

SUSSEX COUNTY, VIRGINIA  
SMALL AREA PLANS

# WAVERLY



**PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT  
AUGUST 2021**



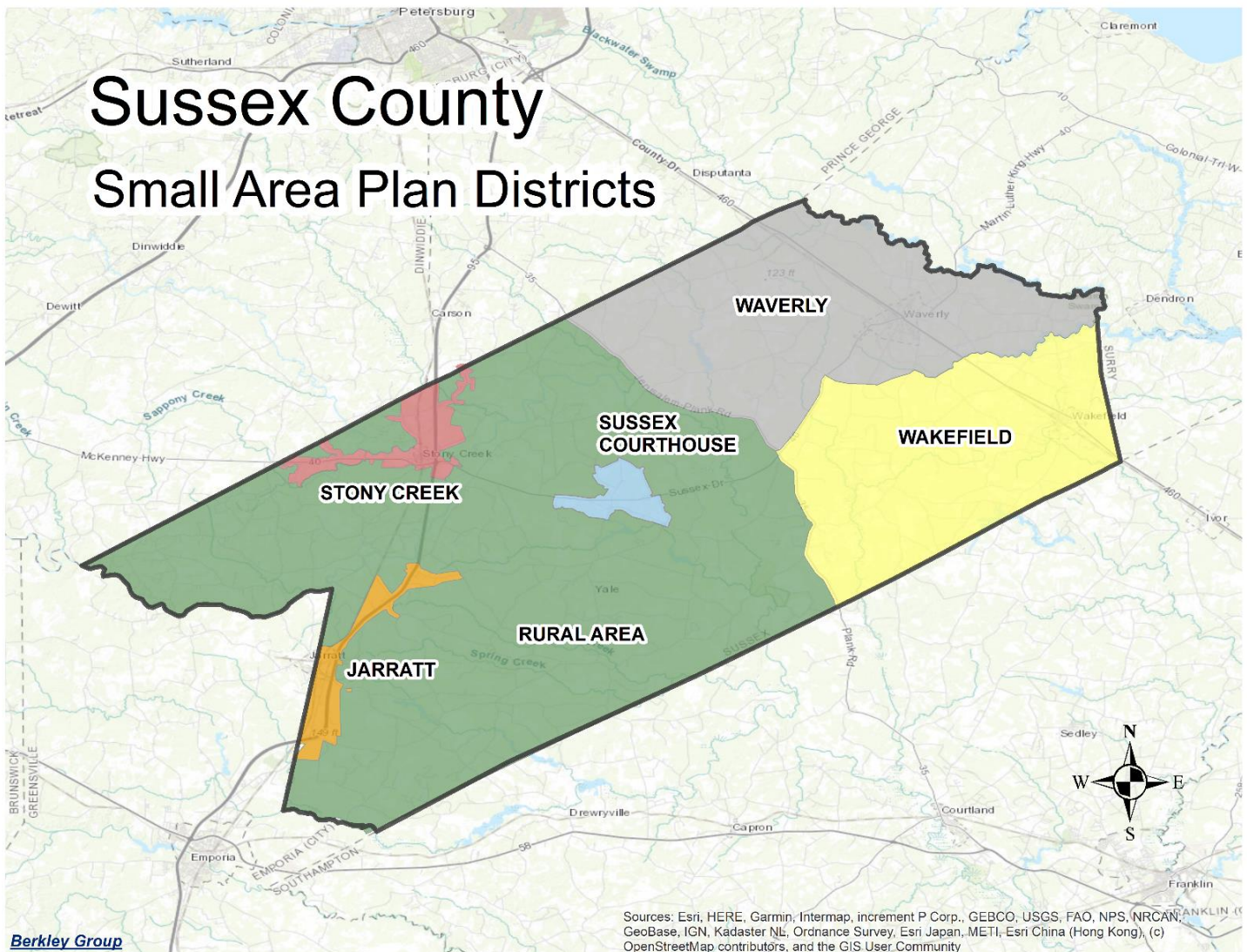
## Table of Contents

Preface .....	3
Six Planning Areas .....	4
Waverly Planning Area .....	6
Existing Features & Uses .....	7
Existing Land Use .....	9
Public Input .....	13
SWOT Analysis.....	14
Transportation Analysis .....	15
U.S. Route 460 Corridor .....	16
State Route 40 Corridor (Sussex Drive / W. Main Street).....	16
State Route 35 Corridor (Jerusalem Plank Road).....	17
State Route 602 Corridor (Cabin Point Road) .....	17
Railroad Corridor.....	17
Transportation Improvements.....	18
Future Vision & Planning.....	19
Future Land Use Analysis .....	20
Implementation Recommendations .....	23

### Preface

Sussex County is a rural yet diverse County that contains individual development areas separated by rural landscape, farms, forests, and a diverse network of waterways. Due to this disparate pattern of development, Sussex County has chosen to utilize a planning strategy that includes individualized area plans for six areas, including the rural area that lies between each of the developed areas.

Each of the geographic regions of Sussex County has a prevalent strength that is specific to the unique conditions of that area. By identifying, focusing on, and nurturing these individual strengths, the County can develop a balance of overall growth and conservation that builds a healthy ecosystem for future development. The goal is to support beneficial growth in each of the focus areas that promotes the success of the County as a whole, while protecting the elements that are important to the people, the economy, and the culture.



### Six Planning Areas

The six individual areas that create the backbone of this interdependent County planning strategy are as follows:

#### **Sussex Courthouse / State Route 40 Planning Area – Civic Core**

This planning area contains a large government complex and new consolidated school facility. The area is of historical importance and is surrounded by large pristine farms that are important to the local agricultural heritage. It is also served by State Route 40 which is a significant local transportation route within the County.

#### **Jarratt Planning Area – Interstate Services**

Located along Interstate 95 (I-95) with relatively little floodplain area and sufficient public services, this planning area can support higher intensity development that is reliant upon easy access to I-95. The area offers a good industrial alternative to the Waverly area due to transportation access.

#### **Rural Planning Area – Conservation**

Agriculture is an important economic and cultural driver in Sussex County. Planning in this area should ensure protection of prime farmland, forests, and the hydrological network that supports the farm economy, rural heritage, tourism, and environmental diversity.

#### **Stony Creek Planning Area – Commercial Center**

Fed by I-95 and accessible to other areas in the County, the Stony Creek area can accommodate commercial development that is missing in the rural area between Petersburg and Emporia. The large floodplain/wetland areas of this district restrict the amount of development and make it more suitable to commercial than industrial development.

#### **Wakefield / Homeville / U.S. 460 Planning Area – Local Culture**

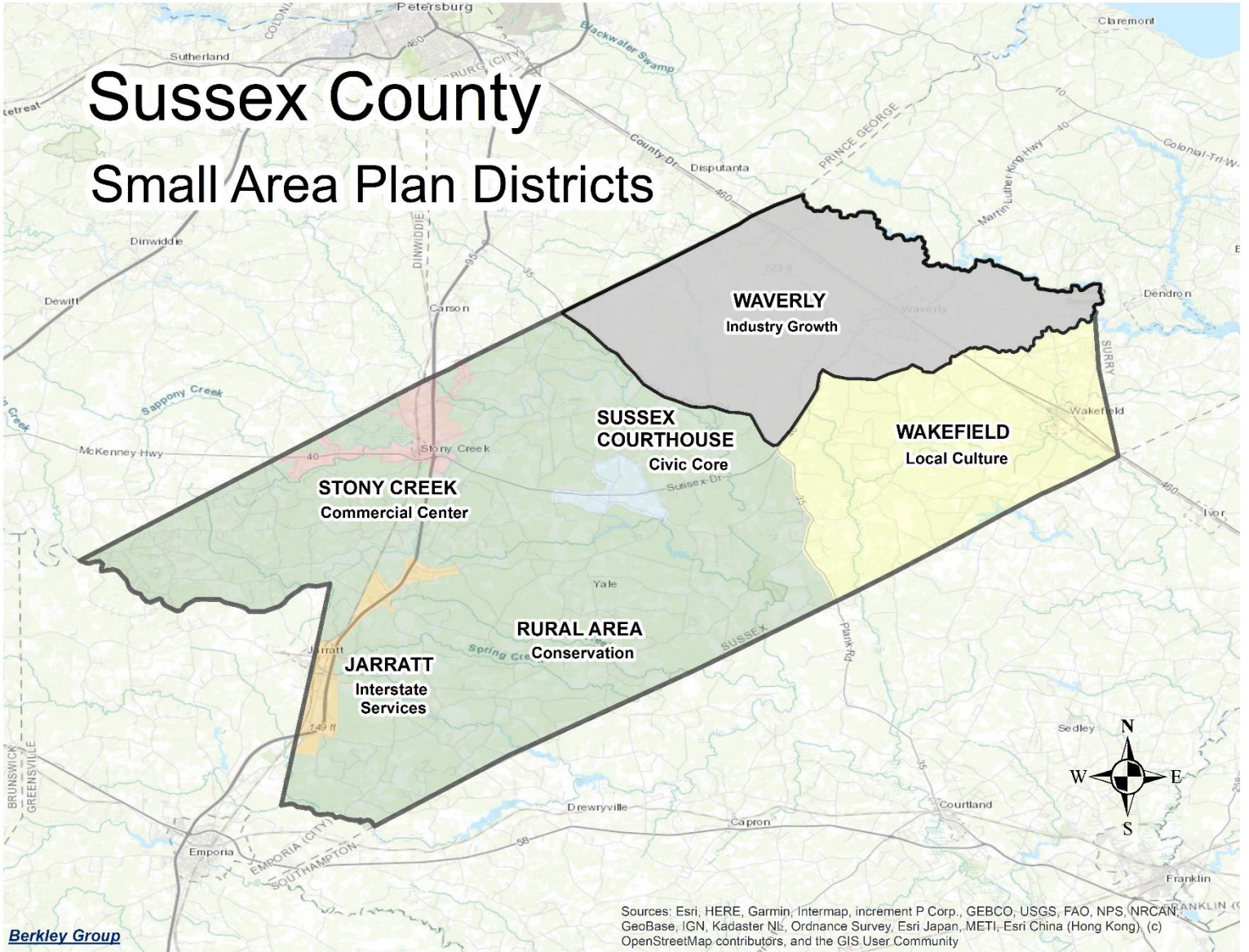
This planning area contains tourism, agritourism, and recreational opportunities that can be nurtured and developed. With the U.S. Route 460 access and existing tourism, Wakefield can take advantage of the passing traffic and popularity of nostalgic and rural tourism.

#### **Waverly / Blackwater / U.S. 460 Planning Area – Industry Growth**

Waverly is the center for current and future industrial development. With U.S. Route 460 access and room for rural/urban expansion, Waverly is a prime location for expanded urban development patterns.

This plan will focus on Waverly – The Center for Industry Growth for Sussex County. With a strong presence of existing industries and businesses, along with a thriving local community, the Waverly Area is considered the Center for Industry Growth in Sussex County. The strength of this area is the existing commercial and industrial activity combined with the availability of sites for new development. This Small Area Plan is a component of the larger Sussex County Comprehensive Plan examining features, challenges, and opportunities in the constrained zone surrounding the Town of Waverly while also considering how this area relates to the other areas of the County.

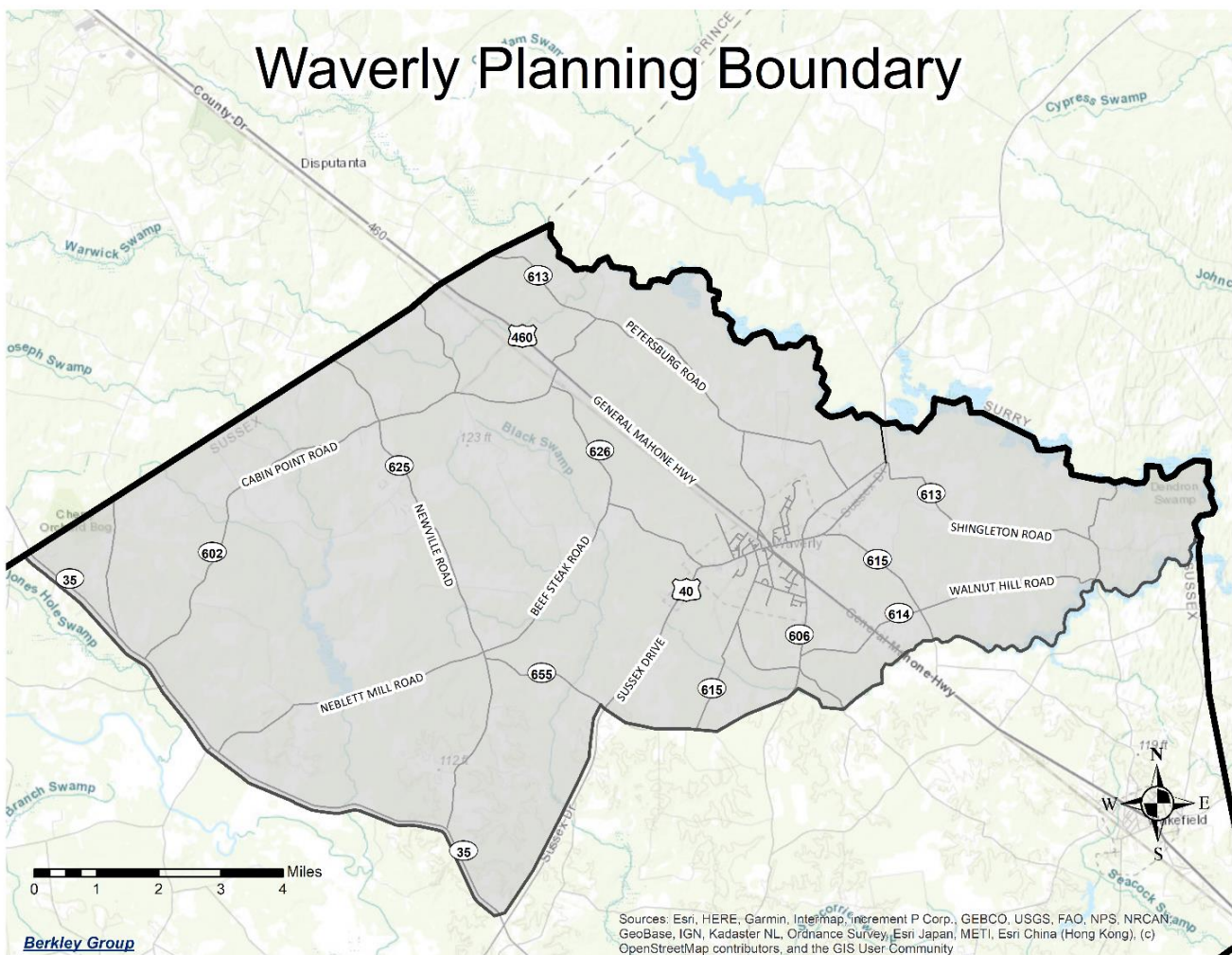




## Waverly Planning Area

The Waverly Planning Area defines the northeast portion of Sussex County and covers approximately 100.4 square miles. The area includes 3.1 square miles in the Town of Waverly, which is the most populous Town in the County. The Planning Area is bisected by a 9.5-mile segment of U.S. Route 460, which connects the Richmond and Hampton Roads metropolitan areas. The boundary of the Planning Area runs along State Route 35 from State Route 40 northward to the Sussex County line. The southern boundary of the Planning Area runs along State Route 40 to the intersection with State Route 655 and then just south of State Route 614.

The estimated population of the area is 5,772 people based on 2010 Census Block data and includes 2,149 people in the Town of Waverly.<sup>1</sup> This is Sussex County's most populated area, accounting for roughly half of the countywide population. The Planning Area had 1,340 households as of 2010. The Sussex State Prison complex contributes to the total population of the Planning Area and, according to 2019 ACS data, has an estimated population of 1,010. When excluding the prison complex, the population is estimated at 4,762 people, which still makes it the most populated area in the County. Additionally, based on 2019 ACS data the Town of Waverly has an estimated population of 2,633.



<sup>1</sup> Due to the small size of the Planning Area, Census Block data must be used to estimate population. Data on the Block level is only available every ten years following the Decennial Census.





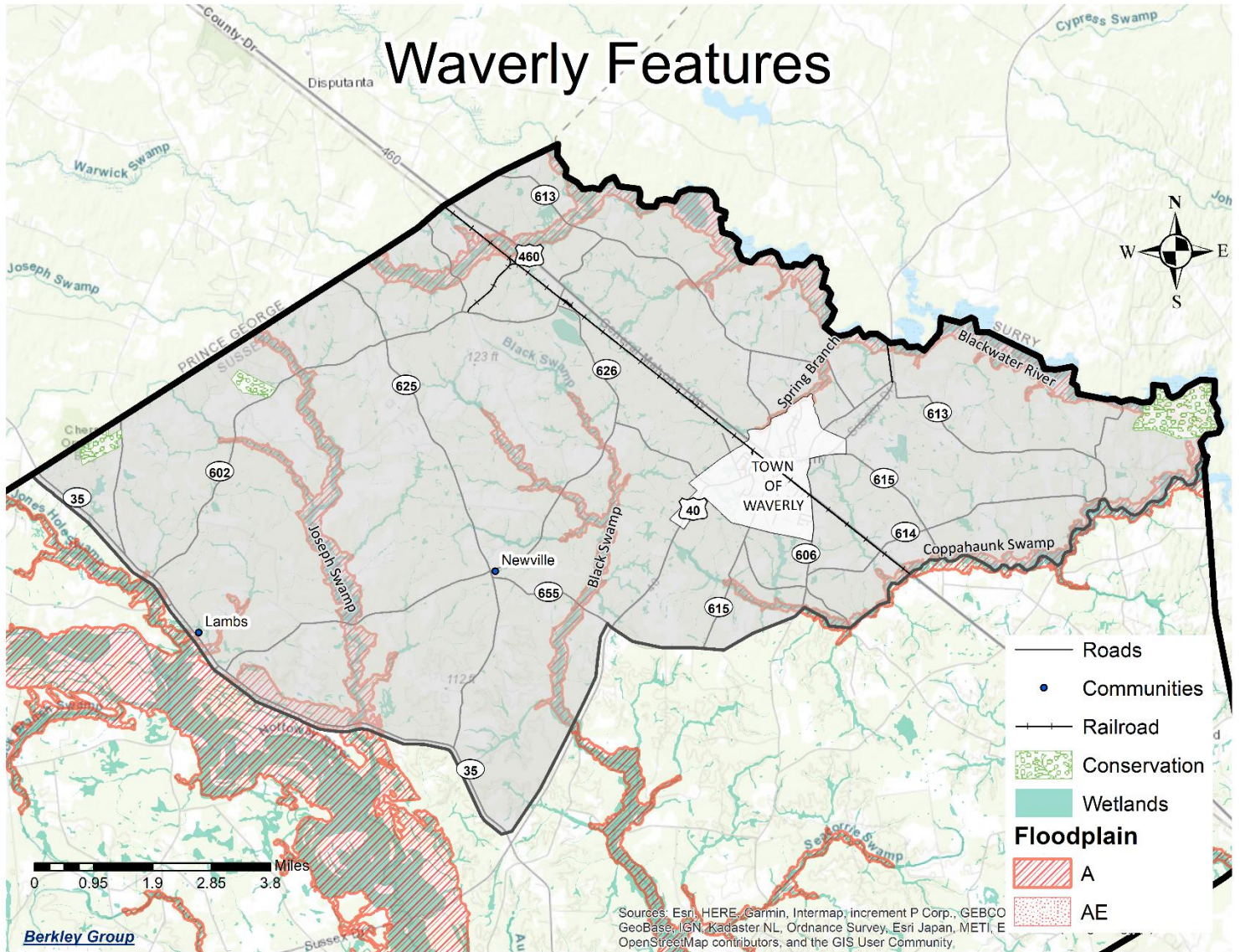
## Existing Features & Uses

The Waverly Planning Area consists of the Town of Waverly, concentrated development along U.S. 460, and expansive rural and natural areas. The location of existing development and established transportation corridors will guide future development while the presence of natural resources restrict expansive growth beyond established developed areas. Near the Town of Waverly and other strategic corridors in the Planning Area, there are existing neighborhoods with a higher concentration of single-family homes. There is also a modest commercial presence, with most commercial uses located within the Town. Most undeveloped land is dedicated to agricultural uses and forests outside of the Town of Waverly.

Physical development in the Planning Area is served by existing utilities, which include electric power lines and water and sewer service. Most of the Planning Area receives electricity from the Prince George Electric Cooperative, which has its main office and warehouse near the Town of Waverly on U.S. 460. Some portions of the Town and farther south along U.S. 460 receive electricity from Dominion Power. The Sussex Service Authority provides water and sewer service to most of the existing developed areas in the Planning Area. The Blackwater Wastewater Treatment Plant on Beef Steak Road serves wastewater customers in the Planning Area. High-speed fiber internet is available in most of the Planning Area through RuralBand from Prince George

Electric Cooperative. RuralBand's Waverly Zone extends through most of the Planning Area. RuralBand plans to continue extension of fiber internet along U.S. 460 and near Jerusalem Plank Road (State Route 35).

Key natural features in the Planning Area include Blackwater River, Coppahaunk Swamp, Black Swamp, Joseph Swamp, and Spring Branch. These sensitive areas contain a wealth of environmental features, such as wetland areas, flood zones, and riparian areas that play an important role in plant and animal species diversity as well as natural water system filtering. These areas are found along the entire northeast border of the County formed by the Blackwater River and in two large areas in the rural interior of the Planning Area. While extensive, these natural features only make up a small percentage of the Planning Area and do not extend into most of the highly developed parts of the Waverly area.

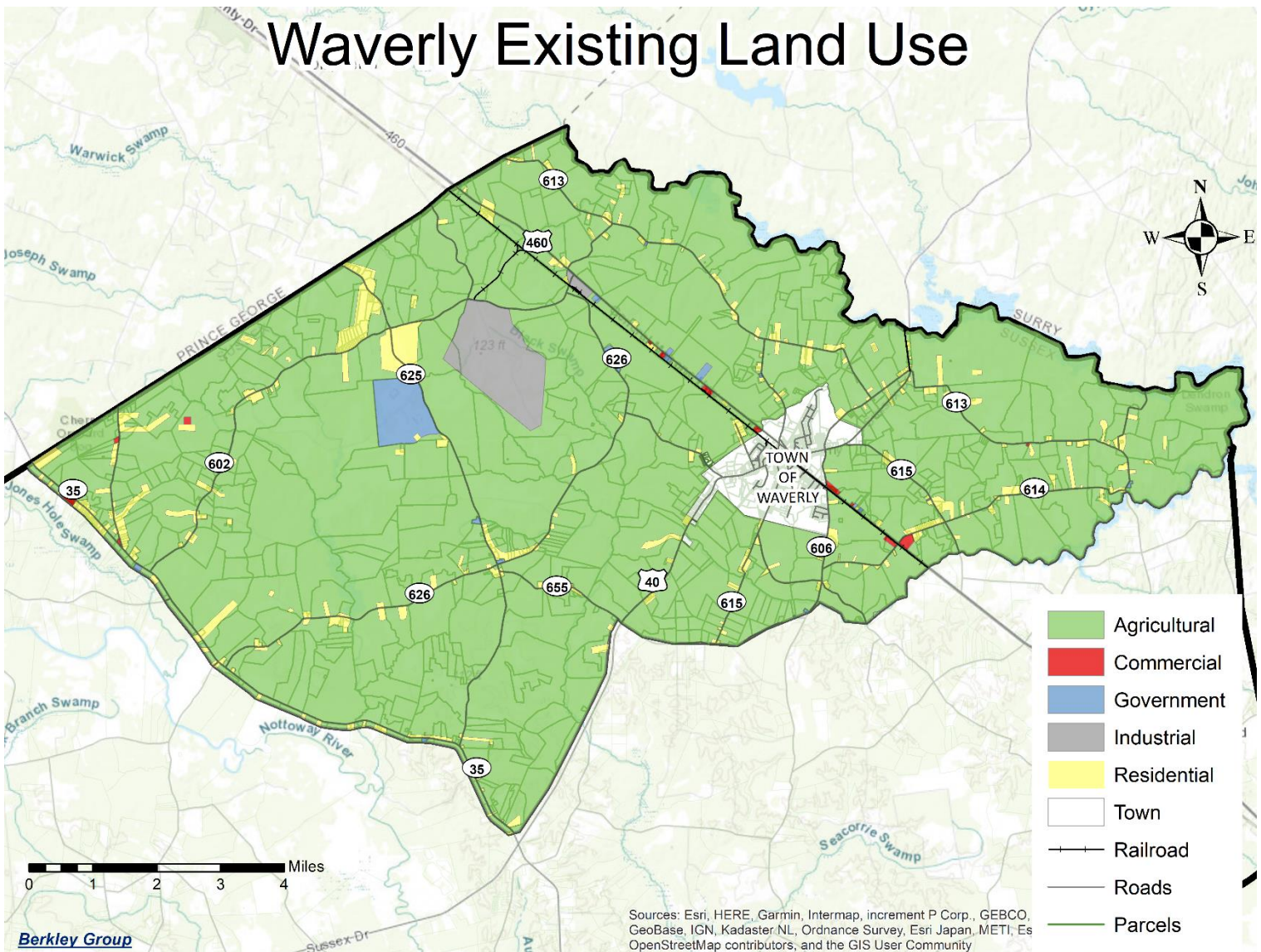




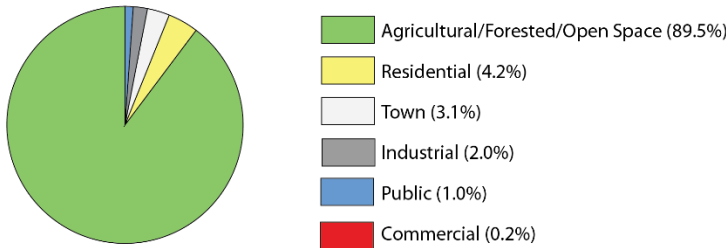
### Existing Land Use

As a large Planning Area that extends well beyond the Town of Waverly and the U.S. 460 corridor, the majority (around 90%) of the Waverly Planning Area is either agricultural or open forested space. This does not mean that the Planning Area is unfit for any development. Instead, it confirms that existing development is strategically located in places that protect the rural character of the County and provide adequate access and services. Most residential and commercial uses are located in the Town of Waverly, which accounts for about three percent (3.1%) of the land area.

Additional residential development is concentrated around the Town of Waverly and near Cabin Point Road (State Route 602) with scattered rural residential uses throughout the entire area equaling about four percent of the total area (4.2%). Limited commercial uses can be found outside of the Town primarily along U.S. 460. The map below and the pie chart on the next page show the quantity and location of various land use types in the Planning Area. These graphics are also complemented by descriptions of each land use type on the following pages.



Waverly Existing Land Use



### Agricultural/Forested/Open Space

Like much of Sussex County, this Planning Area is mostly composed of agricultural, open space, or forested land use. These areas are labeled simply as Agricultural on the existing land use map. West of U.S. 460, land is more heavily forested with some agriculture operations scattered within the large blocks of dense forested land. East of U.S. 460 towards the County border along the Blackwater River, undeveloped land is mostly cultivated agricultural land with sections of conserved forested lands directly adjacent to the Blackwater River. Most of the area is designated as Prime or Statewide Important Soil, indicating it is suitable for cultivation agriculture.

This land category also includes public and privately preserved lands. The 635-acre Dendron Swamp State Natural Area Preserve is located along the Blackwater River in the southeastern portion of the Planning Area. The 150-acre Cherry Orchard Bog State Natural Area Preserve is located in the extreme northwestern part of the Planning Area. Operated by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, both sites contain unique and rare environmental features and, therefore, public access is largely restricted. Additionally, the Meadowview Biological Research Station manages the private 428-acre Joseph Pines Preserve off of Cabin Point Road, which is held under a conservation easement through the Virginia Department of Forestry. The land contains a small research station called the Center for Biodiversity at Joseph Pines Preserve, and the land is open for limited public use with a permit. The Planning Area also has two other large tracts of private land held in conservation easements, including a 434-acre tract near Neblitt Mill Road and a 306-acre tract off of Walnut Hill Road near the Coppahaunk Swamp. Collectively, preserved lands equal about three percent (3%) of the entire Planning Area.

A narrow band of wetlands and Approximate A Flood Zones bounds the western, southern, and eastern borders of the Planning Area. Two smaller flood zones run through the middle of the Planning Area. There is little development in these locations with most development being located outside of any designated flood zones.

### Residential

Existing residential development consists primarily of single-family dwellings, many of which are prefabricated structures on lots of five acres or less. The Town of Waverly and the roads leading into the Town contain the highest density of residential development. There is also a notable residential area farther from the Town around the intersection of Cabin Point Road and Neville Road. Other housing units in the Planning Area are scattered on larger rural lots along lightly traveled local roads.

Residential units consist mostly of single-family detached housing, with a significant number of manufactured homes in the Planning Areas and around the Town. There are several new residential subdivisions that are recent or are currently being developed near Waverly. These include Cabin Point Estates (28 lots), Sweet Gum Corner (49 lots), the Sebera Subdivision (25 lots), and Willow Woods Estates (28 lots).



High-density residential development in the Planning Area consists of apartments and mobile home parks. The Sussex Trace apartment complex is located on State Route 40 just outside of the Town of Waverly and consists of eight two-story townhome buildings containing 50 units. The complex is income-restricted and has a Project-Based Section 8 contract with HUD.



Within the Town, Waverly Village Apartments is a 40-unit multifamily apartment complex that is income restricted. The 24-unit Covington Court Apartments, also in the Town, is an age-restricted development designed for the elderly population. There are also multiple high density mobile home parks in and around the Town Waverly.

### **Industrial**

The Waverly Planning Area has an established industrial presence in addition to multiple planned industrial parks. The largest industrial use is the Waste Management Atlantic Waste Disposal landfill site on Cabin Point Road, which opened in 1993 and is a major revenue stream for the County. The 1,300-acre landfill accepts between 6,000 and 8,000 tons of refuse per day and is one of the largest landfills in the country. Roughly one-third of the landfill's daily volume comes from municipal waste from New York City. As a benefit to Sussex County, residents are able to drop refuse at the site free of charge. To offset some of the impact of the methane gas produced by the landfill, a 23-mile pipeline was completed in 2004 connecting the landfill to the Honeywell Plant in Hopewell. The pipeline, which is believed to be the longest landfill gas pipeline in the world, supplies the plant with methane-rich gas and eliminates the need for flaring methane gas at the landfill. Gas from the landfill offsets about 20% of the plant's energy needs, which would be enough to power close to 7,000 homes. The use of this pipeline improves local air quality and reduces the region's air emissions of greenhouse gases.

Other industrial uses include the Smithfield Waverly Feed Mill and Grain Elevator at the intersection of U.S.



460 and Cabin Point Road, the McGill-Waverly Composting Facility on Beef Steak Road, the Scott's Company Mulch packaging site near U.S. 460 and Walnut Hill Road, and the Wood Fuel Developer's wood pellet manufacturing site in the Town of Waverly. Currently marketed industrial development sites are discussed later in this plan.

### **Commercial**

This land use category includes areas used for retail, consumer services, and professional activities. Within the Waverly Planning Area, commercial sites are generally concentrated along U.S. 460 and within the Town. Commercial uses outside the Town of Waverly include gasoline stations, auto repair shops, small convenience stores and restaurants. The main office of the Prince George Electric Cooperative is also in the Planning Area located on U.S. 460 south. Other commercial uses are mentioned in the Town section.



### **Public**

This land use category includes buildings for governmental functions as well as schools, libraries, fire stations, and other similar public uses. Public facilities within this Planning Area include the Blackswamp Wastewater Treatment Plant, Deerpath Lane Pump Station, Sussex I and Sussex II correctional facilities, and the Sussex County Water Storage Tank. The Sussex Correctional Complex on Newville Road is the most substantial public use in the Planning Area outside of the Town of Waverly.

In the Town, multiple public uses provide services for Town and County residents. The Agnes Taylor Gray Library in Waverly is a branch of the Blackwater Regional Library. The Town also has the Waverly Volunteer Fire

Department and the Waverly Rescue Squad, which provide emergency services to the surrounding area.

### ***Town of Waverly***

The Town of Waverly is the hub of this part of the County and is where residential and commercial uses are most concentrated within the Planning Area. The Town has many assets that are important for the vitality of the entire area. Along U.S. 460 and W. Main Street, the Town has a variety of retail options, including restaurants, a pharmacy, banks, gasoline stations, convenience stores, a post office, and boutiques. The Town, however, no

longer has a full-service grocery store. The downtown is listed as a national historic district.

The Town also has health and wellness centers in addition to parks and recreation opportunities that are important local assets. The Waverly Medical Center, operated by Horizon Health, offers basic medical services. Accordius Health operates a 120-bed nursing facility in the Town. Recreational opportunities include Allen W. Gibson Memorial Park, the Waverly Ruritan Ballfields, and the Sussex County Young Men's Athletic Club Park.



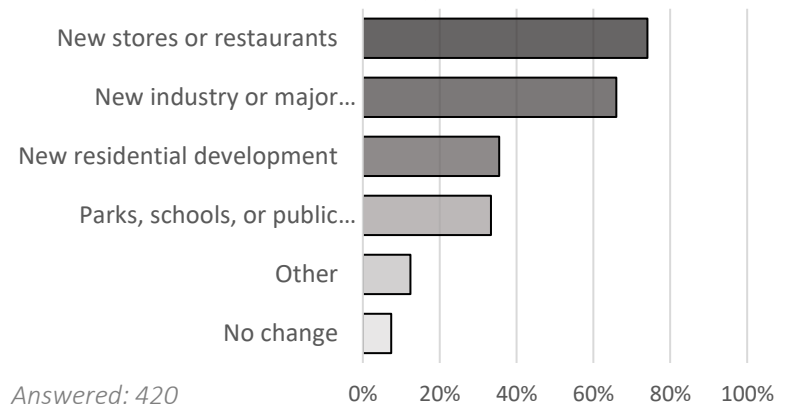


## Public Input

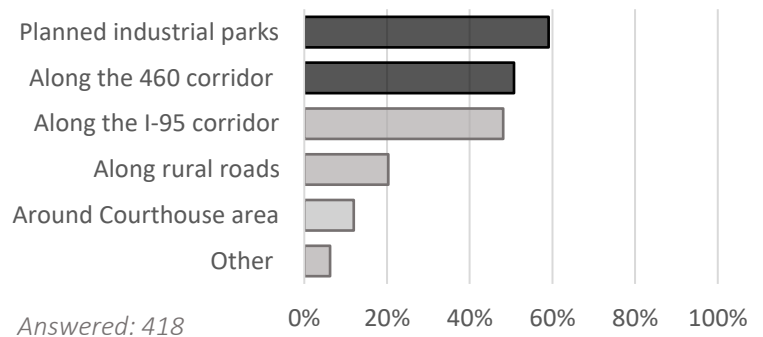
Local stakeholder meetings and county-wide surveys provide a brief understanding of public opinion about the current status and future of the Waverly Planning Area. The input recognizes the need for development of new businesses to increase local commercial activity. Additionally, there is recognition that the Waverly Area has strong potential for new industrial development that can bring more employment opportunities.

Located along U.S. 460 with multiple planned industrial sites, the Planning Area has been recognized as an appropriate location for additional commercial and industrial development. This public input mostly pertains to the areas directly around the U.S. 460 corridor and does not recommend large-scale development for some of the more rural parts of the Planning Area away from U.S. 460. Public input also recognizes some need for new residential development. This type of development is likely best located near but not directly along the U.S. 460 corridor. Accordingly, public input suggests that rural roads are ideal for new residential development in the County. The Waverly Planning Area is already the most populated part of Sussex County, and the area should continue to support the residential development necessary to strengthen the local economy.

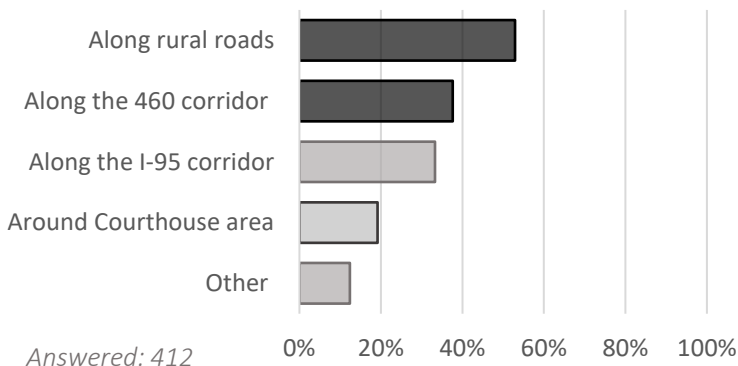
### What would you like to see happen in the Waverly area?



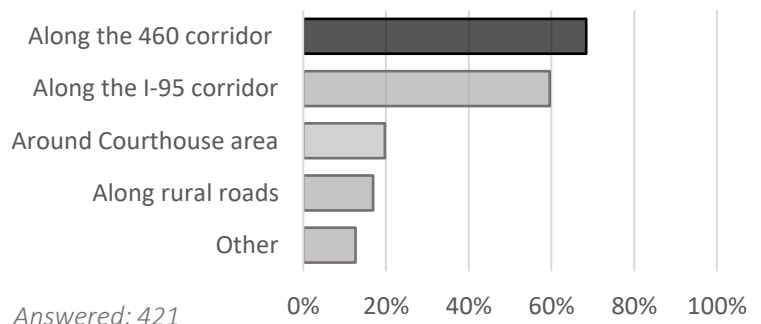
### Where should new (non-farm) industry be generally located?



### Where in the County should new housing be concentrated?



### Where should new, non-farm commercial business and shopping areas generally be located?



## SWOT Analysis

The Waverly Planning Area has a host of assets and challenges. The SWOT analysis identifies the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats faced by the Planning Area. These are internal and external factors that help plan the best uses for land and best investments for the community.

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
INTERNAL	<p><b>Strengths (Positive characteristics of the Planning Area that give it an advantage over others.)</b></p> <p>Availability of developable land for future public and private use in large tracts.</p> <p>Multiple industrial sites primed for development.</p> <p>Relative affordability compared to Virginia’s Richmond and Tidewater hubs, both in land prices and in tax structure.</p> <p>Transportation access via U.S. 460 (Corridor of Statewide Significance) and State Route 40 provide easy access to multiple major population centers.</p> <p>Access to utility infrastructure to supply potential industrial and commercial development.</p> <p>Rail access to the Norfolk Southern Railway providing direct access to major ports in Hampton Roads</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses (Negative characteristics of the Planning Area that could harm its revitalization.)</b></p> <p>U.S. 460 is not a limited access road and has high amounts of through traffic, making safety and site access a concern for new development along the corridor.</p> <p>Water and wastewater capacity restrictions may limit the viability of some larger industrial or commercial developments.</p> <p>The presence of multiple industrial sites along with frequent truck traffic may infringe on existing residential areas and restrict the location of new residential growth in the area.</p> <p>Lack of variety/density and availability of affordable housing may not meet the need of potential future employers.</p>
EXTERNAL	<p><b>Opportunities (External influences that can be used to the advantage of the Planning Area.)</b></p> <p>Prime soils and active agriculture can qualify owners for farm conservation opportunities that offer monetary benefits as well as land preservation.</p> <p>Access to the Port of Virginia makes it possible for Sussex-based manufacturers to reach international markets.</p> <p>Affordable land, taxes, and living costs make Waverly a marketable location for some businesses compared to more urban areas in the state.</p>	<p><b>Threats (External factors that could prevent improvement of the Planning Area.)</b></p> <p>Many Virginia, and other, localities are in competition for similar industrial and commercial developments.</p> <p>Typical conditions placed by major industries for tax breaks and other incentives may reduce actual benefits to the County’s tax base.</p> <p>Other land intensive, but not revenue or job intensive, uses, such as utility-scale solar generation facilities, can take up valuable agricultural or potential industrial land.</p>



## Transportation Analysis

Future uses in the Waverly Planning Area (Industrial Center) must be coordinated with transportation routes and other existing assets in the area (See also: Existing Features & Uses).

The following table shows Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) average daily traffic (ADT) count estimates in 2019 for each major road in the Planning Area. While future development may increase traffic volumes, it is anticipated that these roadways are sufficient to accommodate potential growth. A brief overview of existing and future uses for each major route follows.

Additionally, this analysis incorporates various construction priorities, programmed projects, identified deficiencies, and recommendations from existing VDOT publications and plans such as the VTrans Mid-Term Needs, projects listed in the Six-Year Improvement Program, and traffic deficiencies identified in the Crater Planning District Commission (PDC) Rural Transportation Plan.

<b>VDOT Average Daily Traffic Count Estimates, 2019</b>	
<b>Transportation Corridor</b>	<b>Traffic Count</b>
<b>U.S. 460</b> North of Town of Waverly South of Town of Waverly	12,000 11,000
<b>Sussex Drive/W. Main Street (State Route 40)</b> West of Town of Waverly Between Lobbs Shop Road/U.S. 460 East of Town of Waverly	2,100 3,200 2,700
<b>Jerusalem Plank Road (State Route 35)</b> North of State Route 626 South of State Route 626	2,500 1,900
<b>Cabin Point Road (State Route 602)</b> East of State Route 625 Between State Route 625 and U.S. 460 West of U.S. 460	410 1,200 280



### U.S. Route 460 Corridor

The U.S. 460 corridor is considered a Corridor of Statewide Significance (CoSS) and is a defining feature of the Planning Area and eastern Sussex County. U.S. 460 is an important regional transportation route connecting the Richmond and Hampton Road metropolitan areas. The Waverly Planning Area marks a point approximately halfway between these two important nodes. Within the Planning Area, U.S. 460 is a four-lane undivided highway named General Mahone Highway after the confederate general William Mahone. It carries an average of 11,000 vehicles per day. This includes a notable level of truck traffic which accounts for about 20% of all trips along the corridor. These trucks likely use the route as an easier and more reliable connection to the ports in the Hampton Roads region.

In the past, there have been discussions at the state level about the capacity and safety of the route if regional travel is further prioritized along the corridor. As an undivided highway with high truck traffic and multiple driveways without left turn lanes or deceleration lanes, relevant safety concerns exist along the corridor. For many years, VDOT was working to develop a parallel U.S. 460 limited access bypass through the area, but those plans have not been seriously considered in recent years. Nevertheless, the County must ensure that new development promotes safety and limits further congestion.

Traffic along U.S. 460 is both an asset and challenge. The road brings travelers directly through the Planning Area and helps to support the viability of local businesses along the corridor. However, through traffic also poses some safety risks and may limit where new development can be located with adequate access. The development of new entrances and outlets along the roadway should be carefully planned, with multiple uses sharing entrances where possible.

U.S. 460 is also a major route through the Town of Waverly, and is a central component to the Town's potential as a commercial and residential center. In particular, the Town and County should cooperate on functional and aesthetic improvements within the corridor, including wayfinding, sidewalks, landscaping, and sign regulations that help to tap the economic potential of pass-through traffic, encouraging long-distance travelers to stop or stay in Waverly and Sussex County.



### State Route 40 Corridor (Sussex Drive / W. Main Street)

State Route 40 is a major local route transecting the Planning Area and providing access to County resources to the west of Waverly. Route 40 is also an important cross-county route connection to the I-95 corridor near Stony Creek. State Route 40 is, therefore, a key route for residents and businesses relying on access to U.S. 460 and I-95.

State Route 40 in the Town of Waverly goes through the downtown district before crossing the railroad and U.S. 460. Outside of Town, State Route 40 has some light residential development with driveways onto the road as well as many undeveloped areas. As an important cross-county transportation corridor, future development and traffic should be managed to promote safety and the unrestricted flow of traffic. The County should continue its practice of discouraging subdivision lots with state road frontage and should use appropriate regulations to create shared entrances to adjacent uses.



### State Route 35 Corridor (Jerusalem Plank Road)

State Route 35 is a lightly developed route forming the western boundary of the Waverly Planning Area. The route has few commercial uses and a light amount of mostly clustered residential development. State Route 35 is at the center of the County's vision to conserve agriculture, forestry, and open space uses in the interior of the County.

State Route 35 serves an important role as being the primary north to south route through the center of the County. It provides an alternate for residents and passing travelers from I-95 or U.S. 460 along a more scenic route. Accordingly, State Route 35 should be considered as a scenic corridor, with appropriate protections applied to preserve land use, aesthetics, and views in this area.



### State Route 602 Corridor (Cabin Point Road)

The Cabin Point Road corridor is a minor route connecting U.S. 460 with State Route 35. It provides access to the Sussex mega site via Beef Steak Road and to existing industrial development (landfill), employment (Sussex I and II prisons), and an established residential area. Closer to U.S. 460, the traffic on Cabin Point Road is close to 35% trucks which is high for a smaller state route. Beyond Neville Road (State Route 625), Cabin Point Road has little truck traffic and light residential development. Cabin Point Road is the only elevated crossing for the Norfolk Southern rail line in the area.

Due to heavy truck traffic, the County should discourage significant residential development between U.S. 460 and Neville Road (State Route 625).



### Railroad Corridor

Norfolk Southern owns and operates the double-track railway that parallels U.S. 460 through Sussex County. The railroad is heavily used and is a critical freight connection to the Hampton Roads ports. The corridor has Amtrak service on the line, but there is no passenger rail access in the County. The Planning Area also has a few active and inactive spurs from the main line to industrial sites. The roughly 1-mile-long connection to the Waste Management Disposal site is the most heavily used spur in the area. The Smithfield Grain site also has an active connection to the railway. The spur cutting through the Town of Waverly to the Wood Fuel Developers manufacturing site is inactive.

The rail corridor parallel to Route 460 is an asset for the Planning Area. The availability of rail service could be a major factor in attracting new industrial or commercial investment in the area that can transport materials or finished products by rail. This rail line is an important feature in the marketing of multiple available industrial sites for the County. The existing elevated crossing at Cabin Point Road is also an important access point in the Planning Area that supports unrestricted movement of truck traffic across the railway.



### Transportation Improvements

A few notable transportation improvements are recommended for the Waverly Planning Area. The VTrans Mid-Term planning recommendations largely focus on U.S. 460 as a Corridor of Statewide Significance (CoSS) and improving access from the CoSS to Industrial and Economic Development Area (IEDA) sites with at least Tier 3 readiness within the Planning Area. First, VTrans identifies U.S. 460 as in need of capacity preservation (low priority) and transportation demand management (medium priority) measures. Jerusalem Plank Road between Baxter Road and Cabin Point Road has also been identified as in need of safety improvements (medium priority). Finally, VTrans lists Cabin Point Road (State Route 602), Beef Steak Road (State Route 626), and U.S. 460 as requiring improved access and road capacity if any IEDA sites are developed. Recent VDOT projects under the Six-Year Improvement Program include the reconstruction of a new bridge on State Route 603 (Triple Bridge Road) at the County border over the Blackwater River. This bridge was completed and reopened in 2019.

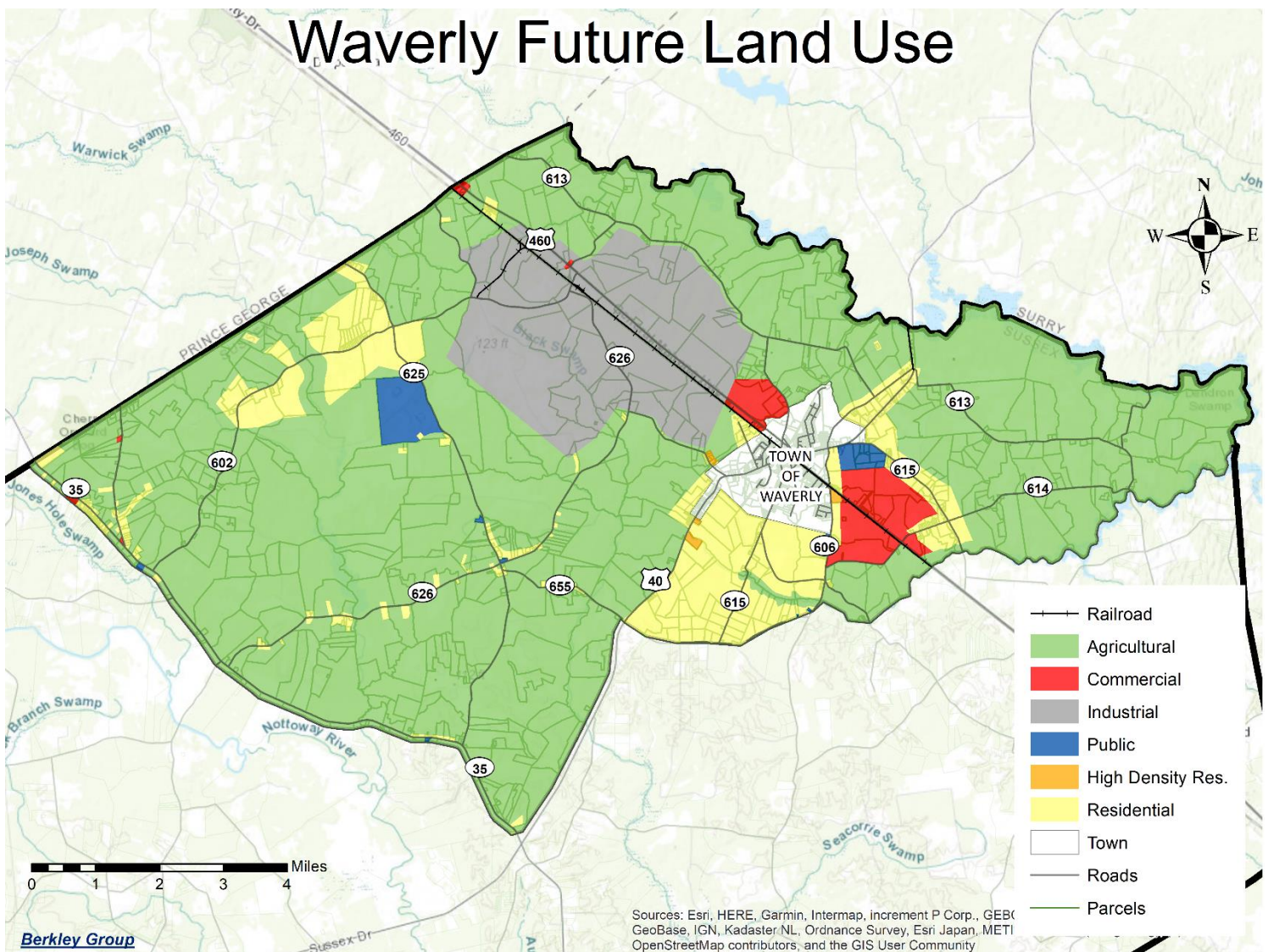
Recommendations in the Crater PDC and VDOT Rural Transportation Plan include a number of safety, signage, accessibility, and road size recommendations. First, on U.S. 460, the plan recommends adding more signage about turns and alignment along the corridor in the short-term and proposes a possible realignment in the long-term. Next, the plan recommends that Cabin Point Road from U.S. 460 to Newville Road (State Route 625) also have better signage about turns and alignment in the short-term and proposes widening to four lanes in the long-term. At the intersection of Cabin Point Road and U.S. 460, the plan recommends installing improved pavement markings and assessing if the intersection warrants a signal.

On State Route 40 (W. Main Street) in the Town of Waverly, the plan suggests studying improved turn lanes from State Route 40 onto U.S. 460 to improve safety and reduce congestion as well as relocating the stop bar and stop signs at the railroad crossing. In the long term, the plan also considers an interchange at the intersection of U.S. 460 and State Route 40 if U.S. 460 ever undergoes a realignment.

## Future Vision & Planning

The Waverly Planning Area has the potential to support new industrial and commercial development to strengthen and diversify the economy of Sussex County and the surrounding region. The presence of major roads, existing industrial uses, and available developable land will support additional growth in appropriate locations. The clustering of development will also help to protect the rural character and natural features that are important components of the Planning Area. Sussex County has already invested in developing the Waverly Area as a hub for industry and employment while also preserving agriculture and open space.

The fulfillment of the industrial growth vision can bring major benefits to residents. A major industry in the Waverly area would bring new employment opportunities to Sussex, including jobs for existing residents while also drawing new workers to the area. This activity could create new residential demand and help sustain area businesses in addition to attracting new stores, services, and other commercial support functions. Industrial growth would expand the County's tax base, leading to investment and improvements in schools, social services, public facilities, and other community improvements.



## Future Land Use Analysis

The recommended future uses are based on a variety of factors, such as existing development, actively marketed sites for economic development, best land use practices, environmental conditions, zoning, and access to public utilities. The future land use in the previous page depicts the ideal location for each land use category discussed in this section. The outlying portion of the Planning Area is home to farms, forests, and open spaces, including flood zones and riparian areas that should be protected. The U.S. 460 corridor is an ideal location for businesses, with many large, undeveloped tracts that have access to rail and highway infrastructure. Future land use recommendations include the addition of industrial uses and commercial uses along U.S. 460 and new residential development around the Town of Waverly. It also suggests strategies to ensure that agriculture and forestry continue to be profitable and the unique natural features of the area are preserved. Ultimately, future use of the Waverly Planning Area, whether for conservation or for large-scale development, must be compatible with the existing natural and man-made features that define this part of Sussex County.

### ***Environmental Areas***

Sensitive environmental areas, including rivers, streams, flood zones, wetlands, and riparian areas are important considerations for future development. These areas are found along the entire northeast border of the County formed by the Blackwater River and in two major areas in the rural interior of the Planning Area. These resources are critical to the long-term health and sustainability of the land and its residents. As Sussex County welcomes industries and investment, impacts to these critical environmental resources should be assessed and adequately mitigated. Environmental conservation will be a relevant consideration for all land use categories in the Planning Area.

### ***Agricultural/Forested/Open Space***

In addition to sensitive environmental areas, Sussex County should focus on maintaining the rural character that defines much of the Planning Area outside of the U.S. 460 corridor. The primary land use around Waverly will continue to be rural in nature and include large tracts

of agricultural, forest, and open land uses. On the future land use map, these areas are labeled as Agricultural. Development should be focused in designated areas and discouraged throughout most of the Planning Area. The main purpose of this land use classification is to facilitate existing and future farming operations, allow for expansion of farm related activity, reduce the effects of soil erosion, and protect watersheds to promote the continuation of farming and forestry as among the most important sectors of the economy.

Identifying the most productive agricultural and forestry enterprises in the Planning Area are necessary to protect them from planned industrial or commercial development and growth. To promote the rural character of the County and ensure these lands remain profitable, the County should consider the full scope of modern farming activities, including agritourism, on-site sales, food preparation, and events, and modify local regulations to more easily permit all activities that can help farmers maintain a profitable enterprise. Such activities have the added benefit of drawing visitors to the rural areas of Sussex County for tourism and recreation.

Areas of agricultural conservation should be used for active agricultural and forestry enterprises, and best management practices should be observed relative to the land disturbance, support structures, and other facilities that such agricultural/rural operations require. Areas that are in forest preservation programs should be maintained to support the ecological balance between agriculture and forest, and the County should consider the formation of a farmland conservation board to promote and manage conservation easements specific to the protection of active agricultural land.

### ***Industrial***

Future industry and investment should build on existing industrial development along U.S. 460 and near Cabin Point Road north and west of the Town of Waverly. This area contains existing facilities (landfill, composting facility, and feed mill) and land being actively marketed for commercial and/or industrial investment (Sussex mega site and Cabin Point site). The County's Blackswamp Wastewater Treatment Plant is also located



near these sites. Additionally, the sites are in close proximity to U.S. 460 and the Norfolk Southern railroad which provide ideal accessibility with minimal impacts on local roads. This makes the Waverly Planning Area the ideal location in Sussex County for new industrial development.

The Sussex Mega site and the Cabin Point Road site (Route 602 Industrial Park) are certified sites by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) that are most fit for new industrial growth. The Sussex Mega site is a 752-acre publicly-owned site with direct rail access. The site also surrounds the County's wastewater treatment plant and an electric substation that would provide utilities to the site. The Route 602 Industrial Park is 134 acres and is located across U.S. 460 from the Sussex Mega site.

The County should aggressively market these sites to a variety of businesses including major manufacturing, shipping and fulfillment, data centers, and other uses that can take advantage of available sites, low costs, and proximity to major markets in the Richmond and Hampton Roads metro areas. The County should also make efforts to prepare these sites to be as shovel ready as possible by improving transportation and utilities, clearing land, and making other improvements to ready these investment areas for potential buyers. Site and facility design should consider the rural and scenic attributes of Sussex County and mitigate noise, traffic, pollution, or other externalities near commercial or residential uses. Ultimately, the County must be flexible and open to a variety of investments and industrial uses. Allowing development on industrial sites in phases or pods will create more opportunities for private sector investment. The U.S. 460 and Cabin Point Road intersection already has an industrial presence that best suits the need for economic growth in the County while minimizing additional adverse impacts to the local rural character.

### **Commercial**

The Town of Waverly and the Planning Area in general has experienced very little commercial development and recently lost its only grocery store. Eventual industrial development in planned industrial parks can begin to attract residential development, and then retail, service,

and supporting commercial services to the area, both within and outside of Waverly.

The U.S. 460 corridor and downtown Waverly should be the preferred location for commercial growth. New commercial investment should be prioritized in the Town of Waverly where there is available vacant retail space in need of revitalization. To preserve the level of service on U.S. 460, any new commercial development should be built near existing intersections and driveways along U.S. 460. The Town of Waverly has lower speed limits and major intersections that are ideal locations for commercial growth. As the Town of Waverly redevelops, commercial development can extend outwards along U.S. 460. Development in these zones should conform to a town-like scale and density, with attractive and welcoming landscaping and signage that provides a buffer or transition between planned large-scale industrial use north of the Town and rural highway corridor uses south of Town.

### **Residential**

The Town of Waverly has been the traditional center of residential land use in the Waverly Planning Area. An additional emerging area of new homes has been built within the last 10-15 years along Cabin Point Road near Newville Road and the Sussex correctional facilities. Industrial growth, including the utilization of the Sussex Mega site could lead to new employment opportunities and increased demand for housing in this part of the County. The preferred location for new residential development should be in or near the Town of Waverly, in compact developments with good transportation access, and on parcels of 0.5 acres or less served by public water and sewer utilities. Residential development should be avoided near existing or planned industrial sites. The concentration of residential development in or near the Town can help preserve agriculture in rural areas of the County and minimize traffic impacts on small rural roads. The emerging residential area along Cabin Point Road near Newville Road is not ideally situated near transportation and Town services but can support some development. Residential growth in other locations should largely be restricted to housing structures on large rural lots.

The County should also encourage a wide variety of housing types, including single family homes, townhomes, and apartments to meet the needs of all areas of the housing market. The Town and adjacent parts of the County already have some multifamily development, and these types of uses should continue to be allowed to ensure quality affordable housing is available. Modernizing the vacant and deteriorating housing structures present within the Planning Area should also be emphasized. Finally, improving the local amenities, services, and access to existing residential structures should be an economic development focus. There are many aging mobile homes in need of repair, modernization, or replacement. The County should continue to work with residents to access state and federal funds dedicated to home repairs. Also, as residential growth expands outward from Waverly, the County should prioritize safety and accessibility by limiting residential growth on U.S. 460 and promoting walking and biking infrastructure in neighborhoods.

### **Public Use**

The Sussex I and II Correctional Facilities are a major source of employment for Sussex County. However, state-owned and operated facilities are not a source of tax revenue, and so do not support local schools or other public needs. Given the choice, Sussex County should prioritize the expansion of other existing businesses and the recruitment of new tax-paying businesses over expansion of the State prison system within the County.

The County should also address needs for new public facilities as additional housing and employment creates a greater demand for public services. Opportunities to renovate the library, add parks, and expand recreational options can improve the overall quality of life of residents.

### **Town of Waverly**

While Waverly itself is an incorporated town, and therefore conducts its own land use planning and development and regulatory programs, its vitality is critically important for the County.

Sussex County should welcome new commercial development along U.S. 460, as well as within the downtown. Downtown commercial development should make use of existing vacant structures, including upper floors for offices or accessory residential uses, while any new commercial construction within the downtown should conform to the scale, design, and character of its surroundings along Main Street, Bank Street, and Maifield Avenue. Commercial development along U.S. 460 will be more automobile oriented than downtown uses and should be planned with proper turn lanes and combined and clearly marked entrances to avoid any negative effects on traffic within the corridor.

Commercial development will benefit from industrial and residential growth in the Planning Area. The potential for major employers to invest in the Sussex Mega site and Cabin Point Road Site may help attract commercial investment to the Town. The County should also support new residential growth within the Town.

The County and Town should also consider beautification and wayfinding signage that can attract visitors from the busy U.S. 460 corridor. Landscaping should take the form of street trees as well as attractive entrance features welcoming visitors to Waverly from U.S. 460. With 11,000 vehicles per day currently passing through the Town on this route, landscaping and signs identifying points of interest can convince more travelers to stop and contribute to the local economy.

## Implementation Recommendations

Recommendations for the Waverly Planning Area build on the strengths of the area as Sussex County’s center of industrial growth. The recommendations focus on identifying opportunities for development and investment while also preserving agriculture and open space.

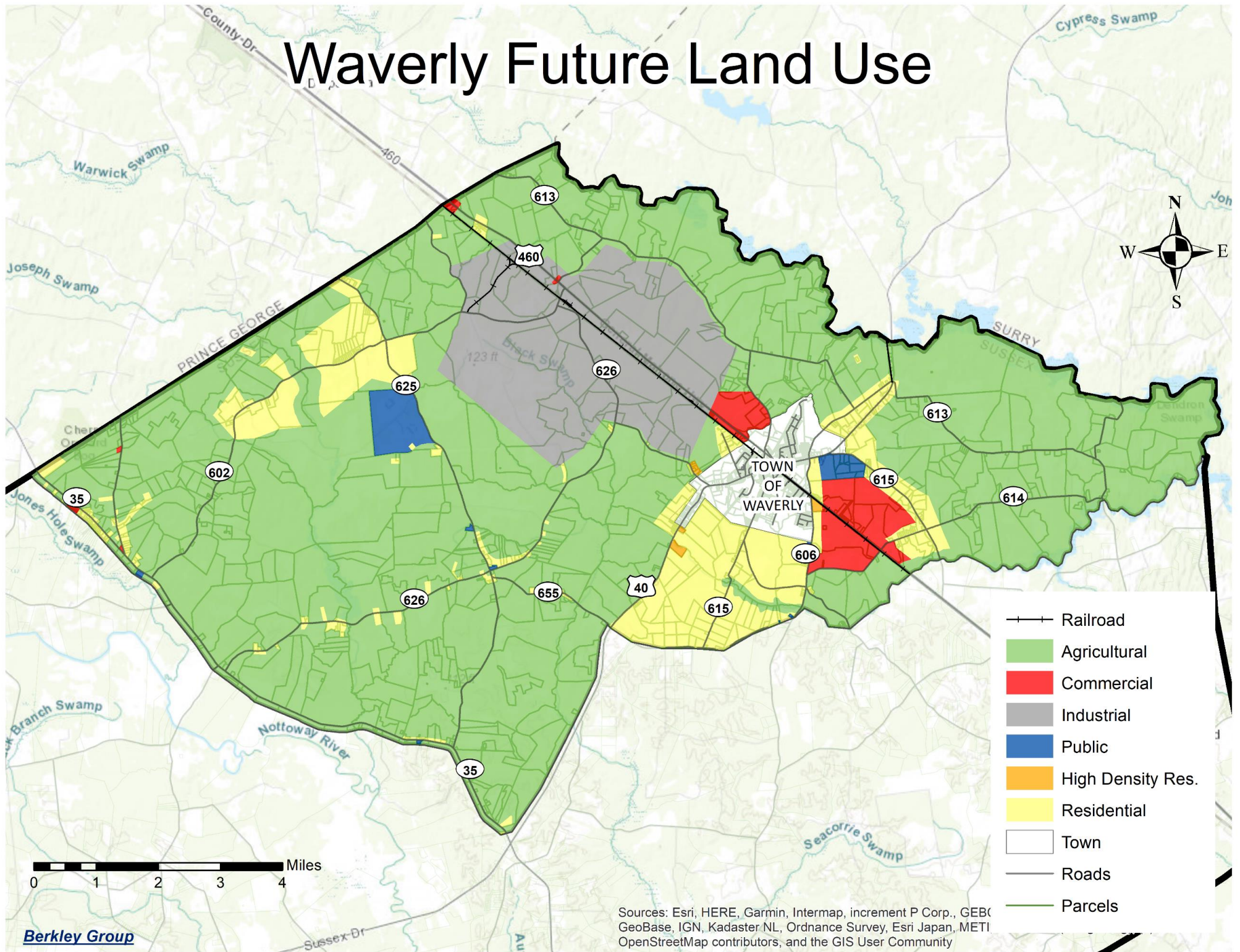
Implementation Task	Cost Scale	Time Scale <sup>2</sup>	Responsible Party
Continue marketing both the Sussex Mega site and Cabin Point Road Site to select industries and companies that can provide positive employment and tax base benefits while minimizing environmental impacts.	\$	Short-term	County Administration
Amend the zoning ordinance to increase buffering and landscaping requirements around industrial development.	\$\$	Short-term	Planning and Zoning Department
Gather community input to consider renaming U.S. Route 460 (General Mahone Highway) to better present the local culture and identity of the local area.	\$	Short-term	Planning and Zoning Department
Consider wayfinding, signage, and streetscaping that improve the aesthetic and direct traffic to local attractions.	\$\$	Short-term	County Administration
Continue to work with utility providers, local businesses, and County residents to extend broadband internet service to all unserved and underserved homes and businesses.	\$\$	Short-term	County Administrator
Promote County policies and farmer participation in conservation and environmental programs, such as those available through the VA Department of Agriculture and Conservation Services (VDACS).	\$	Short-term	Cooperative Extension

<sup>2</sup> *Short-term* (1-5 years); *Medium-term* (5-10 years); *Long-term* (10+ years)



Implementation Task	Cost Scale	Time Scale <sup>2</sup>	Responsible Party
Update County zoning ordinance to encourage cluster development, deter the development of prime farmland and woodlands, and preserve the rural character of the County.	\$\$	Short-term	Planning and Zoning Department
Provide education to local residents to apply and obtain state and federal funding for housing renovations and rehabilitation.	\$\$	Short-term	Planning and Zoning Department
Establish a highway corridor overlay district to preserve and improve the appearance along U.S Route 460.	\$\$	Medium-term	Planning and Zoning Department
Implement site and infrastructure improvements in publicly-owned industrial parks (e.g., grading, clearing, culverts, utilities) that produce shovel-ready sites for major industrial and/or commercial development.	\$\$\$\$	Medium-term	County Administration
Consider utilizing farmland protection tools available in VA State Code to promote long term agricultural conservation.	\$	Medium-term	Cooperative Extension/ Planning and Zoning Department
Partner with the Town of Waverly and the Virginia Department of Transportation to develop and improve sidewalk and bike infrastructure near dense residential development.	\$\$\$	Long-term	County Administration
Work with the Virginia Department of Transportation to pursue additional improvements that support heavy truck traffic entering and using Cabin Point Road.	\$\$\$	Long-term	County Administration
Implement necessary utility improvements/expansions along State Routes where residential commercial, or industrial growth is projected in the Planning Area.	\$\$\$\$	Long-term	County Administration

# Waverly Future Land Use



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community