened in 2015

There are several waterfront properties located within the Historic District that have potential for redevelopment and revitalization. Three issues are associated with the redevelopment of these properties, (1) connection to the Occoquan Riverwalk, (2) providing the necessary flexibility and incentives to make development economically viable, and (3) the actual zoning designation of the land.

In particular, the Town must specify how any future uses will link to the Riverwalk. This is critical to ensure an adequate number of public access points and that building design takes into account and encourages the use of the Riverwalk. Use type is critical in that uses should lend themselves to Riverwalk activities. If the Town is silent on what kind of uses it would like to see, then it may lose an opportunity to influence the decision-making process. Finally, the Town needs to address whether current zoning restrictions placed on waterfront properties, such as the 35 foot height requirement, need to be more flexible in order to encourage redevelopment of the type desired.



Figure 45 Gaslights and Sidewalks
Installed as part of the Mill Street
Enhancement Project

Outside of the Historic District, land use consists of a mixture of residential structures on radial roads and other small streets. Several of the houses are comparable in age to those in the Historic District, while many others are of more recent vintage. Most single-family homes outside of the central area are located on relatively large lots, while homes within the Historic District are on small lots of 5,000 square feet or less.

While many residences within the Town are single-family detached dwellings, the current trend is towards higher density residential development. Projects begun since 1990 include the townhouse addition to Occoquan Mills, single family homes at Hollows II and townhouse units at Dawson’s Green, Occoquan Reach and Berrywood. Since 2010, town homes have been completed at Vistas at Occoquan, Myrtle Banks, Occoquan Heights and Gaslight Landing. Currently proposed residential developments include additional townhouse units at



Figure 6 Former site of Water Treatment Facility, River Mill Park completed, 2016

Rivertown and Kiely Court in the Historic District. Continued development has caused debate over whether the Town should encourage or discourage dense forms of development such as townhouses, both in and out of the Historic District.

Public and semi-public uses within the Town consist of the Town Hall, the Mill House Museum, River Mill Park, Furnace Branch Park, Mamie Davis Park, Riverwalk, canoe, kayak and SUP launch, a church, a cemetery, VFW post, and the post office, Riverwalk. —Kayak/Canoe Launch,

and the Prince William County Visitors Center. All of the above (except the cemetery) are located within or directly adjacent to the Historic District. These facilities are important elements comprising the flavor of Occoquan and are all worthy of preservation.

Many of the debates over development in the Town have as much to do with open space preservation as they do with design and compatibility with existing development patterns. Even with the recent development of the Occoquan Heights community, there still remains several lots outside of the historic district that are over one acre and have the potential for future redevelopment from low density to higher density uses. The Occoquan River also provides open space and comprises nearly 25 acres within the Town.

Design and development issues will continue to be of major concern for the Town whether dealing with a new residential subdivision or small infill projects. ~~Most recently, t~~The Town partnered with Prince William County and Fairfax Water to redevelop the old Fairfax Water Treatment Facility into a public park, ~~set to which~~ opened in ~~the summer~~July of 2016, and has allowed the town to anchor the northwestern end of its retail district with public open space. ~~Near the new park,~~In 2021, the Town Council approved granted special use permits for The Mill at Occoquan project, a mixed used development planned the a proposed development on for a one-acre large riverfront parcel on Mill Street near River Mill Park that includes a mix of residential and commercial uses, and significantly adds to the development of the public

~~Riverwalk, the new park, is for sale that has the potential for redevelopment and further enhancing the Town's business district, should it be developed with a balance of business and residential uses that will include a significant addition to the river walk and a mixture of commercial and residential uses.~~ New projects must continue to be planned in harmony with the surrounding areas and projects, while at the same time maintaining the eclectic mix of residential and business activities already found within the Town's historic business district.

CHAPTER THREE

Occoquan 2026: Imagining Tomorrow Today

Our Vision

Occoquan prides itself on honoring the past while embracing the future. The small town charm attracts visitors from all over the world; the beauty of the natural environment attracts outdoors and nature enthusiasts, and the successful mixed-use zoning attracts a wide variety of businesses and restaurants. Residents and business owners live and work together in a supportive relationship that enhances the town's reputation and quality of life. Occoquan's vision includes a premier set of standards that will secure and promote the town throughout the twenty-first century and beyond. Championing the maintenance and improvement of the Historic District will provide an economic boon for the town and will be accomplished with its designation as a Main Street America community and the continued outstanding stewardship exhibited by the town's leadership. In addition to the Main Street America program, the completion of the Riverwalk along the Town's waterfront will guarantee the community's continued popularity within the region. Occoquan, Virginia has been and will continue to be a premier destination for those who enjoy the beauty and benefits of historic waterfront communities.

Our Goals – Comprehensive Plan Themes

1. Community Character & Community Life

To guide Occoquan's continued physical development so as to maintain a mix of land uses – residential, commercial, and public – reflecting the town's historic identity and image while enhancing the social and economic well-being of its residents, merchants and visitors alike.

2. Circulation and Mobility

To create and maintain a safe and efficient Town-wide mobility and transportation network that is interconnected, multi-modal and reflects a pedestrian-friendly land use pattern.

3. Economic Vitality & Diversity

To promote proactive and sustainable economic development and redevelopment actions in the Occoquan Business and Historic District that respects the district's unique character, balances residential density, and protects its ecological setting, while encouraging a diversity of economic activities in selected target areas of Occoquan.

4. Environmental Stewardship

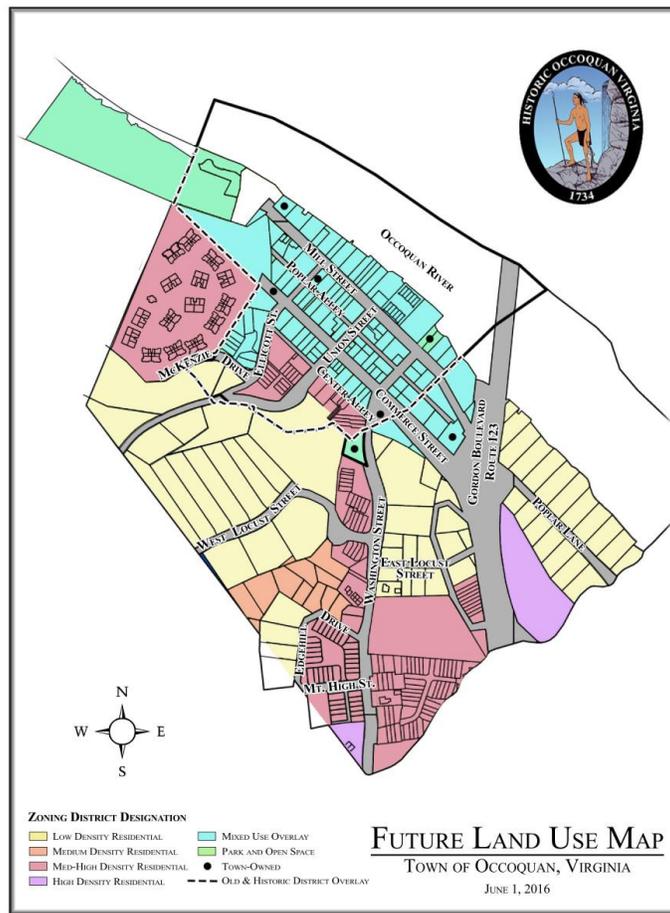
To provide for the harmonious use of land that meets the needs of Occoquan, while enhancing the area's environmental quality.

5. Regional Coordination

To continue to build upon and enhance partnerships with Prince William and Fairfax Counties to generate a shared border area, land use planning and zoning that reflects and advances Occoquan’s vision and desired future.

Our Plan for 2026

The year 2026 will have brought many positive changes to Occoquan. The completion of the Town’s river walk, the successful implementation and continuation of the Main Street America program, and the appropriate development of private properties will produce a quaint, yet modern environment for visitors and residents alike. The improvement of our zoning ordinances will produce a variety of restaurants and businesses that will attract visitors from around the region. The continuation of our mixed-use business model will allow for residents and business owners to live and work in a neighborhood partnership. The Historic District, and its buildings and infrastructure will be superbly cared for and regularly beautified according to the Architectural Review Board’s regularly updated guidance documents. Occoquan 2026 is a beautiful, successful and vibrant town.



Map No. 4 Future Land Use Map, 2016

CHAPTER FOUR

COMMUNITY CHARACTER & COMMUNITY LIFE

Goal

To guide Occoquan’s continued physical development so as to maintain a mix of land uses – residential, commercial, and public – reflecting the town’s historic identity and image while enhancing the social and economic well-being of its residents, merchants and visitors alike.

Overview

The Town’s leadership will strive to preserve the charm and character of Occoquan by focusing particularly on four aspects of the community:

- Housing development will be closely monitored so as to maintain the current balance of Affordable, Mid-Level, and Luxury Level residential choices.
- Neighborhoods will be preserved where feasible, and re-vitalized where necessary and appropriate to retain the Town’s vibrant character.
- New services and facilities for use by residents and visitors alike will be encouraged and supported by the Town.
- Finally, the Town is especially committed to preserving parks and open spaces for community enjoyment and commercial uses in keeping with the character of Occoquan.

Housing and Housing Affordability

The Town currently has multi-family, single family and mixed-use housing located throughout its boundaries. This diversity should continue with a view to limit future development in the Historic District to the construction of mixed-use development consisting of both residential and commercial enterprises in the Historic District. As for the areas outside of the Historic District, the Town should seek to limit the expanded use of current residential areas so as to ease strains on the community’s transportation network.



Figure 7 Homes and Businesses on Mill Street, 2016

The Town looked at the question of housing affordability, and within the context of Prince William County, the Town has satisfied the Code of Virginia by having multi-family, single-family and mixed-use residential opportunities within the community.

Neighborhood Preservation and Revitalization

To seek to encourage the redevelopment of commercial areas in a manner which will ensure the continued recognition of the Town's unique character combining residential and commercial development in an esthetic and harmonious way, while ensuring that the owners of these properties can redevelop them in a manner which is economically feasible.

Over the last several years, the Town has renovated and expanded the Town Dock, which promotes businesses in the Town to visitors arriving by water. Access to the Occoquan River cruise boats is now easier and safer. The purchase of a 17 acre parcel of woodland on the western end of Tanyard Hill has helped preserve the beauty and natural state of one of the Town's historic gateways.

Community Services and Facilities

It is a priority to develop the infrastructure along the riverfront as a means of encouraging both residents and non-residents alike to make the Town a unique destination to enjoy.

In collaboration with the Gaslight Landing Condominium Association, the planned Occoquan Riverwalk is now extended upstream as far as the Occoquan Inn. In 2015, Vulcan Stone Quarries Inc., generously provided truckloads of blue stone rip-rap to stabilize the river bank at Mamie Davis Park where the Town Dock meets the park. Further downstream, [in 2021, Vulcan donated rip rap and VDOT refurbished the riverbank near the site of the new canoe, kayak and SUP launch which opened to the public in April 2021.](#) ~~the Town has led the way for construction of a public ADA kayak and canoe launch to serve both residents and visitors alike.~~ [In addition, in 2021 the Town Council granted special use permits for the undeveloped **one-acre** property along Mill Street near River Mill Park which includes the planned development of a portion of the Riverwalk along the development's waterfront. This planned addition will complete **approximately 30% percent** of the planned linear footage of the Riverwalk.](#)



Figure 8 View of Riverwalk and Town Dock, 2015



Figure 9 View of Occoquan River toward upper and lower dams from the Footbridge, 2016

Parks, Open Space, Public Space

It has been a priority to promote the expansion of the Town's current Parks and Open Spaces to enable a broader utilization of these areas as a means of improving the overall quality of life for residents. These improvements will also encourage people outside of the Town to make Occoquan a prime location for leisure activity.

In 2015, the Town entered into a lease with Fairfax Water to develop the former water treatment facility site into a one acre community park named River Mill Park. The demolition of the tanks and stabilization of the site was undertaken by Fairfax Water, while the development of the park site was managed by the Town and funded through Prince William County capital outlay. The Park itself provides a stunning view of both the lower and upper dams which have not been seen in over 50 years. River Mill Park was opened to the public in July of 2016 and will be viewed as the center of the Town's community activities.

The new park will be now the site of many community events such as concerts, community gatherings, and weddings. It will also provides a beautiful natural setting for passive recreational use. Events in the park will not only provides activities for residents and non-residents, but also serves as a vehicle to encourage increased foot traffic for Town businesses.

As mentioned previously, the Town's purchase of the 17 acre parcel at the top of Tanyard Hill Road should also provides the Town the opportunity of coordinating with both Prince William County and private groups for the construction of a trail connection extending from the Tanyard Hill parcel through Lake Ridge, and on to the County Government Center. In 2021, led by Mayor Porta, a group of volunteers from the Prince William Trails and Streams Coalition constructed a natural trail on the parcel for residents and visitors to enjoy. The Town is continuing to work with Prince William County to complete trail connections as part of the planned Occoquan Greenway Trail.

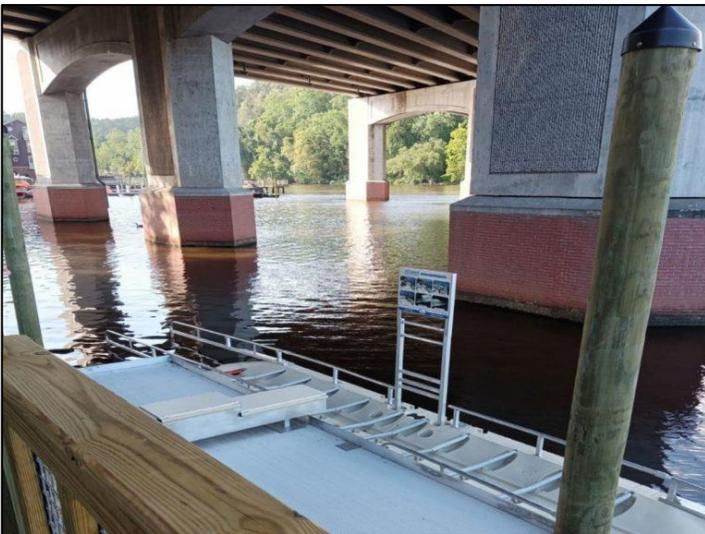


Figure 10 Kayak Launch Ramp completed, 2021

In 2021, aAfter many years of planningg and development, the ADA canoe, kayak and SUPKayak Launch Ramp launch opened on the south side of Town underneath the Route 123 bridge in April 2021. Largely funded through a grant the Town sought in 2010 from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, this is believed to be the only free, 24/7 public access ramp on the Occoquan River suitable for people with ambulatory disabilities. The ramp not only provides recreational access to the Occoquan River, but also provides access

to the Town for visitors coming in via Kayak-arriving via non-motorized watercraft.

CHAPTER FIVE

CIRCULATION AND MOBILITY

Goal

To create and maintain a safe and efficient Town-wide mobility and transportation network that is interconnected, multi-modal and reflects a pedestrian-friendly land use pattern.

Overview

Historically, the Town of Occoquan has survived the loss of major transportation facilities. In fact, much of the historic preservation of the Town may be due to its removal from the path of strip commercial development which has taken place along the arterial highways nearby. The result has been that the Town's street system has remained in keeping with the small town it serves.

As part of the original Town charter in 1804, a plat was created which established a grid system of streets and lots. The originally platted system of street rights-of-way still exists to some extent, but some of the streets have been vacated.

The remaining grid street system of the Historic District is connected to the surrounding areas and highways by several radial roads. These radials are the "life-lines" of the Town, providing access to and from the rest of the region. The most important radial roads are Union Street/Tanyard Hill Road, Washington Street/Occoquan Road and Commerce Street with its connection to Route 123.

Table No. 3: Vehicles Per Day

VDOT Annual Average Daily Traffic Volume Estimates [by](#) Section of Route - Prince William Maintenance Area

Road	1986	1996	2001	2014	2020	% Change
Tanyard Hill Road (Town Line - Ellicott)	N/A	N/A	4,000	4,200	<u>3,700</u>	<u>(11.9%)</u>
Union Street (Ellicott - Commerce)	N/A	N/A	4,000	3,700	<u>3,500</u>	<u>(5.4%)</u>
Union Street (Mill - Commerce)	N/A	N/A	1,200	2,500	<u>2,900</u>	<u>16%</u>
Washington Street (Commerce - Mill)	7,800	2,000	2,500	2,800	<u>3,000</u>	<u>7%</u>
Washington (Town Line - Commerce)	N/A	N/A	1,800	2,000	<u>2,100</u>	<u>5%</u>
Commerce Street (123 - Washington)	7,000	6,500	4,900	5,500	<u>5,300</u>	<u>(3.6%)</u>
Commerce Street (Union - Ellicott)	N/A	N/A	840	740	<u>690</u>	<u>(6.7%)</u>

Commerce Street (Washington - Union)	N/A	N/A	3,500	3,200	<u>2,500</u>	<u>(21.8%)</u>
Mill Street (Ellicott - Dead End)	N/A	N/A	1,400	390	<u>390</u>	<u>0%</u>
Mill Street (Washington - Ellicott)	N/A	N/A	980	2,800	<u>3,000</u>	<u>7.1%</u>
Poplar Lane (Town Line - Washington)	N/A	N/A	550	560	<u>460</u>	<u>(17.8%)</u>
Ellicott Street	N/A	N/A	440	600	<u>520</u>	<u>(13.3%)</u>

The westerly portion of Union Street and Tanyard Hill Road outside of the Town limits is a narrow, winding road with no shoulders and restricted sight distances. According to statistics kept by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), this road carries about 4,200~~3,700~~ vehicles per day (VPD). It is assumed that much of this traffic is composed of commuters from the Woodbridge area using the road as a short cut to/from Route 123.

According to the VDOT Annual Average Daily Traffic Volume Estimates the traffic volume on Washington Street in 2020 was about 3,000 VPD, a 20% percent increase from the 2,500 VPD count in the 2001 statistics, but a significant drop from the 7,800 VPD reported in 1986 study. The reduction in traffic may be attributed to improvements to Old Bridge Road and Route 123 and making the detour through Ttown unnecessary. Likewise, the traffic on Commerce Street from Union to Washington Streets has experienced about a 28.6 percent decrease in VPD. Washington Street from Commerce to the Town line has seen a 16 percent increase and Commerce Street from Route 123 to Washington Street has seen between-an eight percent increase in VDP in-the-between 2001 and 2020. This may be due to new townhouse developments completed since 2001 on Washington Street, including Occoquan Heights and Occoquan Reach. According to the VDOT Annual Average Daily Traffic Volume Estimates for 2014, the traffic volume on Washington Street in 2001 was about 2,800 VPD, a slight increase from the 2,500 VPD count in the 2001 statistics. This is a significant drop from the 7,800 VPD reported in 1986 study. The reduction in traffic may be attributed to improvements to Old Bridge Road and Route 123 and making the detour through Town unnecessary. Likewise, the traffic on Commerce Street from Washington to Ellicott Streets has experienced about a 12 percent decrease in VPD, while Washington Street from Commerce to the Town line and Commerce Street from Route 123 to Washington Street has seen a 12 percent increase in VPD. This may be due to new townhouse developments completed since 2001 on Washington Street, including Occoquan Heights and Occoquan Reach.

Mill Street, from Ellicott Street to the dead end, saw a substantial decline in VPD from 1,400 in 2001, to 390 VPD in 2020. During the same time period, Mill Street from Washington to Ellicott Streets saw a 206 percent increase in VPD. This significant variation can most likely be attributed to the location of the traffic counting sensor between 2001 and 2014. With the development of the new town park opening of River Mill Park development of the mixed-use

project and increase use of River Mill Park at this end of the town, we expect to see a substantial increase in VPD on this section of Mill Street in the coming years.

Washington Street is narrow, with a right-of-way width of approximately 30 feet, has limited sight distances, and limited opportunity for widening activities. In 2015, VDOT worked with the Town to complete a sidewalk project at West Locust Street that included the installation of a crosswalk to aid in pedestrian circulation and safety along Washington Street.

In the fall of 2021, VDOT will be upgrading the intersections of Mill Street and Ellicott Street and Mill Street and Washington Street. The upgrades include the installation of crosswalks and ADA improvements to the sidewalks. The project will improve pedestrian circulation and significantly increase pedestrian safety along Mill Street.

Within the downtown area, the primary streets have adequate rights-of-way. One exception is Ellicott Street, which has a narrow right-of-way and is one-way from Mill to Commerce Street and from McKenzie to Union Street.

The Town of Occoquan has a bustling business district, boasting many unique shops, eateries and businesses. During peak business times, traffic on all streets within the downtown area is heavy with both vehicular and pedestrian activity. ~~A traffic and parking study is recommended in order to~~In 2017, the Town contracted JMT to provide an assessment of the Town's parking spot turnover and cut-through traffic. Based on the recommendations from that study the Town has implemented a free timed parking district as recommended in order to support parking availability for patrons and residents of the district. identify peak hours, parking solutions and traffic control considerations. The study found an average 250-300 cut-through vehicles per hour and recommended taking this data to VDOT to conduct a study for mitigation.

As of 2021, there is a STARS study underway for improvements to Old Bridge Road/Route 123 and also for the I-95 interchange. This could lead to improvements in the near future that reduce congestion along this corridor and reduce cut-through traffic through town. In the past, improvements including the widening of Route 123 and HOV lanes on I-95 have had a significant impact on the Town, including potentially reducing commuter traffic through Town. —The Town of Occoquan shares its borders with Woodbridge, a non-incorporated community within Prince William County, which continues to grow in population and experience development.

According to the 2010 Census, Woodbridge population grew to a total of 54,275, up from 31,941 in the 2000 Census. Continued population growth is expected as new residential and commercial development occurs based on its proximity to nearby Washington DC, FT. Belvoir, and Marine Corps Base Quantico. Overall, ~~a~~According to the 2010 Census, the population of Prince William County was 402,002, resulting in a 43.2 percent% increase from the 2000 Census. The current estimated population of Prince William County is 431,863470,335 (as of December

~~31, 2015~~the 2019 American Community Survey), which represents growth of ~~7.43%~~17 percent since April 1, 2010. Prince William County is projected to grow to 519,928 persons by 2030 according to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. In comparison, an estimated 995 people called the Town of Occoquan home in 2013, up ~~31.0%~~percent from 759 in 2000. According to the United States Census' in ~~2015~~2019, the population was estimated to have increased to ~~1,025,174~~.

Over the years, the Town has gone through some major changes particularly since the ~~2013 last~~ Occoquan Comprehensive Plan ~~was completed on September 3, 2013~~. The Town's industrial center has continued to evolve and now incorporates additional restaurants, as well as businesses with expanded hours of operation. New residential developments like Gaslight Landing, Occoquan Heights, and Vistas at Occoquan have been completed.

~~Since the adoption of the current Comprehensive Plan in 2016, -the Town opened River Mill Park, a one-acre- waterfront park located at the west end of Mill Street at the site of the former River Station Water Treatment Plant operated by Fairfax Water since 1967. The park includes an event pavilion, a looped asphalt trail, a restroom and storage facility, and upgrades to the footbridge that crosses the Occoquan River. Since its opening, the park has become a popular gathering place for residents and visitors, the site of weddings, and hosts many town events throughout the year including concerts, beer gardens, craft vendor events, trivia nights, and other special events.~~

~~Additionally, the Town has completed and opened a canoe, kayak and SUP launch under the Route 123 bridge, providing free public ADA access to the Occoquan River to the public.~~

~~These and future changes will continue to increase Town residents' and visitors' use of roads, parking and sidewalks. Furthermore, the Town is weeks away from completing a new one-acre waterfront park, named River Mill Park, located at the west end of Mill Street at the site of the former River Station Water Treatment Plant operated by Fairfax Water since 1967. The new park will include an event pavilion, a looped stone dust trail, a restroom and storage facility, and upgrades to the footbridge that crosses the Occoquan River. Canoe, Kayak and SUP Undoubtedly, such changes will increase Town residents' and visitors' use of roads, parking and sidewalks.~~

The following are top circulation and mobility themes reported on the most recent assessment of the current Town's Comprehensive Plan. The final survey was reported on February 15, 2016.

1. **Traffic:** Cut-through traffic continues to be a problem. A transportation/traffic management strategy that addresses cut-through traffic is needed. Alternative modes of transportation should be considered.

2. **Parking**: Parking remains a challenge downtown and in residential areas. Occoquan needs to develop a parking management study and strategy focused on downtown and adjacent surrounding areas.
3. **Sidewalks**: A pedestrian mobility management strategy is needed. Pedestrian safety should always be considered for both residents and visitors.
4. **Gateways**: A woodland buffer between Occoquan and surrounding areas should be preserved.

Based on the aforementioned, the Town government should continue working to plan and implement solutions that will enhance residents and visitors' circulation and mobility while protecting our historical and environmental attractiveness. This work is highly important as reported census statistics continue to show expected population escalation in the area. The following are recommended goals and policies to meet such ends.

Traffic

Even as road improvements have occurred, cut-through traffic continues to be a concern for residents. Rise in population due to new development within the Town and elsewhere in Prince William County has added to the problem. It is expected that increasing business activity and opening of new parks will intensify traffic problems and demand on parking.

The problem of increasing commuter traffic cannot be solved by the Town alone, because the source of much of the problem is outside the Town and roadway improvements are the responsibility of the Virginia Department of Transportation and Prince William County. Increased efforts between the Town, Prince William County, and VDOT are needed to develop solutions and to plan for required improvements.

One source of traffic congestion that could be moderated is that generated by the lack of mail delivery and the dependency on a PO box system for mail distribution for all 1,000+ town residents, as well as businesses. A post office box system was set in place many years ago since the community's size at the time did not meet the USPS minimum requirement for mail delivery services for its residents and businesses. Currently, this system is still in place and the town's post office is located in the heart of the historic district at the corner of Mill and Washington Streets. As a result, residents and businesses are required to visit the post office regularly, creating pedestrian and vehicular congestion in this location. Consideration needs to be given to installing mail box clusters strategically located in the larger residential neighborhoods throughout the Town so that USPS can begin to deliver residents' mail. This would not only improve traffic flow, but also would cut down on emissions pollution, particularly when drivers leave engines idling while they retrieve and sort through their mail.

Recommended Action Items Related to Traffic:

- i. ~~A Town traffic study should be conducted that considers current needs, as well as future growth.~~

- ii.i. Based on the [2017 JMT -Town of Occoquan, Virginia Parking](#) study, the Town should [continue to](#) work on an enhanced street and traffic flow management and execution plan to accommodate local and commuter traffic particularly during peak hours and holidays. The management plan should not jeopardize current Town historical, environmental, business flow, and should address residential concerns.
- iii.ii. As part of the plan, Town Council will investigate and make recommendations on the need to widen portions of Commerce Street. Any widening project will include new curbs and brick sidewalks consistent with other Business District improvements.
- iv.iii. It is suggested that all Town sidewalks be 6 to 10 feet in width on each side. Within the historic district, such sidewalks shall be brick.
- v.iv. As a part of the site plan or subdivision approval process, developers should be required to improve adjoining streets to standards of VDOT and this Plan.
- vi.v. All residential streets serving lots less than one acre in size should be constructed with curbs and gutters and with sidewalks on at least one side.
- vii.vi. No street right-of-ways in Occoquan should be vacated until the surrounding properties have been fully developed or an alternate plan for handling automobile circulation in the vicinity has been endorsed by affected property owners and by Town Council.

Parking

Maximizing the availability of parking spaces while maintaining the historic nature of the Town has been an ongoing issue. Parking problems typically occur during peak business hours, weekends, and holidays.

The majority of parking for visitors in Town is on-street parking or parking in one of the town's four municipal lots including under the 123 bridge. Previously, the Town partnered with private property owners in an effort to increase public parking opportunities, including the development of the Mom's Apple Pie property, which includes several public parking spaces, both off-street and on-street. ~~Currently, the Town is seeking a grant to conduct a parking and traffic study in 2016, with an expectation to incorporate appropriate improvements and recommendations within the budget and capital improvement plan process to begin addressing this ongoing issue. The Town Council will continue to look for ways to increase parking.~~ [The 2017 JMT Traffic and Parking study encouraged continuing to work with property owners and developers to provide parking and to encourage the use of Town-owned lots. It also encouraged improving the walkability of Occoquan and incorporating bicycle parking to take advantage of Occoquan lying along a prominent bike ~~path~~route.](#)

Parking problems are acute in the business district due in part to the fact that when the Town was originally laid out and built, there were no automobiles. The Town originally adopted a Zoning Ordinance which did not require any off-street parking in the Business District. The ordinance was subsequently amended so that off-street parking is now required for all new development, redevelopment, or expansion.

Although on-street parking accommodates many vehicles, increased residential, park development and business activity require additional action to alleviate parking problems.:

Recommended Action Items for Parking:

- i. A new Town parking study should be conducted based on current and future expected growth.
- ii. Based on the study, the Town should work on an improved parking management and execution plan. Courses of action should be developed to improve commercial district and nearby residential area parking rules.
- iii. Continue to look for suitable close in sites and develop Town-owned parking lots.
- iv. Continue to require developers to provide appropriate off street parking.
- v. Encourage use of business-owned vacant land for commercial parking.

2021 Parking Update

In 2017, the Town contracted with the consulting firm JMT to conduct a Traffic and Parking study for the Town. Based on the results and recommendations of that study, the Town implemented a free timed parking district in 2021 in an effort to increase availability of parking for patrons in the business community.

Sidewalks

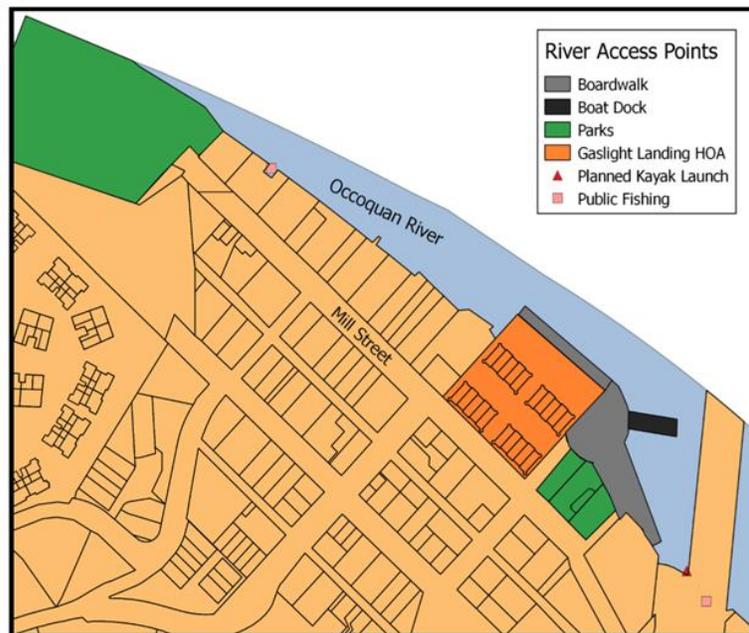
Although automobile access to the Town is certainly important, one of the charms of Occoquan is that it is accessible by foot and by water. There are several efforts underway to increase pedestrian access within the Town. The most significant effort is the Occoquan Riverwalk, which will significantly increase access to the Town's waterfront. In 2015, the most recent expansion of the Occoquan Riverwalk opened behind the Gaslight Landing Community. Ultimately, the Riverwalk is planned to will span the length of the Town of Occoquantown along the river, creating a path from the Canoe and Kayak Launch under the Route 123 bridge to River Mill Park at the western end of town. In 2021, the Town Council granted special exception applications for approved The Mill at Occoquan development, paving the way for the addition which will complete an additional of approximately 30 percent% of the rRiverwalk on the Westerwestern end of tTown. Ultimately, the Riverwalk will span the length of the Town of Occoquan, creating a path from the planned Canoe and Kayak Launch under the Route 123 bridge to the new River Mill Park at the western end of town. The addition of this section of the Riverwalk will allow the town to focus on future efforts to complete the middle section, ultimately connecting the Riverwalk from Mamie Davis Park to the Mill House Museum.



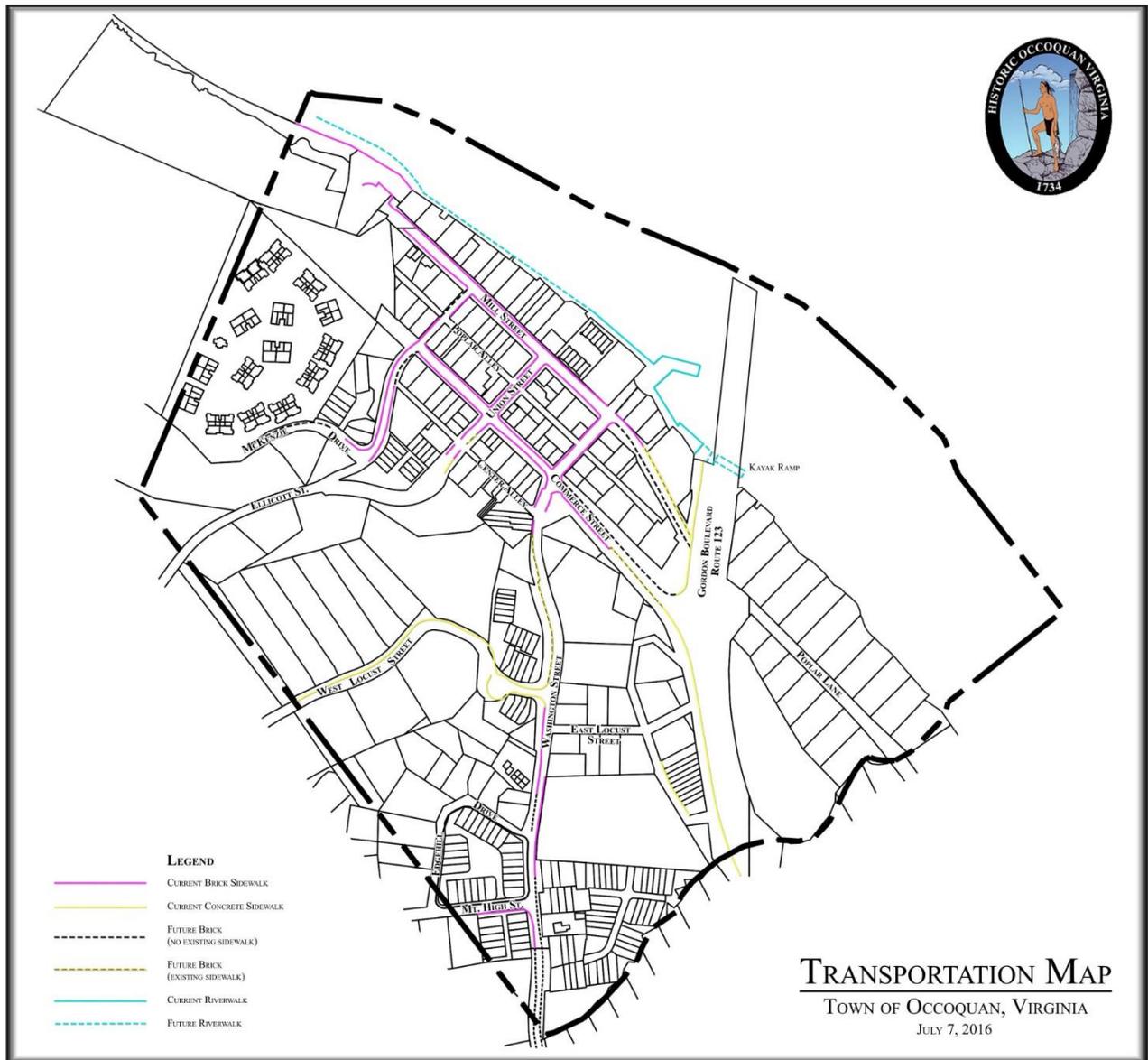
Figure 11 Nathaniel Ellicott Footbridge, 2016

Another pedestrian access is the Occoquan foot bridge, which is owned and maintained by VDOT. Maintenance of the Occoquan foot bridge should be an important element of the Town's pedestrian circulation plan in that the bridge serves as part of a regional bike trail and provides pedestrian access to the Town during the Spring and Fall craft shows. Without the foot bridge, pedestrians wishing to park on the

Fairfax County side of the Occoquan River would be forced to walk over the heavily travelled Route 123 bridge. As part of ~~the new~~ River Mill Park's construction, the Occoquan foot bridge ~~has been~~ upgraded to include replacing the chain link fence with black railing and the addition of lighting. The Town should continue to work with VDOT to perform scheduled maintenance of the footbridge.



Map No. 5 River Access Points in Occoquan



Map No. 6 Pedestrian Circulation Map/Transportation Map

The plan for pedestrian circulation is illustrated above on map number 6. The most significant element of the plan is for the construction of the Occoquan Riverwalk at the “rear” of lots between the Route 123 parking lot on Mill Street and River Mill Park. This walkway will make maximum use of the Town’s scenic assets, open greater commercial possibilities and allow the establishment of a buffer in accordance with the intent of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. [With the planned Mill at Occoquan development completing another significant portion of the Riverwalk, the Town should continue to work with existing riverfront property owners to connect the wWestern and eEastern portions of the Riverwalk. Expansion of the Riverwalk west of the Gaslight Landing community should be an ongoing and cooperative effort between the Town and riverfront property owners and developers.](#)

In the 1990s, through a grant program, the Town planned and implemented the Mill Street Enhancement Project, which improved pedestrian facilities in the Business District by replacing aging concrete with brick and adding gas lights. Continued expansion and maintenance of brick sidewalks are recommended on all main and connecting streets of the Historic District.

Table No. 4: Brick Sidewalk Maintenance and Installation Schedule - From Adopted FY 2017 Budget, Brick Sidewalks Improvements Program

FY	Street	From	To	Application
2017	Town Hall	N/A	N/A	Maintenance/ Replacement
2018	Ellicott Street	Mill Street	McKenzie	Maintenance and Install
2019	Commerce Street	123	Ellicott Street	Maintenance and Install
2019	Mill Street	Town Parking Lot	Union Street	Maintenance and Install
2020	Mill Street	Union Street	Ellicott	Maintenance/ Replacement
2020	Washington Street	Mill Street	Mount High Street	Maintenance and Install
2021	Mill Street	Ellicott	West End	Maintenance/ Replacement

Other pedestrian related improvements include extension of sidewalks and construction of pedestrian trails to serve new residential developments, as well as improvements to intersections to install ADA crosswalks within the downtown area.

Table No. 5: Intersection Improvement Schedule - From Adopted FY 2017 Budget, Intersections Improvements Program

FY	Intersection Location	Location of Proposed Crosswalk
2016	Mill Street/ Washington Street	1. Crossing Washington Street 2. Crossing Mill Street
2017	Mill Street/ Ellicott Street	1. Crossing Ellicott Street 2. Crossing Mill Street
2018	Mill Street/Union Street	1. Crossing Mill Street (impacts parking)
2019	Washington Street (near Occoquan Heights)	Crosswalk connection at safe location
2019	West End of Mill Street	Crossing Mill Street at Mill House Museum
2020	Union Street/Commerce Street	Crosswalk existing, update to meet current standards

2021	Commerce Street/Ellicott Street	Crosswalk existing, update to meet current standards
2022	Commerce/Washington Street	Crosswalk existing, update to meet current standards

Recommended Action Items for Sidewalks:

- i. It is recommended that the Town conduct a community planning project to identify streetscaping and sidewalk opportunities. Such planning shall include intersection improvements to install crosswalks and increase pedestrian safety and circulation.
- ii. The Town shall continue to improve and expand sidewalks to preserve downtown historical character. Pedestrian access serves as the life-line of commerce and daily living activities for residents and visitors alike.
- iii. Improve pedestrian circulation facilities so as to decrease automobile reliance.
- iv. Planning for the Riverwalk shall be finalized and a revenue stream identified to complete the project in coordination with property owners.
- v. Designated transportation pick-up and drop-off locations for public school and private transport should be considered as part of the overall Town strategy.

Gateways

Major gateways to the Town include Commerce Street, Washington Street, Mill Street, Poplar Lane and Tanyard Hill Road to Union Street. These “gateways” are an important element of Town design and serve to announce to visitors that they are entering a unique and special place. As stated previously, it is the Town’s policy that the Tanyard Hill Road gateway be preserved in a rural state that provides a glimpse of how an early traveler might have viewed the Town. It also serves as a cherished Town woodland buffer.

Recommended Action Items for Gateways:

- i. The Town should conduct a community study to improve, expand and improve the use of brick sidewalks to the Town center. The study should also incorporate streetscaping, beautification, and woodland protection.
- ii. The Town should continue to safeguard and improve Town gateways as they are of great importance to community business growth. Important consideration should be placed on the protection and preservation of gateways as they serve to affirm the Town’s historical and environmental characteristics.
- iii. It is highly recommended that the Town improve communication and planning with Fairfax County and Prince William County in an effort to protect Occoquan gateways from development decisions that counteract the Town’s goals. Distinct consideration should be given to the expansion of our Town boundaries to better safeguard Town Gateways in a way that meets the needs of residents and overall planning.
- ~~iii.~~
- ~~iv. The Town will pursue designation of Tanyard Hill Road as a State scenic byway as one way of preserving its character.~~

v.iv. The Town should plan in its CIP for how to implement and finance improvements to the Town’s gateways.

Emergency Evacuation Planning

The Town of Occoquan should continue to partner with regional agencies to plan and prepare for emergency situations that may impact the town or region. Currently, the Town actively participates in the planning and implementation of the following emergency plans, which are on file at Town Hall.

Table No. 6: Emergency Plans

Plan Name	Lead Agency	Impact/Purpose	Town Role
Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan – Update Underway in 2016	NVRC/Fairfax County	Maintain Eligibility for FEMA Funding – Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program	Participating Locality; Under Prince William County
Upper and Lower Occoquan Dams Emergency Action Plan	Fairfax Water	Emergency response/alert to Dam Failure	Participating Locality; Emergency Response for Evacuation and Notification
Emergency Action Plan – Occoquan Arts and Crafts Show	Town of Occoquan	Emergency Response to emergency incidences at semi-annual Craft Show	Lead Locality; partnership with Prince William County

CHAPTER SIX

ECONOMIC VITALITY AND DIVERSITY

Goal

To promote proactive and sustainable economic development and redevelopment actions in the Occoquan Business and Historic District that respect the district's unique character, balances residential density, and protects its ecological setting, while encouraging a diversity of economic activities in selected target areas of Occoquan.

Overview

A Vibrant Town Center

The economy of Occoquan remains strong as it continues to experience growth, as evidenced by meals and sales tax revenues, in addition to building and zoning activities. The boutiques, shops, eateries and services, as well as many community events located within the downtown area perpetually draw tourists and local citizens alike who are attracted by the unique character and ambiance of the Town.



Figure 12 Town Businesses on Mill Street, 2015

~~In July of 2015, the Town of Occoquan resumed administration of the building official service after a three-year period of using the services of Prince William County. As of May 10, 2016, building permits generated approximately \$14,000 in revenue for the Town. In comparison, in FY 2012, building permits generated \$5,412 in revenue. Part of the current activity in building official permitting is related to rehabilitation of existing buildings and the development of the new River Mill Park, set to open in the summer of 2016.~~

Meals tax and business license revenues also indicate a healthy and vibrant business community. By the end of FY 2016, the Town is estimating approximately \$165,000 in collected meals tax revenues. In comparison to FY 2015 meals tax actuals, not including the increase of one cent in the meals tax rate for FY 2016, meals tax revenues experienced a five percent (5%) increase in FY 2016. In addition, self-reported sales figures on both meals tax forms and business licenses are trending upward reflecting a healthy business community.

Another indicator of continued growth in the Town is the increased value of assessments of taxable property by Prince William County. A combination of increased property values and new construction have resulted in a taxable base of \$185,451,000 in 2016, up from \$182,345,500

in 2015, a difference of \$3,105,500 or two percent. In 2001, property values totaled \$75,047,800. This represents a 147% increase.

Since the early 1990s, the Town has seen significant growth in all areas – growing from approximately 350 residents to over 1,000 today, a bustling and robust business community, and an engaged and active citizenry.

Commercial Areas

In the early 1990s, the Town Council reduced the Town’s Real Estate Tax Rate from \$0.25 per \$100 of assessed value to \$.05 per \$100 of assessed value and utilized the revenue generated from the semi-annual craft shows to supplement the Town’s Operating Fund. Later Councils recognized that this fiscal policy did not provide the public with an accurate picture of the revenue stream required to sustain basic operations, and that 24% of the Town’s total revenue depends upon four days of good weather and eager volunteers. Therefore, the Town Council has reduced its dependence on the revenue generated from the craft shows to fund its operating budget and has focused on using those sources to fund capital projects including deferred maintenance, road improvements, building and historical maintenance, sidewalk and pedestrian projects, and other long-term, high-cost projects. This has allowed the Town to avoid incurring long-term debt and manage its infrastructure maintenance and planned enhancements.

A majority of the Town’s revenue for its Operating Fund is generated through taxes, service fees and licenses which fund the town’s day-to-day services ~~and~~ programs ~~and~~ ~~special events.~~ ~~The~~ ~~net~~ funds generated from the ~~semi-annual~~ Arts and Crafts Show ~~and other town events~~ support the Town’s Ten Year Capital Improvement Plan, which is reviewed and adopted annually during the budget process.

As part of its Operating Fund, the Town of Occoquan provides public safety, public works, trash and recycling services, storm water management, ~~Building Official and permitting~~, business licensing, ~~community events and~~ parks management, and maintenance services. Residents of the Town of Occoquan also pay Real Estate Taxes to Prince William County since Town residents also receive the benefit of being a County resident and are able to use most services provided by the County. Some shared services include public safety, such as police and fire, schools, ~~libraries, health and human services~~, emergency management and parks and recreation.



Figure 13 Occoquan Arts and Crafts Show, 2015

Issues facing the Town with regard to economy and finances largely center on (1) maintaining and expanding a mix of retailers that will make the Town a destination for visitors and (2) whether the ~~Spring and Fall craft shows~~ town's events produce adequate revenue for the Town to implement and maintain various capital improvement projects.

The sound barrier wall installed along the Route 123 during the construction of the bridge in 2007 eliminated the spectacular vista of the Town that had served to draw potential visitors in for a look. Since then, the Town has invested in upgrading signage, enhancing landscaping, partnering with the Occoquan Business Partners (formerly Occoquan Business Guild) ~~within Town and at the Town entrances, enhanced landscaping at the Town entrances,~~ and working closely with Discover Prince William and Manassas to promote and advertise the Town of Occoquan. In addition, ~~the Town recently hired an~~ the town's Events and Community Development Director, ~~who will~~ plans and implements ~~the a~~ marketing strategy for the Town and works in partnership with tourism and business organizations in promotion of the Town. The Town also hosts the ~~semi-annual~~ Arts and Crafts Show, which draws ~~more than 10,000~~ thousands of people to the Town. With the addition of the new River Mill Park, the Town now has a venue to host community events such as mMovie nNights, tTrivia nNights, and €concerts that further highlight and promote Occoquan as a year-round destination. While the Town has closed In 2020, tthe Discover Prince William and Manassas Visitors center closed, and in 2021 the County constructed a Visitor Kiosk near the Mill House Museum. The Town has leased the former visitor center building for a commercial use, it will seek a partnership with an appropriate private commercial business to who will maintain the building and keep the public restrooms open at that end of the Town. With the addition of the new River Mill Park, the Town now has a venue to host community events and further highlight and promote Occoquan as a year-round destination. Finally, the Discover Prince William and Manassas Visitors Center is within the Town of Occoquan, which draws folks traveling on I-95 into our community. In order to continue to promote Occoquan and support its business community, emphasis must continue to be placed on establishing and enhancing community and regional partnerships, and developing a comprehensive marketing plan.

Economic Catalyst Sites

Maintaining and expanding a mix of retailers that will appeal to and draw in outside visitors is also of concern to the Town as well as the Town's business community. In considering what types of businesses to encourage, the Town must maintain the delicate balance between a thriving commercial sector and keeping a small town atmosphere. In addition, the Town must consider developing programs or partnering with organizations to provide assistance and guidance for small businesses in order to provide the current business community with the tools and support necessary to be successful.

Main Street America is one of the most powerful economic revitalization tools in the nation. Acceptance into the program will enable Occoquan to maintain its historic small town charm while building its economic vitality. The focal point of MSA is to produce a complete and

sustainable community revitalization. The four pillars of the program are: economic restructuring, design, promotion, and organization.

Historic Preservation and Appearance

Many of the issues and ideas presented in this Comprehensive Plan will require additional fiscal resources. For instance, grants and reimbursable programs for historic preservation, streetscaping, marketing and environmental protection are generally available through Federal, State, and County organizations. However, these grants often require a sizable match from the Town. According to the results of a 2002 Plan Survey, 38% of respondents would pay



more in taxes to provide the match for State and Federal grant applications while 27% indicated that they would not be willing and 35% indicated that they didn't know. The results indicate that there are a large number of people who could be persuaded one way or another. On the other hand, several results provide a clearer picture of how residents might feel if increased revenues were put towards specific projects. 61% of

respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay additional taxes towards the completion of an Occoquan Riverwalk. However, only 10% and 20% of respondents would be willing to pay additional taxes for increased Town staff or police protection, respectively.

Studies⁴ within Main Street America prove that the smallest investment in the exterior of a property has measurable impacts on business sales as well as on the ability of a business to attract new customers. The vast majority of businesses participating in Main Street America see a ten percent increase in the number of first-time customers. An even larger number (90%) experienced increased overall sales, with an average increase of 20 percent.

In previous iterations of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, there has been a request to identify funding opportunities to rebuild some of the significant early buildings that helped start the mercantile basis of the original settlement of Occoquan. It is recommended that funding should be sought to expand, promote, protect and enhance current historical landmarks including the Mill House Museum/Merchant's Mill, and Rockledge Mansion, as well as invest in the Occoquan Riverwalk project in an effort to bring the Town back to its river-oriented origins.

Main Street America Program

The National Trust for Historic Preservation offers an amazing opportunity for the revitalization of commercialized Historic Districts in its [one-of-a-kind](#) Main Street America Program. The Program currently celebrates over three decades of success thanks to the multitude of towns that have entered the program - towns just like Occoquan where the requirements of the Program are already in place. The town's rich history, plethora of documented historic buildings and sites, successful mixed-use commercial and residential historic district, and strong community involvement make Occoquan the perfect candidate for

⁴ Main Street America, Measuring the Economic Impact of Storefront Improvements, May 28, 2015

Main Street America. The benefits of the Program are plentiful: continued revitalization of our mixed-use Historic District, furthering economic vitality, enhancing the town's design, and attracting a new genre of tourists. ~~It is recommended to apply for admission into the Main Street America Program during the next round of applications for the 2017/18 acceptance session.~~

Because government agencies cannot pursue ~~accreditation~~ accreditation with the Mainstreet America Program, it will be ~~necessary~~ necessary to identify someone to establish a nonprofit to pursue this designation. The local government may provide funding to get the ~~initiative~~ initiative started, but it would then need to become an independent organization.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Goal

To provide for the harmonious use of land that meets the needs of Occoquan, while enhancing the area's environmental quality.

Overview and Vision

The Virginia Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act requires the Town to establish a long-range vision focused upon protecting and improving the quality of the Town's creeks, streams and the Occoquan River, as well as the natural habitats of the Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River that are impacted by these tributaries. The Act also requires the Town to establish goals, policies, and action plans based on an inventory and analysis of the Town's natural environment to guide the Town as it continues to grow and develop as a community.

The Town of Occoquan is, therefore, committed to the following principles:

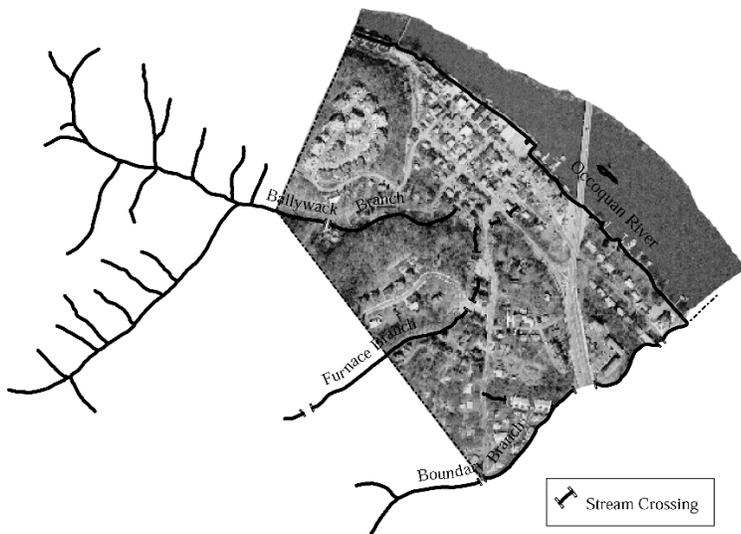
- Avoidance of development on sensitive natural features such as steep slopes.
- Reduction of nonpoint sources of pollution from impervious surfaces adjacent to the River.
- Institution of programs in public education, wildlife habitat preservation, and pollution prevention.
- Enforcement of ordinances such as the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance.
- Protection of all perennial streams in accordance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area designation.
- Creation and Enforcement of other Management Regulations.

Chesapeake Bay and the River Connection

All of the waterways within the Town of Occoquan, including its creeks, drainage ditches, and storm drains and culverts are part of a larger Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. Land use activities within the Town can greatly impact the health of not only local waterways but also the Chesapeake Bay. Tremendous growth in the Chesapeake Bay watershed has led to the significant decline of Bay water quality and habitat. Today, once-plentiful aquatic species, including sturgeon, striped bass, oyster, blue crab, and many species of waterfowl have reached critically low numbers. In addition, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), which serves as food and habitat for many aquatic species, declined sharply during the 1960s and 1970s as a result of increased pollution from development of the surrounding watershed.

In 1983, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency signed the Chesapeake Bay Agreement and created the Chesapeake Bay Program to help find ways to restore the Bay. In Virginia, the most widely recognized result of this agreement is the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (Code of Virginia, §62.1-44.15:67 et seq.). The Town of Occoquan is one of 84 Virginia localities subject to the Act. The Town implemented the Act through its Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance in June, 1991. Additionally, the Virginia Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act requires the Town to establish a long-range vision for how to protect and restore the Town’s creeks and streams as well as the natural habitats of the Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River. The corresponding regulations (9VAC25-830 et seq.) require the Town to incorporate water quality protection into its local comprehensive plan by establishing goals, policies, and action plans based on an inventory and analysis of the Town’s environmental conditions which will serve as a guide as the Town grows and develops. Therefore, it is the intent of the Town to:

- restore impaired streams that are capable of supporting diverse aquatic habitats;
- protect streams which currently support aquatic life from the effects of improper development and other sources of pollution; and,
- provide residents with a wide-range of opportunities to interact with and become stewards of their natural environment.

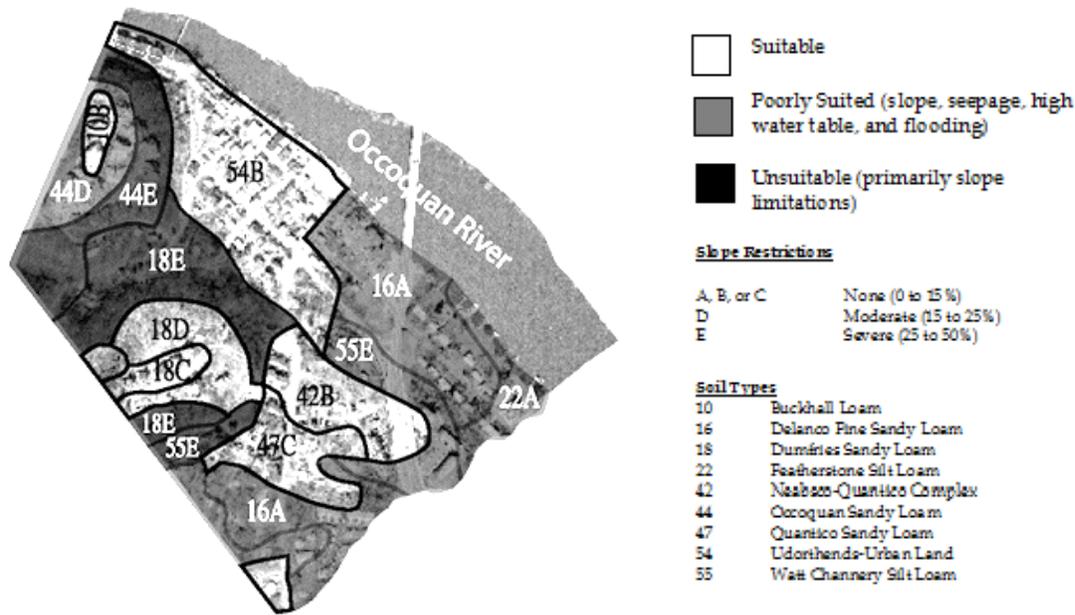


Map No. 7 Town of Occoquan Streams

Before establishing water quality goals, policies, and action plans, it is important to have a detailed understanding of the Town’s natural environment along with the existing programs and policies designed to protect water quality. Gathering background information is important to ensure that adequate data is available for making environmentally sound decisions. The following sections have been pulled together to serve as an information base to understand the Town of Occoquan’s natural environment which will be used to better inform land use decisions.

Water Quality, Drainage and Stormwater Management

The purpose of incorporating water quality protection into local comprehensive plans is to acknowledge what is already being done to help protect water quality and to provide a framework for further reducing the impact of future land usage on water quality. The Town’s efforts to improve local water quality also help improve the larger Chesapeake Bay.



Map No. 8 Natural Constraints to Development

Water pollution resulting from urban areas can generally be reduced through the application of four guiding principles. These include:

- minimizing the impervious surface area necessary to accommodate a desired land use;
- preserving existing vegetation in the landscape during development to the maximum extent practicable;
- challenging and changing the human behavior that results in pollution through public education; and,
- controlling pollution that cannot be reduced through change in human behavior by employing technology or by installing stormwater management pollution reduction facilities (also known as best management practices, or BMPs).

While much of Occoquan has been urbanized for some time, there are still many opportunities for the Town to actively reduce pollution. Through a combination of creating new development that accounts for water quality and natural habitats, retrofitting existing development with water quality controls when possible, and providing the tools for residents and businesses to become better stewards of the environment, the Town can make real contributions to the protection of local water resources and the Chesapeake Bay.

Sensitive Natural Resources and Constraints to Development

Much of the water quality degradation suffered in the Chesapeake Bay watershed is a direct result of development on, or the destruction of, sensitive land resources. Many environmentally sensitive areas, if improperly managed during development, can have significant negative impacts on water quality within and outside the Town. Additionally, many natural habitats such as mature vegetative cover, wetlands, and forested areas provide a natural filter for pollutants generated through natural and anthropogenic sources and need

to be protected and preserved. In the Town of Occoquan, sensitive natural resources include soils with high potential for erosion, areas of steep slopes, floodplains, and forested habitat corridors. The Town strives to foster a community that will continue to grow, develop and remain economically viable, however environmental constraints to development must be considered to prevent degradation of local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay.

Most of the Town’s floodplain has been developed for many years – as it serves as the interface between the Town and the Occoquan River. Development within the floodplain has not been without its consequences. Significant rainfall has resulted in flooding and property damage along the Town’s waterfront areas. The official floodplain, which is defined as the 100-year flood level, is designated on the federal Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). Development within the floodplain is controlled by the Town’s Floodplain Management Ordinance.

The erosion potential of a soil, which is a factor of soil structure and slope, is the primary soil limitation in the Town. Approximately 41% of the Town has only slight erosion potential while another 10% of the Town has moderate erosion potential. Approximately 49% of the Town has severe erosion potential. Steep slopes, or slopes on which development is inappropriate, are considered to be those greater than 20%. Fully 27% of the Town’s land area has slopes between 25-50% which are considered severe. Another 15% of the Town has moderate slopes between 15-25% and may require special engineering precautions. Approximately 58% of the Town has no slope restrictions (slopes ranging from 0 to 15%) and it is these areas where development is most appropriately concentrated. ~~Because 49% of the Town has severe erosion potential, an April 7, 2021 DEQ Chesapeake Bay Preservation Action Program Compliance Review Report recommends, "that the Town reference a more recent study (or studies) in order to provide current and up to date information regarding the potential for shoreline erosion along the Occoquan River, streambank erosion along the Town’s interior streams and all other areas within the Town subject to potential erosion."~~

Artificial stabilization in the form of bulkheads exist along the Town’s shoreline. According to the Tidal Shoreline Erosion in Northern Virginia report (NVRC, 1992), some of the areas along the Occoquan River have experienced moderate (less than 3 feet/year) to severe (greater than 3 feet/year) erosion. The report also notes that shorelines of some of the low lying areas have changed as a result of shifts in marsh and beach shoreline. Additional investigations may be necessary to further evaluate susceptibility of shorelines and streambanks to erosion.

Table No. 7: Soil Characteristics

Soil	Slope	Flooding Frequency	Runoff Class	Depth to Water Table (inches)	Natural Drainage Class	Depth to restrictive feature
Buckhall Loam (10B)	2-7%	None	Medium	80+	Well drained	80+
Delanco Fine Sandy Loam (16A)	0-4%	None	Medium	12-30	Moderately well drained	80+
Dumfries Sandy Loam (18C)	7-15%	None	Low	80+	Well drained	80+

Dumfries Sandy Loam (18 D)	15-25%	None	Medium	80+	Well drained	80+
Dumfries Sandy (18 E)	25-50%	None	Medium	80+	Well drained	80+
Featherstone Silt Loam (22A)	0-1%	Frequent	Low	≤0	Very poorly drained	80+
Neabsco-Quantico Complex (42 B)	2-7%	None	Very high	12-30	Moderately well drained	14-30 to fragipan
Occoquan Sandy Loam (44D)	7-25%	None	Low	80+	Well drained	40-60 to paralithic bedrock
Occoquan Sandy Loam (44E)	25-50%	None	Medium	80+	Well drained	40-60 to paralithic bedrock
Quantico Sandy Loam (47C)	7-15%	None	Medium	80+	Well drained	80+
Udorthends- Urban Land (54B)	0-7%	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable
Watt Channery Silt Loam (55E)	25-50%	None	High	80+	Somewhat excessively drained	20-40 to paralithic bedrock

Source: Soil Survey, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Available online at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

Septic tank absorption fields are areas in which effluent from a septic tank is distributed into the soil through either subsurface tiles or a perforated pipe. Septic tank absorption field ratings were collected from data on the United States Department of Agriculture’s Web Soil Survey. Only soil depths between 24 to 60 inches are evaluated. Table 8 below shows both verbal and numerical ratings. “Not limited” indicates that the soil has features that are very favorable for septic tank use. “Somewhat limited” indicates that the soil has features that are moderately favorable and may have limitations that can be overcome or minimized through special planning, design, or installation. “Very limited” indicates that the soil has one or more features that are unfavorable and generally cannot be overcome without major soil reclamation, special design, or expensive installation procedures. The numerical ratings indicate the severity of the individual limitations with 1.00 indicating the greatest negative impact on the use and 0.00 indicating the soil feature is not a limitation. As noted in the table below, none of the land within the Town is rated as being favorable for septic tank use. Only one section of the Town is composed of soils that are moderately favorable for septic tank use (Buckhall Loam 10B). The majority of soils within the Town are rated as unfavorable for septic tank use. It would not be recommended to install septic tanks in the area of the Town composed of Udorthends-Urban Land (54B) which has not been rated.

Currently, there are no known active septic fields within the town. Furthermore, the town's Subdivision Ordinance requires connection to the public sewer system and septic tanks will not be permitted.

Table No. 8: Septic Tank Absorption Fields

Soil	Slope	Septic Tank Absorption Field Rating	Component Name (percent)	Rating Reasons (numeric values)
Buckhall Loam (10B)	2-7%	Somewhat Limited	Buckhall (80%)	Slow water movement (0.50)
Delanco Fine Sandy Loam (16A)	0-4%	Very Limited	Delanco (80%)	Depth to Saturated Zone (1.00)
				Slow Water Movement (1.00)
				Flooding (0.40)
			Hatboro (5%)	Flooding (1.00)
				Depth to saturated zone (1.00)
				Seepage, bottom layer (1.00)
				Slow water movement (0.50)
Dumfries Sandy Loam (18C)	7-15%	Very Limited	Dumfries (75%)	Seepage, bottom layer (1.00)
				Slope (0.37)
Dumfries Sandy Loam (18 D)	15-25%	Very Limited	Dumfries (75%)	Slope (1.00)
				Seepage, bottom layer (1.00)
Dumfries Sandy (18 E)	25-50%	Very Limited	Dumfries (75%)	Slope (1.00)
				Seepage, bottom layer (1.00)
Featherstone Silt Loam (22A)	0-1%	Very Limited	Featherstone (80%)	Flooding (1.00)
				Ponding (1.00)
				Depth to saturated zone (1.00)
				Slow water movement (0.50)
Neabsco-Quantico Complex (42 B)	2-7%	Very Limited	Neabsco (45%)	Depth to cemented pan (1.00)
				Depth to saturated zone (1.00)
				Seepage, bottom layer (1.00)
			Quantico (35%)	Seepage, bottom layer (1.00)
				Slow water movement (0.50)
Occoquan Sandy Loam (44D)	7-25%	Very Limited	Occoquan (80%)	Slope (1.00)
				Seepage, bottom layer (1.00)

Soil	Slope	Septic Tank Absorption Field Rating	Component Name (percent)	Rating Reasons (numeric values)
				Depth to bedrock (0.62)
Occoquan Sandy Loam (44E)	25-50%	Very Limited	Occoquan (80%)	Slope (1.00)
				Seepage, bottom layer (1.00)
				Depth to bedrock (0.62)
Quantico Sandy Loam (47C)	7-15%	Very Limited	Occoquan (75%)	Seepage, bottom layer (1.00)
				Slow water movement (0.50)
				Slope (0.37)
Udorthends- Urban Land (54B)	0-7%	Not Rated	Urban land (50%)	
			Udorthends (40%)	
Watt Channery Silt Loam (55E)	25-50%	Very Limited	Watt (80%)	Slope (1.00)
				Depth to bedrock (1.00)
				Seepage, bottom layer (1.00)

Source: Soil Survey, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Available online at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

Within the Occoquan area, forested areas, stream buffers, and wildlife habitat corridors are quickly disappearing. Approximately one quarter (25%) of the Town’s land area is still covered by woodlands. Much of the woodland area is located in the western portion of the Town in steep terrain areas that are unsuitable for development. The Ballywack Branch drainage area is located within the west of the Town and remains largely forested. Additionally, stream buffers still exist around Ballywack and Boundary Branch. These areas are essential for the protection of water quality and aquatic habitats. Land use decisions must consider the need to preserve them to prevent further degradation to water quality.

Existing and Potential Sources of Pollution

Pollution can come from a variety of sources and can have many different impacts such as surface and groundwater contamination, poor air quality, and aesthetic degradation of the landscape. The quality of water running in local streams and rivers is one of the most important indicators of the health of a watershed. Protecting the quality of surface water is a major challenge faced by many urbanized localities. While a certain level of pollution from development, transportation, and commercial and industrial activities is inevitable, pollution must be minimized to protect against environmental health hazards and preserve the ecological balance.

Due to the Town’s relatively small size and absence of major industry, existing and potential sources of pollution are easier to identify. Much of these pollutants are characterized as nonpoint source pollutants which are generated from many diffuse sources. Nonpoint source

pollution results from stormwater runoff which picks up and carries pollutants that collect on impervious surfaces such as roadways, sidewalks, and rooftops into waterways. These impervious surfaces prevent stormwater from soaking into the ground. Land development often increases the amount of impervious surface, resulting in increased stormwater runoff and often increased pollution to waterways.

Since the Town of Occoquan lies within the Occoquan Watershed which drains to the Potomac and eventually the Chesapeake Bay, minimizing nonpoint source pollution is an important initiative. Nonpoint source pollution within the Town most commonly results from residential activities, commercial activities and parking areas, waterfront activities, and atmospheric deposition. Nonpoint source pollution within Occoquan can be reduced by minimizing impervious areas of a development site, maintaining open space, preserving indigenous vegetation, and utilizing Best Management Practices (BMPs) designed to reduce stormwater runoff and filter out phosphorus, sediment and other harmful pollutants. Public education and outreach initiatives can also be utilized to help inform residents and businesses about how their activities may impact nonpoint source pollution and surface water quality. Increasing public awareness can help citizens take actions to reduce their impacts. The Town's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance and Erosion and Sediment Ordinance set forth performance standards aimed at reducing nonpoint source pollution and protecting water quality and delineated preservation areas.

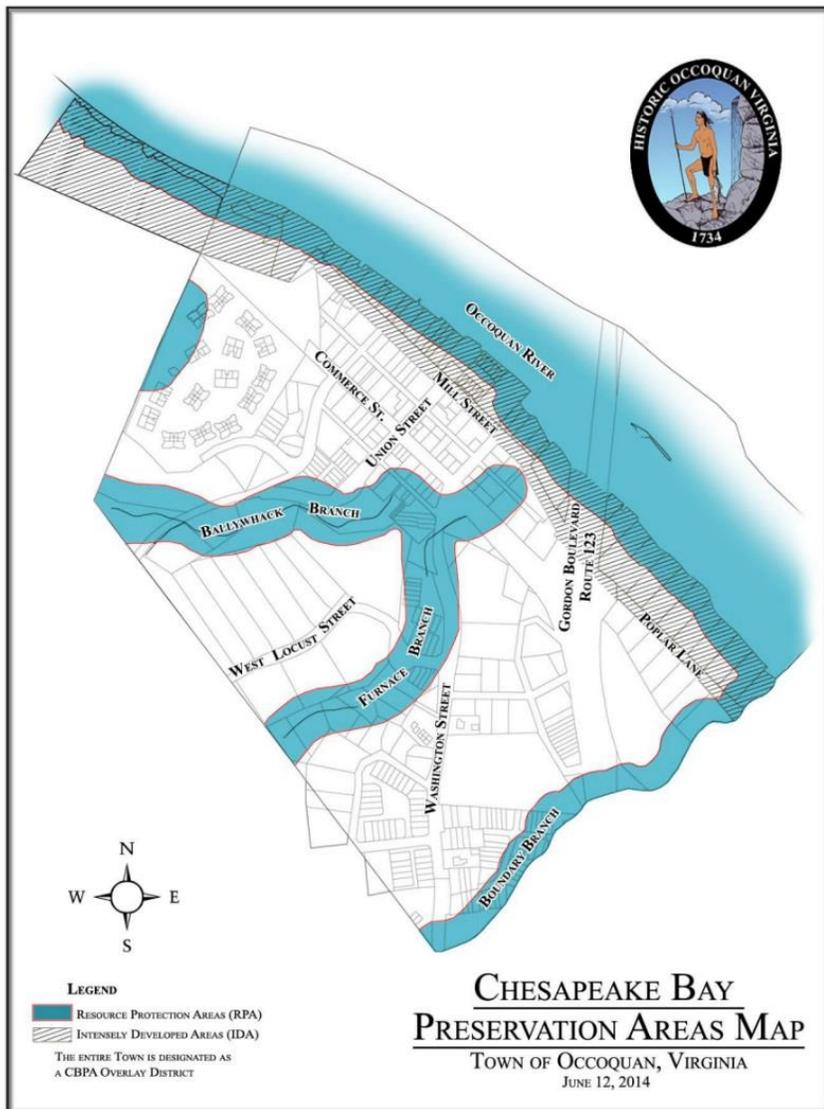
Fisheries

The Occoquan River is an important feature of the Town as it provides recreation, numerous environmental benefits, and enhances the aesthetic quality of the surrounding area. There are a few locations where citizens access the river to fish however the Town does not have any designated public or commercial fisheries.

Environmental Programs and Regulations

In response to State and Federal mandates the Town has adopted and implemented a number of ordinances designed to protect and preserve both the local natural environment, particularly the identified sensitive natural resources, and the larger Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance



Map No. 9 Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area

The Occoquan River is an integral part of the Town providing natural habitat for aquatic life in addition to recreational and aesthetic opportunities. The impaired listing of the river for fecal coliform and estuarine bioassessments and the concern of further degradation if land use and development activities are not properly managed is a primary environmental challenge recognized by the Town. The Occoquan River flows into the Potomac River which ultimately drains to the Chesapeake Bay. The Commonwealth has required all localities within Tidewater Virginia to designate "Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas" within which land uses are restricted or managed and water quality measures are provided to protect the Chesapeake Bay, and other waters of Virginia, from degradation resulting from runoff pollution. In accordance

with that requirement, Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas have been mapped for the Town of Occoquan. The mapping of these areas includes Resource Protection Areas (RPAs) and Resource Management Areas (RMAs) based upon a natural resource inventory which included a review of U.S Geological Survey (USGS) topo-quadrangles, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory Maps, U.S. Soil Conservation Service soil surveys and other technical resources. The Town's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance implements the Virginia Chesapeake Bay Act. The primary purpose of the ordinance is to prevent any increase in nonpoint source pollution from new development and to reduce at least 10% of nonpoint source pollution in redevelopment. The ordinance sets forth a program to protect the delineated RPA and RMAs. For example, the Ordinance requires that a 100-foot vegetated buffer area be preserved along all RPA features and tributary streams, and in some cases, reestablished if one does not presently exist or is in poor condition. These buffer requirements are relaxed in areas identified by the Town as Intensely Developed Areas (IDAs) out of

recognition of the difficulty in reestablishing full buffers in these areas due to the nature of development. The IDAs in the Town include all areas to the north of Mill Street and Poplar Lane.

RPAs are lands at or near the shoreline that have intrinsic value due to the ecological and biological processes they perform which benefit water quality or are sensitive to impacts that may cause significant degradation to the quality of State waters. The RPA designation in the the Town includes tidal wetlands, nontidal wetlands connected by surface flow and contiguous to tidal wetlands or tributary streams, tidal shores, and a 100-foot vegetated buffer area located adjacent to and landward of all previously listed components and along both sides of any water body with perennial flow, as lands protected by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance. In practical terms, the RPA includes a 100-foot wide strip of land landward of the Occoquan River shoreline, buffers around Ballywhack Branch, Furnace Branch, Boundary Branch and a small area in the northwest corner of Town, between Commerce Street and the western end of Ballywhack Branch.~~In practical terms, the RPA includes a 100-foot wide strip of land landward of the Occoquan River shoreline.~~

RMAs include land types that, if improperly developed, have the potential for causing significant water quality degradation or for diminishing the functional value of the RPA. All lands in the Town not included in a RPA or the IDA constitute the RMA. This is because all stormwater from development within the Town is flushed directly into natural or man-made channels and then directly to the Occoquan River. Development and redevelopment within the RMA must meet several performance criteria to minimize the impact on water quality. The performance criteria establish policy guidelines for the Town in decisions to grant, deny, or modify requests to rezone, subdivide, or use and develop land within the RMAs and RPAs. Performance criteria include preventing an increase in nonpoint source pollution as a result of new development based on a Town-wide average, decreasing nonpoint source pollution by 10% during redevelopment, minimizing land disturbance during development, maximizing the preservation of indigenous vegetation, and minimizing impervious surface area for a desired land use.

Urban water quality issues are complex and will require the Town to commit to a watershed management approach that utilizes both structural (urban BMPs) and nonstructural (establishment of stream buffers, public education, etc.) water quality management techniques to address a range of sources and types of pollution. The Town recognizes the importance of minimizing adverse impacts associated with land use and development on water quality, and thus in support of this chapter's goal, the Town has enumerated several policies for implementation which are detailed in Chapter 9.

Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance

The Town's Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance (E&S Ordinance) implements the Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Law but also supports the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. The purpose of the ordinance is to conserve the land, water, and other natural

resources of the Town through the establishment of requirements to prevent and control erosion and sedimentation that results from land disturbing activities. The E&S ordinance requires proposed land disturbing activities greater than 2,500 square feet within Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas to submit an erosion and sediment control plan to the Town.

Floodplain Management Ordinance

The Town's Floodplain Management Ordinance designates floodplain districts and regulates uses, activities, and development within those areas. The Town's Floodplain Management Ordinance applies to all areas subject to inundation by waters of the one-hundred-year flood (floods that have a one percent likelihood of occurring each year, although the flood may occur in any one year). Floodplain management districts include the Floodway District (defined as that portion of the floodplain capable of carrying the waters of a 100-year flood without increasing the water surface elevation of the flood more than one foot at any point) and the Flood-Fringe District (defined as the area of the one-hundred-year floodplain not included in the Floodway District). The basis for the delineation of these districts is the Flood Insurance Study (FIS) for the Town of Occoquan prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), with a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)-Federal Insurance Administration, dated January 5, 1995. ~~-or as revised.~~ A revision to the 1995 FIRM was proposed by FEMA, dated September 30, 2020, with a tentative adoption date of 2022.

The primary purpose of the Town's Floodplain Management Ordinance is to prevent the loss of life and property, the creation of health and safety hazards, the disruption of commerce and government services, the extraordinary and unnecessary expenditure of public funds for flood protection and relief, and the impairment of the tax base by:

- Regulating uses, activities, and development which, alone, or in combination with other existing or future uses, activities, and development, will cause unacceptable increases in flood heights, velocities, and frequencies;
- Restricting or prohibiting certain uses, activities, and development from locating within areas subject to flooding; and,
- Requiring all those uses, activities, and developments that do occur in flood-prone areas to be protected and/or flood proofed against flooding and flood damage.

Appropriate floodplain management can also have numerous beneficial environmental impacts. Uses, activities, and development may occur within a floodplain district only upon the issuance of a special permit as outlined in Chapter 14 of the Town Code. If the proposed development is within a Floodway District or a Flood-fringe, the applicant must have a detailed hydrologic and hydraulic analysis performed to ensure that other properties will not be placed at undue risk as a result of development in the floodplain. This condition helps to prevent significant alteration to the floodplain which might lead to water quality degradation or changes in the ecological balance of the floodplain. Other requirements for development within the floodplain will depend on whether the proposed development is within a Floodway District or a Flood-Fringe District. The Floodplain Management Ordinance also specifies

design criteria for sanitary sewer, water, and drainage facilities, along with other utilities to ensure that the potential for water pollution or unsanitary conditions during flood events is minimized.

Site Plan Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance

The Town's Site Plan Ordinance (Chapter ~~15513~~ of the Town Code) and Subdivision Ordinance (Chapter ~~15614~~ of the Town Code) contain several provisions aimed at protecting the environment and preventing inappropriate development on land with unsuitable characteristics for the proposed use. The Town's Subdivision Ordinance stipulates that public sewage facilities must be extended by a sub divider to all lots within a subdivision and that septic tanks are not permitted (§14-21D.)

Public Education Programs

While the Town does not directly run any environmentally-related education programs, the Prince William Cooperative Extension (PWCE) and the Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District (PWSWCD) have developed a number of programs and publications to support environmental stewardship. These services are available to Town residents as citizens of the County.

The PWCE provides educational opportunities through field days and seminars, demonstration lawns, and one-on-one visits from trained "Master Gardener" volunteers. For the past several years, the PWCE has conducted a water quality program aimed at reducing the excessive use of lawn fertilizers and pesticides through proper lawn care techniques. Utilizing the PWCE's water quality program to reach Town residents may help to reduce nonpoint source pollution generated from yard care. The PWSWCD provides a number of services, including public education and ecology workshops, and works with local residents on reforestation and conservation projects.

Trees and Landscaping

Remaining forested areas, stream buffers, and wildlife habitat corridors are quickly disappearing in the Occoquan area. Preserving these areas is essential for the protection of water quality and aquatic habitats. Moreover, the area is a designated Bird Sanctuary requiring particular attention to preserving shoreline wooded areas. Fully a quarter (25%) of the Town's land area is still covered by woodland, and most yards and streets have individual trees. Most of the wooded area of the Town is in its western portions in steep terrain areas which are not favorable for development. Significantly, the Ballywack Branch watershed area to the west of the Town is still largely forested. Significant stream buffers still exist around Ballywack Branch and Boundary Branch. Preserving these areas is important not just for the ecological benefits but also for the aesthetic value they can provide.

Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling

The Town provides weekly refuse removal and collection of recyclable materials. Both residents and businesses receive collection services from the town on Wednesday of each week. In addition, special picks ups and yard debris is also collected on a weekly basis.

Occoquan's waste reduction efforts are centered on a residential and business curbside recycling program. The Town's recycling program is single-stream, meaning that all recyclable materials including ~~glass,~~ plastics, newspapers, cardboard, magazines, and cans, and other recyclable materials, can be comingled and collected by our refuse contractor. The Town contributes to Prince William County's recycling rate, which during calendar year 201~~5~~9, was ~~33.7~~38.2 percent, exceeding Virginia's minimum requirement of 25 percent⁵.

The Town of Occoquan should continue to expand its recycling efforts and promote increased recycling with both its residents and businesses, as well as the Town's government. In 2017, the town began the process of replacing its aggregate refuse containers with new containers and added public recycling containers throughout the historic business district. Beginning in FY 2017, the Town will begin a three-year phase to replace its public refuse containers. During that process, ~~T~~the Town should continue to incorporate public recycling containers in an effort to further promote recycling in our public spaces and encourage good environmental stewardship to our residents, businesses and visitors. The Town should also seek to implement recycling standards for its businesses and government, such as participating in VML's Green Government Challenge, DEQ's Virginia Green program, or establishing its own Green Business Recognition Program that recognizes businesses who have received a Green Certification from a third party.

Green Building, Noise and Lighting

Today, many opportunities exist for constructing buildings with minimal impact on the environment. Insulation technology is much improved and it is possible to power buildings, both domestic and commercial, with substantially reduced reliance on fossil fuels. The efficiency of solar panels to generate electricity is improving rapidly. While the historic architecture of the Town should be preserved, newer more efficient construction designs should be encouraged.

~~Currently, the Town enjoys a relatively quiet and calming atmosphere, except during rush hours when cut-through commuter traffic continues to be a problem. The Town's Law Enforcement Division should exercise vigilance over excessive noise during their routine law enforcement activities, particularly during rush hour and around the times restaurants and bars are closing. In 2020, the Town added a permit process for Outdoor Amplified Sound and defined the time and distance parameters associated with the permit. revised and approved a comprehensive Noise Ordinance to clearly define what constituted a violation at the urging of~~

⁵ In 1989, the Virginia General Assembly adopted legislation that established a 25% recycling rate target for communities.

~~local law enforcement. Noise abatement ordinances must be enforced.~~ With more outdoor restaurant uses and outdoor music, the permit process ensures the resulting noise does not disturb the community.

The lighting throughout the Town is one of the key features contributing to its charm and is widely recognized throughout the area. Indeed, the original lamps in Town were powered by acetylene gas before town gas became available. While authentic gas lighting is expensive to maintain, efforts should be made to retain it, except at key intersections where adequate lighting (usually by electric lamps) should be the priority. The charm of traditional gas lamps notwithstanding, the possibility of replacing them with electric, architecturally tasteful replicas should be explored.

Fairfax Peak, a large indoor skiing facility, is planned to begin construction 2023 on the abandoned Lorton Landfill and is expected to open in 2024/2025. The facility is expected to bring increased traffic to the area and presents water runoff challenges to the Occoquan River that will necessitate mitigation. The facility may also create substantial light pollution that could impact the Town due to its proximity.

CHAPTER EIGHT

REGIONAL COORDINATION

Goal

To continue to build upon and enhance partnerships with Prince William and Fairfax Counties to generate a shared border area land use planning and zoning that reflects and advances Occoquan's vision for the future.

Overview and Vision

Historic Occoquan will work effectively with other agencies in the surrounding jurisdictions of Prince William and Fairfax Counties in order to meet present day needs and continually plan for the future. Occoquan recognizes that it does not operate in isolation – the town's infrastructure relies heavily on other entities, and it is impacted by the development of residential, commercial, and transportation systems in the surrounding region. The town will continually coordinate with the agencies concerning these issues in both Prince William County and Fairfax County in order to address a mutually beneficial growth management system that will not hinder the town's access for services nor its historically preserved community. Failing to plan in concert with Fairfax County and Prince William County may result in Occoquan's gateways being compromised by poor development decisions beyond the town's corporate limits.

Shared Border Area Plans – Prince William County

While residents enjoy significant control over many aspects of life in the immediate Town of Occoquan, development and transportation projects in surrounding Prince William County have the capacity to significantly affect the Town's quality of life. As a result, the Town must pay attention to potential development projects, and when appropriate, work with County officials and staff to ensure that impacts to the Town are minimal or even positive. Perhaps the two greatest issues with potential to impact the Town are (1) development that could reduce the existing forested and low-density residential buffer around much of the Town and (2) development or transportation projects that could increase cut-through traffic.

Part of the charm that attracts residents and visitors to Occoquan is that it has maintained a small town identity despite the fast pace of growth in surrounding Prince William County. Entering the Town from Tanyard Hill Road and Washington Street, one can still imagine how a turn-of-the-century traveler might have felt upon arriving at the Town from a long journey. While these low-density buffers have survived to today, it is important that the Town work with the County to ensure that these buffers are preserved for future generations. For the most part, this has been accomplished and development patterns have long been established. For instance, the forested area north of Tanyard Hill Road is protected by virtue of being a part of the larger Lake Ridge Residential Planned Community (RPD). Because much of Lake Ridge is

zoned as a unit, and because the area north of Tanyard Hill Road consists of steep slopes and Ballywack Branch, this area was preserved from development. Additionally, the Town made a profound declaration with regard to development of shared border areas in 2014 when it purchased 17.6 acres of property at the corner of Tanyard Hill and Old Bridge Roads. The property was at risk for development as office space and additional parking for an adjoining parcel, and presented a risk of increased cut-through traffic, increased stormwater run-off, and elimination of the scenic gateway into the Town of Occoquan. The Town placed the property in a conservation easement, thereby protecting it from development in perpetuity.

Although zoning in Prince William County surrounding the Town is well established, coordination and cooperation between the County and Town is important to ensure that any eventual development is compatible with the existing character of Occoquan. The Town has several options for strengthening this coordination with the County ranging from more frequent meetings between Town and County staff, to meetings between the Town Planning Commission and County Office of Planning staff, to the development of an “Occoquan Sector Plan” for inclusion in the County’s Comprehensive Plan. Such a sector plan could establish common community design themes, park and open space goals, and long-range land use goals.

Occoquan needs to maintain regular communication with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding our historic district, our many individual historic properties and landmarks, and the Main Street America Program. This coordination should also reveal the development of historic studies and research grants available for the town’s use. Communication on all of these fronts will produce a regular dialog and persistent reminder of Occoquan’s importance to the history of Virginia.

The Town of Occoquan will also maintain a relationship with VDOT in order to be involved in all future processes relating to multi-modal planning within and around our boundaries.

[Woodbridge Town Center](#)

[The IDI Group Companies and Boosalis Properties plan a \\$380 million mixed-use development that will include 160,000 square feet of retail space, restaurants, bars, grocery stores as well as 900 apartment units. ~~The planned development will be located~~ at the corner of Route 1 and Occoquan Road. While site plans have yet to be submitted, the project is expected to be built within the next five to ~~10~~ten years. The Town should monitor this development for risks and opportunities.](#)

[Shared Border Area Plans – Fairfax County](#)

Occoquan will work to promote a shared border interest with Fairfax County in regards to both the Occoquan River and the Lorton Workhouse Arts Center. Outreach should include (but not be limited to) the river’s beautification and transportation thoroughfares, the development of property along the Fairfax County side of the river, and promoting a shared interest in the arts.

NoVA Arts and Cultural District

In July 2017, the Virginia General Assembly unanimously passed a bill allowing multiple Virginia jurisdictions to form a shared arts and cultural district. This allowed Occoquan, Fairfax County, and Prince William County to approve the NoVA Arts and Cultural District that includes the Town, Workhouse Arts Center and the Occoquan Regional Park in Fairfax. As Virginia's first interjurisdictional arts and cultural district, this new district aims to expand arts and cultural opportunities available to visitors in Prince William County and Fairfax County. The establishment of this district allows the town to work with other jurisdictions to brand the region as a destination for tourism, commerce, and cultural leisure activities.

Fairfax Peak

In 2021, The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (FCBS) entered into an interim agreement with Alpine-X LLC to explore the feasibility of a proposed Fairfax Peak development, an indoor ski facility and recreation area on the site of the closed Lorton Landfill that would be the first-of-its-kind in North America. The proposed snow sports facility will be approximately 450,000 sq. ft square feet., with multiple slopes, the longest of which should be 1,700 feet. in length. It will also include a 100-room hotel and restaurant. Alpine-X anticipates the facility will generate between 300 and 500 permanent year-round jobs.

The Fairfax County Sports Tourism Task Force (FCSTTF) expects between 350,000 to 400,000 annual visitors to the facility; 75 percent% from the DMV area, 10%ten percent from the Baltimore and Richmond areas, and 15% percent from beyond these areas. Additionally, the Task Force anticipates the project will attract national and international attention and further the county's overall economic development objectives as well as increasing Fairfax County's exposure with the facility's capability to host nationally televised competitions. The Task Force also anticipates the facility bringing increased exposure and tourism revenues to the Workhouse Arts Center, NOVA Parks, and Occoquan Regional Park.

For the Town of Occoquan, Fairfax Peak presents both significant challenges but also significantand opportunities. The Ttown and Lorton will share insee the challenges of increased traffic and environmental impacts to our shared river, but only Fairfax County will directly benefit from the substantial tax revenues the development will generate. At the same time, our local schools may benefit from year-round snow sports athletics programs, our citizens may benefit from new job opportunities, and our commercial entities and public events may benefit from the influx of visitors. The Town should establish events, programs, and policies that will best take advantage of these new opportunities.R.

jurisdictions

[For the town, Fairfax Peak presents both significant challenges and opportunities. Several challenges will face the region, including the town, such as increased traffic and potential environmental impacts. While Fairfax County will benefit directly from the substantial tax revenues that the development will generate, the town and the region will benefit indirectly

from the increased activity, including increased tourism and property values. In addition, other areas may see positive impacts including our school system with year-round snow sport athletic programs, residents may see increased job opportunities in the area, and the business district may see an increase in visitors, resulting in more foot traffic and attendance at town events and attractions. The town should establish policies and programs that will best take advantage of new opportunities and mitigate the potential challenges resulting from this regional development project.]

Shared Border Area Plans – Lake Ridge Parks and Recreation Association

Occoquan shares a portion of its boundaries with the Lake Ridge Parks and Recreation Association HOA (LRPRA). As such, the town needs to maintain a positive relationship with the LRPRA that discourages the sale and development of our shared borders, as well as responsible stormwater management practices. A shared transportation goal should also be considered.

CHAPTER NINE

IMPLEMENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

Overview and Vision

Over the next ten years, the Town plans to vigorously pursue all the ambitious goals outlined in this Comprehensive Plan with diligence and the utmost care. The Town is steadfastly committed to preserving and enhancing the natural environment and the charm that defines Occoquan and its surroundings, while at the same time respecting the needs of the business community. The Town's leadership is confident that through the implementation of this Plan, Occoquan will continue to be the jewel in Prince William County where people will want to visit, live, and raise their families.

Annual Plan Accountability Report

The Planning Commission will review the Comprehensive Plan and prepare an Annual Report for the Town Council with updates and status on the Plan's actions/ goals and timeline. The report will be prepared by the Planning Commission with support from Town Staff to be presented at the January Town Council work session each year. The recommendations and updates from the Annual Report will be included as part of the annual budget and capital improvement plan process. The Comprehensive Plan will be fully revisited and readopted at least every five years.

Action Plan

See following pages for Action Plan.