Middletown Existing Conditions April 24, 2025

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Introduction

What's an Existing Conditions Report?

The Comprehensive Plan is based on both empirical data and the community's vision. The planning process starts with an "Existing Conditions Report" to collect and analyze data to understand Middletown as it is today. Understanding where and how people live, what major employers are in the area, what the environment looks like, or how the transportation system is functioning, gives the community a common foundation for thinking about their vision for the future. The Report is arranged in small "chapters" that discuss the community's geography, demographics, housing conditions, economic conditions, transportation systems, environmental conditions, local community facilities, and the use of land.

Why do we need an Existing Conditions Report?

People tend to have subjective understandings of their own community based on their individual experiences. While it is important to understand different perspectives, it is also important to examine objective data. This process helps ensure that all community stakeholders are starting from a common understanding of the Town's conditions at the beginning of the planning process. Once this is established, the community can work collaboratively to address its needs. This data also assists the planning team with identifying potential issues in the Town and drafting recommendations to improve conditions.

How is this data used?

This data will be used to identify issues in the community and inform the drafting of recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan document. It will also be used to help draft a vision for the Comprehensive Plan alongside the public engagement. These recommendations, once adopted will guide local elected and appointed officials as well as the Town's staff in their work on maintaining and improving the quality of life.

Where did the data come from?

Most of the data comes from the 2023 American Community Survey (5 year estimates), released on December 12, 2024, by the United States Census Bureau, however this document also utilizes other data, such as Decennial Census counts, Virginia Employment Commission, and Esri Business Analyst. These sources are widely used to give communities an accurate picture of their existing conditions.



Middletown is located in the northern Shenandoah Valley along the route of the historic "Great Wagon Road." Established and chartered in 1796, making it one of the oldest Towns in both Virginia and the United States.

The Town's land area is approximately 494.77 acres. The Town and its surroundings, mostly to the west, are the site of the Battles of Cedar Creek & Belle Grove. The National Park Service maintains the land to interpret its history and preserve its condition. The Town is located between Strasburg and Stephens City, with Winchester not much further to the northeast.

Middletown continues to develop today with new neighborhoods and commercial spaces, mostly in relation to the highway exit. However, there are many existing businesses and residential units in historic buildings through the core of the Town. Just outside the Town boundaries, there are many active farms that lend themselves to the visual character of the area.

Two major roads bisect the Town. State Route 11, which runs North to South, and Interstate 81, which also runs North to South, parallel to Route 11. State Route 627, or Reliance Road, provides access to the southwest parallel to nearby Interstate 66.





Regional Context

Middletown is located in the Shenandoah Valley in Northwestern Virginia. As shown on the following maps, the Town is about 80 miles from Washington, D.C. and 58 miles from Harrisonburg, and just 15 miles south of Winchester. Regionally, it is approximately the midpoint between the Stephens City and Strasburg.



Surrounding Metro Areas

Metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) are the definition of a region, used by the US Census Bureau. An MSA consists of a core area that serves as a "population nucleus" and surrounding areas that have a "high degree of economic and social integration" with that core. MSAs are delineated, in part, through commuting patterns.

Middletown is located within the MSAs of the City of Winchester and located just outside the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA. This is Virginia's highest density area of economic activity and population, where growth has generally "sprawled" its way further and further into the countryside. This is important to note for planning purposes, as within the comprehensive plan's horizon the Town will face even further potential growth pressure than has occurred already. However, with careful planning the Town can manage this pressure so that it is to the benefit of the Town and its existing community.



Middletown

Demographics



Source: 1900-2020 Decennial Census, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

Population

2500

The total population of Middletown is estimated to be 1,634 people as of the 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. The more accurate, but now outdated count in the 2020 Census is estimated at 1,355. The graph above shows the Town's population increase since the 1950s. Notably, the population has been growing in almost every decade. The latest available estimate from the U.S. Census Bureau is already higher than the projected population over the next few decades. Middletown's population is too small to receive a projection from the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for demographics.

The same percentage of increase of surrounding Frederick County was utilized to give a snapshot of what growth in Middletown could look like in the future. While this could change based on many different factors, it is showing a trend that already appears to be occurring in Middletown as new subdivisions are finished developing. Across Virginia, many small towns are struggling with the impacts of population loss. Middletown is fortunate to see steady growth which creates many new opportunities.

It is important to plan for infrastructure and land use patterns that accommodates the needs of current and future residents. Growth projections attempt to give an idea of what may happen in the future, but its important to note that growth could drastically exceed or fail to meet the forecasted numbers.

Census Data

The United States Census Bureau has two major methods for collecting demographic information. The decennial census, required by the Constitution and conducted every ten years since 1790, is a short survey of every household in the country. The American Community Survey (ACS) is a longer form containing more questions, taken every year. It is published annually, and seeks to maintain accurate estimates by comparing the 1 year results with sets of 5 years. The decennial census has a smaller number of data points, like population, sex and race, with a lower margin of error. The ACS has a much larger number of data points (like social, economic and housing characteristics) and a wider margin of error. A mix of decennial census and ACS data is used to form the empirical basis for the Comprehensive Plan, to report a picture of the community as accurately as possible. This plan uses a combination of Decennial Census data and 2023 ACS 5 Year Estimates, which is the most recently available data as of the creation of this document.

Population Change Comparison

The graph below shows population change by percentages between 2013 and 2023 with comparisons to other neighboring localities in the region. Middletown had a growth of nearly 40% within the time period, gaining 457 residents. This represents an annual growth rate of 3.3%, far exceeding all neighboring localities. It should be noted that neighboring Frederick County gained nearly 14,000 residents within the same time period, representing a 17.5% increase.





^{2013 &}amp; 2023 American Community Survey, B01003



2023 American Community Survey 5-Yr. Estimates, S0101

Age

The median age in the Town of Middletown is estimated at 39. For comparison, the median age in Virginia is almost the same at 38.8. The age pyramid above shows Middletown's population grouped by sex and age category. Middletown's population appears to have a mix of working age adults and older adults. For example, the median age for the 2010 American Community Survey estimates was 46 years old, in 2023 the median age was 39. With new subdivisions, it is possible many new families are arriving in Middletown and beginning to "show up" in the demographic data. It is not entirely clear why the population pyramid skews predominantly male for most age categories and is possible due to the margin of error, given that the American Community Survey shows that the population is around 4% more female than male in the community. Nevertheless, it is important to plan for all age groups and consider their needs as the Town makes investments for future generations.



2023 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, DP05

Race and Ethnicity

According to 2023 American Community Survey data, 73.6% of Middletown identifies as "White alone," while 3.5% identify as Black or African American. 16% of the population identifies as Other.

2023 American Community Survey estimates 21.7% of Middletown's population identify as Hispanic or Latino.

> Black or African _ American 3.5%

Educational Attainment

The population of Middletown that is over the age of 25 totals 1,174. Of this total, 88.8% are high school graduates or higher. However, only 21.6% of the population holds an Associates or Bachelor's Degree and only 4.1% hold a Graduate or Professional Degree. Middletown's economy has not been historically reliant on the need for higher education as a result of a primarily agricultural economy in the region. However, as technology advances, high speed internet access increases, or other resources become available, new businesses may locate in Middletown. Additionally, members of the community leaving to pursue higher education may choose to return to the County again with new skills and education to further develop and contribute to Middletown's local economy. Nearby Laurel Ridge Community College is an excellent asset to the community to help provide educational opportunities for the community's future growth.





2023 American Community Survey 5-Yr. Estimates, DP05

Housing

Household Size

Households are comprised of one or more people living together. This includes families related by birth, marriage, or adoption, as well as other combinations of people, such as roommates.

The total number of households in Middletown is estimated to be 716 with an average size of 2.65 people per household for Owner-occupied units and 2.22 for Renter-occupied units. If Middletown's population increases to the projected 1,978 by 2050, the Town will need approximately 130 additional housing units for a total of 846 households to maintain the same average size of people per housing unit.

Total Occupied Housing Units: 667 Average Size: 2.65 per Owner Occupied 2.22 per Renter Occupied

Age of Housing



Current Median Home Value & Over Time

Of the 356 owner-occupied housing units, the median home value (including lot value, where applicable) was estimated at \$288,200 in 2023. Approximately 43.5% of homes have values between \$200,00 and \$299,999. For comparison, the median home value in Virginia overall was estimated at \$360,700, which makes Middletown a slightly more affordable place to live. However, in the future, as nearby metropolitan areas begin to grow, housing prices may begin to rise significantly if housing options aren't varied. The chart at the bottom of the page showing median value over time indicates that this trend may have already begun.



Housing Types

Single-family detached homes make up 64.8% of the housing stock in Middletown, or an estimated 464 units in total. The Town has some duplex homes estimated at 16 units, and 236 multi-family units (apartments), and o manufactured housing units. Compared to other localities, Middletown has a good percentage of multifamily units but distinctly lacks attached townhomes and other reasonably attainable forms of housing. The Comprehensive Plan is required by Virginia's State Code to provide for Manufactured Housing as a source of affordable housing. Ideally, housing options are diverse to meet many different lifestyle needs, such as downsizing, raising a family, or simply wanting to live in one type of housing over another. Determining suitable locations for additional multi-family or singlefamily attached homes would help further diversify the housing stock.



Middletown has roughly 716 housing units in total, about 667 of which are occupied. Middletown has a mix

Owners & Renters

Homeownership is regarded as an effective way to "plant roots" in a community and build intergenerational wealth. It is also important to provide affordable, high-quality rental housing for young adults, families, older adults, and other residents who may not have the means to purchase a home or may not want to purchase a home.

Out of the 667 estimated occupied housing units in the Town, 53.4% are owner-occupied and 46.6% are renter-occupied. Middletown's mix of housing is fairly standard for small towns in Virginia.



2023 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, S1101

Tenure

Ninety-three percent (93%) of the total 716 housing units in Middletown are either full time owner-occupied (53%) or renter-occupied (47%). There are an estimated 49 vacant units in the Town. The table below shows the change over the past decade, where the Town had over 100 more units than it had a decade ago, most of which were multifamily units. While the American Community Survey's data has a wide margin of error, this is still an important data point to highlight for the Town. Having a diverse amount of types of housing available for ownership or for rent can build flexibility and resilience in the affordability of the housing market and provide pathways to homeownership opportunities for renters.

	201	3	202	3	2023 American Community Survey,
Owner Occupied - Full Time	334	69.3%	356	53.4%	5-Year Estimates,
Renter Occupied - Full Time	148	30.7%	311	46.6%	Tables DP04, B25004
Vacant	40	7.2%	49	6.8%	
a. For Rent	10	6.8%	17	5.2%	
b. For Sale	0	0%	14	3.8%	
c. Seasonal	16	2.9%	9	1.3%	
d. Other	14	2.5%	9	1.3%	
Total Units	552	-	667	-	

Median Monthly Housing Costs

Middletown's monthly housing costs are comparable to Strasburg, with more affordable rental units available. Compared to Frederick County, Winchester, or Front Royal, renter-occupied units pay substantially less. However, homeowners face similar costs to Winchester and Frederick County, and pay marginally more in monthly costs than Front Royal or Strasburg.





Proportion of Income Spent on Housing Costs

A large proportion of Middletown households are considered cost burdened and spend 30% or more of their income on housing, accounting for 36.3% of all households. Additionally, a further 29.7% of households are approaching cost burdened, spending between 20 to 29% of their income on housing. If housing costs continue to rise, more members of the community will struggle afford life in the town.



Median Gross Rent

Middletown's median gross rent is estimated most recently at \$853. From the chart below, you can see that rent has stayed relatively constant compared to the State's median in the same time period. This data may not represent the on-the-ground conditions for renters, and further examination may be needed as the planning process progresses. \$2,079





Middletown

2023 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates Table S2503

Economy

Median Household Income

The median household income in Middletown is \$57,175, with nearly three quarters of households earning less than \$100,000. Middletown's median household income is about \$33,800 less than the statewide median of \$90,974.



Median Household Income Comparison and Change Over Time

As shown in the bar graph below, median household income in Middletown increased 23.9% between 2013 and 2023 (ACS estimates, not accounting for inflation). Other localities in the region and the County have also experienced a growth in median household income, most notably Winchester at 46.3%. However, the median household incomes for towns in the region are still less than the overall statewide median household income.



Individual Income

The breakdown of Middletown residents individual incomes by percentage of population is displayed below, depicting the median individual income in Middletown by percentage in 2023. Nearly half of all individuals in Middletown earn less than \$25,000, which is approximately the median income for individuals in the town. The next largest income bracket in Middletown are individuals earning greater than \$100,000, with approximately 17% of the population earning between \$100,000 and \$200,000 and a further 2.8% earning greater than \$200,000. Roughly 80% of individuals in Middletown earn less than \$100,000.



Individual Income Over Time in Middletown and Virginia



The median individual income in Middletown has seen some significant change over the past ten years. Notably, in 2015, the Town's median individual income had nearly reached the state's median individual income. However, events such as the COVID-19 pandemic led to sharp declines in individual income following 2020. Since then, individual incomes have begun to climb to levels that were previously seen in the Town, but further economic development may be required to ensure that individual income continues to grow in Middletown.

2013–2023 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, S1901

2013-2023 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, S1901

% Below Poverty Level

Poverty status is determined for individuals based on their annual income. The chart below shows Middletown and Frederick County's percentage of individuals under the poverty level over time compared to that of Virginia overall. It is notable that Middletown's poverty rate more than doubled in 2020 and has yet to come down to its rate prior to 2020. The Town's higher than average poverty level may be due to lasting impacts to the retail market following the COVID-19 pandemic. The United Way publishes a service titled ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) which estimates the household survival budget required to meet the minimum cost of household necessities (housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, technology) by County. The data available for Frederick County revealed that to support a family of four, both parents would need to be working and earning at least \$22 per hour, full time.



Labor Force Participation Rate

The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is the percentage of all people of working age who are either working or actively seeking work (Employed + Unemployed). Middletown's LFPR is 70%, which is above the national rate of 63.5% and Virginia's at 65.6%. The chart below shows the percentage of each age cohort's percentage of the population participating in the labor force. Middletown has an exceptionally high labor force participation rate for workers between the ages of 20 to 44, but a very low participation rate for teens between 16 and 19.



2023 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, S2301

Employment by Industry

Most people in the Town are employed in Retail Trade. Notably, many people in the Town are employed in Manufacturing or Educational Services. Middletown has a good mix of employment, however, there may be issues of sustainable wages for employment, as noted by Middletown's poverty level. Employment data is difficult to track and is subject to seasonal shifts and under reporting.



Major Employers

The Top Ten Employers is adapted from the VA Employment Commission's Frederick County Community Profile, dated 1/22/25. Please note that data for major employers for the immediate vicinity of Middletown are not currently available, yet employment for Frederick County may indicate commuting trends and future growth. Specific employment for firms is not available.

Business/Organization Name	Rank FY24	Employees FY24
Amazon Fulfillment Services, Inc.	1	1000+
Frederick County School Board	2	1000+
Navy Federal Credit Union	3	1000+
Trex Company Inc & Subsid.	4	1000+
U.S. Department of Homeland Defense	5	1000+
Wal Mart	6	1000+
County of Frederick	7	1000+
H.P. Hood, Inc.	8	500-999
The Home Depot	9	500-999
Newell Brands Industries	10	500-999

2023 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. S2405

Virginia Employment Commission's Community Profile on Frederick County, pg. 23

Transportation

Commuting

84% of Middletown residents get to work by commuting in a car, truck, or van. This is typical of other localities. 8.4% of residents reported that they worked from home, while 5.8% reported that they carpooled to work. Only 1% of residents walk to their place of employment. Although Middletown is a small locality, if there is further growth and development it may burden the local road system with greater traffic. If development is targeted around more dense areas of the Town, there is the opportunity to allow for a greater share of the community walking and bicycling to daily needs, or employment.



2023 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, S0801

Travel Time to Work

The largest percentage of Middletown's workforce is commuting between 20 and 24 minutes to work (36.8%). 68.5% of Middletown's commuters travel less than 30 minutes to work. This may indicate that most workers are employed within nearby population centers such as Winchester or Front Royal.

However, nearly 20% of workers travel more than 45 minutes to work, indicating employment in larger metropolitan areas.



2023 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, S0801

Middletown

Place of Work

When commuting times are cross-referenced with the place of work, it is noticeable that 49.3% of the population works in their County of residence.

Middletown's regional location between Woodstock, Winchester, Strasburg, and Front Royal makes it an ideal location for workers who work in those localities.

Commuting To/From

The tables below are produced by the U.S. Census Bureau's "OnTheMap" application, which gives insight into where employed workers are commuting to (from Middletown), and commuting from (to Middletown). There are a total of 935 people employed within Middletown, with 538 people commuting to Middletown. Employment is generally spread throughout the region with a much larger outflow of workers than inflow, showing the Town is more of a "bedroom community." Employment in Winchester, Front Royal, and Strasburg indicates that Middletown residents primarily serve as regional workers supporting nearby population centers.

Employed in Middletown, Live Outside	Employed and L Middletown		Live in Middletown, Employed Outside		
538	17		656		
Places Residents are Commuting To	Workers	%	Places Residents are Commuting From	Workers	%
City of Winchester	131	19.5%	6 Town of Strasburg	32	5.8%
Town of Front Royal	23	3.4%	6 City of Winchester	32	5.8%
Middletown	17	2.5%	6 Town of Front Royal	21	3.8%
Town of Strasburg	12	1.8%	6 Middletown	17	3.1%
Town of Leesburg	11	1.6%	6 Town of Woodstock	8	1.4%
Chantilly	10	1.5%	6 Town of Stephens City	7	1.3%
Arlington	9	1.3%	6 Ashburn	5	0.9%
Town of Warrenton	9	1.3%	6 Shawneeland	5	0.9%
Town of Woodstock	9	1.3%	6 Town of Luray	4	0.7%
Reston	8	1.2%	6 New Baltimore	4	0.7%
Other Locations	434	64.5%	6 Other Locations	420	75.7%

U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2022.

Existing Conditions



2023 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, S0801

Functional Classification

The Federal Highway Administration (FWA) classifies roads based on mobility (how fast vehicles can move from one point to another) and access (the number of opportunities for vehicles to enter or leave that road). These designations influence decisions regarding maintenance and infrastructure projects. The Virginia Department of Transportation owns and maintains the Town's local roads due to the community's size.

Middletown

Roads are designated with one of the following classifications:

High Mobility (High Speed)

- Interstates
- Other Expressways
- Principal Arterials
- Minor Arterials
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Roads

High Access (Lots of Places to Enter/Exit)



Annual Average Daily Traffic

Annual average daily traffic (AADT) is a measure of how many vehicles travel a section of a road each day, expressed as an average value from traffic counts taken over the course of a year. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will generally prioritize maintenance or upgrade projects for roads with higher AADT.

Route 11 (Main Street) and Route 42 (West Reservoir Road) are the Town's most heavily traveled roads, excluding Interstate 81.







Crashes

The following map shows the amount of recorded crashes along Middletown's roads. Notably, almost all areas of Middletown experience crashes. Typically, crashes are recorded along the highest traveled corridors, but there are some notable patterns. Intersections, in particular, have crashes recorded even in neighborhoods. Middletown's most traveled roads are where the highest amount of crashes occur, with strong clusters occurring along Reliance Road and Main Street. The VDOT's crash data map has not been separated by severity to produce the map of crashes. This Comprehensive Plan will seek to proactively plan to eliminate crashes of all types, saving life and property from harm.



Safe Systems = Safe Mobility



From Vision Zero Network



Rural Long Range Transportation Plan

VDOT worked with the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission, which serves as the Planning District Commission (PDC) for the region, to develop the 2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRTP). This plan was released in 2011, and covers the geographic areas of Shenandoah, Frederick, Clarke, Warren, and Page Counties as well as their incorporated towns, such as Middletown. As is the case with a Comprehensive Plan, the RLRTP is visionary in nature and provides recommendations that are not financially constrained.

The map below highlights the transportation system deficiencies in Middletown identified in the RLRTP. These deficiencies and recommendations are outlined in the table on the following pages.

*A potential project listed on the RLRTP is not guaranteed to be completed by VDOT. Through the comprehensive planning process, the Town will identify priority transportation projects using the RLRTP as a guide.

The RLRTP can be accessed at: <u>http://nsvregion.org/documents.html</u>

RLRTP #	Road	Segment Start	Segment End	Deficiency Type	Recommendation
5	I-81 / I-66	Warren County Line	Winchester MPO Border	Operation	Long-term widen to rural six-lane roadway with median (project in environmental stage)
6	US-11 (Valley Pike)	Warren County Line	SCL of Middletown	Operation	Long-term adjacent segment of I-81 is to be widened, monitor this segment for need of capacity improvements.
7	US-11 (Valley Pike)	NCL of Middletown	VA 735	Operation	Long-term adjacent segment of I-81 is to be widened, monitor this segment for need of capacity improvements.
11	VA 627 (Chapel Rd.)	VA 635 N.	WCL of Middletown	Safety	Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
12	VA 627 (Chapel Rd)	VA 625 N	VA 635 N	Safety	Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
13	VA 735 (Salem Church Road)	US 11	0.51 M. E. US 11	Safety	Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
14	VA 735 (Salem Church Road)	0.51 M.E. US 11	VA 636 N	Safety	Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
30	US 11 (Valley Pike)	SCL of Middletown	NCL of Middletown	Operation	Long-term adjacent segment of I-81 is to be widened, monitor this segment for need of capacity improvements. (Middletown)
31	VA T-1107 (Chapel Rd.)	SCL of Middletown	NCL of Middletown	Safety	Long-term adjacent segment of I-81 is to be widened, monitor this segment for need of capacity improvements. (Middletown)



Middletown

Environment

Soils

The United States Natural Resource Conservation Service conducts soil surveys, which outline soil types and characteristics that are present in certain areas. The soils present in Middletown are:

- Silt Loam Well draining soil typically found in areas where limestone has weathered. This type of soil is suitable for Agriculture, Forestry, Engineering, Irrigation, Urban/Recreational, and Wildlife. The most productive trees grown in these soil areas are yellow poplars, eastern white pines, and Virginia pines.
- Rocky Silt Loam These soil areas are similar to Silt Loam soils but contain a greater quantity of limestone and other materials. This soil type is prevalent in the Shenandoah Valley and are frequently cleared for agricultural production.
- Massanetta Massanetta soil are well drained and formed in alluvial material eroded from soils formed in weathered limestone and shale. Massanetta is suitable for Agriculture, Forestry, Engineering, Urban/ Recreational, and Wildlife. The most productive trees are sweetgum, Virginia pine, and northern red oak.
- Frederick-Poplimento Loam A small portion of the Town lies in a Frederick-Poplimento Loam soil area. This soil type is a mix of Frederick and Poplimento Loams that have similar characteristics to the silt loams listed above.

These have been grouped by soil type and presented in a simplified map to the right. Soils range in depth to bedrock from 35 to 68 inches. When erosion and sediment control plans and stormwater management plans are reviewed during the development review process, the soil type and depth are important for determining the rate of stormwater infiltration into the soil and the amount of runoff that may result from development.





Wetlands & Floodplains

Wetlands are defined as areas that are wet or have wet soils during some part of the growing season. The map to the right displays the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetlands Inventory records of wetland locations as well as the annual flood chance according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Wetlands have been historically considered to be wasted land area and were often filled in or drained to make the land developable. However, research has showed that wetlands are home to diverse populations of mammals, waterfowl, and marine life. In addition to providing habitat, many plant and animal species are only present in wetlands, which makes them an important part of regional ecosystems. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that Virginia has lost 42% of all Wetlands acreage between 1780-1980.

Additional environmental benefits to humans are wetlands ability to naturally improve water quality. Densely vegetated wetlands act as a filter by trapping sediments and nutrients before they flow into local waterbodies. Wetlands can also help prevent flooding and erosion with their sponge-like soils soaking up flood water.

While the National Wetlands Inventory is generally accurate, there are still some wetlands that are not mapped. When development occurs, surveys must take place that delineate all wetlands present on any given property.

Due to the high importance of wetlands, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) requires that a Virginia Water Protection (VWP) permit be obtained before disturbing a wetland or stream by clearing, filling, excavating, draining, or ditching.

Wetlands 1% Annual Chance of Flood arce: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, nal Wetlands Inve **Existing Conditions**



Built Environment

Points of Interest

Community facilities in Middletown include government buildings, emergency resources, and the community park. These facilities are funded wholly or in-part by tax dollars, and they are accessible to the community at-large or otherwise provide essential services for life in Middletown. On the map to the right, there are also some important "Tourism" venues identified, such as the National Park Visitors Center and the War Memorial. These are some of the places that Middletown builds its community and quality of life, hence their inclusion alongside typical public community facilities.

Other services included in the map include veterinary services and educational facilities. These are privately owned businesses that provide services to Middletown residents and visitors. These resources are unique and make the Town a more desirable place to visit or reside within, particularly for those who are in need of, or provide these types of services.





Historic District

The Middletown Historic District was registered to the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. The location is primarily focused along Main Street (U.S. Rt. 11) with properties located along Church Street, Senseney Avenue, as well as First, Third, Fourth, and Sixth Streets. According to the National Register nomination, there are 233 contributing buildings that are primarily Greek revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, or Bungalow/Craftsman. The nomination notes that resources include more than a dozen buildings that incorporate late-eighteenth century log construction.

Middletown's rich history began along the Great Wagon Road, later called the Valley Pike, and now known as U.S. Route 11. The Town was officially established by the Virginia General Assembly in 1794 and chartered by Frederick County in 1796. During the Civil War, Middletown was a prosperous trading center for the Shenandoah Valley, known as the "breadbasket of the Confederacy." Military activity was present in and around the town, culminating into the Battle of Cedar Creek in October of 1864, resulting in a strategic Union victory. After the war, residents of Middletown petitioned the Virginia General Assembly for incorporation in 1882, becoming an incorporated town with a mayor and council.





Data Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources



Existing Zoning

Zoning regulations are laws that determine how land can be used in certain areas, as well as requirements for the form of development. Middletown's Zoning Ordinance outlines zoning districts, each of which has its own regulations for uses, structures, landscaping buffer areas, setbacks, or other requirements.

The majority of Middletown is currently zoned R-1 for low density residential. There are several areas with MTND (Middletown Traditional Neighborhood Design - R-4) zoning for general residential uses, including housing, civic and open space, and certain businesses at a higher density. There are several areas along Main Street and on major corridors that are zoned for business (B-1 or B-2).

As Middletown recommends changes in land use through the Comprehensive Planning process, updating the Zoning Ordinance is an essential step in implementing these changes. Most Zoning Ordinances throughout Virginia and the United States are full of outdated requirements from past decades that sought to put extensive controls on where development could go and what requirements it needed to follow. Historically, those controls were often designed to segregate higher income from lower income areas or white residential areas from black residential areas. Beloved shops or restaurants in historic buildings could not be built today under current Zoning Regulations, due to parking requirements for instance. If the most loved parts of Middletown were built in the past and are seen as the safest places to walk around and enjoy your time, why would a community want to make building in the same way illegal? This is the type of question the comprehensive plan will explore in developing recommendations for goals, objectives, and strategies.



Historic residential properties that predate the Zoning Ordinance.

Post Office built to the Zoning Ordinance regulations.

What if every historic structure became a parking lot with a building set-back from the road?



Existing Land Use

It is important to examine how Middletown's land is currently being used to ensure that it is efficient and productive. Efficiency and productive generally means that in areas where growth and development is planned, it is occurring as expected. A hypothetical example of inefficient land use would be if a historic commercial building along Main Street was replaced with a self-storage business. Self-storage businesses, while useful, are often "passive" meaning that they do not have a lot of people coming in or out of them like a restaurant does, meaning it is "inefficient" use of the land in that location along Main Street.

An important aspect of land use planning is ensuring consistency of uses, particularly when related to zoning. For example, many single family homes are located within the B-1 Commercial Zoning District, which is permitted according to the Middletown Zoning Ordinance but is generally not the intent of a business district. A mix of uses is to be expected in a historic town, as towns such as Middletown were founded prior to the advent of zoning. To embrace Middletown's past, a strategy may be to reform zoning in the Town to account for the mix of uses and encourage new infill development that adds to Middletown's historic charm.

One of Middletown's assets for tourism is the beauty of the natural countryside, and the local economy is also fortunate to have active farms directly adjacent to the Town's boundaries. If these farms were subdivided and converted into residential units, the cost to supply and maintain sewer and water infrastructure outside of Town boundaries will eventually hurt the Town's finances as well as erode the "small town charm" character that residents express their enjoyment of. This topic will be explored further in the full comprehensive plan with greater detail and examples.



Land Use Type	Acres (Approximate)	Percentage of Total
Suburban Single Family	102.53	23.5%
Urban Single Family	69.6	15.8%
Commercial	53.37	12.1%
Local Government	38.91	8.8%
Education	11.04	2.5%
Multifamily	9.2	2.1%
Religious	5.21	1.2%

