

City of Richwood



Comprehensive Plan

Adopted
June 2016

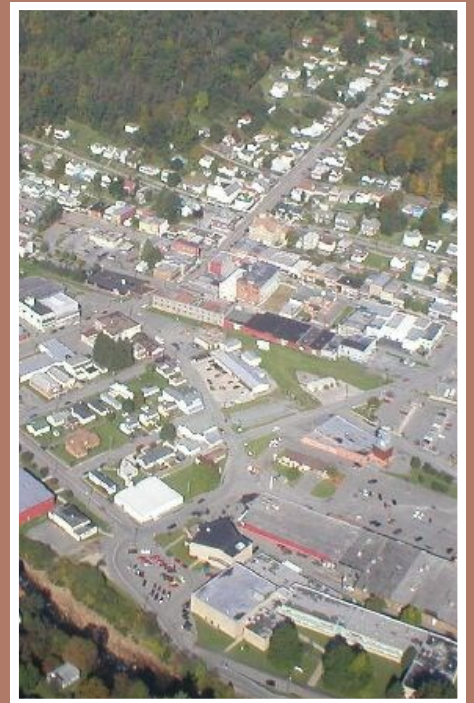




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City of Richwood



Comprehensive Plan

Chapter 1: Introduction



The City of Richwood sits nestled like an island among a sea of mountains. In any direction the natural beauty of the area can be seen. Mountains, streams, trails, and forestland are all within minutes of this Nicholas County community. Richwood long known as a giant in the timber industry now faces many challenges not unlike many other West Virginia communities. However Richwood has already begun re-creating and redeveloping itself through the comprehensive plan process.

Purpose

According to §8A-1-2 of the West Virginia Code a comprehensive plan is a plan for physical development and sets forth guidelines, goals, and objectives for all activities that affect growth and development.

In order for a local government to adopt many land use ordinances, including a zoning ordinance or a subdivision and land development ordinance, a comprehensive plan is required to be in place. In addition, many land use ordinances are required by law to be consistent with the comprehensive plan.



In order to make sound decisions, as they pertain to land use and development, a community is often well served by not only adopting a comprehensive plan but actively utilizing the plan as a policy and guidance document. Therefore it is the intention of the Richwood Planning Commission to create a plan that will serve as the blueprint for land development and community programs and projects over the next several years.

Acknowledgments

There are many people and organizations that participate in the comprehensive plan process and the creation of Richwood's comprehensive plan is no different. First and foremost is the planning commission, who was tasked with preparing the comprehensive plan. The Richwood Planning Commission, which is a volunteer body, has met several times over the course of the last couple of years to discuss the various components that help form the comprehensive plan. Additionally the planning commission held public meetings and distributed surveys to receive public input throughout the process.

Also crucial for the successful completion of the comprehensive plan were the Mayor and City Council. As elected officials they are responsible for adopting the comprehensive plan and have a large role in the subsequent implementation of the comprehensive plan after adoption.



Richwood High School also played an important role in the development of the comprehensive plan. Not only were students involved in the development of the comprehensive plan during instructional time. The school also hosted an annual community engagement night and a booth was set up to get input from parents, students, and teachers.

There were countless citizens who came to the meetings to provide input, fill out stakeholder surveys, or speak with planning commissioners or elected officials. Their input is crucial in achieving a communitywide comprehensive plan. Mr. Ray Moeller, an AmeriCorp VISTA who now serves as the Nicholas County Extension Agent for West Virginia State University was critical in getting information disseminated throughout the community and providing additional leadership during the comprehensive plan process.

In early 2013 through the assistance of the Northern Brownfields Assistance Center the city reached out to WVU College of Law, Land Use and Sustainable Development Law Clinic to assist in the completion of the comprehensive plan. The Law Clinic facilitated meetings, assisted the city in making sure that all required components and objectives were sufficiently met, help develop surveys, and assisted in the drafting of the comprehensive plan.

Legal Requirements

Chapter 8A of the West Virginia Code establishes the scope and purpose of community comprehensive plans. Each comprehensive plan and subsequent update must follow the requirements found in this chapter.

As stated in §8A-1-1(a)(5) “a comprehensive plan is a guide to a community’s goals and objectives and a way to meet those goals and objectives.” According to the West Virginia Code the comprehensive plan should also “be the basis for land development and use, and be reviewed and updated on a regular basis (§8A-1-1(b)(3)), which the Code later defines as every 10 years (§8A-3-11(a)).

A comprehensive plan is required if a governing body wants to enact a zoning ordinance, enact a subdivision and land development ordinance, require plans and plats for land development, or issue improvement location permits for construction.

Pursuant to Chapter 8A, a comprehensive plan must meet certain objectives and contain certain components in order to be considered valid. Care has been taken to ensure that all required objectives and components have been sufficiently addressed in the City of Richwood Comprehensive Plan.

Adoption Process

The planning commission is tasked with preparing the comprehensive plan. Once the planning commission has either created or amended the comprehensive plan they need to hold a public hearing pursuant to Chapter 8A of the West Virginia Code. After the planning commission holds a public hearing

and addresses any public comment they can recommend the comprehensive plan to the governing body. In order to do this the planning commission needs to submit the comprehensive plan to the governing body, then at the governing body's next regularly scheduled meeting the planning commission needs to present the recommended comprehensive plan to the governing body.

After the presentation by the planning commission the plan comes under the purview of the governing body. At some point prior to adoption the governing body also needs to have a public hearing. After providing proper notice and allowing for written public comment of the plan the governing body can hold a public hearing. After holding a public hearing the governing body can decide whether or not to adopt the comprehensive plan. If adopted the comprehensive plan needs to be filed with the office of the county clerk of the county where they are situated.

Plan Organization

The City of Richwood Comprehensive Plan has been organized to encourage ease of reading and navigation to specific content. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the comprehensive plan including a description of the legal framework and detailed tables that show where each mandatory component and objective is discussed in the plan. Chapter 2 is the Community Profile, which gives the reader a historical snapshot, as well as an overview of the city as it pertains to housing, economic development, transportation, land use, recreation, and public facilities. Chapter 3 sets out the Needs Assessment, which identifies the issues that need to be addressed in order for the city to achieve its vision of the future. Chapter 4 articulates the Action Plan, which lists goals, objectives, and specific action steps, which are prioritized by importance.

Finally the reader will have an opportunity, through the appendices, to review information that is supplemental to the comprehensive plan.

Composition of Comprehensive Plan

- Chapter 1- Introduction
- Chapter 2- Community Profile
- Chapter 3- Needs Assessment
- Chapter 4- Action Plan
- Appendices

Public Participation

Involving the public early, often, and throughout the comprehensive plan process is very important to the success of the plan. While there are required public hearings, the city should take the extra steps to involve the public throughout the process. By doing so it benefits not only the planning commission by getting additional input but it benefits the citizens because they can get a better understanding of the issues and become more informed about the overall comprehensive plan process.





Planning commissions are required to adopt procedures for public input throughout the process. The City of Richwood Planning Commission adopted public input procedures which have been followed throughout the process and can be found in the appendices.

The planning commission made sure that all of their official business was conducted during an open meeting as required by the state's open governmental proceedings act regulations. The planning commission also solicited public comment by advertising for and holding an open house where all members of the public were invited to attend and provide comments. Additionally, the planning commission sent out stakeholder surveys to various people/organizations as another way of getting input from the public. Law clinic personnel met with students at Richwood High School to get in order to get input from students who in the future will have to make the decision to continue to live in the area or move away.

Required Objectives for a Comprehensive Plan	
W. VA. Code §8A-3-4(b)(1)-(7)	
Code Provision	Chapter
Statement of goals and objectives	Chapter 3
Timeline on how to meet short and long-term goals and objectives	Chapter 4– Implementation Matrix
Action plan with implementation strategies	Chapter 4
Recommendations of a financial program for necessary public funding	Chapter 4
Statement of recommendations concerning future land use and development policies	Chapter 4 (Goal 5)
A program to encourage regional planning, coordination, and cooperation	Chapters 3 & 4
Maps, plats, and/or charts- that present basic information on the land, including present and future uses	All Chapters

Required Components for a Comprehensive Plan	
<i>W. VA. Code §8A-3-4(c)(1)-(13)</i>	
Code Provision	Page #
<i>Land Use</i>	
Different land uses (including, for example, residential, agricultural, historic, etc.)	3-20 through 3-23, 4-9 through 4-11
Population density and building intensity standards	2-11
Growth and/or decline management	3-15, 3-21, 3-22
Projected population growth or decline	2-12
Constraints on development (including identifying flood-prone and subsidence areas)	2-3,2-4, 3-13, 3,14, 3-19, 3-22, 4-10
<i>Housing</i>	
Analyze projected housing needs and different types of housing needed (including affordable housing and accessible housing for persons with disabilities)	2-9 through 2-11, 3-15, 3-23, 4-5
Identify the number of projected housing units and land needed	3-15
Address substandard housing	3-14, 4-5
Rehabilitate and improve existing housing	3-14, 4-6
Adaptive reuse of buildings into housing	3-15, 4-6
<i>Transportation</i>	
Vehicular, transit, air, port, railroad, river, and any other mode	2-15, 2-18 through 2-20, 3-12, 3-17, 4-3, 4-7
Movement of traffic and parking	3-12, 3-16, 3-17, 4-7
Pedestrian and bicycle systems	2-20, 3-16, 3-17, 4-7
Intermodal transportation	2-20



Code Provision (Con't)	Page #
Economic development	
Analyze opportunities, strengths and weaknesses	3-3
Identify and designate economic development sites and/or sectors	3-4, 3-10, 3-12
Identify types of economic development sought	3-4 through 3-6
<i>Miscellaneous Components</i>	
Infrastructure	3-15 through 3-20, 4-8, 4-9
Public Services	2-2, 3-6, 3-7, 3-22, 4-5
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Community Design	3-8, 4-4
Preferred development areas	3-7, 3-8, 3-12, 4-3, 4-9
Renewal and/or redevelopment	3-14, 4-6
Financing	Implementation Matrix
Historic preservation	3-12, 3-15

City of Richwood



Comprehensive Plan

Chapter 2: Community Profile

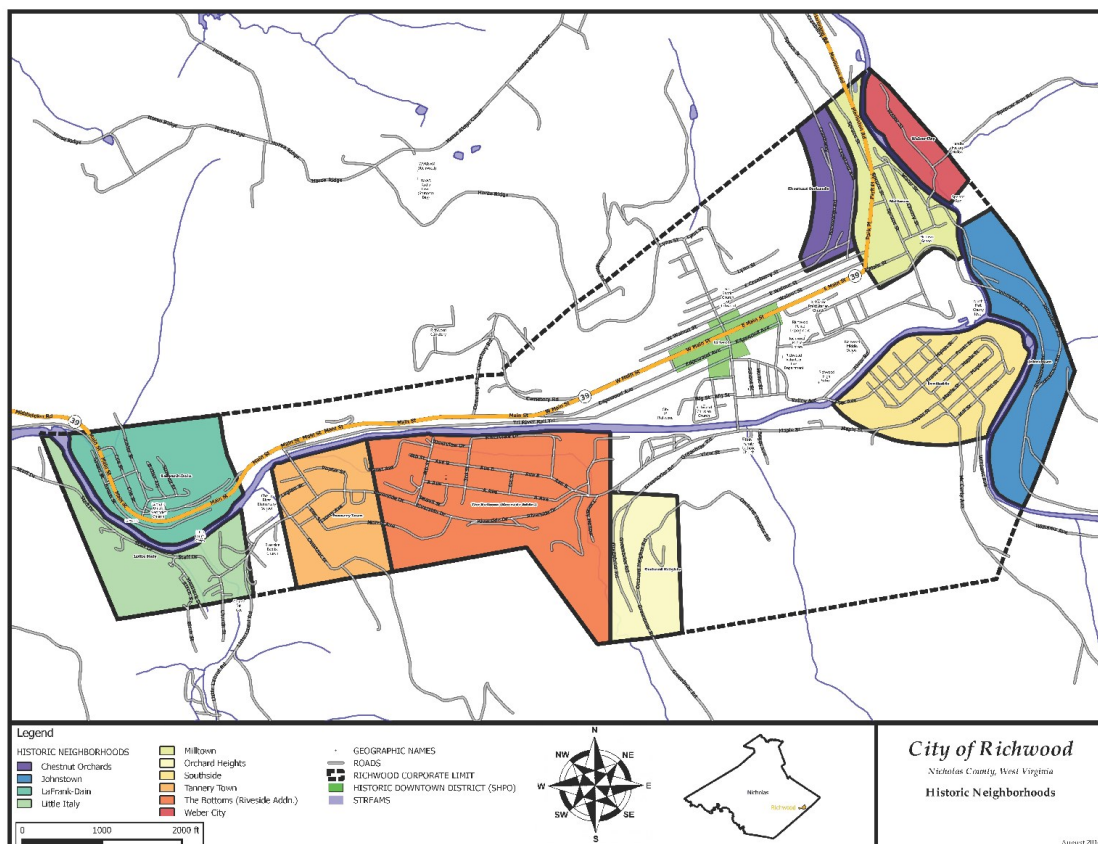


Existing Land Use

The City of Richwood is fortunate to be situated among some of the most beautiful and scenic areas found in West Virginia. The land in and around the city is one of its greatest resources, therefore proper land use planning is extremely important to the city and its citizens.

The city was incorporated in 1901. One of the unique aspects of that time period that survives today is the distinct neighborhoods found in Richwood. At one point many of these neighborhoods had their own elementary school. Map 1 depicts the general location of the historic neighborhoods. “Richwooders” still use the place names of the old neighborhoods when talking with one another. These neighborhoods form an important and unique part of Richwood’s history that should continue to be part of the community’s heritage.

Map 1– Historical Neighborhoods



Richwood has neither a zoning ordinance nor subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) in place. In 1969 the United States Housing and Urban Development created a planning document for Richwood. The HUD planning document proposed a zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, Capital Improvement Plan recommending priorities, and a public



improvement program.

The 1969 plan called for the establishment of five zoning districts; two residential districts, a business district, an industrial district, and a conservation district. The plan also called for language pertaining to height restrictions, off-street parking, and permitted uses. While there have been significant changes in Richwood since 1969, the HUD document should be reviewed if the city contemplates the development of a zoning ordinance which is consistent with this comprehensive plan.

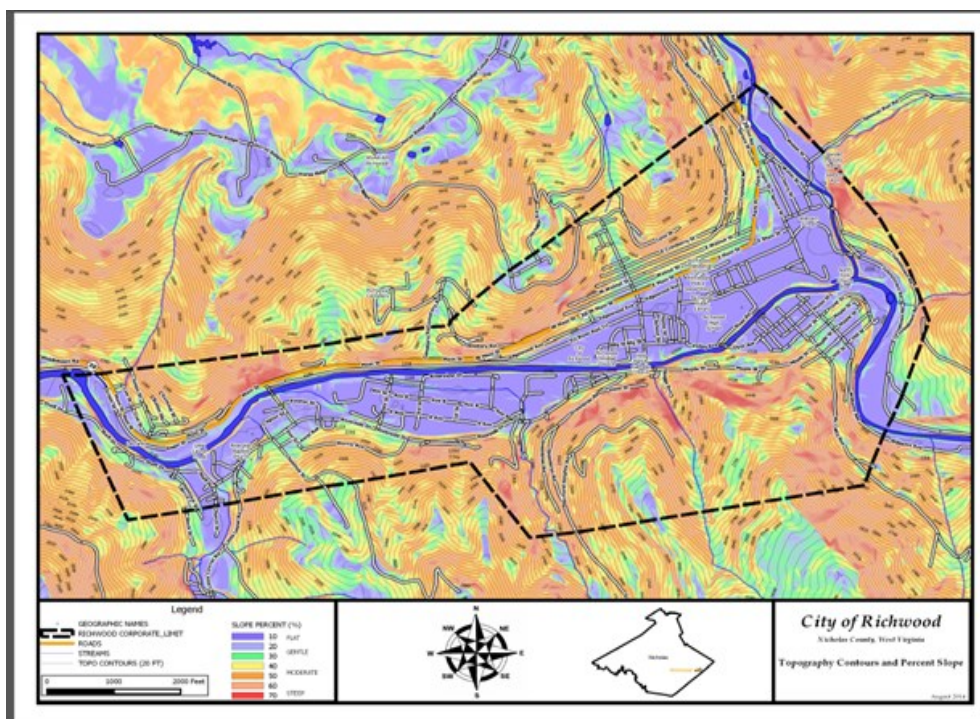
Downtown Richwood, which runs along Main Street from White Street to Oakford Street, is the center of trade and commerce in the city. However there are businesses sprinkled throughout the city, including two working lumber yards, Laurel Creek Hardwoods and Collins Hardwood Company LLC. A few vacant industrial/manufacturing sites, most notably the old BFG building, which the Richwood Building Commission currently owns, lie in the downtown area.

The majority of structures in Richwood are single-family residential, especially in parts south of the Cherry River. The city includes a few multi-family residential areas and one age-restricted multi-family unit (Edgewood Village). The city also includes a significant number of abandoned and dilapidated structures.

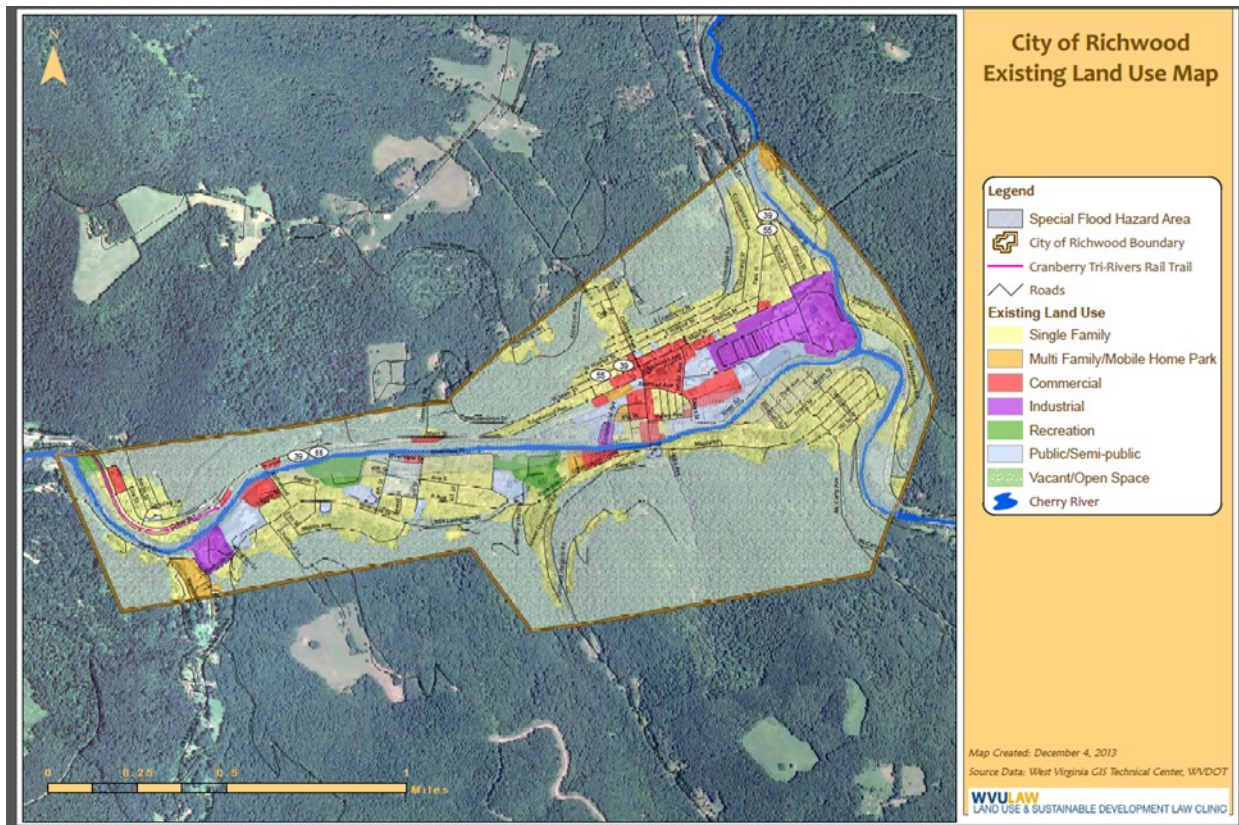
Because the city sits at the junction of the South Fork and North Fork of the Cherry River much of Richwood lies within the Special Flood Hazard Area (AKA “the floodplain”). Significant floods occurred in 2001 and 2003, and in the past there have been talks of

placing a flood control dam on the Cherry River. However no serious discussions on a dam have occurred in some time. Because many citizens must purchase flood insurance, the city has chosen to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) which allows citizens in Richwood to purchase flood insurance policies.

Map 2– Steep Slopes



Map 3– Existing Land Use Map



While some undeveloped land remains within the city’s limits, Richwood is close to being built out. Many of the areas within the city that have remained undeveloped are situated along steep slopes, making it very difficult to ever develop. Relatively flat undeveloped areas are likely to be located within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), which makes development in those areas undesirable. Another option for any future development is that the city encourage redevelopment in areas that are relatively flat and/or not within the floodplain.

The City’s History

The city boasts a large historic district that encompasses the downtown area and which runs along Main Street and branches out on Oakford Avenue in either direction. The historic district has been designated under the National Register of Historic Places since 2001 and covers approximately ten (10) acres. Sixty-one resources (structures) lie within the district: Fifty-one of the structures are considered contributing buildings and 10 are considered non-contributing buildings. A contributing building is any structure which adds to the historical integrity or architectural qualities that make up the historic district. Additionally, Richwood city limits includes several state-designated historic structures, through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Richwood contains little land considered agricultural, including some arable land (5-10 acres) in the Johnstown neighborhood and a few acres in the Weber City area. Some of the land



within the city limits may be undeveloped, yet very little would be considered rural in nature. However much of the land directly outside the corporate city limits would be considered rural, as a significant portion of land adjacent to the city is part of the Monongahela National Forest.

During much of the 19th century, the area around Richwood was relatively unsettled. The area was originally known as Cherry Tree Bottoms and started to see growth after the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad tracks were laid in the early part of the 20th Century. During that time the City of Richwood was incorporated (1901) and soon thereafter became one of the leading lumber camps in the region.

The community grew from a population of 24 in 1900 to 7,000 in 1929. This rapid growth is directly related to the timber industry and, in particular, the Cherry River Boom and Lumber Company (the mill is still in operation as Collins Hardwood Company LLC). The Steele-Wallace Clothespin Factory was also located in Richwood during this time was reported to have been the largest factory of its kind in the world.

During its peak, Richwood acted as a regional hub for trade, commerce, and entertainment. The city contained three banks, two theatres, two hospitals, numerous hotels and boarding houses, and more than 30 other commercial establishments. The commercial buildings included department stores, drug stores, hardware and furniture stores, a Coca-Cola bottling plant, a tannery, a broom handle factory, and a leather shoe manufacturer. Richwood's tannery was one of the largest in the state when it was in operation from 1904 till 1938. A section of the city is still referred to as the Tannery District.

In 1933, the U.S. Forest Service established two Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps near Richwood. These two camps (Woodbine and Cranberry) managed and protected area forests (Source: www.wvencyclopedia.org). The CCCs were designed to provide jobs for young men, to relieve families who had difficulty finding jobs during the Great Depression in the United States while at the same time implementing a general natural resource conservation program.

Richwood saw continued economic growth up through the 1960s and 1970s. During that time Main Street did not have any empty storefronts. Friday nights in Richwood were especially busy as people came from all over to shop including people from Summersville and Webster County. However a downturn in the both coal and timber industries in the latter part of the 20th Century affected Richwood and the surrounding areas. Coal mining had come to the area after the depression and was an important source of employment for several decades. However in 1984 and 1985 the immediate area lost approximately 500 coal mining jobs. Also in the mid-1980s BF Goodrich, which had a large rubber products plant in Richwood was forced to lay off

Newspaper Article

The following is an excerpt from a 1927 newspaper article: "Unlike most centers of population dependent largely upon the forests or industries in wood, Richwood is not a mere city of shacks, but a real city whose chief public and business buildings are constructed of brick, stone, tile and concrete. The main streets are paved with brick and many of the alleys are of concrete. At least six miles of the streets are lighted with electricity. There is an abundance of good, pure water, a good water and sewage system and a well-equipped and effective fire department. A large, three story brick building houses the city government." (Source: <http://www.richwooders.com/richwood/history/cityofrichwood.htm>)

hundreds of local people.

During this time many people went elsewhere to find work, including a significant number of people who migrated to the Charlotte, NC area. Also during this time of economic hardship, local citizens started fund raising by holding events such as Oktoberfest and Winterfest. In many ways the city has never really recovered from the huge loss of industry and jobs which occurred during the 1970s and 1980s.

Cherry River Boom and Lumber Company

No company has had such a significant and long-lasting impact to the Richwood area as did the Cherry River Boom and Lumber Company. The company employed hundreds of people and its timber came from 200,000 acres of forest lands (found in Nicholas, Webster, Greenbrier, Pocahontas and Randolph Counties).

The Cherry River Boom and Lumber Company is no longer in business and the Richwood mill has seen several owners over the years including Ritter Lumber, Georgia-Pacific, and currently Collins Hardwood Company LLC. The mill is actually the longest continually operating sawmill in West Virginia. There is also another operating lumber company in Richwood, Laurel Creek Hardwoods. Between the two lumber companies well over 100 people are currently employed.

Cherry River Navy

The Cherry River Navy (CRN) is a community organization started in Richwood to bring attention to the need to build a road between Richwood and Marlinton. The Cherry River Navy was successful in their campaign as Route 39/55 was constructed and now connects to two communities.

While the CRN is not an actual military unit, 4-star Admirals in World War I regalia participated in many area parades and other fund raising events, and the group included a women's auxiliary. After the start of WWII many members of the Cherry River Navy joined the actual armed forces and the CRN became inactive for some time. In the 1960s the organization was revived. The group's "ship" is named the SS Mop Swab and contains an actual 10 gauge cannon that fires blanks. The CRN's membership list has included presidents, governors, senators, astronauts, and others who have distinguished themselves for outstanding service to community and country.

Economic Profile

Richwood has seen a steady decline in most economic sectors over the last several decades. The city also recently lost its only supermarket, Foodland, which closed in late 2014. One stakeholder was quoted as saying "it is very hard to do any shopping in Richwood now; most of the stores have closed up." The stakeholder continued by saying "that for good shopping one would need to go to Beckley which is 90 minutes away or Charleston, which is even further."

In terms of the healthcare industry, a satellite healthcare clinic exists in Richwood, but the



previously existing hospital no longer resides in the city. Two (2) dentists operate in Richwood and one remaining pharmacy lies within the city (Rite Aid). Two active lumber yards, Collins Hardwoods, which employs ~65 people and Laurel Creek, which employs ~30 people lie within the city. BE Aerospace in Fenwick employs ~150-200 people, but few employees of the facility live in Richwood.

Richwood Events and Festivals

- ◇ Scenic Mountain Triathlon (Summit Lake area)
- ◇ Mountain Color Fine Arts (October 25)
- ◇ Ramp Festival (they have held it for 75 years)
- ◇ Cherry River Festival (August)

"Past 80 Party" (June) RHS

Several annual festivals call Richwood home. These festivals help boost the local economy. Richwood calls itself the "Ramp Capital of the World" and hosts a large festival, the Feast of the Ramson, every April in honor of the pungent wild leek. Another annual event, the Cherry River Festival is a multi-day event held in July/August. There are beauty pageants, workshops, presentations, contests, concerts, carnival rides, and a parade at the Cherry River Festival each year.

The New River Gorge Regional Development Authority has worked with Richwood businesses in the past. The RDA has 2 full-time staff and 4 additional staff through a partnership with West Virginia State University Extension. The primary mission of the RDA is to attract new industry to the region and to support existing industry. This is achieved through (1) the development of business parks and publicly owned property in which to house new businesses, (2) operation of loan programs to assist existing industry, (3) marketing program to identify new potential prospects and (4) partnership with West Virginia State University Extension for community development types of projects.

Employment statistics

According to the Census Bureau the two largest industry groupings in Richwood are 1) educational services, health care, and social assistance and 2) manufacturing. Retail trade, which used to be an important sector in Richwood when it served as the regional hub now accounts for roughly 11% of the total workforce (employed individuals 16 years and older) in Richwood. The other sizeable industry grouping is "arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations and food services."

Table 1 - Employment by Industry City of Richwood (2013 American Community Survey-
Estimates) Counting Civilian Employed Population 16 years and over.

Industry	% of Workforce
Educational services, health care, and social assistance	38.6%
Retail Trade	10.7%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	10.2%
Manufacturing	11.4%
Construction	4.7%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	4.6%
Public Administration	0.2%
Other services except public administration	0.3%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	0.7%
Transportation and Warehousing and utilities	4.7%
Wholesale Trade	0.1%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	0.2%
Information	0.0%

The unemployment rate in Nicholas County has fluctuated, however the rate spiked from 4.8% in 2008 to 8.6% in 2009. The following year the unemployment rate peaked at 9.7% and has decreased to 8.5% in September 2015.

In 2012 the percentage of persons (16 and over) who were in the labor force for the state was 54.9%, Richwood 39.7%, and Nicholas County 51.1%. This disparity suggests a small pool of people in the city available for any new job openings.

The 2013 Census estimates that Richwood's unemployment rate is 15.2% which is significantly higher than both the county (8.9%) and the state rates (8.4%).

Median Household Income

The median household income in the City of Richwood in 2012 was \$24,706, compared to \$38,780 in Nicholas County and the state-wide median of \$40,000. Richwood's median household income was therefore 39% lower than the state average in 2012.



Table 2- Nicholas County Unemployment Rates

2000	6.8%
2001	5.9%
2002	7.2%
2003	7.2%
2004	5.3%
2005	5.3%
2006	4.9%
2007	4.6%
2008	4.8%
2009	8.6%
2010	9.7%
2011	8.9%
2012	9.1%
2013*	8.9%



Top Employers Nicholas County

Top Employers in Nicholas County March 2013 (Source: West Virginia Department of Commerce)

- Nicholas County Board of Education
- Alex Energy, Inc.
- Summersville Regional Medical Center
- Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
- Seneca Health Services, Inc.
- Columbia West Virginia, Inc.
- Lowe's Home Centers Inc.
- BE Aerospace Engineering, Inc.
- Nicholas County Community Action
- Nicholas County Nursing and Rehabilitation

Housing Profile

The housing inventory of a community is a very important facet of any community. It is important for officials in communities such as Richwood to understand the type of housing, the

condition of the housing, the price of housing as it currently stands and then try to identify if any changes to the current housing stock should be encouraged in the next 5-10 years.

Occupied/Vacant

The 2000 Census indicated that there were 1,233 housing units, 1,030 were occupied (83.5%) and 203 vacant (16.5%) in Richwood.

The 2010 Census indicated that there were 1,163 total units of which 76.4% occupied (889 units), leaving 23.6% vacant. In 2013, the American Community Survey (ACS) estimated that there are 1,412 housing units in Richwood of which 1,064 or 75.4% of those units were occupied, leaving 24.6% vacant (348 housing units vacant).

To put these numbers into context, in 2010, the vacancy rates for the U.S. and West Virginia, were 11.4% and 13.4%. These figures indicate that Richwood has a significantly higher proportion of vacant housing structures (23.6% in 2010) than both state and national averages.

Home Ownership

According to the 2008-2013 American Community Survey, of the homes classified as “occupied” in Richwood, 70.8% were owner-occupied. The median home value was \$36,200 and 47.7% of home owners with a mortgage paid more than 30% of their monthly household income in housing costs. Meanwhile the median home value for West Virginia was \$98,500, 40% higher than the city. Also in West Virginia 24.5% of home owners with a mortgage paid more than 30% of their monthly household income in housing costs according to the ACS.

In Richwood the remaining 26.3% of occupied units were occupied by tenants. Median monthly rent averaged \$500. In the city 52.5% of renters paid more than 30% of their household income in rent. Compared to 48.6% for the state, and 52.1% in the United States.

According to the 2012 ACS a minority of Richwood residents (41.5%), both owners and renters, have lived in their residence for more than 20 years. Whereas 28.3% of residents, both owners and renters, in West Virginia have lived in their residences for more than 20 years.

Age of Housing

One indicator of a community’s housing stock in regards to condition and value is to look at the age of the housing units. However it must be understood that many homes that were constructed decades ago are still in good shape and may be of historical significant to a community, therefore high prevalence of older housing does not suggest unequivocally that there is widespread dilapidation. However there is likely some correlation between the general



age of a community's housing stock and the prevalence of dilapidated and/or vacant structures.

United States Census Data indicates that the majority of houses in West Virginia, Nicholas County, and Richwood were built prior to 1980. 64% of houses in the state, 54% in Nicholas County and 88% in Richwood were constructed prior to 1980. Over half of Richwood's entire housing stock was built prior to 1950 (54.1%).

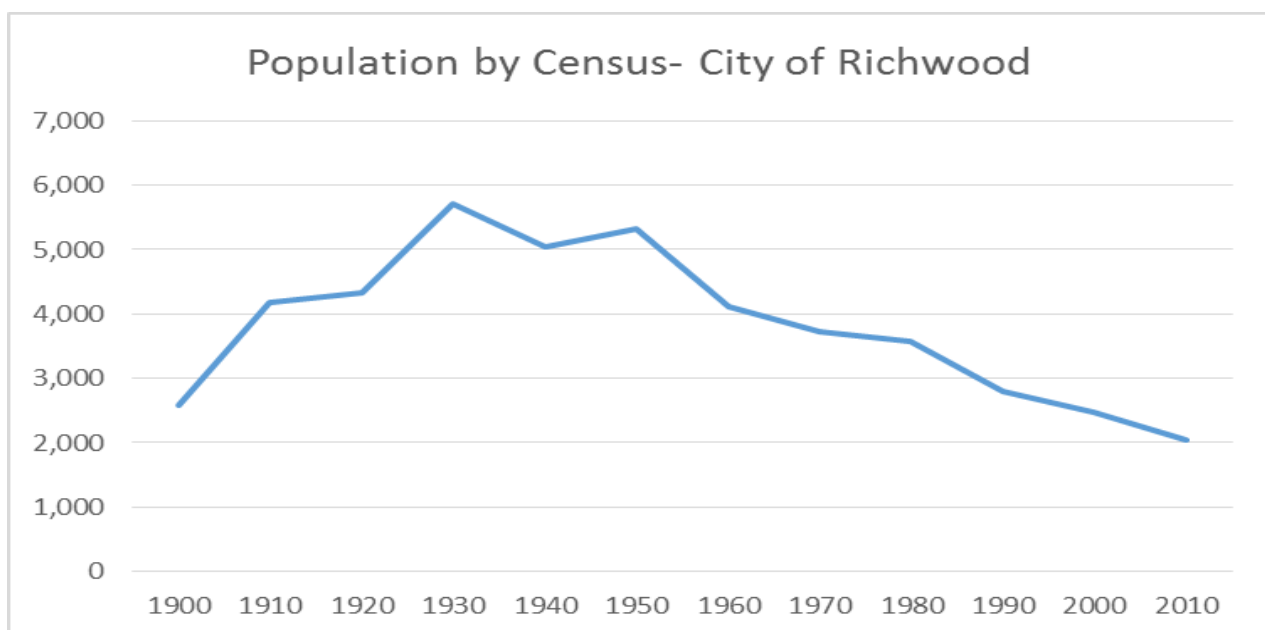
Richwood did see several structures built between 1970 and 1979. This means that a very high proportion of Richwood's housing stock is 30 years or older with a significant portion that was built over 60 years ago.

Population Profile

According to the 2010 Census the City of Richwood had a population of 2,051; the Census estimated that in 2012 that the number dropped to 2,046 and in 2013 it was 2,024. In 2010 the City had a population density of 1,274 people and 722 housing units per square mile of land.

Beginning in 1900 there was a significant increase in the population of Richwood as seen in the sharp increase between 1900 (2,588) and 1910 (4,189), which was a 38% increase in 10

Table 3– Population Trend– City of Richwood



years. Table 3 shows the population of Richwood through each census dating back to the 1900 decennial census.

Nicholas County has followed a slightly different trend in terms of population. There was considerable growth between 1890 (7,219) and 1910 (17,699) in which the population more than doubled. The population for Nicholas County hit its peak in 1980 when there were 28,126 people living in the county. The population has gradually dropped and in 2013 the county had an estimated population of 25,965.

While there are several factors that come into play when trying to make population projections, some factors are clearly outside the city's control. The WVU Business and Economics Department has projected population estimates for all the counties up through 2030. For Nicholas County there has been a very slow decline from its population apex in 1980 through 2013. The forecast calls for continued, albeit gradual, population decline through 2030 where it is estimated that the population will decrease to 24,485, a 6% decline in 27 years. (Source: West Virginia Population Projection, WVU College of Business and Economics)

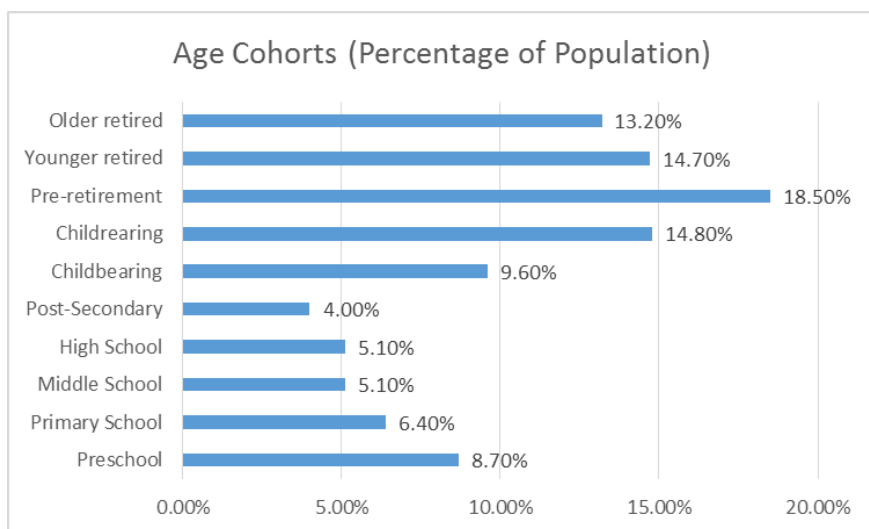
Age Distribution

The age distribution or age cohorts in part tell us who lives in our communities. The distribution can tell us if our community is an older community or a younger community. Richwood clearly has an older population with the largest cohort

Table 4– Age Distribution (by cohorts)

General Age Cohorts

- Preschool- (Under the age of 5)
- ☐ Primary School (5-9 age group)
- ☐ Middle School- (10-14 age group)
- ☐ High School- (15-19 age group)
- ☐ Post-Secondary- (20-24 age group)
- ☐ Childbearing- (25-35 age group)
- ☐ Childrearing- (35-54 age group)
- ☐ Pre-retirement- (55-64 age group)
- ☐ Younger retired- (65-74 age group)
- ☐ Older retired (75- and up age group)





being the “pre-retirement age group (55-64) which comprises of 18.5% of the population.

Median Age (2013 American Community Survey)

The median age of a resident of Richwood is 50.3 which is much higher than the median age found in the state (41.5) and the median age of Nicholas County (44.1).

Race and Gender

According to the 2013 American Community Survey 94.8% of people living in Richwood are white. 0.0% identify as Black only, and 0.5% Hispanic or Latino. 4.0% of people living in Richwood identified as being two or more races.

Nicholas County’s population consists of 98.0% white, 0.0% Black, and 0.2% Hispanic or Latino. In 2013 West Virginia had a racial breakdown as follows: 93.8% white, 3.2% black, and 1.3% Hispanic. In 2013 44.8% of the population in the city were males and 55.2% females.

Form of Government and Ancillary Services

Fire Department

There are 40 active volunteers in the Richwood Fire Department which was established in 1906. The department’s service area spans 275 miles, including mutual aid areas. In 2012 the department responded to 105 calls and in 2013 that number jumped up to 120 calls. The department owns seven engines in house with the most recent addition being a 1998 E-one Engine that was purchased in February 2014.

The department is actively looking to replace the 1978 FMC Engine and a tanker that was built by the department (300 gallon tanker).

Three top priorities for the fire department in the future are 1) to update the equipment including the hose and trucks, 2) update the city’s hydrants and supply lines, and 3) be able to keep a high number of members in the department.

City Government

The City of Richwood operates a Strong-Mayor form of government. The City Council is

comprised of 8 members elected from the wards (two from each ward) by voters of the city and each serve 4-year terms. The Mayor is elected at-large in a separate election and presides over the meetings.

There are currently a total of 22 full-time and 9 part time city employees. The following table breaks down the placement of employees into various municipal departments.

City Department	Number of Employees
Street Department	7 FT, 0 PT
Sewer Department	2 FT, 0 PT
Water Department	6 FT, 0 PT
Code Enforcement Officer	1 Volunteer
Administrative Staff	3 FT, 2 Elected Officials
Custodial	0FT, 2 PT
Police Department	1FT, 6 PT
Sanitation	3 FT, 0PT

The 2013-2014 annual budget (expenditures) for the City of Richwood totaled \$906,302, allocated as follows:

- General Government- \$258,736
- Public Safety- \$194,818
- Street and Transportation- \$187,548
- Culture & Recreation- \$20,900
- Social Services- \$300
- Capital Projects- \$0

The majority of the city's revenues during FY 2013-2014 came from the following sources:

- Property Taxes- \$97,268
- Business and Occupation Tax- \$280,000
- Excise Tax on Utilities- \$88,000
- Refuse Collection- \$249,200
- Police Protection Fees- \$43,000
- Gaming Income - \$21,000
- Franchise Fees- \$13,676



Police Department and Emergency Services

The city has an established police department that is tasked with the enforcing the laws of the city and keeping the peace. The Richwood police department consists of 1 full-time officers and has 7 police cruisers in their fleet. The operating budget during 2013-2014 for the police department is \$179,019.



Redi-Care Ambulance Service, a private company provides EMS support for the City of Richwood.

Parks and Recreation

The City maintains over 12 acres of park area within its corporate boundary. There are three (3) city-owned parks in Richwood (Dain, City, and Pratt) plus a pocket park on Main Street.

The Cranberry/Tri Rivers Rail Trail goes through the western part of the city. The Cranberry/Tri Rivers Rail Trail is currently 16.5 miles long with 11 more miles planned. The rail trails surface is packed stone and it follows the Cherry River to the confluence of the Gauley River then heads up along the Gauley into the Monongahela National Forest. Permitted uses on the trail include hiking, biking, and horseback riding.



The Richwood Public Library is located right next to City Hall. It is part of the Mountain Library Network. There are 2 full-time employees, 3 part time employees, and other volunteers, as well as a five member Board of Directors. The library is funded by the County Commission, Board of Education and Grants-in-Aid through the state.

The library provides several services and programs to thousands of community members throughout the year. Some of the services provided include computer/internet access, computer training, genealogy research, a paperback book exchange, meeting rooms, and story hour.

Public Services/Facilities

Public services and facilities typically include such things as power utilities, waste management, and water treatment and supply. These services and their corresponding facilities are extremely important to the wellbeing of a community. The City of Richwood provides many of these services for the benefit of its citizens including some living customers outside the corporate boundary.



The City provides water treatment services for citizens within the city limits as well as providing water to areas outside the corporate limits including Hinkle Mountain and Laurel Run.

The City also provides waste water treatment facilities both to citizens within the city and residents living outside the corporate limits. Trash pickup in Richwood is handled by the city and is sent to the Nicholas County Landfill located outside of Craigsville.

While there has been some discussion of curbside recycling in the city at this point the only items that can be recycled are electronic devices which the city picks up periodically throughout the year.

Educational Profile

At one time there were six (6) elementary schools in Richwood and the city had its own school district. Those schools gradually closed and now only one elementary school, Cherry River Elementary, remains. The city also has one middle school (Richwood Middle School) and one high school (Richwood High School).

Nicholas County Schools operate 15 schools (2 high schools, 2 middle schools, 10 elementary schools, and the Nicholas County Career and Technical Center).

Cherry River Elementary School currently has an enrollment of 238 students. Richwood Middle School has an enrollment of 290 students, and Richwood High School had an enrollment of 388 students.



Table 7- ACT Test Scores

ACT- Average Composite ACT Score			
Year	Nicholas County	West Virginia	National
2008	20.8	20.7	21.1
2009	21.2	20.7	21.1
2010	21.2	20.7	21
2011	21.1	20.6	21.1
2012	21.3	20.6	21.1

Richwood High School (RHS) is one of two high schools in the county. RHS is an important part of the community and has recently been recognized as a Bronze Medal School by the U.S. News and World Report, making it one of the top schools in the state. This is an amazing

achievement considering that towards the end of 2010 RHS was identified as a “persistently lowest-achieving school” by the WV Department of Education, putting it in the lowest 5% of secondary schools in the state.

The school received a federal “School Improvement Grant” which has been a catalyst for several school programs and initiatives that have been used to turn Richwood High School from one of the lowest performing schools in the state into a nationally recognized school.

Seven (7) schools in Nicholas County were designated as Title I Schools during the 2013-2014 school year. This program, authorized by Congress, provides supplemental funds to school districts to assist schools with the highest student concentrations of poverty to meet school educational goals.

Table 6—WESTEST2 Scores

	WESTEST2 (2012)			
	% of Students Proficient			
	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies
West Virginia	48.42	46.54	40.73	36.79
Richwood HS	50.0	40.5	42.15	40.74
Richwood MS (6 th grade)	49.5	40.4	45.0	31.5
Cherry River ES (3 rd grade)	36.1	41.7	36.1	30.6

The average composite ACT Score for Nicholas County Students is highlighted in the chart. Nicholas County students have consistently scored higher than the state’s average composite score and have scored near or above the national composite score averages.

According to the district profile from the West Virginia Department of Education there were 4,100 students enrolled in Nicholas County Schools in 2013. The average class size of 18.2

students per class in Nicholas County was lower than the state average of 19.3 students per class.

In 2011, the student/teacher ratio for Nicholas County Schools was 16.1:1 while the state ratio was 13.9:1, however the county ratio was down to 15.3:1 in 2012.

As a supplement to the Richwood schools the Family Center of Richwood provides an after school program which is usually free of charge and which provides children with homework help, arts & crafts, computer usage, and snacks foods. During the summer months the center offers day camps and has a certified teacher on staff who can also mentor GED students.

Transportation Profile

Air Travel

The Richwood Municipal Airport is a public airport that services the City of Richwood and surrounding areas. The City of Richwood created an authority to operate the airport. The airport has a 3,360 x 60 foot asphalt runway. The airport primarily services local clientele but it is also used for small planes for emergency landings. The airport averages 75 aircraft operations per month (61% local general aviation, 39% transient aviation) and there are 8 aircraft based on the field.

There are plans of adding a runway which will run north-south. It has been indicated that a new tractor mower, painting and trim equipment, fuel for local planes, one of the hangers needs to be replaced, and the runway needs to be resurfaced.

There is also one heliport in the City, which is located in “The Bottoms” area of Richwood.

There is also an airport in Summersville which has a 3,015 x 50 foot asphalt runway and averages 44 aircraft operations per week.

The closest large-scale airport is Charleston’s Yeager Airport which is a regional airport that offers scheduled flights to hubs including Atlanta, Dallas, Chicago, and Washington, DC.





Boating

People are often seen kayaking the Cherry River right through Richwood. However the river is only navigable for kayakers during certain times of the year. Boaters often put their kayaks in at the Comstock Bridge or the Weber City Bridge and ride downstream. The Cherry River is not navigable for larger vessels and there is no port in the area.

Vehicles

The main road through Richwood is Route 55/39 which traverses in a general east-west direction. Back in the early 1900s citizens of the Richwood worked tirelessly to get a road constructed over the mountains to Marlinton. In fact the Cherry River Navy was originally established to bring attention to the cause. They were successful and Route 55/39 winds through the Monongahela National Forest from Richwood over to Marlinton. While the route serves as an important passage for commerce it is truly a remarkable and scenic drive that also connects Richwood to the Cranberry Glades Botanical Area.

The lack of an Interstate or U.S. Highway in close proximity to the city hinders progress for Richwood. The closest Interstate is I-64 which is approximately 40 miles and one hour from Richwood. The closest US Route is Route 19 near Summersville, which is approximately 25 miles away. This relative remoteness should not be seen as a complete detriment. Much of the allure and appeal of Richwood is that it is off the “beaten path” and in all directions there are beautiful and scenic areas.

Within the city the street system is laid out to fit the terrain but follows a general grid street pattern. Two bridges connect the north and south portions of Richwood, which is bisected by the Cherry River.

In terms of costs, the city spent \$187,548 during FY 2013-2014 on streets and transportation projects which amounts to 21% of Richwood’s entire budget.

Rail

The railroad was of great importance to Richwood in its industrial and manufacturing zenith. Because of the timber industry, large tannery, clothespin factory, and all the other manufacturing and industrial companies located in Richwood the rail was essential for trade and commerce during the Twentieth Century. Because many of those factories closed down the rail lost much of its importance during the 1960s and 1970s.

There are currently no active rail lines that go through Richwood. The city is looking to utilize

old rail lines to establish a rail trail that would go into the heart of the city. The city would be looking to extend the Cranberry/Tri Rivers Rail Trail system which is already in place in parts of the city. At this point the trail stops within the city limits near Mumsey's Iron Skillet Restaurant. The city would like to continue the rail trail into the city all the way to the train depot which is situated close to the historic downtown area.

Bicycle

While the Cranberry-/Tri River Rail Trail offers an excellent bike route through a portion of the city there are other routes in and around the city which also offer citizens and visitors a safe and beautiful bike ride. Some good bicycle areas include Route 55 towards Marlinton, the Highland Scenic Highway (Route 150), and within the city a nice route exists along Dogway Road.

Public Transit

The Mountain Transit Authority operates public transportation in Nicholas, Fayette, Webster, and Greenbrier Counties. There is currently one scheduled route that goes from Summersville to Richwood with various stops in between. There are two buses which travel that route (one bus in the morning and one bus in the afternoon). All the MTA buses are compliant with the ADA and run Monday-Friday.

Intermodal Transportation

Intermodal Transportation involves more than one form of carrier such as rail, truck, air, or ship. In Richwood there is no active rail, air, or navigable ports therefore goods will have to come into the city by vehicle. There is very little to no intermodal transportation occurring in Richwood now, whereas when the railroad was active intermodal transportation was commonplace.

City of Richwood



Comprehensive Plan

Chapter 3: Needs Assessment



Needs Assessment Overview

One of the more important exercises related to the Richwood Comprehensive Plan is the identification of the city's critical issues. The planning commission, through the comprehensive plan process, has identified the most pressing needs of the community which need to be addressed in order for the community to achieve its overall vision for the future. While Chapter 2 showed a "current snapshot" of Richwood in terms of housing, economic development, education, and land use this chapter identifies some of the most critical issues facing Richwood now and in the near future.



In order to identify the most pressing community needs the planning commission has tried to elicit public participation by holding open houses, distributing stakeholder surveys, developing a Facebook page, going to the Richwood High School community engagement nights, talking to high school students in civics class, and participating in other community functions.

The goal of the Chapter 3- Needs Assessment is to identify the most critical or pressing needs facing Richwood. Then in the Chapter 4- Action Plan we will address those critical needs by developing goals, objectives, and specific action steps. Additionally in Chapter 4 we will develop an implementation matrix which will prioritize the goals, objectives, and action steps.

Issues of Importance

Throughout the comprehensive plan process the planning commission has identified, with the help of the community, several issues facing Richwood. The city should focus on the most pressing, albeit manageable, issues to conserve the city's scarce resources. Therefore the planning commission has identified five (5) major issues of importance: 1) Economic Development, 2) Housing, 3) Transportation, 4) Infrastructure, and 5) Land Use. These issues are broad and have various sub-issues that are more discrete and discernable.

Input from Citizens

The importance of allowing the public to participate throughout the comprehensive plan process



cannot be overstated. While public participation is required during the comprehensive plan process, the Richwood Planning Commission went beyond the statutorily required minimum for public participation to include a multi-faceted approach which encouraged community members to be active participants in the development of the comprehensive plan.

One of the first activities of the planning commission during the comprehensive plan process was to hold an open house in the Spring of 2013. The open house was held in the J.H. Meadows Municipal Center. A flyer was created and distributed throughout the community that gave the date, time, and place. The open house was well attended with well over 30 members of public attending and providing input. By holding an open house early in the process, the planning commission learned of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Richwood from the citizen's perspective. The planning commission also sought input with regard to establishing a vision statement that would be the basis for all of the planning commission's work.

The planning commission also created custom stakeholder surveys for various people and organizations to get specific input. Over 20 stakeholder surveys were distributed.

The planning commission, with the assistance of the WVU College of Law's Land Use and Sustainable Development Law Clinic ("Land Use Clinic"), also circulated a mini-questionnaire to parents attending the high school's community engagement night. The questionnaire contained only 4 questions, including whether the citizens were aware of land use and revitalization efforts in Richwood. A large majority (83%) of the respondents either answered "very aware" or "somewhat aware."



Attending the community engagement night was important for a few reasons, first it provided another forum to obtain public input which helped identify issues facing Richwood. Secondly the planning commission was able to reach people that may not normally be present at typical planning commission meetings. In order to reach some people the planning commission realized that it had to go out into the community and actively seek input from community members.

Another useful public participation strategy included establishing a Facebook page specifically for the Richwood comprehensive plan. Having a Facebook page dedicated to the comprehensive plan process proved useful to distribute pictures and to inform the community about upcoming meetings and events. The Land Use Clinic also visited two civics classes at Richwood High School to solicit their thoughts on Richwood and its future. The planning commission believes that it is important to capture the youth's perspective when updating or completing a comprehensive plan because they are the ones that in 10-15 years will be making decisions as to whether to stay or leave Richwood.

Vision

Developing the vision is one of the more important initial steps that a community can take during the comprehensive plan process. The vision provides the overarching statement that will lead the community into the future. Whenever goals, objectives, and specific action steps are discussed, the vision should be a consideration as to what direction the community should take. The planning commission considered all public input in developing the following vision statement:

“Richwood will be a safe, healthy, attractive destination for tourists and residents, with supporting businesses and venues.”

Economic Development

Lack of economic development opportunities in Richwood is generally considered the most pressing issue facing Richwood. No one “magic” fix exists, but rather a multi-pronged approach with collaboration from various groups and agencies, including the Richwood Chamber of Commerce and the Richwood Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) works best.

A few large employers remain in the area, such as Collins Hardwood, which employs approximately 120-150 people, Laurel Creek Hardwood, employing over 50 people, the nursing home (100 employees), and the B/E Aerospace plant in Fenwick, which employs dozens of people. However the area continues to lack full-time, year round work.

A few grassroots initiatives currently exist that may be able to help kick start small-scale economic development in Richwood. One initiative, “trythiswv.com”, is “grounded in the socio-ecological model of health promotion.”

The city seeks to promote healthy living by developing raised community gardens, among other initiatives. The city’s FEMA mitigation lots, already restricted from residential or commercial development, provide potential sites. Additionally the Richwood Pantry received a mini-grant to develop education for healthy living in Richwood.



Niche Markets

Motorcycle Tourism

Many motorcyclists pass through Richwood as they ride on Route 39/55. However, the motorcyclists largely fail to stop in Richwood. The city needs to create incentives for the motorcycle riders to stop and see what the city has to offer, relax, grab a bite to eat and take



in some entertainment.

The lack of public restroom facilities for visitors/ motorcyclists which are accessible and visible from the road hinders the effort to have visitors stop in the city. A kiosk with information materials available 24 hours a day would aid the effort.

“Rider Friendly Business Association” completed a study which indicates that motorcyclists need to stop, on average, every 2 to 3 hours for fuel. Often when they stop for fuel they also purchase a beverage and/or snack.

The study also suggested that there are three things motorcycle tourists look for in place to stop:

1. Outdoor dining
2. Covered parking
3. Music and entertainment

Motorcyclists often are more likely to stop at road side attractions, and visitor’s centers that are clearly marked and visible. Since 2003 the number of motorcycles owned and used in America has grown 19 percent. It is also noted that motorcycle tourists’ median household income is almost \$9,000 more than the typical American which means a greater likelihood of disposable income.

The city should create reasons and opportunities for the motorcyclists to stop in Richwood. The city, in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce and the CVB, need to market the city and the surrounding areas an enjoyable area to take a ride and then stop in Richwood and eat, rest, and take in some live entertainment.

The marketing should go hand in hand with creation or establishing of amenities for the bikers. For example the West Virginia Department of Tourism published the “Ride the High Five” which gives motorcycle riders a list of biker friendly routes in Grant, Hardy, Hampshire, Mineral, and Pendleton Counties. This in-depth pamphlet lays out different routes and directions as well as providing a route map of the entire region. Something similar could be completed for Richwood and the surrounding region.

The city should encourage and sponsor charitable events such as poker runs and motorcycle rallies that are appropriate and family-friendly. The proceeds of which could go to the purchasing of playground equipment or fire and EMS vehicles for instance.

Arts Community and Small Scale Entrepreneurial Enterprises

Throughout the comprehensive plan process many people have discussed their desire to see Richwood become more of an “Arts Community.” The downtown murals and the storefront paintings already give the city an artistic feel. The city should continue to encourage the arts and artists to relocate or establish their business to the city.

Work with groups such as Sustainable Mission Partners or Richwood Creations to encourage the establishment of local small-market businesses which utilize existing resources such as local timber.

The city should also encourage the repurposing of one of the empty buildings in town for light manufacturing or the establishment of a micro- or nano-brewery or other entrepreneurial enterprises.

Celebrate Richwood's History and Culture

Part of Richwood's charm is its almost unparalleled history as a booming timber town in West Virginia during the early part of the 20th Century. The city needs to celebrate Richwood's rich and storied history and culture.

Richwood, in its prime, had very few empty storefronts and Friday nights in Richwood were especially busy as people came from all over the region to shop.

While things are unlikely to go back to what they once were the city needs to promote some of what makes Richwood different than any other city or town in West Virginia. Richwood has the longest continually operating sawmill in West Virginia (Collins Hardwood). At one time Richwood also had the world's largest clothespin factory and one of the state's largest tanneries.

The Cherry River Navy (CRN) is a unique organization that is certain to pique tourists' interests. The CRN was originally initiated to bring attention for the need to build a road from Richwood to Marlinton. While the construction of the road (current Route 55) took several years, the CRN was successful in getting their objectives completed. The CRN is now relegated to special events and has a ship named the SS Mop Swab. A more visible presence of the CRN would give people a first look at an organization with an ingenious marketing idea and a fascinating and unique history.



Another concept that Richwood could promote is its old historic neighborhoods. Many people might be surprised to find out that Richwood is really a collection of several small neighborhoods many of which had their own churches and school houses as well as identity. The city should promote these historic neighborhoods including demarcating them with signage and creating educational materials which explain and give a brief history of the different neighborhoods.



One way to celebrate Richwood's culture and heritage is to continue to hold and expand on annual events. There are already several annual events that are aimed at promoting Richwood's culture and history. The following is a list of community events that are already organized and ongoing within Richwood:

1. Scenic Mountain Triathlon (Summit Lake area)- the longest running sanctioned triathlon in West Virginia.
2. Mountain Color Fine Arts Show (October)
3. Ramp Festival (75 years since it started)
4. Cherry River Festival (August)
5. "Past 80 Party" (June)

Resources may limit expansion of events or creation of others, but the city should encourage the expansion of these events as much as time and resources permit. Some citizens suggested more 5K/10K runs. Not only running events encourage physical fitness, but if properly advertised and strategically scheduled, people will travel to Richwood to participate in the event, marketing the city further.

The city should encourage and collaborate with local business owners and organizations to hold more small events for community members. One example of a smaller community-focused event is the Richwood High School Community Engagement Night. This event is held annually and showcases the many wonderful talents that students at RHS possess.

An opportunity exists to have concerts downtown and in local parks. Local musicians already play in some concerts at the pocket park on Main Street. The city should encourage more of this type of family entertainment. Free movie night at the park or even using the side of one the downtown buildings as a screen may also encourage people come together and recreate as a community at little to no cost.

Facelift/ Downtown Revitalization

Many people throughout the comprehensive plan process have commented that Richwood needs a "facelift." Most of those comments were in regards to the abandoned and dilapidated structures found throughout Richwood but some of the comments were directed towards inoperable vehicles and deteriorating infrastructure.

The city needs to review the state code enabling authority and processes by which inoperable

vehicles and abandoned vehicles may be removed within the corporate limits. These cars can be considered a nuisance and unsafe, and can harbor vermin. The city should create a list of all the vehicles that may be subject to towing/demolition and prioritize the list as well as allocate sufficient funds to deal with the vehicles.

The city should work with the Richwood CVB- Main Street Beautification Team to address the downtown area. While some downtowns have lost their importance and visibility due to alternative road construction, Richwood's downtown continues to be the center of community activities and functions.

Some suggestions include a façade improvement program. However no discussion of whether the guidelines would be optional or mandatory has taken place. The city officials would need to identify where the façade program would be applicable or whether it would be community-wide. A façade improvement program would also require the establishment of certain standards that will be recommended or required. What type of architecture is the city trying to accomplish? Is the city trying to encourage general façade improvements or does the city want a certain type of architectural style?

A voluntary program should incentivize business owners by giving them tax breaks or other concessions within the limits of the law.

The city can also invest in planters and street trees in the downtown and various other places around the city. This investment should be done strategically and with some knowledge of what species of trees and flowers would work in the cityscape. Some trees are ideal for planting along the street with their root system, others will uproot sidewalks and roads or drop nuts/berries. The same sort of research needs to go into the planters the city needs to find flowers and shrubs that not only bring aesthetic appeal but also are hardy and can withstand infrequent watering and full sunlight.

The various building murals provide a unique ambience to the downtown. These paintings bring the buildings to life and tell a story of the community in a very large and visual way. These murals are very important to keep and maintain. A list of any other buildings that might be appropriate for new murals should be created by the city, possible the CVB Beautification Team.

One other idea for public art suggests that a group such as the art class at Richwood High

Case Study– Clemson Paw Prints

As you drive into Clemson, SC on Old Greenville Highway not far from the famed Death Valley Football Stadium, one notices a unique design painted on the road. It is the Clemson University logo, its orange paw print. Found right in the middle of the campus this signifies that this is "Tiger Country" and exudes school spirit in a fun, unique, and relatively inexpensive way.



School paint big timber axes coming into Richwood on Main Street from both directions. The identity of Richwood High School and the lumberjack to the community is strong. Painting the timber axes on Main Street to let people coming into town know that this is “lumberjack country” would be an inexpensive and unique way to show community pride. The city would need to work with Department of Highway officials to make sure this is permitted before anything is painted on the road.

Recycling Program

One thing mentioned along with revitalizing and cleaning up the city was to initiate a more robust recycling program. As of February 2015 the only recycling streams were for tires and electronic waste. However the city collects bulk goods such as household appliances which are eventually transported to metal re-claimers.

The city’s sanitation committee is in discussions to implement curbside recycling for municipal customers. While the logistics and costs need to be discussed, the city should strongly consider and promote this project, if feasible. If the city is to implement a curbside recycling program, the key is to make it as convenient as possible to the customers and to provide information on why recycling is important for Richwood. If the program is only seen as an additional cost and an inconvenience it is not likely to be successful and/or accepted.

Currently, all sanitation services for citizens and the immediately surrounding areas is operated by the city. Customers are invoiced for services on the water bill each month.

Empty Buildings/Storefronts

Revitalization of the downtown includes a reduction in the number of empty, yet structurally viable, storefronts downtown. The question is how to bring in business to Richwood. Part of the issue is market-related supply and demand, but that does not mean that the community cannot facilitate and encourage economic growth.

The CVB Main Street Beautification Team has already placed paintings in some of the empty storefronts. This group is also instrumental in refreshing the downtown murals and featured a window decorating contest. With the assistance of RHS students, the Beautification Team also completed a general cleanup of the downtown.



The city needs to continue to work with the CVB Beautification Team and emphasize the utilization of the downtown storefronts.

Creation of an inventory of the empty storefronts and identification of the owners provides a good first step in this process and gives the city a better sense of the extent of the problem. The city could work with the identified storefront owners and encourage them to utilize the property, whether by leasing the property, turning some of the properties into housing rentals, or in some cases, when mutually beneficial, turning the property over to the city or non-profit to be used for municipal or community-driven purposes.

Telework and the Internet

One concept that holds promise for Richwood as well as the rest of West Virginia is Telework. The idea is simple, people like to visit this region of West Virginia because it is beautiful and because there are plenty of places to whitewater raft, hike, mountain bike, rock climb, fish, hunt, camp, etc. However these people typically have to go back to larger population centers to earn a living. Telework makes it possible for people who want to earn a good living move closer to the place where they like to spend their free time. The New River Gorge and Richwood area are both prime areas for relocation if high-speed internet infrastructure were in place.

BridgeValley Community and Technical College (formerly Bridgemont Community and Technical College) based out of Montgomery, WV has recently established the “Telework West Virginia” initiative which is aimed to advance statewide telework, and in the long-term, “build a data repository that helps match prospective employees and employers, regardless of their physical locations” as noted by Holly Clark who is the Distance Learning Program Director for the College.

A state-wide kickoff event occurred in 2013 in Charleston and Ansted Mayor Pete Hobbs has been a catalyst for the initiative since he was a telecommuter with AT&T for several years. Richwood officials have been meeting with representatives of “Telework West Virginia” and continuing the work of promoting telework in the New River Gorge and Richwood areas. The city should continue to be an active participant in the telework initiatives around the state. The Telework West Virginia initiative will likely take time so the city needs to stay involved for the long haul. As communities’ and officials lose interest or become involved in other ventures Richwood needs to show they are committed to this project through completion and lobby for broadband to be laid throughout the city. Having high speed internet would be a huge



marketing tool for the city.

Develop a Municipal Website

In order to effectively communicate with citizens, business owners, potential tourists, staff, local leaders, and other stakeholders the city must find a cost effective way to quickly and efficiently disseminate data. Establishment and maintenance of a municipal website aids this effort.



The city should identify why it needs to create and maintain a municipal website. Some commonly noted reasons for cities to have their own websites include that the website can be used to disseminate information about upcoming meetings, post meeting minutes on the website, posting information on community events, and to provide contact information for the different municipal departments/officials.

The level of detail and amount of information found on a municipal website can vary depending on resources, and staff's time and expertise. It is important to note that a municipal website could also be a powerful economic development tool.

The city must budget for anticipated costs of establishing and maintaining the website. Private companies may be hired to design and maintain websites for the city.

Focus on outdoor recreation tourism

While it is important for the city to promote and encourage businesses that operate within the city it also needs to promote outdoor recreation businesses that might be headquartered in the city but operate primarily outside the city limits.

Some of the potential activities that might work in the Richwood area are mule teams, backpacking, horseback riding, mountain biking, hunting, fishing, kayaking, and camping. With both mule teams and horseback riding the animals could be brought in by trailer to the trailhead of the Cranberry/Tri Rivers Rail Trail. Adequate parking for truck and trailer



must be provided. The Cranberry/Tri Rivers Rail Trail, which goes through the western part of the city along the Cherry River to the Gauley, allows for equestrian traffic.

With the assistance of the CVB, the Chamber of Commerce should encourage and promote activities these activities, all of which can be enjoyed in or within a short distance of the City.



ATVs

The city needs to continue to explore the possibility of establishing an ATV trail network in a similar way as what has been done with the Hatfield and McCoy ATV trail in the southern part of the state.

The city, as well as Nicholas County, has contributed several thousand dollars that helped supplement a US EPA site assessment grant that was used to complete a feasibility study as to whether or not the area could support an ATV recreational area. The feasibility study was completed by Burning Rock Outdoor Adventure Park management in conjunction with the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority. The study suggested that a full ATV park in the Richwood area would cost approximately \$1.3 Million. The potential sites include the old Richwood municipal dump. The city should continue to encourage the possible development of an ATV trail system in and around the city and look for possible funding sources to complete a trail system/park.

Encourage more B & B's or hotels

Establishing any of the niche markets or sustainable tourism in Richwood requires adequate lodging accommodations in the city. Overnight accommodations prove especially important. Richwood currently has one B & B operator and no hotel/motels within the city limits. Having additional overnight accommodations would facilitate the development of the motorcycle, mountain bike, and ATV industries as well as all the other outdoor recreational activities. The city should work with the Chamber, CVB and any interested developers or property owners and encourage this type of development.

One way to address two issues simultaneously is to take a vacant or moderately dilapidated structure and incentivize remodeling the structure so that it could be a bed and breakfast or short term (weekly) rental for tourists.



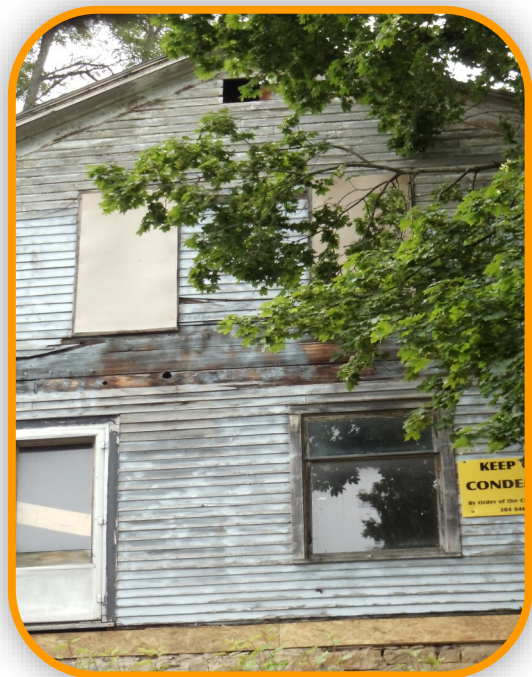
Housing

Housing was the most frequently discussed issue in Richwood throughout the comprehensive plan process. Most comments were centered on the prevalence of abandoned and dilapidated structures found in Richwood. While several abandoned and dilapidated commercial and industrial structures exist, the majority of these abandoned and dilapidated buildings in the city consist of single-family residential structures. The city must address abandoned and dilapidated structures not only for health and safety reasons but also for aesthetics and appeal for prospective business owners and people wanting to retire or recreate in the city.

While new residential development in Richwood has been limited in the last several years, the city should identify areas that might be appropriate for new residential development. Very little land in Richwood was identified as undeveloped or rural in nature. Most of the remaining undeveloped land within the current corporate boundary lies within the floodplain or along a steep slope. While these areas are not precluded from being developed, practical and regulatory issues largely prevent new development in these areas.

Some discussions with a developer focused a portion of the south side of Maple Avenue being subdivided and developed into single family residences. However those plans fell through. Concerns about developing on the south side of Maple include the steep slopes. The question that needs to be considered is whether the city wants to encourage development in an area with steep slopes and which has a very narrow road (Maple Avenue).

If structurally sound the city may want to consider encouraging terraced apartments that are nestled on the hillside that have a nice view of Richwood and the rest of the valley.



Another area that was discussed for residential development is the area between the BFG building and the Cherry River which is currently undeveloped, however much of that area is within the Special Flood Hazard Area (AKA the floodplain).

Few undeveloped and buildable areas in Richwood remain and many of these areas are probably better served as open space. This means that the community should encourage redevelopment,

renovation and adaptive reuse.

Redevelopment of dilapidated properties and structures

The planning commission discussed several specific areas/structures for redevelopment. Over 100 identified dilapidated structures, many of them abandoned, exist within the city. The Watergate Motel, which is currently vacant and in the floodplain, formed the focus of much discussion during the planning process. Several other identified areas with clusters of abandoned or dilapidated structures exist in the city.

The adoption of building and property maintenance codes forms a key strategy to address abandoned and dilapidate structures. The city has already adopted the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) 2012 edition but not the building code. At the moment, the city is using a licensed/certified inspector, shared with the City of Summersville. Richwood should continue to enforce the IPMC to the fullest extent possible.

The city possesses a finite amount of resources to address abandoned and dilapidated properties. Therefore the city should create a prioritization list using a set of criteria to rank the properties as to which properties are the most important to rehabilitate or demolish. Prioritization ensures that resources are allocated to those properties most in need.

Renovation

In some cases renovation or remodeling of abandoned or dilapidated structures makes economic sense. These options should especially be the focus with historic structures. The city should encourage renovation whenever possible, and the city should assist willing property owners in locating tax credits or grant programs that will supplement their projects.

Adaptive Reuse

Many structures in the downtown area should be redeveloped, most notably the Bank Building and the Old Dominion Hope Building. Both buildings are historically significant and many community members would like to see these buildings prominently utilized, possibly through adaptive reuse. Adaptive reuse consists of repurposing structures, enabling a use different from the original use. The city should also encourage residential over or behind businesses, especially in the downtown area.

In addition to developing a prioritization list for abandoned and dilapidated structures, the city should also analyze projected housing needs. Demand for rental properties may increase in



upcoming years, particularly for the oil/gas workers that may be in the city temporarily. Identifying how the city should address a sudden influx of temporary residents poses an important issue for city officials to confront in the near future.

Richwood likely contains a sufficient number of housing units for the near future since the population of the city has been on the decline for the last several decades. However, the demand for temporary housing will likely increase as workers migrate to the area for the oil/gas industry jobs. It may be that while the total number of housing units does not need to be decreased, the types/ diversity of housing units available may need to be expanded to include more starter houses, short- and long-term rentals, apartments, and accessible.



Transportation

Transportation is an important part of any city's infrastructure and the costs to build and maintain infrastructure related to transportation is often a sizeable portion of any local government's budget. Richwood contains a fairly simple grid street layout that is interrupted by the Cherry River, which divides the city in half. Main Street (Route 39/55) is the main thoroughfare through Richwood and has recently been milled and resurfaced.

Because of inclement weather, age, flooding, standing water, and topography, many of Richwood's roads are in need of repair. When the Land Use Clinic representatives visited RHS the students outlined several areas that either needed repairs to sidewalks or roads.

The city could implement a capital improvement plan (CIP) to systematically address streets and sidewalks. A CIP provides structure, prioritization, and identifies the means of financing infrastructure projects. The CIP should be a straightforward easy-to-use plan that provides guidance to the city as to which municipal projects should be completed by a certain time frame and how the city is going to fund each of the projects.

Bicycles

As with most communities, the ability to bicycle in the city varies greatly. No dedicated bicycle lanes exist on any of the municipal roads, but some streets experience low traffic flows and

bicycling can be done fairly safely if following proper rules. The Cranberry/Tri Rivers Rail Trail, which lies partially in Richwood, provides a good place for bicycling. This Rail Trail follows the Cherry River several miles west all the way to the confluence of the Cherry and the Gauley Rivers, at which point it starts to follow the Gauley up into the Monongahela National Forest.



The city has tried to purchase or lease the land that extends from the place the Cranberry/Tri Rivers Rail Trail ends into the downtown area near the old railroad depot. By acquiring or leasing the land to extend the Rail Trail into the downtown, people could travel through many parts of the city that are currently not safely accessible by bicycle. The city should continue to work with property owners and the Tri-Rivers Rail Trail stewards to establish the trail further into the city.

A bike lane alongside Route 39/55 towards Marlinton would bring serious bike enthusiasts to this beautiful and scenic roadway. The elevation adds to the challenge of cycling through the Cranberry Glades to Marlinton.

Parking

While parking was not cited as a major concern in Richwood, citizens identified some parking-related issues.

The lack of on-street parking in some areas of the city represented one common theme. Areas such as Alumni Hall, Walnut Street, Cranberry Street, Park Place and Riverside Drive all experience a lack of parking options. The issue primarily relates to a lack of space for off-street parking on many residential lots. Where there are opportunities to widen the roads, this option should be considered as a possible capital improvement to allow for on-street parking and the safe flow of traffic.

Citizens expressed concerns with parking during annual events held downtown such as the Cherry River Festival. The city should work with the organizers of the festivals including the Feast of the Ramps and the Cherry River Festival to devise ways to ensure adequate parking and flow of traffic. The city wants to encourage people to attend these events, however lack of



parking and difficulty of access may serve to discourage participation in these events. The city may need to develop a parking and traffic plan for special events.

Also identified was the lack of parking in the downtown area due to businesses, especially those along Main Street, which lacked off-street parking. A municipal lot on Main Street would supplement the limited on-street parking currently located on Main Street. The city should identify areas that could be used for parking and speak with business owners to gain insight as to the location and size of a municipal lot.

Pedestrians

Pedestrian issues include the need for more street lights and the lack of sidewalks in some areas of the city. Riverside Drive between the bridge and Greenbrier Street is considered dangerous for pedestrians. However, no other crossing for the Cherry River exists other than the bridge, which is very narrow.

The city has discussed the possibility of building a pedestrian bridge across the Cherry River that would connect both parts of the city. The city should continue to pursue the pedestrian bridge project to provide a safe route for pedestrians and help promote walking and exercise.

The city should start to prioritize the areas that either need sidewalks or need to repair the sidewalks through a CIP.

Airport

The Richwood Municipal Airport needs the runway to be resurfaced. In addition, one of the hangers needs to be replaced and an additional hanger space built. Painting and striping equipment as well as mower and trim equipment were all needs identified by the Director of the Airport in the Stakeholder Survey.

Infrastructure

Updated, dependable, and efficient water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure facilities prove vital not only for economic development purposes but also for water quality, flood control, citizen's health, and protection of the area's natural resources.

Water

Richwood's current water treatment plant [WTP] is a mid-1960s facility with some of the distribution system dating back 113 years. The plant desperately needs significant improvements or replacement. The city will spend approximately \$100,000+ on some minor refurbishment work as part of the Hinkle Mountain / Little Laurel extension project in the near future. Funding for that project should be in place by 2016.

The city is working to select an engineering firm to assist with leak detection and targeted repairs of the water distribution system. A significant water loss due to leaks in the system likely exists. At least four water main breaks have occurred along Main Street since the city repaved the street in the fall of 2013. These leaks may provide a good indicator that the distribution system is in need of overall repairs.

All three municipal water-storage tanks are in need of inspection, cleaning, and painting. Additionally the city needs stationary emergency-backup generating capability (300 kva, minimum) to operate the plant when main electrical utilities are down. The costs of such a system was estimated at \$85,000.00 in 2012. This estimate excluded installation and switch gears.

Fortunately, the city's water treatment facility contains adequate capacity. However, the city should ensure that the system is efficient and that citizens receive clean water at a reasonable rate. The city should clean out the reservoir periodically. The last cleaning occurred 10 years ago, cleaning should be done more frequently. The city also needs water systems operators to run the water treatment system.

Sewer

The municipal sewage system is also in need of





replacement/repairs. The treatment facility was built in 1965 and has become outdated. The facility was originally designed for .5 million gpd (gallons per day), but routinely treats 1 million gpd. The city has recently completed some emergency repairs on a main clarifier which cost approximately \$160,000 to complete. However, more long-term issues remain.

Because of the sewage plant's age and the fact that it is operating overcapacity, the plant needs to be replaced with an SBR (sequential batch reactor) style waste water treatment plant [WWTP]. The city presented a funding package to the Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council (IJDC) over 10 years ago. However, nothing has been approved. The breaking of sewage lines, along the Cherry River, indicate that this project should be of high priority.

The replacement costs will likely exceed \$4 million, with the collection system being the most costly component. The city also needs a stationary emergency backup generator (~70 kva) to operate the WWTP in power outage events.

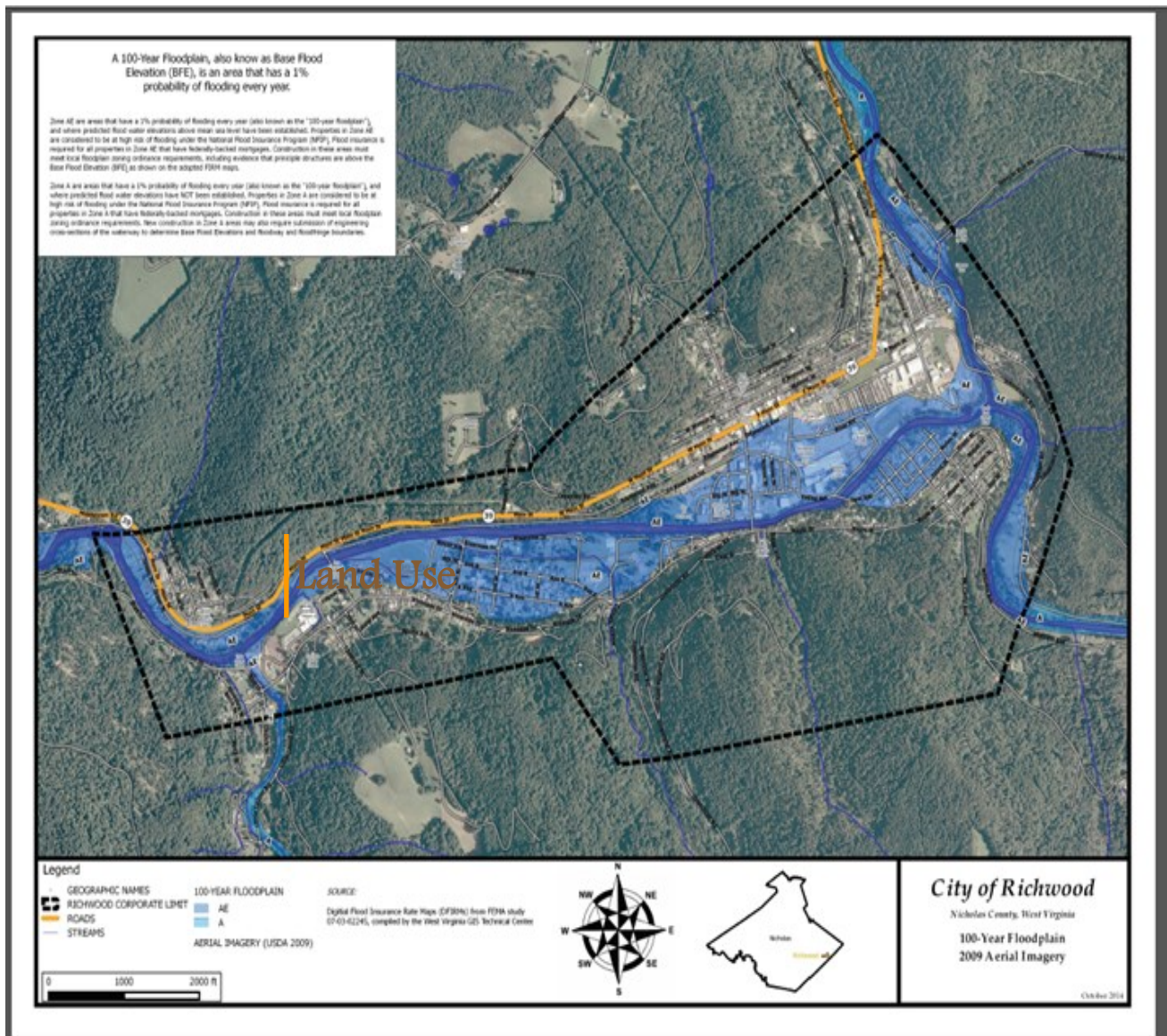
Stormwater/flooding concerns

With a river bisecting the city and a significant portion of Richwood situated in the Special Flood Hazard Area (AKA floodplain), flood events and damage from flooding form a constant concern. Concerns also exist with respect to damage resulting from stormwater runoff. Stormwater has caused damage to buildings in the city, particularly along the north side of Main Street.

In 2003 and 2004 the city separated the sewage and stormwater drains on Oakford and Railroad Avenues to prevent combined sewer overflows (CSOs). However many drains are still combined and the city must prioritize and address this issue.

During or directly after a rain event, some areas within the city contain standing water. The city is currently working with experts from West Virginia University on various stormwater issues. Actions include a survey and an inventory of some of the areas that typically have standing water issues.

The city should consider implementing a stormwater management plan. This plan will allow the city to think strategically about how to address complex and multi-faceted stormwater issues and to identify what the short and long-term goals are of the community. It is also essential that the city protect the open spaces near the waterways and try to maintain the riparian buffers that can currently be found along many parts of the Cherry River in Richwood.



Land Use

The comprehensive plan process identified many land use issues. While much of the allure of Richwood arises from the land within and surrounding the city, the land also limits what can be done in regards to land use initiatives. Much of the city either lies within the Special Flood Hazard Area or contains relatively steep slopes. Areas directly adjacent to the city include similar features. These characteristics are not unique to Richwood but limit what the city can do in regards to land use and future development. Specific issues arising during the process include the historic district, floodplain management, and possible annexation.



Protection of Open Space

It is imperative that Richwood protect and maintain its parks and open spaces throughout the city, with special attention paid to lands adjacent to the Cherry River. The City should also encourage the establishment of additional recreational areas and green space. Richwood depends on natural resources and scenic areas which can be found within and in areas surrounding the city. Therefore special attention needs to be paid towards protecting these assets. The city should also work with Nicholas County to promote a more regional approach to land management and protection of the area's natural resources.



The Historic District

Richwood already contains a historic district, designated by the National Park Service in 2000. The designated historic district lies along Main Street between White Avenue and Oakford Avenue. Suggestions include the extension of the historic district to continue along Main Street eastward and partially up Park Place to encompass the historic structures in that area.

The city should consider the possibility of extending the historic designation to other parts of the city. However when those discussions take place, the property owners of the areas potentially affected must be included.

Annexation

Only a few areas are considered for possible annexation (See Map X). The most logical area for annexation extends west along Route 55 towards Fenwick and Holcomb. These unincorporated areas lie west of the City. Richwood already provides water services to Fenwick. The area includes the Fenwick B/E Aerospace Inc. plant, which would certainly increase the city's B/O tax.

However the city needs to balance the costs of annexation with the benefits. The city would probably grow by around 300 people. However, the costs of providing other municipal services to those areas if annexed might be very high and perhaps infeasible. Affected property owners must

be considered as well.

Floodplains

Much of the city lies within the floodplain. The city has had two significant floods recently: in 2001 and 2003. Exercising proper floodplain management should always be a top priority of city officials when deciding a course of action relating to land use and development in Richwood.

The city should consider establishing a Community Ratings System (CRS) program. Richwood participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which involves the community agreeing to some minimum federal requirements in exchange for the federal government providing flood insurance to those property owners which have a federally-backed mortgage for a property in the floodplain. If the community does more than the minimum requirements, the citizens may benefit from the CRS program, which provides discounts on flood insurance premiums to all community members who have to carry flood insurance. The discount relates directly to how much and what type of voluntary mitigation activities the community undertakes. The more programs and activities the community engages in, the greater discount each citizen with flood insurance receives.

Community Improvement Areas

Citizens expressed a common sentiment that too many dilapidated structures, abandoned/inoperable vehicles, tall grass, and junk in yards exist in the city.

The city should focus on working with discrete areas of the city to target clean-up efforts, as opposed to attempting a community-wide initiative. The city can spend time working with certain areas to address tall grass, abandoned vehicles, fix up sidewalks, and roads in certain parts of Richwood. Once finished with one area, then the city can focus on another area to focus clean-up efforts.

One way to break up the city into manageable areas is to utilize the historic neighborhoods. Many people identify not only as being from Richwood but more specifically from a certain neighborhood. Pride still exists in being from the “Tannery” or from “Little Italy.” The city could establish the community improvement areas by historic neighborhood as a way to promote ownership by community members of certain sections of Richwood.

Growth and Decline Management

Among other goals, the comprehensive plan seeks to develop and promote various economic development growth initiatives. With the possible implementation of broadband and the promotion of telework, the potential exists for population growth in Richwood in the next several years. In the meantime, the more pressing concern for Richwood is decline management. How is the city going to address the continued decline of the city?

Suggestions to address continued population loss in Richwood include clean-up of the city, provision of housing for teachers in Richwood schools, along with payment of a decent wage, and encouragement of growth that allows for small scale construction jobs. All of these ideas suggest a desire for an aesthetically pleasing city that is clean, has affordable housing, and promotes physical construction and/or redevelopment projects on-going in and around Richwood.

City of Richwood



Comprehensive Plan

Chapter 4: Action Plan



The Action Plan contains a list of prioritized goals, objectives, and specific action steps that will aid the community after the comprehensive plan has been adopted and the community commences with the implementation of the comprehensive plan. The Action Plan relies upon information developed in the Chapter 3-Needs Assessment. The comprehensive plan process identified five (5) main areas of concern:

1. Economic Development
2. Housing
3. Transportation
4. Infrastructure
5. Land Use

The Action Plan has been developed so that each overarching goal relates to one of the areas of concern. For instance one goal seeks to facilitate sustainable economic development and growth. This goal reflects the identified need of addressing and implementing various economic development initiatives. The plan identifies objectives and discrete and measurable action steps needed to accomplish each overarching goal.

Goal 1— Facilitate sustainable economic development practices which do not diminish our natural resources

Objective 1- Facilitate the development of local niche markets

Action Step 1- Encourage motorcycle-based tourism

Work with the Richwood Chamber of Commerce and the Richwood CVB to develop materials which show potential riding routes in and around Richwood and the region. The City should work with other local governments in the region as well as other local CVBs and Chambers.

The City should consider providing accessible and well-marked bathrooms close to Main Street with adequate motorcycle parking. The City should also encourage and/or sponsor poker runs and motorcycle rallies as a way to fundraise for specific purposes such as new playground equipment or beautification projects.

Action Step 2- Foster the development of a local arts community and other entrepreneurial enterprises.



Encourage artists to relocate or establish their businesses in Richwood. Display artwork from local artists, or have a “featured artist” that can display their artwork in an empty storefront on Main Street. This “empty” storefront could be opened occasionally so that the featured artist could hold an open house and explain their pieces of work and also to sell their work.

Work with groups such as Sustainable Mission Partners or Richwood Creations to encourage the establishment of local small-market businesses which utilize existing resources such as local timber. Encourage the utilization of one of the empty buildings in the City to be repurposed for light manufacturing or the establishment of a micro- or nano-brewery or other entrepreneurial enterprises.



Action Step 3- Outdoor recreation tourism

Continue to look into the feasibility of developing ATV trails around the Richwood area. Encourage mule-wagon teams and horseback riding opportunities, including horseback riding on the Cranberry/Tri-rivers Rail-Trail and providing ample parking for vehicle and horse/mule trailers at trail head in city limits. With the assistance of the CVB and the Chamber of Commerce encourage and promote activities such as mountain biking, hunting, fishing, kayaking all of which can be enjoyed in or within a short distance of the City.

Objective 2 Give Richwood a Facelift/Revitalization

Action Step 1-Make sure appropriate ordinances have been adopted to enable city officials to continue to take the necessary steps to address unsafe and unsanitary conditions such as dilapidated structures and inoperable vehicles.

Action Step 2- Work with the CVB’s Main Street Beautification Team which is dedicated to



beautifying the city.

Action Step 3- Develop downtown façade improvement program

Consider adding additional planters and street trees along Main Street. Develop and incentivize local businesses to participate in a façade improvement program that encourages the improvement of storefronts in the downtown area.

Action Step 4- Look into the feasibility of painting large timber axes on Main Street coming into the city both directions in several locations. The axes show pride in Richwood High School and local timber heritage.

Objective 3- Encourage and promote Telework

Action Step 1- Continue to be an active participant in any telework/broadband initiative including “Telework West Virginia” and BridgeValley Community and Technical College which is spearheading the initiative.

Action Step 2- Encourage the development of reliable broadband internet service in Richwood as a catalyst for economic development and teleworking.

Objective 4- Encourage more overnight lodging opportunities

Action Step 1- Encourage the expansion of the existing Bed & Breakfast and encourage other B & B's to be established in the city.

Action Step 2- The establishment of a hotel or motel should be encouraged by city officials. Currently there are no hotels or motels within the city limits.

Objective 5- Develop a municipal website



Action Step 1- Develop a budget for creating and maintaining a municipal website.

Either have a company maintain the website or train city staff to be able to maintain the website once it has been completed.

Action Step 2- Place a community event calendar, meeting schedule, minutes and agendas on the website make sure to keep up to date. The website should be considered a marketing tool for the city.

Objective 6- Celebrate History and Culture of Richwood

Action Step 1- Promote historic neighborhoods. The city should create education material as well as street signage demarcating historic neighborhoods.

Action Step 2- Work with local organizations to expand the number of small community-centered events, such as 5k run/walks, movies at the park and free concerts in the summer.



Objective 7- Create recycling Program

Action Step 1- Analyze whether it is feasible to add curbside recycling program in the City.

Meet with citizens and poll them about their interest in such a program. Make sure to complete a cost/benefit analysis of implementing a curbside recycling program.

Goal 2– Encourage the development of safe and affordable housing options

Objective 1- Reduce the number of dilapidated and abandoned residential structures

Action Step 1- Continue to enforce the International Property Maintenance Code. Make sure

that all code enforcement officers are properly certified and maintain certification for the entirety of their employment with the city.

Action Step 2- Encourage the renovation of existing residential structures, when feasible, rather than demolition.

Action Step 3- Prioritize residential structures where significant repairs or demolition is necessary. Base prioritization on an identified list of criteria, including environmental remediation conditions (Brownfields).



Objective 2- Encourage redevelopment and adaptive reuse

Action Step 1- Encourage areas above and behind commercial storefronts to be converted into residential units, especially in the downtown area.

Action Step 2- Convert some single-family residential structures into multi-family units that could be utilized as long-term rentals.

Goal 3— Improve transportation conditions

Objective 1- Prioritize road and sidewalk projects

Action Step 1- Establish a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for municipal projects, most notably road and sidewalk improvement projects. A CIP will be used to identify, prioritize, and develop a timetable for the repair and creation of roads and sidewalks.

Objective 2- Provide better pedestrian facilities

Action Step 1- Consider building a pedestrian/bicycle bridge that that crosses the Cherry River



and connects both parts of Richwood. The bridge could be located near the BFG building and extend a trail could be built to connect downtown with the city park on the other side of the river.

Action Step 2- When constructing or repairing municipal sidewalks make sure to create curb-cuts at intersections and ensure that the sidewalks are wide enough to comply with federal accessibility standards.

Objective 3-Address various parking concerns

Action Step 1- Consider widening some of the streets where on-street parking is permitted so there is adequate room to safely maneuver vehicles.

Action Step 2- Develop a plan for event parking within the city. Work with event coordinators to plan for large influx of vehicles that come in to the city during many of the events held throughout the year.

Action Step 3- Identify areas where a municipal parking lot could be established in close proximity to the historic downtown area.

Objective 4- Improve bicycle infrastructure

Action Step 1- Establish dedicated bike lanes that connect various parts of the city.

Action Step 2- Extend the Cranberry/Tri-Rivers Rail Trail all the way in to the old downtown train depot.

Action Step 3- Work with state transportation officials to establish a bike lane on Route 55 from Richwood towards Marlinton.



Goal 4— Public facilities and infrastructure improvements

Objective 1- Make improvements to municipal water system and facilities

Action Step 1- Update the water distribution system including water lines.

Action Step 2- Complete minor refurbishment work as part of the Hinkle Mountain/ Little Laurel water line extension project.

Action Step 3- Hire and retain additional municipal water operators

Make sure that pay is competitive and there are incentives to continue to work with the city.

Ensure these operators receive proper training and provide continuing education/certification opportunities.



Action Step 4- All water-storage tanks need to be inspected, cleaned, and painted. Additionally the city needs to clean out the reservoir at least every 10 years.

Action Step 5- Purchase stationary emergency-backup generators so that the water treatment system can still function during power outages.

Objective 2- Wastewater system and facilities

Action Step 1- Wastewater treatment facility is outdated, often overcapacity, and needs to be updated

The collection system is failing and will constitute the bulk of the costs of upgrades. A funding package has already been submitted to the West Virginia Infrastructure and Jobs Development



Council (IJDC). Upgrades to the system will cost approximately \$4 million.

Action Step 2- Purchase an emergency backup generator that will allow the waste water treatment plant to continue operating in the event of a power outage.

Objective 3- Identify and pursue solutions to stormwater issues

Action Step 1- Create and implement a stormwater management plan

Focus on areas with poor drainage and which have standing water after many rain events.

Action Step 2- Look at ways the city might be able to assist business owners, particularly those located on the north side of Main Street, who frequently have stormwater entering their businesses.

Action Step 3- Continue to work on separating combined sewers to prevent combined sewer overflows (CSOs).

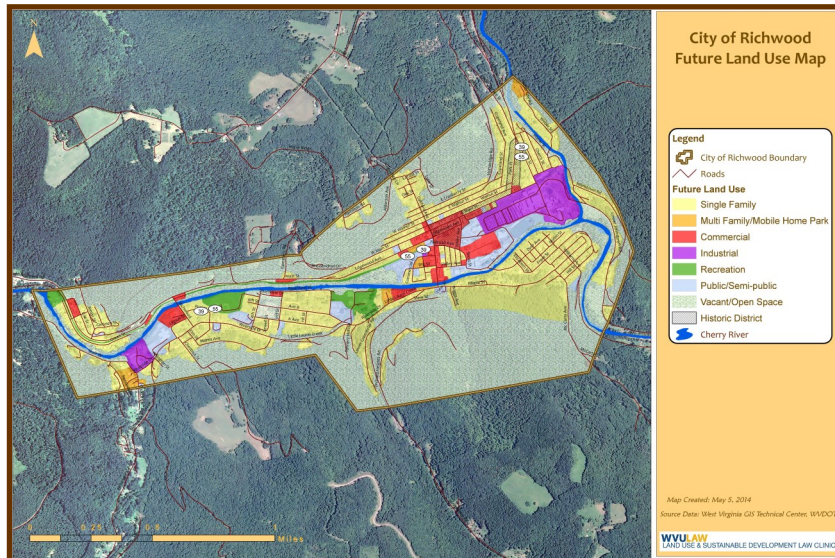
Goal 5– Develop resilient and sustainable land use practices

Objective 1- Community Improvement Areas

Action Step 1- Use the city’s historic neighborhoods to delineate “community improvement areas.” (CIAs) The focus on establishing the CIAs should be placed on encouraging people to be involved in keeping their CIA cleaned up and in taking ownership of that area/ neighborhood.

Action Step 2- The city can encourage CIA spring clean ups, holiday light competitions and other activities that build community and encourage improving the city. Council can meet with residents of CIAs during certain times of the year. CIAs resemble political wards but are more

informal and should be initiated by citizens.



Objective 2- Reevalue historic district

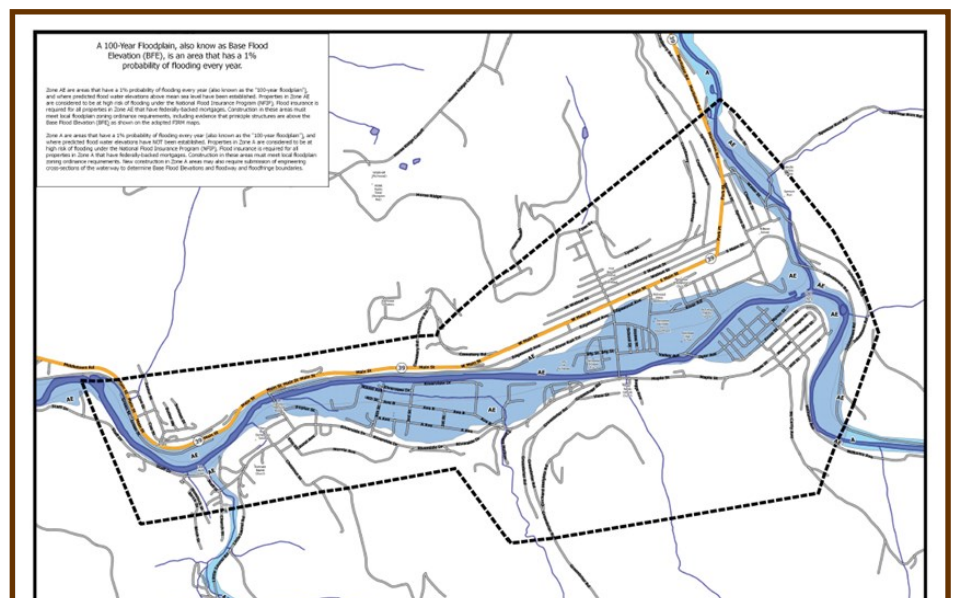
Action Step 1- Look at expanding the designation of the existing historic downtown district.

Work with property owners throughout the process and review the current inventory of properties within the federally-designated district to ensure accuracy.

Objective 3-Floodplain Management

Action Step 1- Establish a Community Ratings Service (CRS) program that will allow property owners that are required to purchase flood insurance to receive a discount on their flood insurance.

The more flood mitigation activities/programs the city participates in, the greater the





discount the community members will receive on their flood insurance premiums.

Action Step 2- Utilize some of the small FEMA mitigation lots in the city to establish raised-bed community gardens.

Objective 4- Consider annexation

Action Step 1- Research the laws and procedural requirements that govern annexation in West Virginia. Staff and council should be aware of all the options for annexation and understand the costs and benefits of annexing additional land into the city.

Action Step 2- Identify and study the areas that may available for annexation. Work with potentially affected land owners throughout any annexation discussions and proceedings.



City of Richwood Comprehensive Plan						Implementation Matrix
Recommendation	Priority	Reference page #	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Estimated Costs	Funding Sources
Goal 1: Facilitate Sustainable Economic Development Practices that do no diminish our natural resources						
Encourage motorcycle-based tourism	Moderate	4-2	Chamber of Commerce, CVB	City of Richwood	Variable. Costs associated with printed materials	Multiple jurisdictions contribute funds, cost-sharing
Foster the development entrepreneurial enterprises and a local arts and crafts community	High	4-2	CVB, Chamber of Commerce	City of Richwood	staff time, possible costs involved with developing an artists incubators (building and furnishings)	Flex-E-Grants, other grant funding programs that support local art.
Promote outdoor recreation tourism	High	4-3	City of Richwood	United States Forest Service (USFS), Chamber of Commerce, CVB, Nicholas County Commission	City may need to contribute further funds for ATV trail initiative. Time spent working with various officials and organizations	May need to contribute funds for trail construction, trail head parking and continuing maintenance.
Remove inoperable vehicles in yards and roads	Low	4-3	City of Richwood	N/A	Staff time, cost for required notice (\$3.45 per certified mailing sent out)	General fund
Assist the CVB’s Main Street Beautification Team, which is dedicated to beautifying the city	High	4-3	CVB	City of Richwood	Staff/ Officials time. Cleaning supplies (~\$100), decoration costs variable	General fund
Incentivize downtown façade improvements	High	4-4	Chamber of Commerce	City of Richwood, Richwood Building Commission	City can reimburse a certain % for paint. Hanging planters would cost a \$100-\$300 per planter, plus maintenance/upkeep costs	General fund
Paint several large timber axes on Main Street coming into the city both directions	Moderate	4-4	City of Richwood	Richwood High School, WV Department of Transportation	\$100-\$200 for paint, repaint every 2-3 years	Fundraising at community functions throughout the year. General fund
Continue to be an active participant in any telework initiative with broadband including “Telework West Virginia” and BridgeValley Community and Technical College	Moderate	4-4	Private Developers	City of Richwood, New River Gorge Regional Development Authority	No Cost to City	N/A
Encourage the development of reliable high-speed broadband internet service in Richwood	High	4-4	City of Richwood	Shental, private developers	No Cost to City	N/A
Encourage the expansion of the existing B & B and encourage additional B & B’s to be established in the city	Moderate	4-4	City of Richwood	West Virginia Bed & Breakfast Association, NRGRDA	No Costs	Possible Tax Incentives in years 2 & 3 to B & B owner, reduction in B &O Tax
Encourage the establishment of a hotel/motel within in city limits	Moderate	4-4	Private Developer	City of Richwood	No Costs	N/A
Place community event calendar, meeting schedule, minutes, and agendas on the website	Moderate	4-5	City of Richwood	3rd Party web designer	Costs dependent on whether work done in-house or by 3rd party web designer. Will have initial start up costs. as well as periodic maintenance fees	General fund

City of Richwood Comprehensive Plan						Implementation Matrix
Recommendation	Priority	Reference page #	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Estimated Costs	Funding Sources
Create signage demarcating the historic neighborhoods of Richwood	Low	4-5	City of Richwood	West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, Nicholas County Historic Landmarks Commission, Nicholas County Historical Society	Each sign may cost \$200 or more depending on design and placement	The WV State Historic Preservation Office - Survey and Planning Grant can cover much of the costs
More frequent small community-centered events, such as a 5k run/walk or community movie night	Moderate	4-5	Chamber of Commerce	CVB, Chamber of Commerce, City of Richwood, Blueprint Communities, Local Churches	Advertising, T-shirts, refreshments for races. (~\$200 per race, depending on number of people). Minimal costs for second-run movies	A way to generate revenue for a certain cause, such as painting axes on roads, or downtown beautification
Add curbside recycling program	Low	4-5	City of Richwood	3rd Party Recycler, WV Solid Waste Management Board	Could cost anywhere from \$5 to \$25 per month for consumer. Bins can cost \$5 each	City may receive money for the recyclables to offset costs to customers. WV DEP Recycling Grant Program
Goal 2: Address Abandoned and Dilapidated Housing						
Continue to enforce the International Property Maintenance Code	High	4-5	City of Richwood	The City of Summersville, State Fire Marshall's Office	Cost of personnel, continuing education, demolition costs	Share building inspector with other jurisdictions, which offsets costs. General Fund
Encourage the renovation of existing structures when feasible, rather than demolishing structure	Moderate	4-6	City of Richwood	SHPO, Church and Civic Groups, Nicholas County HLC	Staff time for education and outreach	N/A
Prioritize residential structures for demolition, base prioritization on an identified list of criteria including environmental remediation concerns	High	4-6	City of Richwood (Nuisance Property Committee)	County Health Department, Richwood Building Commission	Demolition costs vary considerably depending on size, asbestos, and other factors. Anywhere between \$3,000-\$12,000 or higher to demolish structure	City can place lien on the property for costs incurred during demolition. Will only receive money if property changes hands or if redeveloped. City may take the deed for property under certain instances
Encourage some commercial structures to be turned into residential units, especially in the downtown area. Limit conversions to the back of the building or second floor for residential units	Low	4-6	City of Richwood	Chamber of Commerce, Property owners, private developers	N/A	N/A

Recommendation	Priority	Reference page #	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Estimated Costs	Funding Sources
Update the water distribution system including water distribution lines	High	4-8	City of Richwood	Region 4 Planning and Development Council	Unknown, city will hire engineering firm to establish cost estimates	IJDC
Complete minor refurbishment work as part of the Hinkle Mountain/ Little Laurel water line extension project	High	4-8	City of Richwood	Region 4 Planning and Development Council	\$100,000	IJDC
All water storage tanks need to be inspected, cleaned, and painted. Additionally the city needs to clean out the reservoir periodically (at least every 10 years)	High	4-8	City of Richwood	Region 4 Planning and Development Council	Varies depending on the amount of clean up and if there are any repairs needed	IJDC
Purchase stationary emergency-backup generators so that municipapl drinking water system can still function in the event of a power outage	Moderate	4-8	City of Richwood	WV Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM), WV Bureau for Public Health, Nicholas County Office of Emergency Services	\$85,000, excluding installation and switch gears	IJDC
Sewage treatment facility is outdated, often overcapacity, and needs to be updated	Moderate	4-8	City of Richwood	Region 4 Planning and Development Council	\$14 Million	IJDC
Purchase an emergency backup generator that will allow the waste water treatment plant to continue operating in the event of a power outage	High	4-8	City of Richwood	DHSEM	\$85,000	IJDC
Create and implement a storm water/surface watershed plan	High/Moderate	4-9	City of Richwood	Private Consultant, WVDEP, NRRGRDA	Could cost between \$10,000 to \$20,000 to complete	WV DEP Guidance on storm water management, alleviate some costs
Continue to work on separating combined sewers to prevent combined sewer overflows (CSOs)	Moderate	4-9	City of Richwood	WV DEP	Cost dependent on scope of project. Estimates have been upwards of \$4,000 for each property serviced along main sewer line.	WV DEP Guidance on storm water management

Recommendation	Priority	Reference page #	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Estimated Costs	Funding Sources
Goal 5: Develop Resilient and Sustainable Land Use Practices						
Use the city’s historic neighborhoods to delineate “community improvements areas”	Moderate	4-9	City of Richwood	Chamber of Commerce, Property Owners	Minimal costs for notification of events, city hosting meetings.	General Fund
Look at expanding the designation of existing historic downtown district	High	4-10	City of Richwood	SHPO	Hire consultant to review the current designation and make recommendations on any new areas/ structures. Possibly complete in-house with assistance from SHPO.	Utilize SHPO's expertise. SHPO planning and inventory grants.
Establish a Community Ratings Service (CRS) program through FEMA	Low	4-10	City of Richwood	DHSEM, Region 4 Planning and Development Council	Minimal costs for establishing the program. Costs variable to complete CRS activities.	N/A
Utilize FEMA mitigation lots in the city to establish raised-bed community gardens or other community facilities	Low	4-10	City of Richwood	USDA, Schools, Food Pantry, FEMA	Raised-bed community gardens can cost between \$1,000-\$4,000 to create and will have some maintenance and upkeep costs	Multiple grant funding opportunities. USDA grant program; Project Orange Thumb Grant program, etc.
Understand the laws and procedural requirements that govern annexation in West Virginia	Low	4-10	City of Richwood	N/A	Town Official/Staff time and training	N/A
Identify and study the areas that may available for annexation. Work with any potentially affected land owners throughout any annexation discussions and proceedings	Low	4-11	City of Richwood	N/A	Costs of having meetings, developing a plan for implementation, attorney fees	General Fund