

# **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF HAMILTON**



**Second largest white oak in Virginia at Hillbrook**

**Adopted April 21, 2003 (County of Loudoun)  
Adopted March 10, 2003 (Town of Hamilton)**

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## **PREFACE**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Hamilton area, like much of Loudoun County, experienced strong residential growth in the 1990's. During the development of the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Hamilton and UGA (1995 Hamilton Plan) residential growth pressures were expected to continue into the second half of the decade. Based on the large land area within the Urban Growth Area (now known as the Joint Land Management Area, JLMA) and residential density assumptions of up to four units per acre, the population growth projections in the 1995 Hamilton Plan estimated a doubling of the population. The 1995 Hamilton Plan policy stressed management of the growth such that the Town would not be strove to achieve a balance between managing growth and maintaining the inherent qualities that characterized the Town and the larger Hamilton community.

Subsequent to the adoption of the 1995 Hamilton Plan, the Town conducted a sewer service study. The study highlighted the fact that there is, and will continue to be, limited capacity at the Hamilton sewer plant. The Town considered this information in tandem with the development potential in the Urban Growth Area (UGA). Based on the limitations of utility capacity, the Town decided to recommend to the County a reduction in the size of the designated UGA. A Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPAM 2000-0002) was approved which reduced the UGA to its current boundaries. The revised Hamilton Plan has been updated to address this change and the policies more strongly stress the importance of achieving and maintaining a balanced and sustainable land use pattern.

As revisions were being considered for the Hamilton Plan, community meetings helped identify issues important to the citizens. On January 17, 2001, the County sponsored a community forum as a vehicle for members of the Hamilton community to talk about community issues. Participants were asked about the positive attributes of living or working in Loudoun County as well as their concerns and the participants primarily focussed their comments on Hamilton issues.

Strengths that were identified included an appreciation for the small-town feel and sense of community in the Hamilton area. Also noted were the small-school environment; a good quality of life; and an open feeling due to abundant open space, natural resources, and surrounding farmland.

Some concerns or challenges that were identified included threats to water quality, fear of losing the small-school and small-town atmosphere, excessive traffic speeds, and better pedestrian connectivity.

Many of the strengths and weaknesses cited in the 2001 forum were similar to those cited in the public forums that were held to garner citizen input for the 1995 Plan. However, the vision has shifted from that of trying to manage growth within a larger, expanded UGA (or JLMA), to that of trying to preserve the quality of development and quality of life within a smaller community sphere.

## **PROCESS FOR UPDATING THE NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

During 2000-2001, the Hamilton Planning Commission began a five-year review of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan, as required by the Code of Virginia. The Hamilton Planning Commission determined that factors such as changing demographics, new development, local and regional transportation and public infrastructure requirements and challenges, environmental concerns, and the overall growth of the County all contributed to the need for a full revision of the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Input for this Plan was provided by the Citizens Advisory Committee, a group of more than thirty Town and JLMA residents tasked to examine all aspects of community life and develop recommendations for the future. Citizen comments recognized that while the vision of growth for Hamilton and the surrounding area is now scaled back from the vision of 1995, the Plan should continue to focus on maintaining and enhancing the characteristics and qualities that embody the Hamilton community. Those qualities include a safe community that effectively manages vehicular and pedestrian traffic; a community that maintains its close-knit residential feel; preservation of historic character; respect for natural resources; and a revitalization of the core commercial area in the center of town.

With the input and recommendations of the Citizens Advisory Committee, the Hamilton Planning Commission conducted more than 20 work sessions, over 9 full committee meetings, an open house and a public hearing to revise the 1995 Plan. This draft was forwarded to the Town Council in the summer of 2001.

The draft was circulated to civic associations, business organizations, boards and commissions, and interested individuals for comment. In the late summer of 2001, the Town Council forwarded the draft to the County to begin a joint review process.

A Joint Review Committee composed of members from both the Hamilton and County Planning Commissions was convened in August 2002 to review the draft prepared by the Hamilton Planning Commission. The Joint Review Committee met during the fall of 2002 to review the draft.

## **PLAN SUMMARY**

The Introduction provides a broad picture of the purpose and basis of the Comprehensive Plan, the relationship of the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Hamilton and JLMA with the County's Revised General Plan, as well as the setting and history of the Town of Hamilton.

The Comprehensive Plan contains ten topical chapters that provide detailed background information on Population and Growth, Land Use, Community Facilities and Services, Natural Resources, Transportation, Housing and Community Development, Economic Development, Historic and Cultural Resources, Annexation, and Implementation. These sections also articulate goals, policies, and actions to guide the Town in its progress toward protecting and enhancing the Town's identity and distinctive character.

While the plan is organized into functional topics, there are many horizontal threads that form its fabric. Key among these are the goals established throughout this Plan to:

- **Achieve a balanced and sustainable land use pattern that will retain Hamilton's historic, small Town character in a rural setting;**
- **Provide for the equitable, effective distribution of public facilities and services and implement preventative maintenance and physical and financial planning measures regarding existing and future infrastructure;**
- **Support the continuation of Hamilton Elementary School at its present site within the Town JLMA and support a competitive school system that reflects the Town's strong commitment to education;**
- **Uphold a high standard of environmental stewardship, promoting clean air and water and promoting effective tree, waterway and wildlife preservation standards;**
- **Provide safe and orderly flow of traffic in Hamilton and surrounding areas;**
- **Protect and enhance the Town's neighborhoods by discouraging cut-through traffic and create streets that are rural in nature (tree lined and/or landscaped) with attention to safety;**
- **Provide for safe pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle movement through the Town and surrounding area, by means of sidewalks/paths/trails that interconnect the Hamilton community;**
- **Encourage a range of quality residential development and redevelopment sensitive to the Town's interest in maintaining its character, being pedestrian friendly and providing parks and open spaces;**
- **Create and sustain commercial development within the core commercially zoned area in the center of Town;**

- **Create and stimulate a favorable climate for economic development, recognizing the intimate connection between economic prosperity and maintenance of high quality physical and social environments;**
- **Preserve and protect the Town's historic and cultural resources to maintain a unique sense of place and provide for increased social interaction;**
- **Protect the finite water resources by limiting additional usage to that which will ensure adequate clean water is available to present users and future new users; and**
- **Control type and rate of growth of residential and commercial development to ensure infrastructure can support without overloading.**

The role of government has changed dramatically over the past decade as Town leadership takes an entrepreneurial role to increase government effectiveness in making coordinated infrastructure and land use planning decisions. More than ever, effective government is closely tied to the well being of the community. The Town Council and Board of Supervisors strive to add a conscious, planned, qualitative aspect to growth, while ensuring that the cost of supporting infrastructure is offset by resulting benefits. The Comprehensive Plan provides a series of strategies to ensure that the Town and surrounding area continue to be positioned prominently among jurisdictions as an exceptional place to live, work and visit.

The Town of Hamilton's Comprehensive Plan and Area Management Plan is a policy and strategic guide for public decision-making. The Plan describes the community's historic, physical and social character, examines and responds to local and regional issues, and provides a blueprint for the future. The goals, policies and actions in the Plan describe a desired future for the Hamilton community and provide recommended paths for attaining that future state. For purposes of understanding the structure of each chapter in the Plan, these definitions are provided:

Goal – Object or end that one strives to obtain

Policy – Guiding principle used for decision-making

Action – A definitive act or activity that can be measured for completion

The Plan includes workable, responsible goals, policies and actions to encourage the creative cooperation among government, private organizations, and individuals that is necessary to build a modern community while showing reverence to the past.

## I. INTRODUCTION

*The Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Hamilton was initially prepared by the Town Council, Town Planning Commission and the Town's consulting planning team. The Plan was adopted by the Mayor and Town Council on September 13, 1993. In May 1995, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors initiated a Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPAM) for the designated Urban Growth Area (UGA) surrounding Hamilton as defined in the Choices and Changes: Loudoun County General Plan. The Loudoun County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors reviewed the initial Hamilton Comprehensive Plan as it relates to the UGA (now called the Joint Land Management Area [JLMA]) and made revisions as agreed to by the Town of Hamilton. The Board of Supervisors and Town of Hamilton adopted this revised comprehensive plan on February 12, 1996 and December 20, 1995 respectively which superseded the General Plan guidelines for land use in the Hamilton UGA, and supersedes the original September 13, 1993 Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Town. In October of 1999 the Town of Hamilton initiated the five-year review of the Comprehensive Plan. During this review the Hamilton Planning Commission recommended a revision to the UGA. The Board of Supervisors and Town of Hamilton adopted this revised Urban Growth Area on September 5, 2000 and August 1, 2000 respectively. The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors and the Town of Hamilton adopted this latest version of the Comprehensive Plan (which supersedes all previous Comprehensive Plans) on April 21, 2003 and March 10, 2003 respectively.*

### **Purpose and Legal Basis of the Comprehensive Plan**

There are several fundamental reasons for any local jurisdiction to prepare and implement a comprehensive plan, including the following items:

1. Forecast and prepare for future changes in the community such as population size, employment base, environmental quality, and the demand for public services and facilities.
2. Set goals for the future based upon the concerns, needs and aspirations of local citizens.
3. Establish policies, or courses of action, needed to achieve those goals and to protect the public health, safety and welfare.
4. In Virginia and many other states, to conform with state requirements that every local government adopt and maintain a comprehensive plan.

Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia requires that every governing body in the Commonwealth adopt a comprehensive plan for the territory under its jurisdiction by July 1, 1980. Section 15.2-2230 requires the local planning commission to review that plan at least once every five years.

Section 15.2-2200 of the Code of Virginia establishes the legislative intent of planning and zoning enabling authority. In summary, the Commonwealth's intent is to encourage local governments to:

- a. Improve the public health, safety, convenience and welfare of the citizens;
- b. Plan for future development with adequate highway, transit, pedestrian, bicycle, health, recreational, and other facilities;
- c. Recognize the needs of agriculture, industry and business in future growth;
- d. Preserve agricultural and forestal land;
- e. Provide a healthy surrounding for family life in residential areas; and
- f. Provide that community growth be consonant with the efficient use of public funds.



The Old Farmer's & Merchants Bank

Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia specifically states that the comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants.

It further states that the comprehensive plan shall be general in nature in that it shall accomplish the following:

1. Designate the general or approximate location and character of features shown on the plan, including where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, removed or changed.
2. Show the long-range recommendations for the general development of the territory and may include such items as the designation of areas for different kinds of public and private land use, a system of transportation facilities, a system of community service facilities, historical areas, and areas for the implementation of groundwater protection measures.

In Virginia, the local Comprehensive Plan is a guide for making community development decisions and thus the governing body can exercise some discretion in how strictly it interprets and adheres to the plan. However, the Code provides that the construction of streets or other public facilities be subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission as to whether the general location and extent of the proposed facility is in substantial accord with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

#### **Relationship of the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Hamilton and the JLMA and the Revised General Plan for Loudoun County**

In July 2001, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors adopted the Revised General Plan, which is the central element of its Comprehensive Plan. This document replaced the previous comprehensive plan called the Choices and Changes: General Plan, which had been adopted in 1991.

During the course of preparing Revised General Plan, the County sought input from the incorporated Towns as to their preferences for planning policy for the County land adjacent to their corporate limits. The Town of Hamilton contributed its views on these matters, and the Town's recommendations were fully considered by the County during the process. However, the policies of the Revised General Plan for the Hamilton area are general in nature and thus set the stage for more detailed plans for the territory around the Town.

Because the further development of land around the Town will have a direct relationship on the fabric of the Town, it is appropriate for the Town to develop detailed planning policy recommendations for that area. Any such policy recommendations from the Town for the County land surrounding it will not become formal government policy unless and until the County Board of Supervisors adopts those policies as part of the County's own Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Hamilton and the JLMA consists of two distinct territories for planning policy:

1. The incorporated Town which is governed by the Hamilton Town Council, and;
2. The JLMA which surrounds the Town and is governed by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors.

The Revised General Plan designates an area surrounding the Town as “Joint Land Management Area” (JLMA). The Town may extend Town water and sewer facilities to areas within the JLMA and this area typically will provide for development at higher densities than in the rural area. Note that the term “Joint Land Management Area” (JLMA) replaces the term “Urban Growth Area” (UGA) which was used in the previous Hamilton Comprehensive Plan.

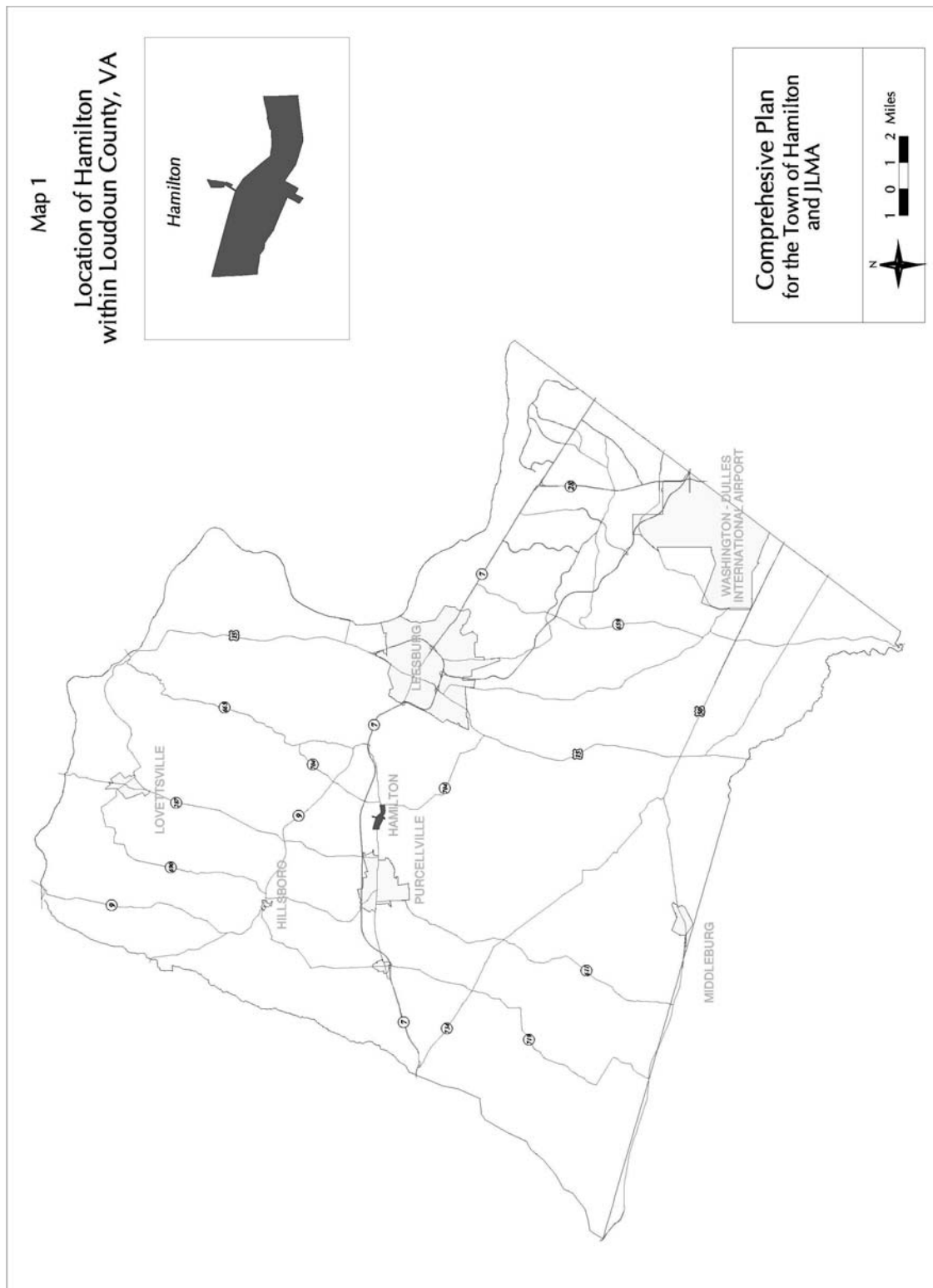
Together these areas make up the total planning area, which this Plan addresses. References in the Plan to the “Town” will refer to the incorporated limits and references to the JLMA will apply to that area outside of the incorporated limits that is within County jurisdiction and so designated in the Revised General Plan.

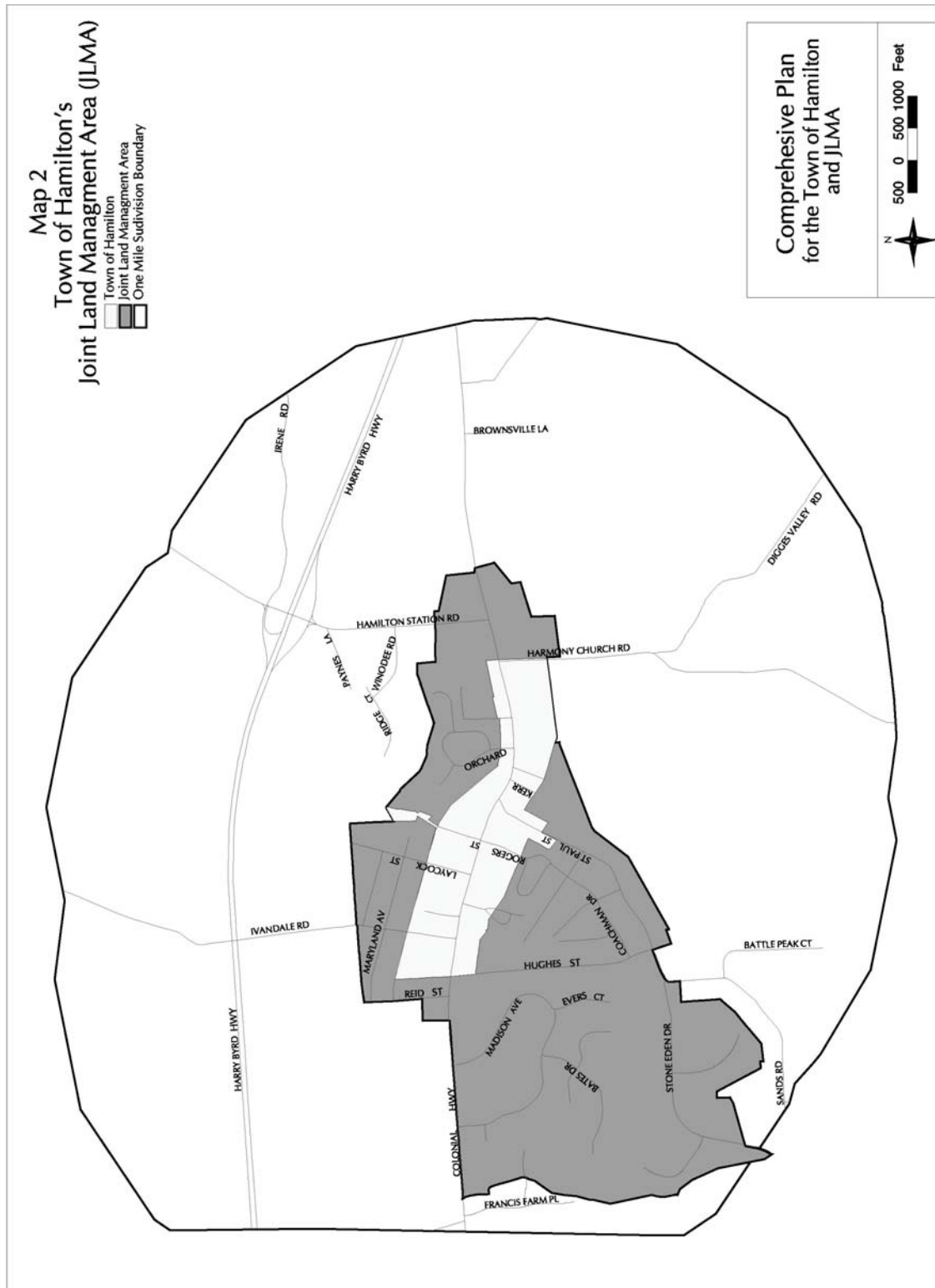
### **Summary of County Plan Policy for the Hamilton Area**

Loudoun County’s Revised General Plan establishes countywide goals and planning policies, including broad policies for guiding future development. For areas around the Towns, the County policy advocates the preservation of the rural heritage of the County and promotes agricultural land use and rural economy land uses. Outside of the Hamilton JLMA, the County policy permits residential density of one unit per twenty acres (or one unit per ten acres for clustered developments). There are general policies that pertain to all of the Town JLMAs on growth management, land use, transportation, public facilities, and public utilities. Policies that are specific to each town are also included. These policies were based on recommendations from the Town and were coordinated between the Towns and the County during the plan review process. Policies pertaining to Hamilton as stated in the Revised General Plan include:

1. Development within the Hamilton JLMA will comply with the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Hamilton and the adjacent area in the JLMA.
2. The County will support Town efforts to develop an identifiable town center to serve as a community focal point for the Town and the JLMA.
3. Development in the Hamilton JLMA will extend the existing street pattern where feasible, and in lieu of extending the existing pattern, develop a traditional street network and block pattern to reflect the County’s and Town’s community design objectives.
4. The County will coordinate with the Town to assure that new developments in the JLMA are planned with roads that are compatible with traditional town designs.

5. The County will work with the Town to effectively manage transportation systems around the Town and to explore methods of traffic calming on Business Route 7 through town including the possible use of a traffic circle at Route 7 and St. Paul Street.
6. The County will work with Hamilton to implement the use of greenbelts or other open space and land management techniques in the JLMA or outside of the JLMA as a means of maintaining a distinct identity for the greater Hamilton community. The County will work with the Town to achieve a balanced land use pattern that will retain Hamilton's historic small town character in a rural setting and maintain its unique sense of place.
7. The County will work with the Town and School Board to support the continuation of Hamilton Elementary School at its present site.





## **II. SETTING AND HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF HAMILTON**

The Town of Hamilton is situated in the valley of western Loudoun County. The Town is eight miles west of the County seat of Leesburg and forty miles west of Washington D.C. Hamilton is the most eastern of the six Towns in western Loudoun. Historically, Hamilton was the largest of those western Towns. However, during the last several decades, it has evolved into a predominantly residential community and has not expanded its borders to take in the substantial development that has occurred adjacent to it.

Hamilton is bisected by business Route 7, currently and historically one of two major east-west roads through western Loudoun, the other being Route 50 through Middleburg. The watershed divide that separates the two major drainage basins of western Loudoun, the Catoctin and Goose Creek watersheds also bisects Hamilton.

The land within and around the original Town had good soils, good topography for farming, and good supplies of groundwater, which made it an attractive place for settlement and continued development in an agricultural-based economy.

The area that presently includes the Town of Hamilton was originally populated by a variety of Native American tribes. European settlers arrived in the late 1730s. George and Tabitha Tavenner were the first to build a house in the Hamilton area in 1768. Later, their son Richard built *Harmony*, a log and stone house where every nail was made by the blacksmith. The area was known as *Harmony*.

In 1831 the Leesburg and Snickers Gap Turnpike Company opened a road connecting Leesburg to Snickersville (now Bluemont). The road facilitated trade and growth in the area. By 1833, there were enough people to support the first church, Harmony Methodist Church. The community was known as *Harmony* as well as *Hamilton Store*, until 1835 when John Quincy Adams approved a post office in Charles Bennett Hamilton's store. The name of the town was recorded as Hamilton. Continued population growth led to incorporation as the Town of Hamilton in 1875.

On March 21, 1865, Confederate Colonel John S. Mosby and some of his men surprised and engaged a group of Union soldiers commanded by Colonel Marcus Reno, in a skirmish known as the Harmony Skirmish. Many of the Union wounded were cared for by families who lived in Hamilton. The Harmony Skirmish was the last important action of the Civil War in Loudoun County.



Stonegate

After the Civil War, in 1868, the railroad had reached Hamilton and western Loudoun, furthering the growth of the area. Hamilton, along with its neighboring towns to the west, prospered as not only the major agricultural center of the area, but also a popular resort area for tourists and vacationers. The air and water were clean and temperatures were cool, and many Washington D.C. families came to stay for the summer. Six trains a day from Washington providing four “mails” and the availability of fresh food from the neighboring farms, made Hamilton an ideal place for families wishing relief from the city’s summer heat and diseases. A mile and a half long boardwalk through town “afforded delightful opportunity to stroll,” and a dance hall at the west end of town provided an evening social gathering place.

In 1860, the Town had a total population of 148 people, but by 1890, it had grown to 407 residents, making it the third largest Town in Loudoun County. By 1900, Hamilton had become the county’s second largest Town, having surpassed Middleburg in population. Today, because the Town limits have not been extended, the population is under 600.

In the early days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Hamilton had many businesses, including two newspapers, a milliner, men’s clothing stores, a butcher shop, a broom factory, a dentist, a stove shop, two hardware stores, boarding houses, livery stable and blacksmith, among others. There was also a flat racecourse. Hamilton was a major center of economic and cultural activity for western Loudoun residents during this period.

However, a decline in economic activity in the Town began in the early 1900s as competition increased from the neighboring Town of Purcellville and the greater use of automobiles limited the benefits of the train for tourist traffic. A critical blow to the Town’s economic fortunes was caused by the fire of 1926 that destroyed much of the center of town including six stores, the post office, and four houses.

Since that time, the Town has become more of a residential community than a business community. Population growth has continued, however, along with the growth of the rest of the county. This growth has occurred not only within the Town boundaries, but also significantly around the edges of the Town, resulting in the majority of the area’s population living outside of the incorporated Town. This development pattern presents both the Town and the County with significant land use and public service issues that are addressed in this Plan.

Hamilton has gained in popularity as a good place to live and raise a family, as it has become more accessible to the employment centers of Fairfax, eastern Loudoun, the Dulles corridor, and Leesburg. Many of the features that caused Hamilton to grow and prosper during the 19<sup>th</sup> century are factors in its current growth pattern and will likely continue to be factors into the future. Good soils, good topography, and proximity to eastern urban areas all create opportunities as well as pressures from continued population growth.

### **III. POPULATION AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

Population stands out as one of the most defining aspects of a community. Factors such as growth rate, distribution, and characteristics illustrate both the composition and evolution of a locality. The provision of many other public services, such as the construction of schools and development of recreational facilities, must focus on the present and future needs of an area relative to its population trends.

#### **Recent Development Activity**

During the past two decades, the greater Hamilton community has grown through development of some infill lots in the Town and primarily due to development occurring adjacent to the Town. The earlier portion of this time period saw the development of subdivisions including Hamilton Acres, Hamilton Knolls, Hamilton Terrace, Winodee, and Carriage Ridge. More recently, the subdivisions of Stone Eden and Hamilton Station Estates are in the process of developing and contribute to the growing Hamilton area population.

Loudoun County's growth summary report and building permit data show that between 1995 and 2001, approximately 180 permits were issued for residential dwellings for properties in the Hamilton zip code area. Of that, five permits were issued for residential dwelling units for properties within the corporate limits of the town and approximately sixty permits were issued for properties within the Joint Land Management Area (JLMA).

#### **Opportunities and Constraints for Population Growth**

In the last decade, the County experienced a high degree of growth. The Hamilton area experienced its share of this growth. Growth in the Town and JLMA comes from both a regional demand for new development, as well as from the attractive, "small town" character and high quality of life of the local community. To address growth pressures in the rural areas of the County and to preserve existing farms, policy direction in the County's Revised General Plan has placed an emphasis on agricultural and rural economy uses as opposed to residential development. This change in policy will ultimately affect growth in the rural areas around the Town and JLMA. The County's policy also encourages development to occur within the corporate limits of the Town prior to moving into the JLMA area to facilitate the efficient use of resources and land management.

The Hamilton JLMA has been an attractive area for residential development. Features that make the area attractive to development include relatively well-drained soils with good percolation rates for septic systems, gently rolling and scenic topography, and good road access.

The major constraint to development within the Town corporate limits as well as the JLMA is the lack of undeveloped land. The Town and much of JLMA are virtually "built out". Only about twenty acres of land within the corporate limits and 70 acres of land within the JLMA are undeveloped and potentially available for development in the near to mid-term future. Any development within the JLMA also is limited by whether it will be served by the Town with public utilities or constrained by the inherent limitations of the soils for on-site wastewater disposal systems. Another important consideration is that area development is limited by current road capacity.

## Current Population Estimates

The 2000 US Census provides the most accurate available estimate of current population within the Town and the JLMA. Table 1 shows the year 2000 demographic information for Hamilton and the JLMA.

The 1990 US Census indicated a population of 700 and 254 households within the Town. The 2000 census reported a population of 562 and a household count of 226. The persons per household increased from 2.75 to 3.05 for the census area including the Town, the greater Hamilton area, and the Route 7 West planning area.

There has been no identifiable event that would explain this apparent loss of population or households. Building permit records indicate growth in and around Hamilton. There has been no catastrophic natural event or major economic downturn in the local or regional economy that would explain a loss in households or population. Therefore, the only reasonable explanation for this is that there was an error in the 1990 census information. It is possible that growth actually occurred in the JLMA and was attributed to be in the corporate limits, however this is difficult to verify because the Census tract and JLMA areas do not coincide. Regardless, it is clear that the Hamilton area has been growing in terms of households and population and that growth has had, and will continue to have, an impact on the Town as well as the County.

| <b>TABLE 1<br/>POPULATION<br/>TOWN OF HAMILTON AND JLMA</b> |                       |                 |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| <b>Year</b>                                                 | <b>Loudoun County</b> | <b>Hamilton</b> | <b>JLMA</b>         |
| 1980                                                        | 57,427                | 598             | <sup>1</sup>        |
| 1990                                                        | 86,129                | 700             | 1,101 <sup>2</sup>  |
| 2000                                                        | 172,173               | 562             | 1333 <sup>2,3</sup> |

<sup>1</sup> JLMA did not exist

<sup>2</sup> Estimation of JLMA population

<sup>3</sup> Boundaries of the JLMA were reduced in 2000.

Source: U.S. Census information, Loudoun County Department of Planning

## Population Forecasts

Given the discrete number of undeveloped parcels in the corporate limits and the JLMA, population forecasts can be done by assessing the buildout potential. Growth within the Town and JLMA will be tied to the availability of these developable parcels. A number of assumptions have been made regarding projected population growth. There is no up-zoning anticipated within the corporate limits or within the JLMA. There is also no residential redevelopment anticipated in the short term. The buildout scenario would also be based on the Existing Zoning Map and development policies in this Plan.

Within the Town, approximately thirty-two dwelling units could be added under current zoning. This would potentially add approximately 100 people for a total estimated future population of just over 600 in the Town. The population per household is expected to remain fairly stable, balanced by a combination of younger families moving to the area and a maturing existing population. The projections are based on growth anticipated within the present municipal boundaries only. Future populations would vary if the Town were to annex developed portions of the County surrounding the Town.

Approximately 117 additional units could be built within the JLMA. This would result in a population increase of 357 persons for a future estimated population of approximately 1690 in the JLMA.

Aside from this type of buildout analysis, population forecasting is also done by modeling regional demographic information. Loudoun County periodically conducts population forecasts in cooperation with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). Forecasts produced by the County coincide with the Fiscal Impact Technical Review Committee review of projected service needs in the Planning Subareas in the County. The Town of Hamilton and the JLMA are in the County's Route 7 West planning area. Forecasts for Hamilton and the JLMA are based on the small area geography zones developed by COG and the development patterns and potential in these zones. Round 6.3 forecasts indicate that the combined corporate and JLMA populations may approach approximately 3,000 by the year 2010.



Hamilton Park

## **GOALS – POPULATION AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

1. New development will be encouraged to locate in the corporate limits of Hamilton before moving into the JLMA.
2. Encourage quality in residential development and sensitivity to maintain the character of the Town.
3. Encourage the principle of stewardship in the use of the land in and around Town regarding residential development.
4. Allow for growth at a level that can be sustained by the public services and infrastructure.

## **POLICIES – POPULATION AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

1. Evaluate residential development proposals with consideration for the housing goals of the Town and the finite water resources and limited on-site wastewater disposal locations for the Town.
2. Ensure that a scale and density of residential development is compatible with adjacent and surrounding land uses, supporting infrastructure, and environmental conditions to maintain the overall high quality of life in the Town and its adjacent area.
3. Ensure that residential growth does not overwhelm the elementary school and put the school enrollment over capacity.
4. Limit residential development to that which is feasible given the Town's finite groundwater resource constraints.

## **ACTION ITEMS – POPULATION AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

1. Amend the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to incorporate design and development standards that promote the traditional development pattern of Hamilton.
2. Monitor the number of sewer and water taps granted for new development in the Town and surrounding area to protect the finite groundwater resources for the Town and JLMA.
3. Develop a database on the current population, available supply of housing, and current housing demand within Hamilton and the surrounding area. Work with County School Board to project school population and needs.
4. Review Town development regulations to identify possible streamlining measures to minimize the impact of Town regulations on the cost of housing.
5. Identify measures that the Town might implement to promote and ensure the maintenance of residential homes and properties, in order to protect existing property values and protect public health, safety, and welfare.

## IV. LAND USE

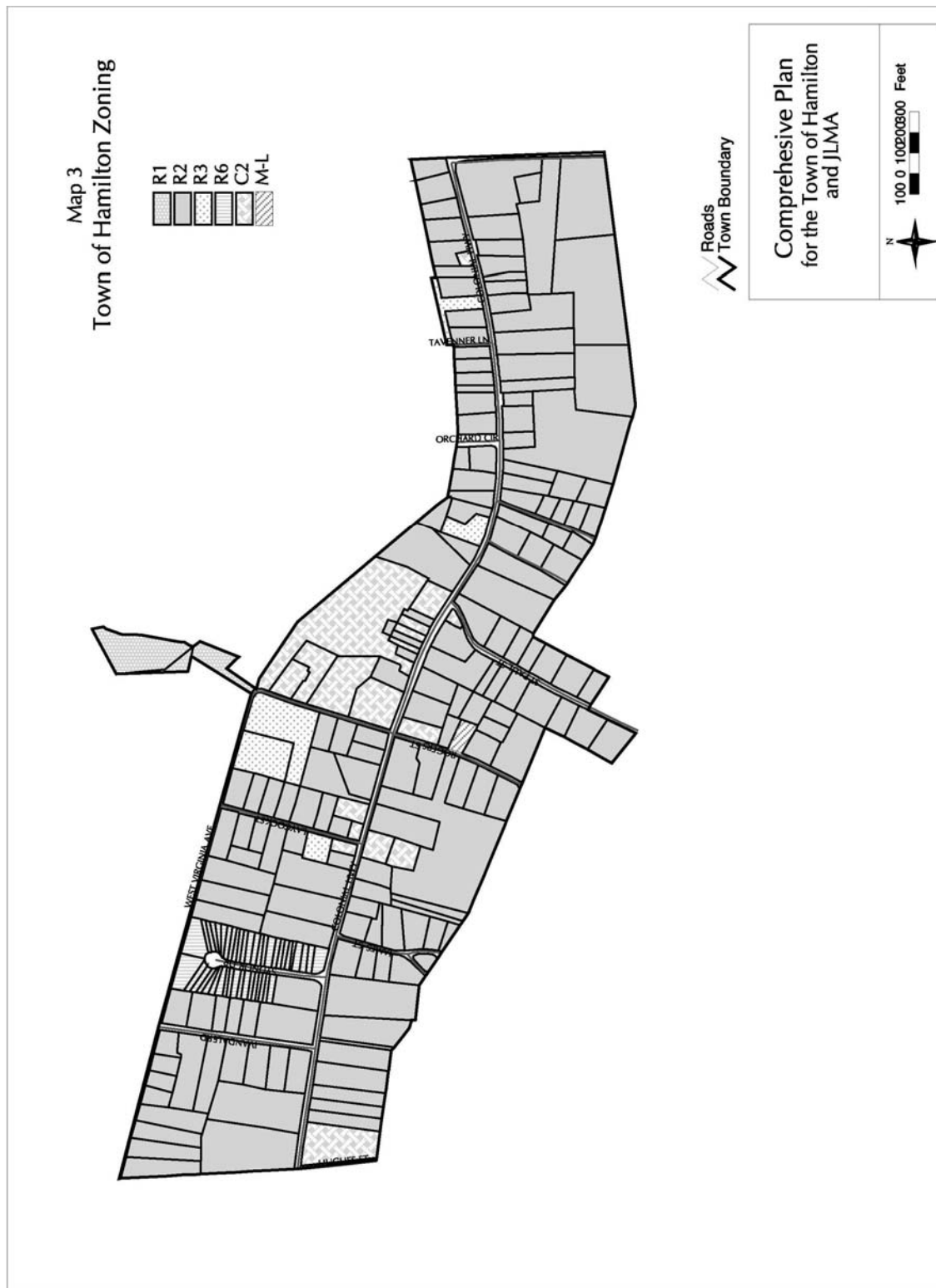
### Existing Land Use

The overall land use pattern in the planning area still retains a predominantly traditional residential character with the Town serving as a focal point for the surrounding agricultural area. This plan recommends land use policies that promote preservation of the Town identity, encourage retention of open space, and that support development that is clearly harmonious with the scale, history, and rural nature of the Town. New development in and around the Town should complement the identity, social cohesion, and rural and historic nature of the Town. New development must also occur at a pace that will not strain or overwhelm public resources.

While some medium density residential and commercial uses have developed around the edges of the Town during the past two decades, the Town still features a relatively clear demarcation between the land which is developed and that which is rural.

Table 2 shows the distribution of existing land uses in the Town and Joint Land Management Area (JLMA) by type.

| <b>TABLE 2<br/>EXISTING LAND USES IN THE TOWN AND JLMA</b> |                                     |                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Land Use</b>                                            | <b>Acres within<br/>Town Limits</b> | <b>Acres in JLMA</b> |
| Agriculture/Open Land                                      | 11 (8%)                             | 176 (30%)            |
| Low Density/Rural Residential                              | 0 (0%)                              | 101 (17%)            |
| Residential, Single Family Detached                        | 97 (73%)                            | 286 (49%)            |
| Residential, Single Family Attached +<br>Multi-Family      | 8 (6%)                              | - (0%)               |
| Commercial                                                 | 6 (5%)                              | 23 (4%)              |
| Public/Semi-Public Uses                                    | 10 (8%)                             | 2 (<1%)              |
| TOTAL ACRES                                                | 132                                 | 587                  |



## Existing Zoning

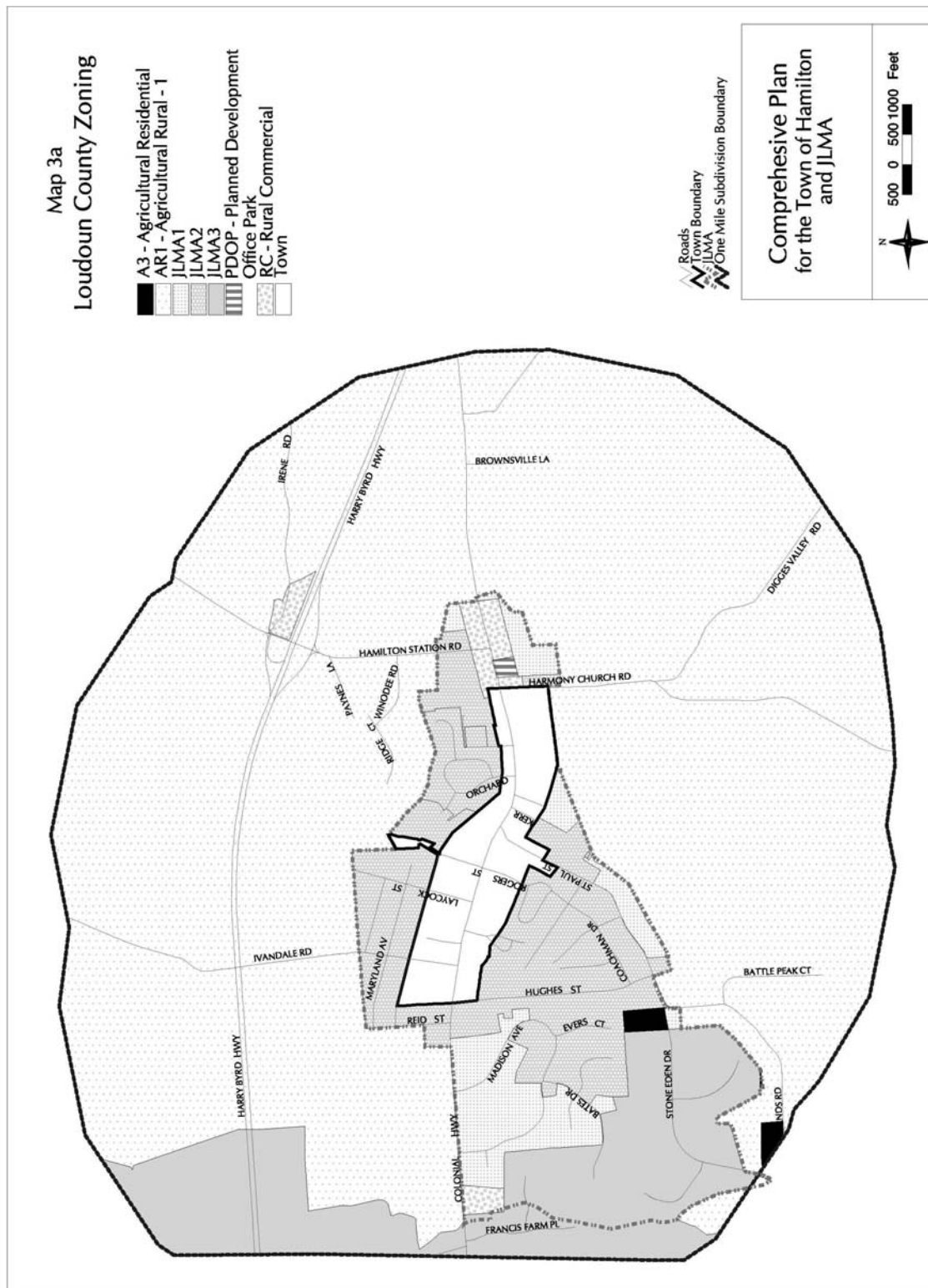
The Town adopted its Zoning Ordinance in 1997. Zoning districts are shown on Map 3 (pg. 16) and Table 3.

| <b>TABLE 3<br/>TOWN ZONING DISTRICTS</b> |                                                                                                                                                               |                                    |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>District</b>                          | <b>General Uses Permitted</b>                                                                                                                                 | <b>Approximate Acres<br/>Total</b> |
| R-1, Residential                         | Single family dwellings and institutional uses; minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet, effective density of about 1 dwelling per acre.                       | 2.1                                |
| R-2, Residential                         | Single family dwellings and institutional uses, minimum lot size 15,000 square feet; effective density about 2 units per acre.                                | 104.8                              |
| R-3, Residential                         | Single family dwellings and institutional uses, minimum lot size 10,000 square feet; effective density about 3 units per acre.                                | 4.3                                |
| R-6, Residential                         | Single family dwellings, semi-detached and attached dwellings, and institutional uses, minimum lot size 10,000 square feet; maximum density 6 units per acre. | 4.0                                |
| C-1, Office                              | Variety of retail and wholesale activities and certain institutional uses.                                                                                    | 0                                  |
| C-2, Retail                              | Variety of retail and wholesale activities and certain institutional uses.                                                                                    | 11.7                               |
| M-L, Light Industrial                    | Variety of light manufacturing and assembly activities.                                                                                                       | 0.4                                |
| Total Acres <sup>1</sup>                 |                                                                                                                                                               | 127.3 acres                        |

<sup>1</sup> Does not include 4.7 acres of public parkland.

The land in the Hamilton JLMA mostly zoned for agriculture and low and medium density residential uses, although a limited amount of commercial zoning also exists. The County of Loudoun has planning and zoning jurisdiction over the land areas outside of the Town's corporate limits. These zoning districts are shown on Map 3a and summarized in Table 4.

The Town currently has subdivision authority for the area generally within a one-mile radius of the Town. The area of subdivision authority is slightly less than one mile on the west side where it abuts Purcellville's subdivision jurisdiction.



**TABLE 4  
COUNTY ZONING DISTRICTS IN HAMILTON JLMA**

| <b>District</b> | <b>General Uses Permitted</b>                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Approximate Acres<br/>in JLMA</b> |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| JLMA-3          | Agriculture and Single Family Dwellings at a maximum of 1 dwelling per 3 acres, depending on soils.                                                                                                                 | 176                                  |
| JLMA-1          | Agriculture, Single Family Residential Dwellings at a maximum density of 1 unit per acre. A minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet is permitted and clustering can be done so long as density requirements are met. | 101                                  |
| JLMA-2          | Agriculture; Single Family Residential One unit per 20,000 square feet.                                                                                                                                             | 256                                  |
| RC              | General Commercial Uses                                                                                                                                                                                             | 20                                   |
| PD-OP           | Offices and accessory Uses                                                                                                                                                                                          | 4                                    |
| Total           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 587 acres                            |

### **Planned Land Use within the Town and JLMA**

The Town will provide for moderate and incremental additional development within the Town by permitting key tracts to develop under their present zoning density, as designated in this plan. In certain cases, marginally higher densities may be permitted if the proposed uses and densities are in accord with the objective of limiting total growth in the current Town limits to a total of not more than thirty two additional dwellings during the next twenty years, representing “ultimate” residential development within the Town.

**TABLE 5  
ESTIMATED DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY  
IN THE PRESENT INCORPORATED TOWN**

| <b>Town Zoning District</b> | <b>Acres Undeveloped</b> | <b>Potential Residential Development</b> | <b>Potential Commercial Development w/o sewer expansion)</b> | <b>Potential Commercial Development (w/sewer expansion)</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| R-2                         | 13                       | 26 du                                    | N/A                                                          | N/A                                                         |
| R-3                         | 2                        | 6 du                                     | N/A                                                          | N/A                                                         |
| C-2                         | 5.5                      | N/A <sup>1</sup>                         | <sup>3</sup>                                                 | 50,000 sf <sup>2</sup>                                      |
| M-L                         | <sup>3</sup>             | N/A                                      | -                                                            | -                                                           |
| <b>Totals</b>               | <b>20.5 ac</b>           | <b>32 du</b>                             | <b>15,000 sf</b>                                             | <b>50,000 sf</b>                                            |

<sup>1</sup> Residential allowed by special use permit only

<sup>2</sup> Assumes .22 Floor Area Ratio

<sup>3</sup> Only marginal amount unless sewer capacity is added

Carefully designed and buffered residential and commercial “infill” development or carefully designed re-developments will be permitted in accord with current zoning designations. Such new development will be carefully designed to protect the traditional visual character of the Town, preserve the small scale and peaceful atmosphere of the neighborhoods and enhance the viability of small businesses that are compatible with the Town’s character.

The incorporated Town will remain the focal point of the community in terms of business, institutional, and residential activity and identity. Although most future residential development in the area will occur adjacent to the present Town limits, all development of land and infrastructure in the area will be designed so as to reinforce the Town as the center of community. All land use changes and development within the Town will be small in scale, incremental and designed to maintain and enhance the basic character and integrity of the existing Town fabric.

Thus, the planning strategy for the Hamilton area is to maintain predominately residential development at a relatively low density in and around the Town, in accord with the policies of this Plan, while reinforcing the center of Town as Hamilton’s historic commercial and community focal point.

Any new development will be primarily residential and designed as interconnected blocks that extend the existing Town pattern. New development will be compatible with the visual character and scale of the Town, featuring traditional, compact, human-scale spaces along public streets.

The existing commercially zoned tracts can accommodate the expected commercial demand in the area. The focus of new commercial development will be in the center of Town in order to strengthen the function of the town center as Hamilton’s traditional downtown area. Vacant commercially zoned land outside of the town center will be encouraged to be developed in

residential or other non-commercial use. These areas also serve as the east and west gateways to the Town. Policies within this Plan and the Revised General Plan call for more detailed planning for these gateways that will establish these areas as distinct entry points to the Town of Hamilton.

In addition to encouraging development and redevelopment of the commercially zoned land within the town center, the Town will encourage the establishment of small-scale home-based businesses that are compatible with the residential character of the neighborhoods.

The Town will pursue an active role in planning adjacent areas, such as the JLMA and the area within the one-mile subdivision authority. The Town and County will coordinate closely to implement land use policies and regulations for adjacent areas in a consistent, clear and complementary manner to achieve the goals of this Plan. Although the Town corporate limits define the area in which the Town has official planning and zoning authority, the impacts of new development adjacent to the Town are as important to the Town's future well-being as development within its corporate limits.

| <b>TABLE 6<br/>ESTIMATED DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY<br/>IN THE JLMA</b> |                                            |                                            |                                                                           |                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>County<br/>Zoning<br/>District</b>                             | <b>Estimated<br/>Acres<br/>Undeveloped</b> | <b>Potential<br/>Residential<br/>Units</b> | <b>Potential<br/>Commercial<br/>Development<br/>(w/o sewer expansion)</b> | <b>Potential<br/>Commercial<br/>Development<br/>(w/sewer expansion)</b> |
| JLMA-3                                                            | 38                                         | 13                                         | N/A                                                                       | N/A                                                                     |
| JLMA-1                                                            | 10                                         | 10                                         | N/A                                                                       | N/A                                                                     |
| JLMA-2                                                            | 17                                         | 34                                         | N/A                                                                       | N/A                                                                     |
| RC                                                                | -                                          | N/A                                        | 0 to 15,000 sf                                                            | 85,000 sf <sup>2</sup>                                                  |
| PD-OP                                                             | -                                          | N/A                                        | <sup>3</sup>                                                              | <sup>3</sup>                                                            |
| <b>Totals</b>                                                     | <b>65</b>                                  | <b>57</b>                                  | <b>N/A <sup>1</sup></b>                                                   | <b>85,000 sf</b>                                                        |

<sup>1</sup> Depends upon sewer capacity allocation

<sup>2</sup> Assumes development occurs at .25 FAR, although district permits up to .4 FAR

<sup>3</sup> Marginal amount available if tract is redeveloped

## GOALS - LAND USE

1. Achieve a balanced and sustainable land use pattern that will retain Hamilton's historic, small town character in a rural setting.
2. Protect the natural resources of the Town and surrounding area.
3. Maintain the existing average residential density in the Town and JLMA.



Hillbrook

## **POLICIES - LAND USE**

1. Future development within the Town and JLMA will be consistent with the Existing Zoning Maps for the Town and County (Maps 3 and 3a) which will also serve as the future land use maps.
2. Ensure that the pattern, scale, location, character, setback, and overall density of land use in and around the Town is compatible and consistent with the existing character of the Town and enhances the overall quality of life, character, well-being and sense of community of the Town and surrounding areas.
3. Preserve the essential beauty of the natural and agricultural landscape by supporting the continued operation of existing agricultural businesses in the JLMA.
4. Promote a safe pedestrian environment in and around the Town.
5. Ensure that the pattern, form, and design of new development encourage the conservation of energy, water, and other natural resources.
6. Preserve the integrity of the historic buildings and streetscape in the Town.
7. Promote high-quality design and efficient land use patterns.
8. Focus commercial activity toward the existing commercial area in the center of Town in order to strengthen its function as the traditional downtown area.

9. Non-residential public uses such as schools, public safety, recreational, parks or public offices should be proximate to Hamilton area populations.
10. Ensure the Town's ability to provide required public services by managing growth at a sustainable rate.
11. Enhance the character of the eastern and western entrances to the Town to reflect the character of the Town.
12. Encourage moderately scaled commercial development on the large, commercially zoned tract in the center of Town in a traditional downtown design that complements the existing historic character of the Town. The downtown area should include a mix of small, non-franchise commercial uses such as: a coffee shop, antique stores, and live/work studio spaces for artisans.
13. Discourage new re-zonings to commercial classifications within the Town or the JLMA, except for the central core of the Town.
14. Preclude further industrial development within the Town or JLMA.
15. Encourage agricultural, equestrian, and open space land uses in the JLMA, and pursue, where appropriate, purchase of development rights policies and other open space preservation tools supporting these goals.
16. Encourage residential design that provides open space preservation, recreational amenities, and supports pedestrian and bicycle travel.
17. Ensure that sidewalks are included in new development or revitalization plans for all areas of the Town and JLMA.

#### **ACTION ITEMS - LAND USE**

1. Evaluate existing Town zoning district regulations and the Zoning Map for their compatibility with the goals and policies of this Plan, and identify necessary or desirable amendments.
2. Review the Town ordinances and regulations to ensure that new development will blend with the existing fabric of the Town in terms of setbacks, side and rear yards, and street design. Priority will be placed on preserving the character of the Route 7 corridor within the Town and continuing the architectural fabric to development around the Town.
3. Review the Town's ordinances and regulations to ensure that adequate landscaping and sidewalks are included in new development, in conjunction with the preservation and enhancement of trees and other vegetation.
4. Amend the Town subdivision ordinance as needed and work with Loudoun County to ensure that new development in the surrounding area blends with the existing fabric of the Town in terms of set-backs, street design, and adequate landscape buffers to protect existing dwellings.

5. The Town and the County will coordinate in managing future extensions of sewer and water into the JLMA so as to encourage a gradual and logical rate and pattern of development in accord with the policies of this plan. Such utility extensions and expansions are designed to ultimately provide full service to the JLMA and be fully funded by the new users.
6. The Town and the County will coordinate to achieve a pedestrian/bicycle trail connection from the Town to the W&OD Regional Trail.
7. The Town and the County will coordinate to ensure that development at the edges of the Town connects to the existing Town road network wherever appropriate, and provides an appropriate and positive visual image at points of entry to the Town.
8. Coordinate Town and County action to establish a greenbelt of open space to separate Hamilton from other Towns or developed areas surrounding Hamilton. The purpose of the greenbelt is to maintain the character of the Hamilton area and to retain a distinct sense of identity and visual separation from Purcellville, Lincoln, and Leesburg. The location of the greenbelt will be determined on a case-by-case basis, based on topography and other physical features that provide adequate visual separation between developed and rural areas or between developed areas.
9. Review Town ordinances and regulations accordingly to ensure that growth is managed to avoid overtaxing public services.
10. Review, and revise if necessary, Town zoning and special exception criteria to ensure the adequacy of Town water supply and sewage treatment facilities for new development or new land uses.
11. Work with Loudoun County to promote and support policies that preserve the agricultural, rural, and scenic areas surrounding Hamilton.
12. Develop a gateway plan for the entrances to Hamilton to provide attractive visual enhancements such as landscaping and signage.
13. Study the potential for future subdivision of existing lots of record under the existing zoning requirements in the Town.

## V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### Water and Sewer Services

The Town of Hamilton provides public water and/or sewer service to properties within the Town, and to some properties in the Joint Land Management Area (JLMA) and within a special sewer tax district. The Town may also provide public utility service to County or Town owned and operated public facilities that are in the Rural Policy Area immediately adjacent to the JLMA. The Town's utility systems are the only public sewer and water facilities in the Hamilton area and thus are a limiting factor for future growth.

*Water Service:* The Town constructed a central water system in the late 1940s and has gradually expanded and upgraded it. The Town currently serves a total of 573 water customers, including twelve commercial or industrial users. Approximately 362 or 63% of these water customers are located outside and adjacent to the Town corporate limits. Nearly all of the residents in the Town are connected to the water system. The few that are not connected rely on individual wells.

*Water Service Facilities:* The Town's water system consists of nine wells, a 60,000-gallon elevated storage tank, a 500,000-gallon ground storage tank, and a distribution system. The system is permitted by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to produce 172,000 gallons of water per day. At peak periods, the Town has pumped as much as 138,000 gallons per day but the average is around 123,350 gallons per day.

*Emergency Capacity:* The 500,000-gallon ground storage tank is available for emergency use and would provide enough supply for a four to five day period. The 500,000-gallon tank is located near the center of Town. However, prior to distribution, water is pumped up to a 60,000-gallon tall tower next to the tank. This provides more stable water pressures and reduces wear and tear on the pump at the base of the tower.

Based on the storage volume, the system should be capable of providing 3,000 gallons per minute (gpm) for three hours for an industrial or commercial fire. Alternatively, it should be capable of providing fire protection for 9,500 people or 2,700 dwellings. A fire truck with booster pumps may be necessary to provide adequate pressures. If such equipment is available, the current fire protection system should be adequate for the anticipated Town and area growth scenarios.

*Water Distribution Lines:* The water mains are generally in good condition. The pressures are generally good, although they tend to fall somewhat at the east end of Town. The decentralized system of wells does not require mains as large as a centralized system; however, growth on the fringes will require either drilling new wells or upgrading smaller mains.

*Sewer Service Facilities:* The Town of Hamilton constructed its central sewer system in the late 1960s. The Town of Hamilton lies at the high point along the drainage divide between the Catoctin and Goose Creek drainage basins. The sub-watersheds that comprise the natural drainage system in and around the Town generally follow in multiple directions away from the center of Town. Due to the location of the treatment plant at a relatively high elevation at the edge of the corporate limits, the only way in which sewer service can be provided to many areas

in and around the Town is to pump the sewage through force mains to gravity lines, which in turn flow to the plant.

Two pump stations are currently used to collect sewage from drainage sheds to the south and northeast of the Town. Because these drainage sheds are substantially built-out and the other drainage areas flow away from the Town in all directions, any further growth other than redevelopment of existing parcels will likely require additional pump stations or treatment plants.

In 1990 the system was upgraded and expanded from a capacity of 80,000 gallons per day to a permitted capacity of 160,000 gallons per day. Currently, the average daily flow is less than 80,000 gallon per day.

Several public utility studies have been commissioned to evaluate the Town's utility systems. In July 1996, a report was commissioned to study the existing conditions and capacity of the Towns sewer treatment plant. The report, *Hamilton Area Sewer Project—Impacts to the Existing Wastewater Treatment Plant—Preliminary Engineering Report*, provided the basis for improvements to the sewer plant and sewer lines. The upgrade was necessitated and initiated by the County to solve a health problem associated with failing septic systems in the County within close proximity to the Town. This expansion was financed by a loan from the state revolving fund and another loan from Loudoun County. A special tax district called the Hamilton Area Sewer Tax District (HASTD) was created to pay for connecting these properties to Hamilton's sewer system. Property owners in the HASTD pay additional taxes to defray the cost of loans. Up to 165 residences with failing systems will ultimately be served by the Hamilton sewer system through this County project.

In the years after the 1996 report was completed, some large parcels within the Hamilton JLMA were developed at lower densities than what was anticipated. Consequently the utility projections needed to be reassessed and an updated report was prepared in 1999 entitled *Water and Sewer Master Plan—Town of Hamilton—Urban Growth Area 1990-2050*.

In August of 2000, the Town amended the Hamilton Plan to reduce the JLMA area to its current size of 587 acres. The County followed suit and adopted a Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPAM 2000-0002) in September of 2000. In an effort to recognize the reduction in the JLMA and to recognize the policies within this Comprehensive Plan, the Town is considering updating the utility master plan.

At present, 382 customers are connected to the sewer system, of which one hundred eighty (180) are located outside the Town corporate limits. An additional one hundred and sixty (160) new users are committed to the HASTD. Additional capacity must be reserved for the undeveloped properties that are within the corporate limits and to service increased needs for schools and safety systems.

*Sewer Service:* In addition to the Town's public water and sewer systems, many of the residents living outside the Town but within the JLMA have individual, private wells and septic drainfields. Most of these continue to function properly, due in part to the generally good soils in the area. However, in some locations within the HASTD, failing septic systems have been identified and remedied.

## **Solid Waste**

The Town provides curbside solid waste collection service to Town residents through a contract with a private hauling company. This service is financed through the Town's general tax revenues. Residents outside of the corporate limits contract independently with private companies or take their refuse directly to Loudoun County's solid waste facility located south of Leesburg.

The Town also has initiated the implementation of an effective recycling program. The Town's solid waste hauler provides curbside collection every week for yard waste, magazines, newspapers, glass, cans and plastics.

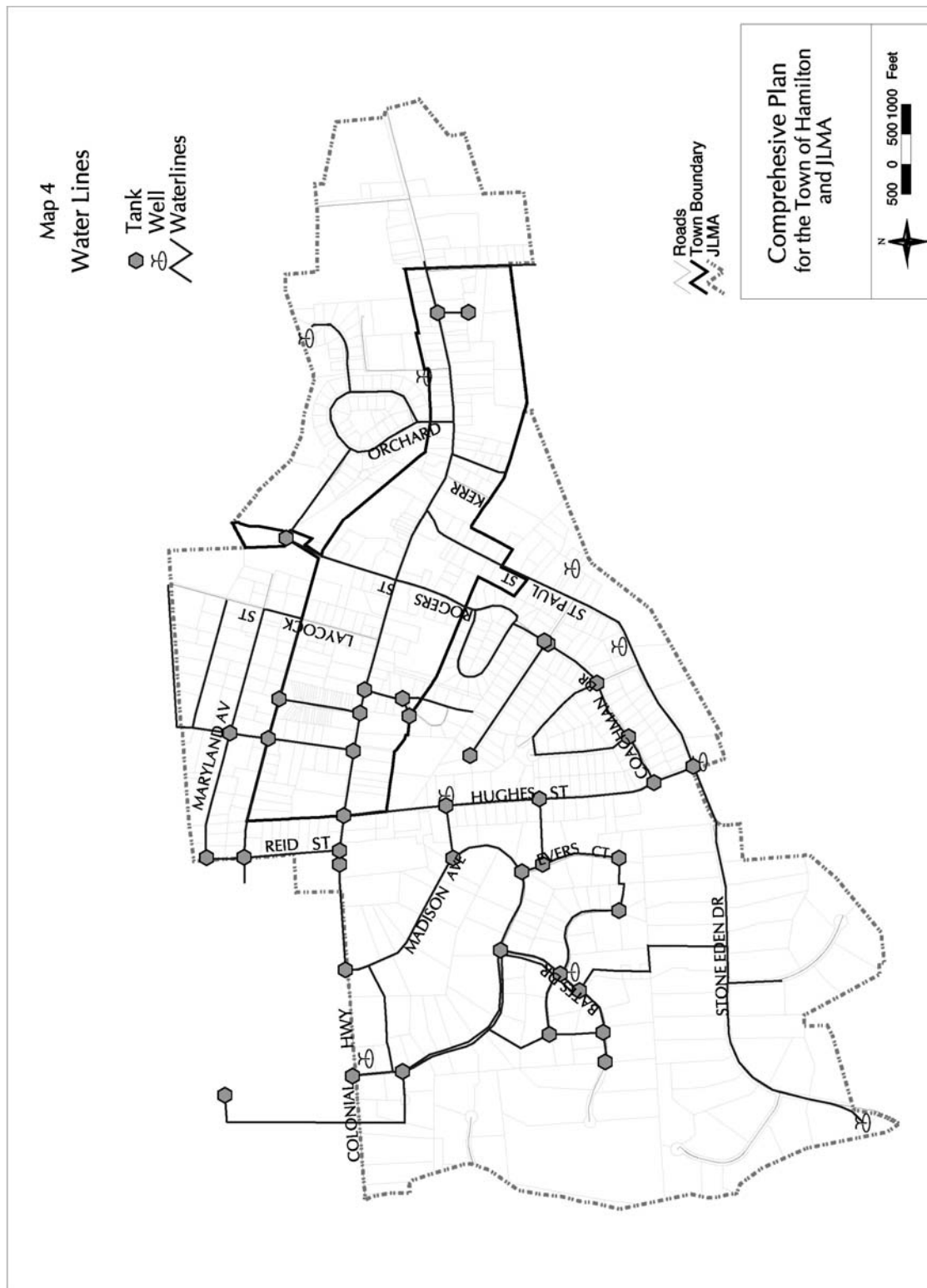
## **Stormwater Management**

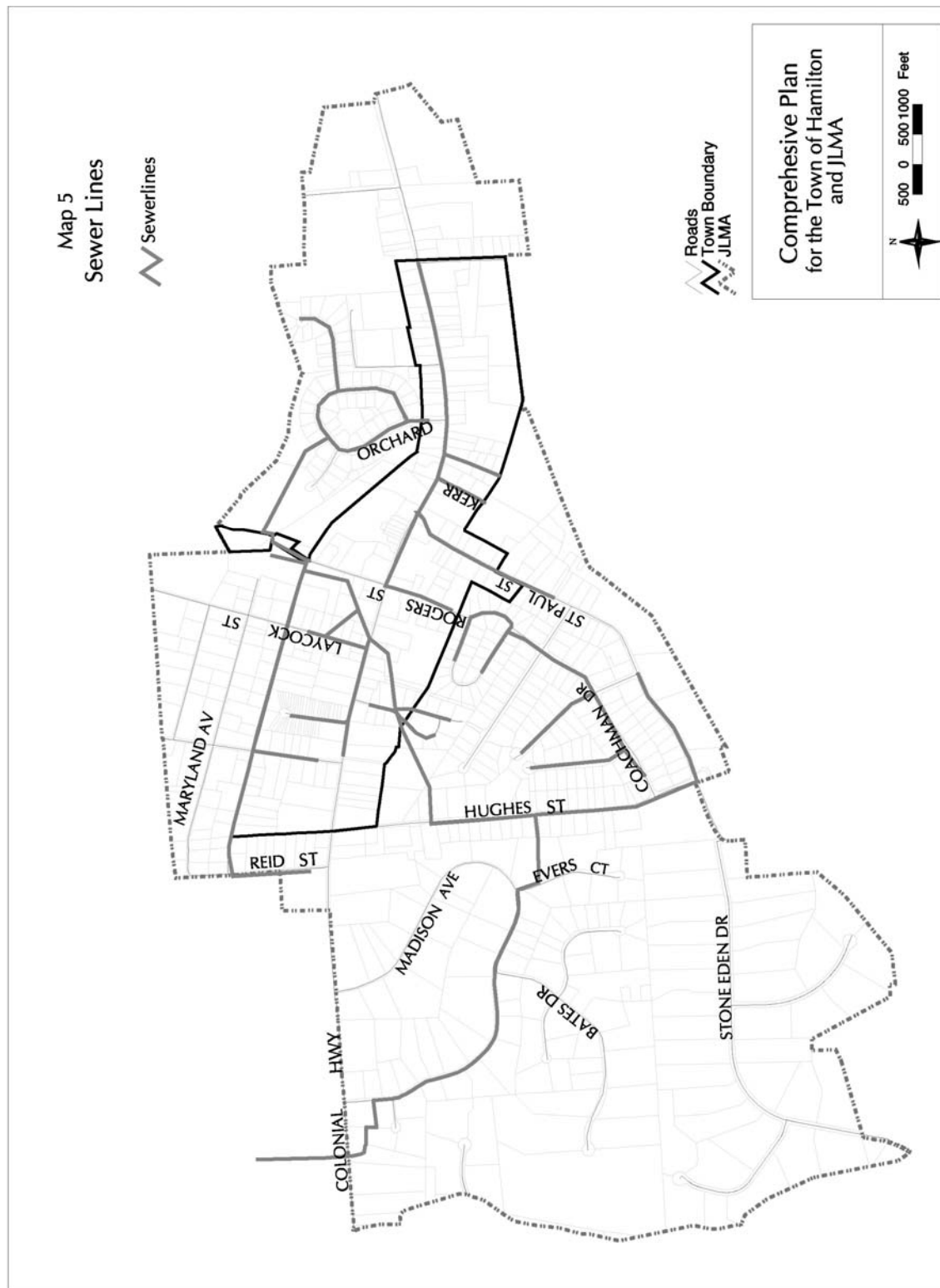
The older sections of the Town are currently drained of stormwater runoff by a series of ditch sections and culvert pipes adjacent to the roadways. The newer areas of development have been designed and constructed with curb and gutter section roadways and a series of storm sewer inlets and pipes for drainage.

Any construction or subdivision plans for the JLMA are reviewed by both the Town and the Loudoun County Department of Building and Development. Any development within the JLMA must comply with Loudoun County's standards for stormwater management as set forth in its Facilities Standards Manual (FSM). Development within the Town limits must be reviewed by the County and must comply with the provisions of the Virginia State Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook for stormwater management regulations.



Pond at Winodee





## **Public Safety**

*Fire and Rescue:* The Hamilton Volunteer Fire Company (Loudoun County Company 5) and the Hamilton Volunteer Rescue Squad provide safety and emergency services to the Town and surrounding area. The Fire Company operates from a station located near the center of Town with the Rescue Squad operating in a separate facility on a side street. Plans are underway to consolidate fire and rescue facilities under one roof on the east end of the JLMA. The fire department has two Class A pumpers, a brush truck and an air unit. The rescue squad operates one ambulance. Hamilton Volunteer Fire Department is one of fifteen volunteer fire companies in the County fire and rescue system and works cooperatively with the other companies and the Loudoun County Department of Fire and Rescue to provide services to the local area. The company's "first due" area includes Hamilton, Paeonian Springs, and Waterford.



Hamilton Volunteer Fire Department

*Law Enforcement:* The Loudoun County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services to the residents of the Town and surrounding area. The Town straddles the border of patrol sectors 2 and 3, within which the department maintains a deputy on duty at all times. The department also provides regular motorcycle patrols on the W&OD Trail and assigns an officer to attend Town Council meetings to share and receive information about local law enforcement issues. In addition, the Virginia State Police have jurisdiction throughout the County as in other parts of the state, focusing on traffic law enforcement.

## **Public Schools**

The Loudoun County public school system has four facilities that serve residents of the Hamilton area.

Hamilton Elementary School is located contiguous to the Town of Hamilton with access from within the corporate limits. It has 300 students with an average class size of approximately twenty. The school has an estimated capacity of 330 students. This school is a cornerstone of most Town activities, with sports teams, civic groups, and citizen committees using it as an evening meeting place. The preservation, and even expansion, of this school is an important objective of this plan.

Blue Ridge Middle School located just south of Purcellville, and Loudoun Valley High School, located within Purcellville, provides middle and secondary public education facilities for Hamilton area residents.

To relieve pressure at Blue Ridge Middle School and Loudoun Valley High School, Harmony Intermediate School opened in the fall of 2002 for eighth and ninth grade students. When a second high school is built to serve the western part of the County, Harmony will serve as a second middle school. The school is located on business Route 7 adjacent to the Hamilton JLMA. Part of the school property lies within the Purcellville JLMA. It will have a projected maximum enrollment of 1150.

## **Parks and Recreation**

The Town of Hamilton owns and operates a 4.7-acre park behind the post office which features play equipment and several open play fields. The County-owned elementary school has two softball fields, a tennis court, and a basketball court. The W&OD Regional Linear Park provides hiking and bicycling opportunities.

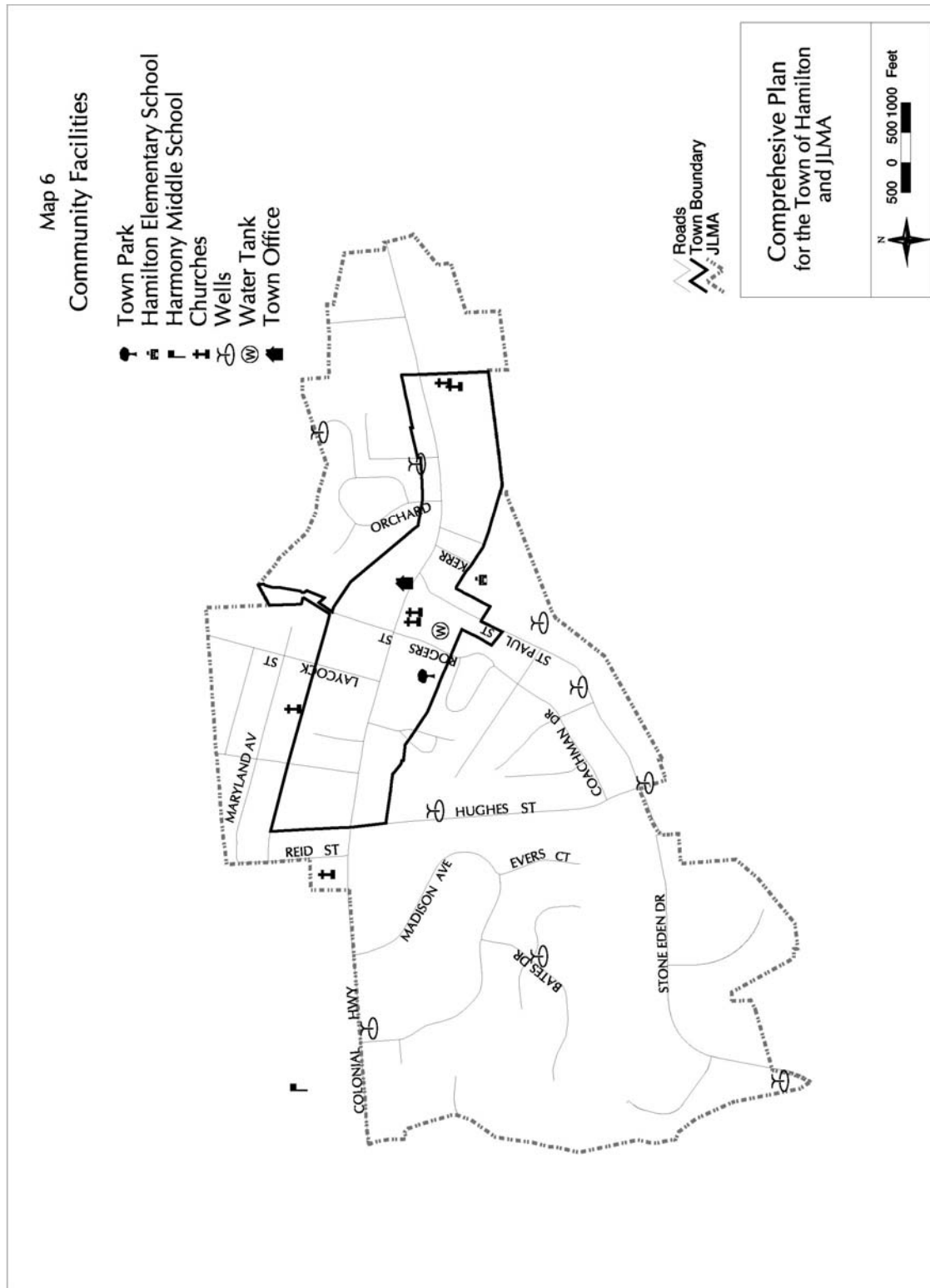
In addition to the park facilities within and adjacent to the Town, Loudoun County recently opened Franklin Park on approximately 200 acres of land between Purcellville and Round Hill. The regional, County-owned park facility serves all western Loudoun citizens.

## **Town Government**

The Town of Hamilton is incorporated under charter from the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Town has a seven-member elected Council, including the Mayor who is also a voting member. Council members serve staggered, four-year terms. The Council is empowered to levy taxes, enact ordinances, and exercise other powers as conferred to Towns by the Code of Virginia.

The Town conducts business at the Town Hall, located in the center of the Town on Colonial Highway (Business Route 7). The Town Hall is a single room facility of approximately 1,000 square feet on the ground level which serves as the public meeting room for Town Council and other public meetings, as well as the office of the Mayor and Treasurer/Zoning Administrator.

The Town employs a full time Treasurer/Zoning Administrator, a part-time assistant to the Treasurer, a supervisor of the wastewater treatment plant, a supervisor of the water plants, and a maintenance supervisor.



## **GOALS – COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

1. Endeavor to provide quality community facilities and services that are conveniently located to serve Town and area residents, and businesses.
2. Provide for the equitable, effective distribution of public facilities and services to the Town and JLMA. Implement preventative maintenance and financial planning measures regarding existing and future infrastructure.
3. Support the continuation of Hamilton Elementary School at its present site and support a school system that reflects the Town's commitment to education.
4. Maintain and enhance the basic facilities, services, and institutions of the Town and JLMA, including the elementary school, fire and rescue station, Town Hall, and Town park.
5. Limit future public water and sewer service to within the Town, the JLMA, HASTD, and to publicly owned and operated facilities within the rural area and adjacent to the JLMA. Require Town water or sewer extensions to be at the new user's/developer's expense.
6. Assure community facilities are a size and scale that are compatible with the area in which they are located and are, to the extent feasible, aesthetically pleasing.



## **POLICIES – COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

1. The Town, which may work in conjunction with the Loudoun County Sanitation Authority (LCSA), will be the sole provider of central water and sewer service within the JLMA. The Town may provide water and sewer service to public facilities that are in the rural area but adjacent to the Town JLMA. The development will follow the Town's preferred pattern of growth as set forth in this plan, and be contingent on the Town's capability to support such extensions and the adequacy of the road system to support the new facility. The users will be required to fully fund those services, including any necessary capacity expansions and line extensions.
2. Minimize negative impacts of new development on the existing Town while providing for the efficient and economical coordination and provision of public facilities and services to moderately scaled and compatible development in the JLMA.
3. Continue Town effort to gain maximum efficiency of the sewer system.
4. Continue Town support of the Hamilton Volunteer Fire Company and the Hamilton Rescue Squad, and cooperate with the Loudoun County Sheriff's Department in seeking to establish a sheriff's substation within the Town.
5. Maintain and improve the Town park, and continue to consider future opportunities for acquiring additional park properties and pedestrian trails in the Town and in the JLMA.
6. Capital facility proffers for rezonings in the JLMA will be shared between the Town and the County according to which jurisdiction will be constructing/maintaining and/or funding capital facilities. At such time as the Town becomes responsible for a given service or facility, then the allocation shall be provided to the Town.
7. Cash contributions for park and recreational facilities and capital improvements will be divided as follows: 75% of the funds will go to the County to be used for the development of Franklin Park and 25% of the funds will go to the Town. At such time as Franklin Park is developed, cash contributions for park and recreational facility improvements will be divided evenly between the Town and the County. Land dedicated for public park facilities in the JLMA will be dedicated to the Town or its designee.

## **ACTION ITEMS – COMMUNITY AND FACILITY SERVICES**

1. Conduct a new water and sewer study that reflects the policies in this Comprehensive Plan.
2. Continue Town effort to identify and resolve infiltration problems in the sewer lines in order to improve efficiency of the system.
3. Consider the adequacy of police, fire and rescue services when reviewing rezoning and special exception applications.

4. Expand and enhance the Town's long-range capital program by conducting an infrastructure needs analysis, code-compliance analysis and maintenance needs analysis, and establish funding plan for long term capital needs for all public facilities and utilities.
5. Consider the adequacy of Town water supply and sewage treatment facilities when reviewing rezoning and special exception applications. The County will coordinate with the Town to ensure all rezonings and developments in the JLMA do not negatively impact the Town and existing users in the surrounding areas.
6. Priority for allocation of sewer taps will be given to in-town development, public service facilities located in town or in the JLMA, and the HASTD.
7. The Town, the County, and appropriate landowners will work to achieve public ownership, through donation or purchase, of a portion of the residual land between the W&OD Trail and the Route 7 bypass for use as a park, possibly as a component of the W&OD Trail.
8. The Town will request the County to fund efforts to establish measurements of the ground water supply in the Hamilton-Purcellville-Round Hill area.
9. Upgrade Town-owned recreational facilities to meet the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and safety requirements.
10. Review Town ordinances to consider preferred locations and size requirements for commercial and public telecommunication towers, monopoles and high-tension electric towers.

## **VI. NATURAL RESOURCES**

The Town of Hamilton generally straddles the watershed divide that separates Catoctin and the Goose Creek basins. Outside of the Town limits, the land slopes down into smaller sub-basin drainage areas. As this currently rural land is considered for development, the preservation of natural resources will benefit the Hamilton community. Emphasis should be placed on the following:

- Preserving natural stormwater drainage systems;
- Preserving water quality and quantity;
- Maintaining clean air;
- Maintaining the area's natural beauty, a critical component to community attractiveness, and;
- Limiting residential densities that tax our natural resources.

### **Geological Features**

*Geology:* The Town of Hamilton and its surrounding area lies in the valley between the Catoctin Ridge and Blue Ridge Mountains. This area is called the Blue Ridge Uplands by geologists. In general, it is underlain by a variety of gneiss and sedimentary rocks of old but uncertain age, with some diabase intrusions. Because of the variety of formations and geologic movements, surface soils derived from this bedrock are complex.

The local geology does not contain rock materials that offer potential for economically viable mining or extraction. While the sedimentary bedrocks have some permeability, gneisses and diabase intrusions only transmit groundwater along fractures, and therefore wells will produce variable quantities of water with varying depths and locations. Because the soils tend to be deep, septic fields usually function well.

*Soils:* The soils in the area generally are described as the Purcellville-Philomont-Swampoodle Association. These are deep, generally well drained soils which exhibit good potential for agriculture except in areas with seasonal high water tables or other constraints.

Much of the land within the Joint Land Management Area (JLMA) around Hamilton is classified by the US Department of Agriculture as "prime agricultural" soils that are best suited for continuous agricultural use. Hay, feed crops, and edible crops as well as animal husbandry are rural uses well suited to these soils.

A moderate amount of the soils near the Town have a substantial clay content which creates seasonal high water tables or other wetness problems. These soils can be used as farmland although they are not considered as prime soils.

Much of the soil along the sides of drainage ways tend to have shallower rock (three-five feet) and moderately steep slopes of 15% to 25%. Much of the soil located in low-lying areas along

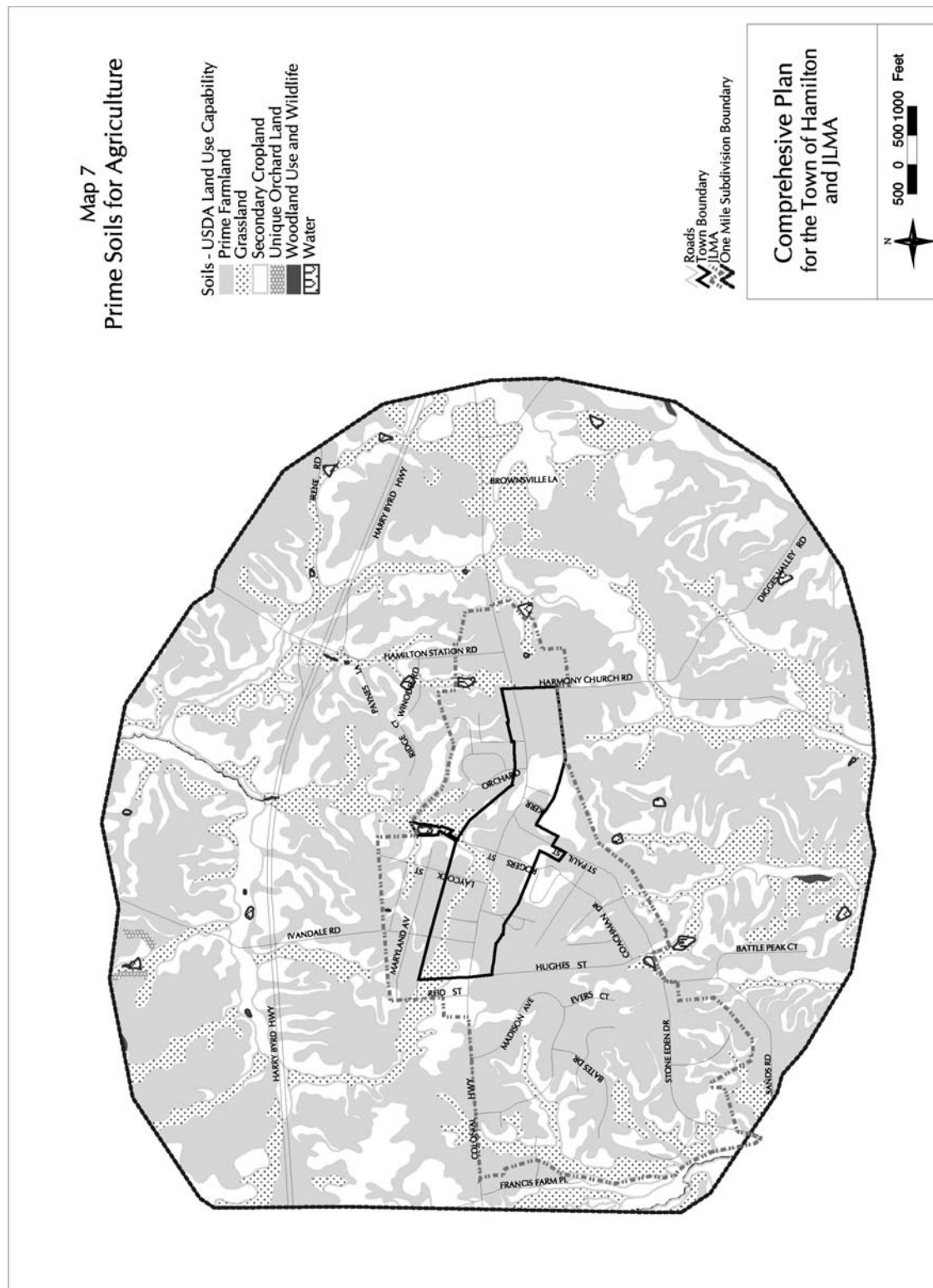
streams and swales has severe drainage problems and are typically located in 100-year floodplain areas. Some of these areas, however, have soils that can be engineered to overcome wetness problems resulting in excellent land for many farming activities.

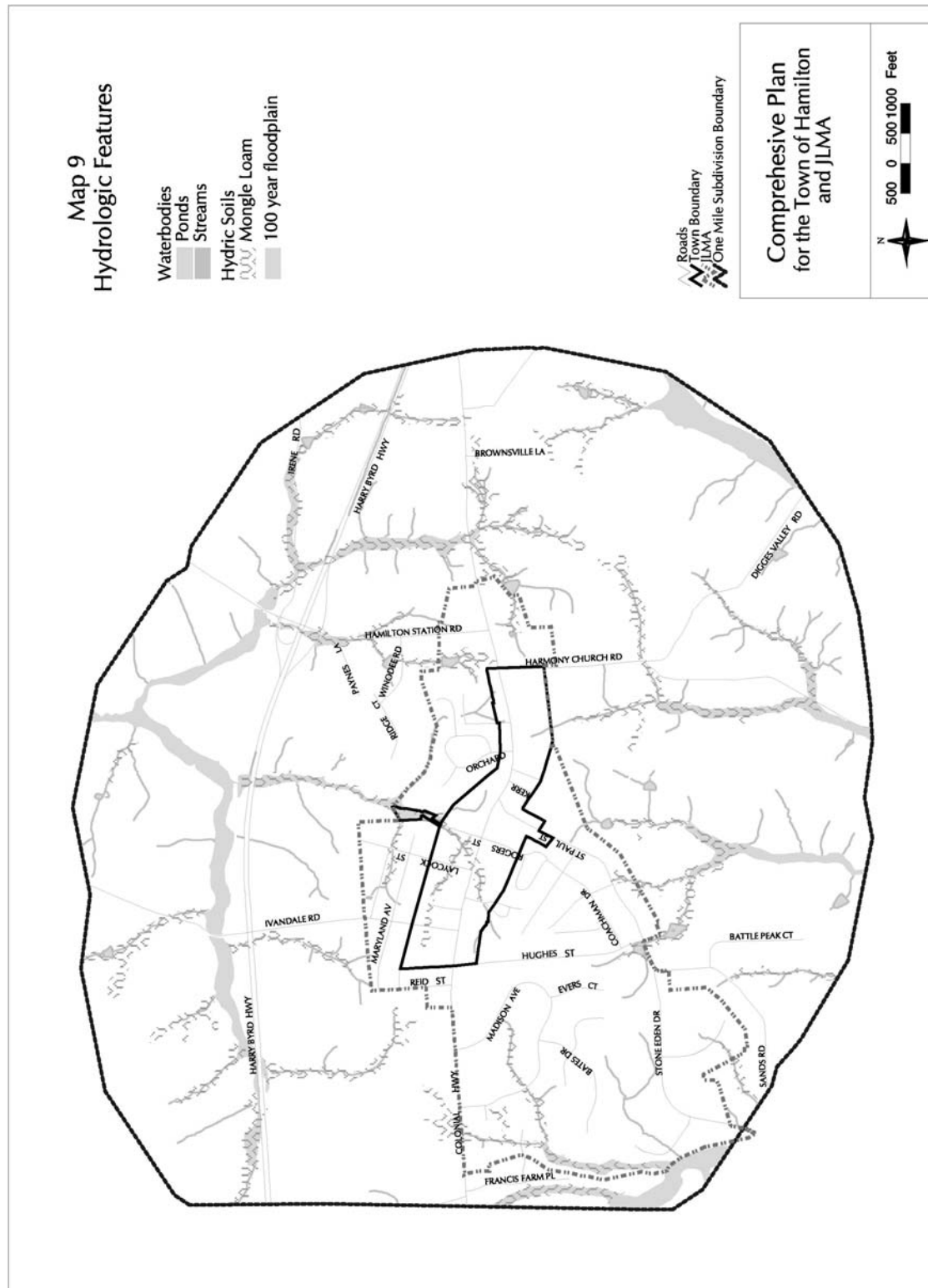
Because of the excellence of the soils, agriculture should be encouraged as a primary use in these areas of fertile land. County administered land preservation programs such as the Property Development Rights (PDR) program, used in tandem with various private land conservation easement programs can help rural land preservation efforts.

*Topography:* The Hamilton area has gently rolling topography. Steep slopes (over 25% grade) are mostly limited to locations adjacent to the creeks. About 50 acres around the Town have moderately steep slopes (15% to 25% grade). The topography generally falls toward the larger stream systems to both the north and south of the Town.

Development on steep slopes is subject to erosion and sedimentation that causes adverse effects on surface water quality. Stream valley slopes often serve as vegetative buffers to filter stormwater run-off and as wildlife habitats. The policies in this Plan promote the conservation of steep slopes and minimization of disturbance of moderately steep slopes. To that end the Plan supports the application of development standards to prevent these hazards.

Elevations in the Town and JLMA range from about 550 feet above sea level at various points in and around the Town, to 425 feet along a creek bed southwest of Town. The lowest point in the Town is the sewage treatment facility on the north edge of the corporate limits with an elevation of 460 feet.





## Hydrological Features

*Hydrology:* Hamilton and the surrounding JLMA are located in the Catoctin and Goose Creek watersheds. The Town lies mainly in the Catoctin Creek basin with adjacent areas lying in both the Catoctin and Goose Creek basins. Like the Town of Purcellville to the west, Hamilton generally straddles the watershed divide that separates these two major stream systems. There are several smaller, sub-watershed drainage areas that support the tributary creeks that flow through the Town and feed into the South Fork of the Catoctin Creek and the Crooked Run tributary of Goose Creek. Several of the creeks in the Hamilton area have year round flows.

*Water Quality and Quantity:* The groundwater system in the area surrounding Hamilton is characterized by the fractured gneissic bedrock. Specifically, little is known about the functioning of the groundwater system in and around Hamilton. What is known is generally applicable to fractured bedrock systems as a whole. Localized precipitation that infiltrates overlying soils is the main source of groundwater, which occurs in both the saprolite and bedrock under unconfined conditions. Groundwater movement is greatly restricted by the degree of interconnection between openings in the rock materials, and can be found within the pore spaces between grains (primary porosity/permeability), within fractures in the bedrock, and within small spaces left in the soil mantle by weathering processes (secondary porosity/permeability).

For the most part, bedrock does not have appreciable primary porosity/permeability, and produces water from fractures, joints, and fault zones. Groundwater movement is largely controlled by bedrock lithology and structure, although it generally moves vertically downward by gravity and then laterally toward discharge points (springs) in stream valleys. The groundwater gradient typically mimics topography while following faults, joints, and fractures, with a general flow pattern from higher to lower topography. As a general rule, groundwater is found at greater depths at topographic highs (ridges) than at topographic lows (valleys). Due to the low primary porosity and the high secondary porosity of the bedrock material it is common for wells that penetrate a highly fractured zone to produce water at fairly high rates. The total quantity of groundwater in the bedrock system is limited, however, and is typically very low (on the order of 5-10% of the total volume of the rock). This buffer of "storage" water is rapidly depleted under high extraction and/or low recharge (drought) conditions. This means that under these conditions, it is not uncommon for groundwater to be rapidly transported long distances and for shallow wells to experience significantly reduced production rates or go dry entirely. All this combines to produce a groundwater system that is uniquely susceptible to infiltration of contaminants from surface sources as well as to overproduction from development. Potential contaminant sources include effluent from residential septic systems, underground and above ground fuel storage tanks, fertilizers, and pesticides. Contamination associated with the release of gasoline into the groundwater has been detected in at least one of the wells operated by the Town of Hamilton.

Although groundwater is the most affordable and probable source of drinking water for Hamilton and its vicinity, the possibility of surface water impoundments should be evaluated.

The Town obtains potable water from the five wells owned by the Town. Those residents outside the Town limits who are not served by Town water and sewer obtain their water from individual wells. The Town experiences droughts that require the imposition of water conservation

measures on Town residents and businesses. Development of open space threatens to impact groundwater recharge surface area. Limiting development in critical groundwater recharge areas is necessary to ensure the long-term viability of the water resource.

### **River and Stream Corridor Resources**

*Floodplains:* With its location at a major watershed divide and with the moderate topographic relief in the vicinity, the Town and its surrounding area have relatively small amounts of land in the 100-year floodplain, which is defined as that area for which there is a 1% chance of flooding in any given year.

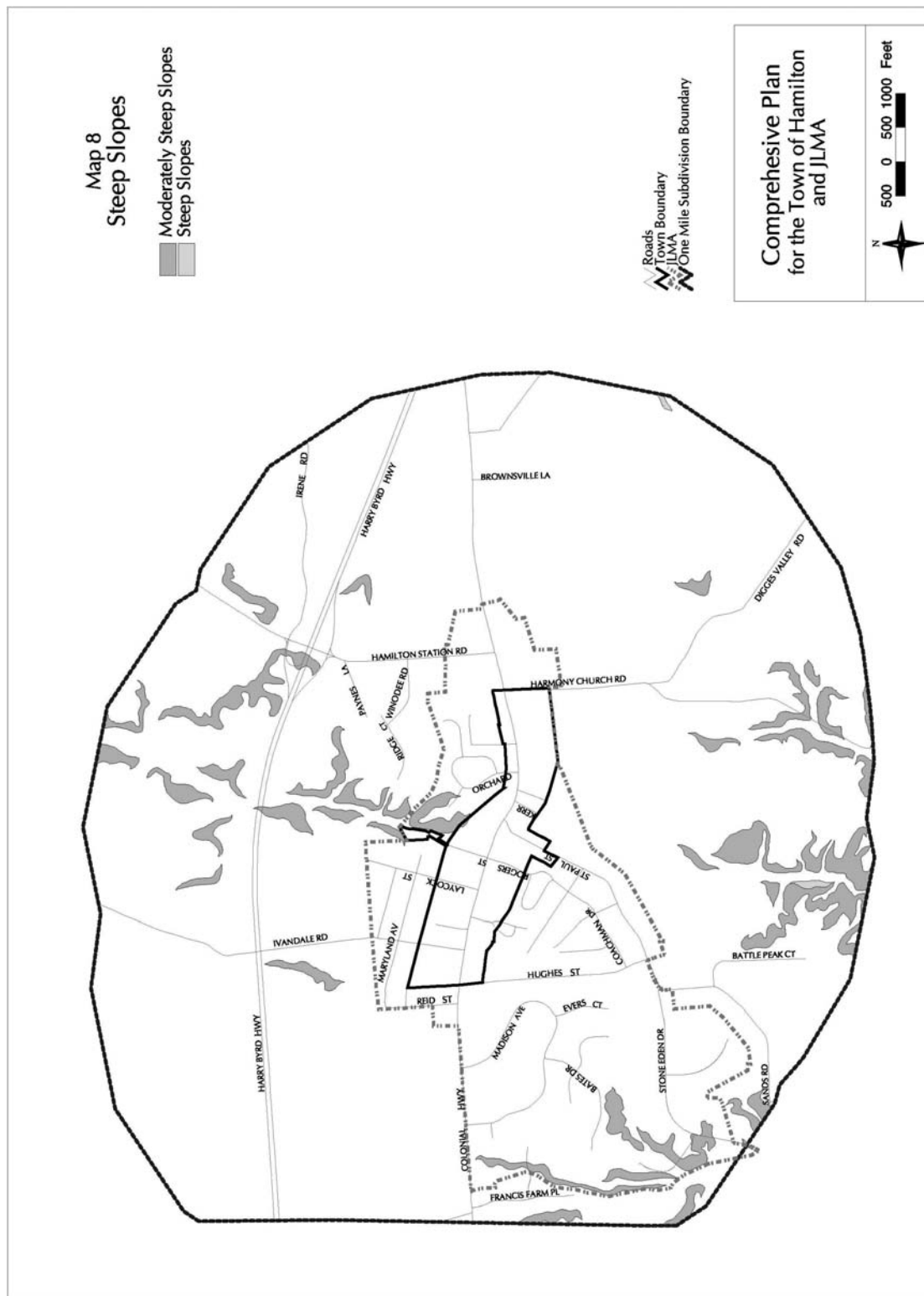
Approximately 40 acres (3%) within the JLMA and no land within the Town constitute the major 100-year floodplain.

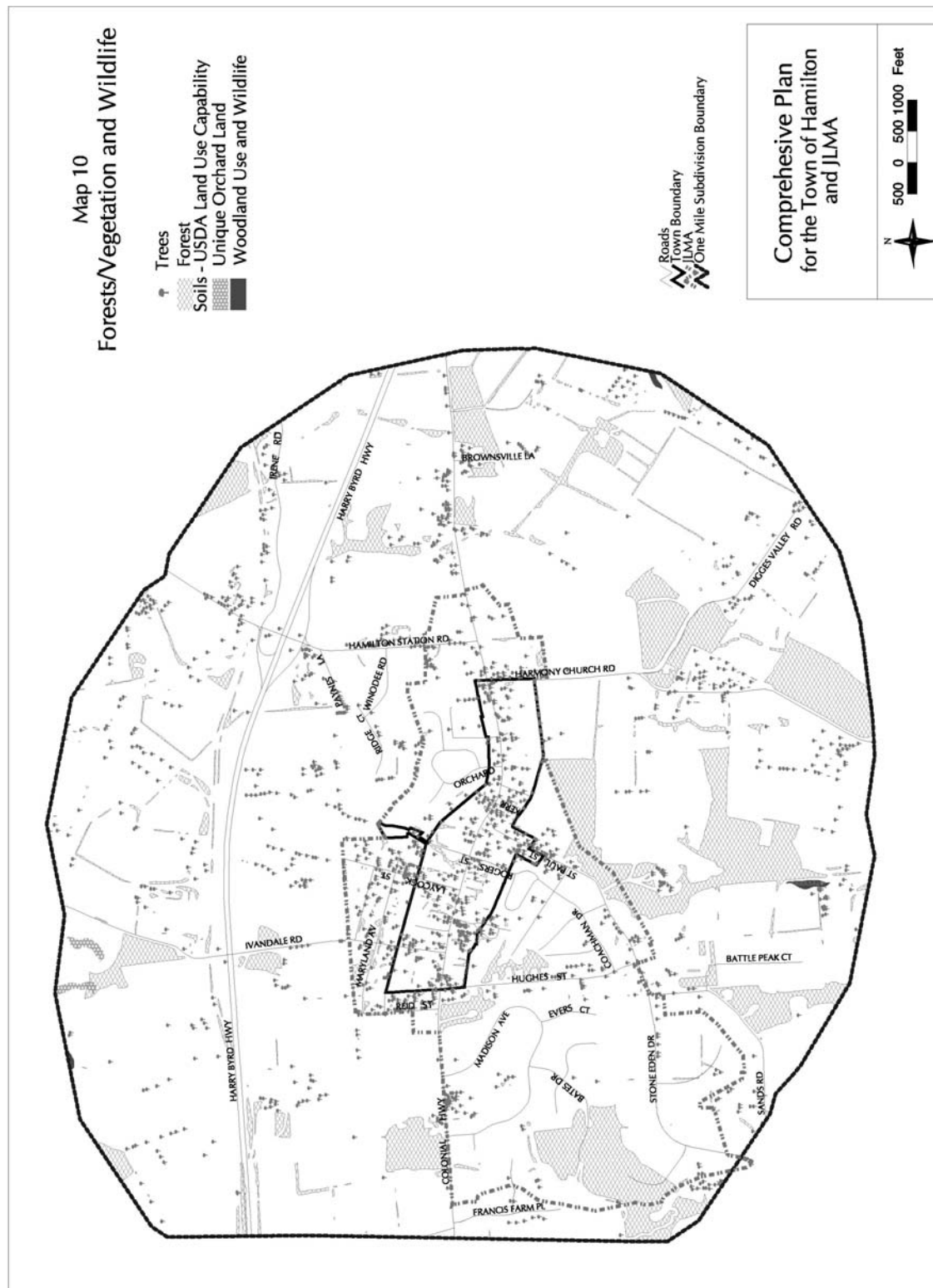
Floodplains (both major and minor) offer natural flood storage capacity and locations for recreational facilities and wildlife habitats. Construction in the floodplain can increase the risk of flood damage by reducing the floodplain's storage capacity. For these reasons, regulations govern development on, diversion, or channelization within the 100-year floodplain (major and minor).

*Wetlands:* About 15 acres of land in the area within the one-mile subdivision boundary contain wetlands, as defined by the National Wetlands Inventory maps of the US Geological Service. These wetland areas are generally closely associated with and often overlap the 100-year floodplain and stream corridors. Wetlands are important natural resources that reduce floodwater peaks by storing the floodwater and reducing velocity. They also serve as groundwater recharge areas, improve water quality, and provide habitat for fish and other wildlife.

*Stream Corridors:* Several stream corridors run through the Hamilton planning area. They have been relatively undeveloped because of the presence of steep slopes and floodplains.

Wooded stream corridors serve as excellent buffers for filtering impurities in surface runoff moving toward a stream. Stream corridors can contain valuable historic, archaeological, and scenic features. They link developed areas via pedestrian access to extensive open space. These natural areas also provide natural community boundaries. County regulations currently control development by requiring minimum buffers around stream corridors.





*Forest/Vegetation:* Within the Town, thin stands of trees line roadsides and fence lines. Mature trees on individual in-town properties contribute to the natural beauty and the quality of life in the Town.

Slightly more than an acre of land in the Town and about 100 acres within the one-mile subdivision boundary are in woodland. The definition used here is an inclusive one, pertaining to all significant wooded areas that have dense, mature tree cover forming an ecosystem that provides food, water, and shelter for various plant and wildlife habitats.

Forest cover is the ideal land use for maintaining water quality because it generates low levels of pollutants and filters pollutants from both surface and subsurface water flows. Trees also serve as natural habitat for wildlife, are important air cleaners, and contribute to the aesthetic beauty of the area. Mature trees offer much more of these advantages than saplings. Herbaceous cover, especially near natural water collection features, serves many of the same functions.

For these reasons, forests and vegetation should be preserved in stream corridors, wetlands, and floodplains. Where development is proposed, regulations control the preservation of significant tree cover through the maintenance of a minimum percentage of mature tree canopy. Owners of properties with large tree canopies are encouraged to protect them through joining an Agricultural and Forestal District, a County incentive program.

*Wildlife:* The Hamilton planning area is home to a wide variety of land-and water-based creatures in concentrations on undeveloped land. Red foxes, eastern cottontail rabbits, white-tailed deer, gray squirrels, southern flying squirrels, several bat species, coyotes, mice, snakes, turtles, and salamanders are among the animals that have been identified here. Several species of hawks, owls and other birds make their home here, while a great number of birds pass through during migration.

The presence of wildlife is essential to ecosystem balance. It provides indicators of the health of natural resources and provides enjoyment to human neighbors.

Stream valleys and mountainsides play a key role in preserving wildlife abundance and diversity. A survey documenting rare, threatened or endangered species could help identify and guide the preservation of large-scale wildlife habitats before these areas are sold for residential development.

### **Environmental Noise, Air Quality, and Light Pollution**

*Environmental Noise:* Highway/traffic noise and construction noise are the main hazards to the local audible environment. The Route 7 Bypass crosses the Hamilton planning area and Business Route 7 runs through the heart of the Town. As active development of surrounding rural lands increases, noise generated by hauling trucks, ground-moving equipment and other construction equipment, both on-site and traversing our roads, will interrupt the valued quiet within the Town and the JLMA.

Noise abatement policies and measures should protect residential communities from these noise hazards.

*Air Quality:* Because of the rural nature of our surroundings, Hamilton currently has very good air quality. Measures such as maintaining high-quality roads, tree preservation and planting, and natural landscaping will seek to maintain this good air quality. In addition, County policies on residential heat sources (wood burning stoves, fireplaces), open burning, tree planting, mass transit support, as well as vehicle emissions will help us continue to comply with the Federal Clean Air Act (1990).

*Light Pollution:* Properly designed outdoor lighting can enhance vision, security, safety, utility, and contribute to an attractive nighttime environment. However, adverse effects of poor nighttime lighting include urban sky glow, glare, light trespass, energy waste, and significant harmful impact on local and migrating wildlife.

County and local outdoor lighting zoning ordinances can regulate the placement, orientation, distribution, and fixture type and size of outdoor lighting to encourage lighting that provides safety, utility and security, prevents glare on public roadways, and protects the privacy of adjoining properties.

## **GOALS – NATURAL RESOURCES**

1. Protect the essential functions and integrity of local environmental systems, including surface and groundwater, wetlands, air quality, wildlife habitats and vegetation in an integrated approach as a “green infrastructure” establishing the bounds of development. This green infrastructure must include protection of:
  - Stream corridors as ecosystems that encompass multiple environmental features, thereby protecting water quality and quantity, recharge areas, wildlife habitats, historic resources, and forming continuous open space networks;
  - Wetlands as important natural filters, recharge areas, and wildlife habitat; and
  - Significant trees, tree stands and public open space areas that support the high quality of life in Hamilton.

## **POLICIES – NATURAL RESOURCES**

1. Promote a conservation design approach to development that will promote the preservation of the natural landscape and features and will integrate these elements into the overall design of a development project.
2. Promote awareness and voluntary involvement of local citizens regarding environmental and natural resource issues, problems, needs and opportunities.
3. Control environmental impacts of proposed public and private development within the Town, and the JLMA by reviewing all rezonings, special exceptions, subdivision, and site plan applications to ensure protection of sensitive natural areas.
4. Promote preservation and increase (where possible) open space within the Town and JLMA, by providing guidance and incentives to local landowners/developers to maintain open space on their lands. These incentives include: land trusts, tax incentives for land

- conservation, agricultural, forestal and historical districts, open space easements, and the purchase of development rights.
5. Promote a compact and clustered pattern of development around the Town to help preserve important environmental areas such as floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, and mature woodlands.
  6. Identify, designate, and document specific natural features and locations in and around the Town for public open space, such as: bike paths, streambed trails, community gardens, wildlife refuges, old railroad right-of-ways, and historically significant places.
  7. Encourage the preservation of the existing fabric and character of the Town, through landscaping, buffering, sidewalks and other improvements to existing and new development.
  8. Maintain the level of quiet within the Town.
  9. Review the impact of any residential subdivision on the quality or quantity of the Town's groundwater resource.
  10. Establish guidelines for, and encourage public and private actions to, maintain and improve local air quality.
  11. Establish lighting standards for the prevention of light pollution, in conjunction with the County.
  12. Enforce, and refine when necessary, the current Town floodplain protection regulations.
  13. Recognize the interdependence of stream corridors and preservation of floodplains, steep slopes, open space, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and scenic vistas and corridors.
  14. Recognize and protect the importance of river and stream corridors, and adjacent environmentally sensitive areas, to the overall health of the Town's surface and ground water resources and to its rural character.
  15. Promote and encourage participation in community clean up efforts, such as Keep Loudoun Beautiful, by residents and businesses in order to keep stream corridors free of litter and debris.
  16. Work to establish overall water quality goals for individual streams and stream segments.
  17. Promote water conservation through innovative reuse systems and through informed household use.
  18. Encourage recycling by all local residents and businesses.
  19. Encourage the protection of local wildlife.

20. Protect vistas through enhanced siting controls and reducing the height of buildings and structures.

## **ACTION ITEMS - NATURAL RESOURCES**

1. The Town will adopt zoning ordinance amendments to establish the design and performance standards necessary to support the conservation design requirements for implementation of the green infrastructure policy.
2. Draft Town zoning ordinance amendments to allow for flexibility in setbacks, lot sizes, and parking requirements to reduce impervious area.
3. The Town will draft zoning ordinance amendments to allow clustering within a site to protect environmentally sensitive areas. Consider alternative design options to promote passive drainage, environmentally sound stormwater management practices, and water quality treatment.
4. Review the Town zoning ordinance to incorporate direction and flexibility to:
  - a. Ensure that new subdivisions are not platted in a manner that would necessitate encroachment into the River and Stream Corridor Overlay District (RSCOD);
  - b. Provide flexibility within the zoning ordinance (i.e. setbacks, lot dimensions, density transfer, etc.) to accommodate the preservation of the stream corridors;
  - c. Allow Facility Standards Manual (FSM) waivers and exceptions, as appropriate; and
  - d. Require applicants to provide more detailed information and analysis to facilitate refinement of the overlay boundary.
5. The Town and County will identify public water supply watersheds and develop more stringent performance standards for development in these areas in order to protect surface and groundwater quality. Consider the following actions:
  - a. Establishment of a town-wide Resource Management Area in which all development must meet certain performance criteria. Criteria allowed under the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act include the following:
    - Preventing an increase in nonpoint source pollution from new development based on a jurisdiction-wide average. Reductions are achieved through the use of BMPs (Best Management Profiles).
    - Reducing nonpoint source pollution from redevelopment by at least 10% through the use of BMPs or restoration of open space.
    - Requiring developers to minimize impervious surface cover, minimize land disturbance, and maximize the retention of native vegetative cover.

- b. Require pump out of septic systems every five years.
  - c. Require implementation of a soil and water conservation plan for all agricultural activities.
  - d. Require compliance with the Department of Forestry's *Best Management Practices Handbook for Forestry Operations* for all silvicultural activities.
  - e. Actively support volunteer stream monitoring programs that assess and monitor the health of the Town's streams through partnership agreements. Town participation may include support functions, among them such activities as providing funding for testing and monitoring equipment, coordination of volunteer efforts, support of public education and outreach programs, and serving as a central repository for monitoring data so that data can be compiled, integrated into the LOGIS database, and disseminated to the public.
- 6. The Town will consider ordinance revisions to provide for the protection of surface water resources from the impacts of development with particular focus on sediment loading.
  - 7. The Town will consider participating in the County's wellhead protection program to protect groundwater from contamination and ensure an adequate level of drinking water for the residents. Establish appropriate protection zones around each of the Town's wells.
  - 8. The Town will initiate and maintain a comprehensive pollution management program to protect groundwater and surface water resources.
  - 9. Promote better awareness and voluntary involvement by identifying activities that could be undertaken by local civic organizations and individual citizens to protect and improve the environmental quality within and around the Town, such as:
    - a. Adoption of open spaces by civic and neighborhood organizations; and
    - b. Adoption of road segment by local businesses and civic groups, including litter pickup, landscaping, and fundraising for sidewalk repair.
  - 10. Establish a citizens committee of volunteers under a Council Member's chairmanship to:
    - a. Monitor environmental impacts of development such as tree preservation, stream monitoring and soil erosion management;
    - b. Promote education of Hamilton area residents about natural features;
    - c. Identify and implement other natural environment related actions that would implement the goals and policies in this document; and
    - d. Identify voluntary activities that could be undertaken by local civic organizations and individual citizens to protect and improve the environmental quality within and around the Town.

11. Amend Town ordinances to:
  - a. Implement a minimum tree-save percentage of 50% for parcels containing mature woodlands; and
  - b. Incorporate environmental standards for new development, including measures such as stream buffers, limits on clearing and grading on moderately steep slopes, preservation of existing tree stands, clustering to preserve open space, and noise and light pollution standards.
12. Assist local landowners/developers to maintain open space, identify and designate specific natural features and locations in and around the Town for public open space. Suggested means include: bike paths, stream bed trails, community gardens, wildlife refuges, old railroad right-of-ways, historically significant places, etc.
13. Establish a compact and clustered pattern of development in the JLMA to help preserve important environmental areas such as steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands and mature woodlands.
14. Work with the County to develop and promote rural open space preservation alternatives to dense residential development of currently open land in the JLMA and the area subject to the one-mile subdivision authority of Hamilton. Alternatives for open space preservation may include land trusts, tax incentives for land conservation, agricultural, forest and historical districts, open space easements, and the purchase of development rights.
15. Review and amend, as appropriate, the current Town land development regulations to ensure adequate provision for erosion control and storm water management. Promote design alternatives to:
  - a. Preserve open space and natural resources;
  - b. Minimize the creation of new impervious area; and
  - c. Minimize increases in post-development runoff peak rate, frequency and volume.
16. Establish guidelines that will help to maintain and improve local air quality.
17. Amend the Town subdivision ordinance and require hydrological study prior to submission of development/zoning applications.

18. The Town and County will initiate study to locate underground fuel tanks and institute plans for removal.
19. The Town will establish a strategic Land Preservation Plan that prioritizes the acquisition of privately held parcels, emphasizing those threatened with the greatest building potential but which have significant conservation values.
20. The Town and County will conduct a survey to document rare, threatened or endangered species in Hamilton and the JLMA.

## VII. TRANSPORTATION

### Roadways

Business Route 7 (Colonial Highway) is Hamilton's main street carrying most of the local traffic to and from Town. The Route 7 Bypass is intended to relieve some of the congestion in Town by carrying regional traffic around the Town. This major road serves the current and foreseen transportation needs of the Town.

The bypass serves the Town directly through a grade-separated interchange at Route 704, northeast of Town. The Route 704 interchange currently functions with generally good efficiency. Morning commuter traffic from the Town makes a left turn movement from Business Route 7 onto Route 704 heading north, meeting with relatively little westbound traffic that would interfere with the left turn movement. In the evening, commuters make right turn movements onto Route 7 into Town.

| <b>TABLE 7</b><br><b>Average Daily Trips (ADT) on Key Road Segments</b> |                                     |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>State Highway</b>                                                    | <b>Segment</b>                      | <b>ADT</b> |
| Rt. 7 Bypass                                                            | Rt. 287 to Rt. 704                  | 26,000     |
| Rt. 7 Business                                                          | Rt. 704 to Clarke's Gap             | 5,200      |
| Rt. 704                                                                 | Rt. 7 Business Ramp to Rt. 7 Bypass | 3,000      |
| Rt. 709 (south)                                                         | Rt. 722 to Rt. 726                  | 160        |
| Rt. 709 (south)                                                         | Rt. 726 to Rt. 710                  | 460        |

Source: 2001 Virginia Department of Transportation Daily Traffic Volumes

The amount of growth projected in the Hamilton planning area has been recently scaled down considerably from earlier plans. The "Southern Collector Road," a planned facility that was identified in the County's 1991 Choices and Changes: General Plan, is no longer needed to accommodate projected traffic in the Hamilton area. Consequently, the southern collector was removed from the County's planning documents including the Revised General Plan and the Revised Countywide Transportation Plan. The Route 7 Bypass will continue to serve the transportation needs of the expanding populations. Regional transportation policy considerations as well as local traffic calming measures are needed to ensure that Hamilton streets do not end up facilitating regional, cut-through traffic.

Transportation planning for the Town must take into consideration the safety of everyone using the streets—pedestrians, motorists, schools and commuter buses, cyclists, children, and farm vehicles. Currently, pedestrians and bicyclists are not able to move safely on some of the local streets because of high levels of traffic and speeding problems on the local through streets, and the inadequacy of the existing sidewalks/trails network.

Non-obtrusive means of safely controlling and moving traffic, such as using changes in pavement or texture of roadway, speed “humps”, landscaping and historic feature signs similar to those identified in the Route 50 Traffic Calming Plan should be considered. Traffic calming, improved enforcement of current speed limits, and continued promotion of available public transport buses are among the strategies that could help to improve transportation safety.

The Town has recently received a TEA-21 grant from the Virginia Department of Transportation to make improvements to the transportation system within the corporate limits at select locations. The grant was awarded to construct raised crosswalks as one means to address traffic calming. Grant money will also be used to improve accessibility with the provision of sidewalk ramps that conform with American Disability Act requirements. Lastly, the project will include the provision of signage at the east and west gateways of the Town. The Town is planning to begin these projects in 2003.

Policy direction in this Plan promotes the center of the Town of Hamilton for commercial revitalization of property currently zoned for commercial use. As a part of this initiative, it will be necessary to address the inadequate parking conditions that currently exist.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian**

The Town and the County are placing a high priority on bicycle and pedestrian network planning. The Town has established a citizen’s committee to advise the Town Council on non-vehicular transportation issues. The County is currently in the process of developing a countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan. These Town and County planning efforts will be coordinated and will emphasize the bicycle and pedestrian trail opportunities that exist within the Town and surrounding JLMA.

One important link in the regional bicycle and pedestrian system is the Washington and Old Dominion Regional Trail. The W&OD Trail is a recreational facility owned and operated by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. It connects Alexandria with Purcellville and points in between with a paved hiking/bicycle trail within the right-of-way of the former Washington and Old Dominion Railroad. It passes to the north of Hamilton, roughly parallel with the Route 7 Bypass. An easement was recently obtained through a subdivision of property formally known as the Laycock Farm. When a trail is built within this easement, it will serve as an important link between the W&OD Trail and the greater Hamilton community.

### **Bus Service**

The Loudoun County Commuter Service currently provides commuter bus service between Hamilton and Washington D.C. Buses currently stop at the Hamilton Baptist Church where the parking lot serves as a park and ride lot. The commuter bus service is an important transportation service that takes cars off the road thereby helping to address Town and County objectives of achieving cleaner air standards and managing an adequate level of service on the major roadways in Loudoun County. The County will continue to work with the Town of Hamilton on providing this service to area residents and assessing future commuter needs in the area.

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## **GOALS - TRANSPORTATION**

1. Move vehicular traffic through present and future Town streets in a safe and orderly manner. Prevent Hamilton from becoming a “cut-through” for neighborhood traffic to and from other destinations.
2. Maintain the historic look and small-town character of Hamilton by maintaining and creating streets that are rural in nature (tree-lined and/or landscaped with safety features). New streets should be named to reflect the history of the Town.
3. Ensure that adequate access and parking is provided for new developments/businesses (especially those within the Town limits).
4. Provide for safe pedestrian and bicycle movement through the Town and JLMA by means of sidewalks/paths/trails that interconnect the Hamilton Community. Make the community pedestrian and bike friendly.
5. Design and locate new roadways so as to have minimal impact on existing residential areas.
6. Promote a safe and efficient transportation system (public, ride-sharing) serving residents, businesses and visitors while protecting the small-town character of the Town and surrounding areas.
7. The Town and the County will continue to support a commitment to public transportation and will work together to increase commuter bus service for the greater Hamilton community.

## **POLICIES - TRANSPORTATION**

1. Provide and maintain pedestrian connections (sidewalks/paths/trails) that interconnect the major community features and residential neighborhoods in the Hamilton Community to support safe pedestrian and bicycle movement through the Town and JLMA.
2. Promote traffic calming as a non-obtrusive means of addressing/avoiding pedestrian and bicycle safety concerns, traffic noise, speeding problems and design concerns in existing as well as future neighborhoods.
3. Promote greater public awareness and participation in resolution of local transportation safety issues.
4. Ensure that all new roads, or improvements to existing roads, be designed to R2 or U2 sections, whichever is more appropriate, to maintain the small-town atmosphere. Road designed to R2 standards are generally shoulder and ditch sections while roads designed to U2 standards are typically curb and gutter sections that can include sidewalks.

5. The Town and the County will coordinate with VDOT to ensure that enough design flexibility is provided so that new roadways in the JLMA are compatible with the existing character of the Town in terms of pavement width, grade, building set-backs and landscaping.
6. The Town and County will coordinate with VDOT to ensure that all new roadways in the JLMA are planned and designed to:
  - a. terminate in other roadways
  - b. form interconnected grids that “flex” to fit the topography
  - c. respect natural and manmade features such as trees, fence lines, hedgerows, and stone walls
  - d. have few, if any, cul-de-sacs
  - e. maximize the convenience and comfort of the pedestrians and bicyclists

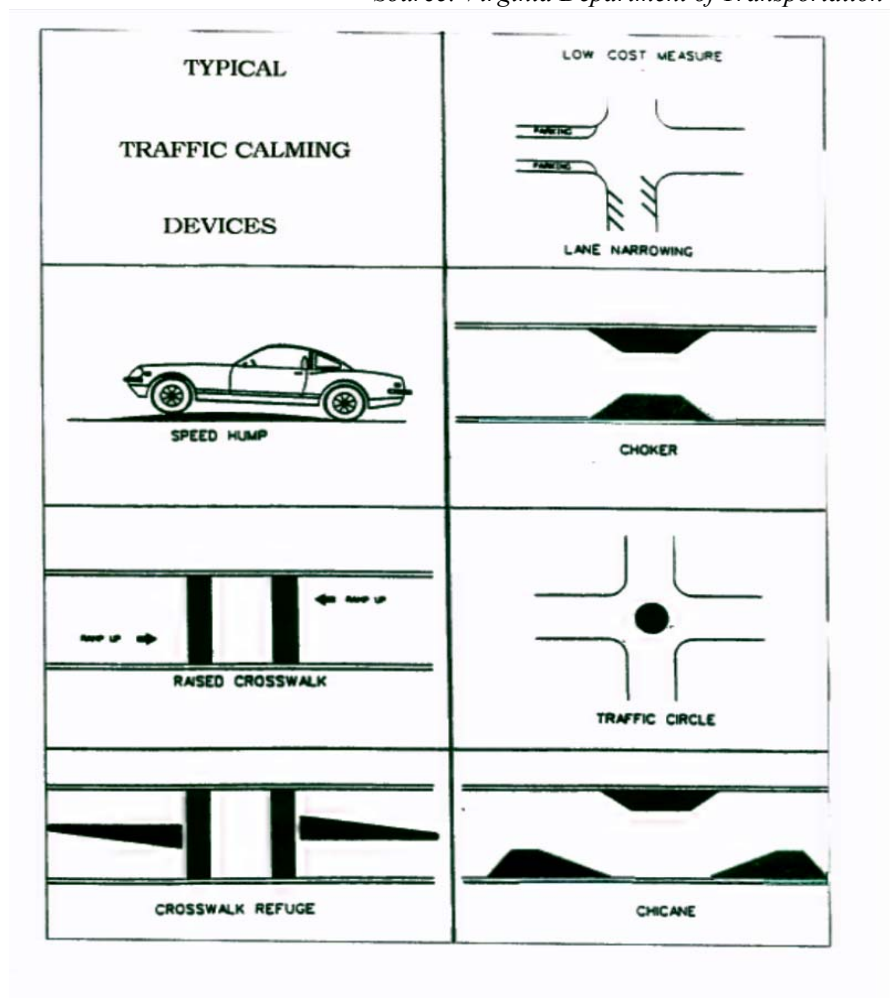
#### **ACTION ITEMS – TRANSPORTATION**

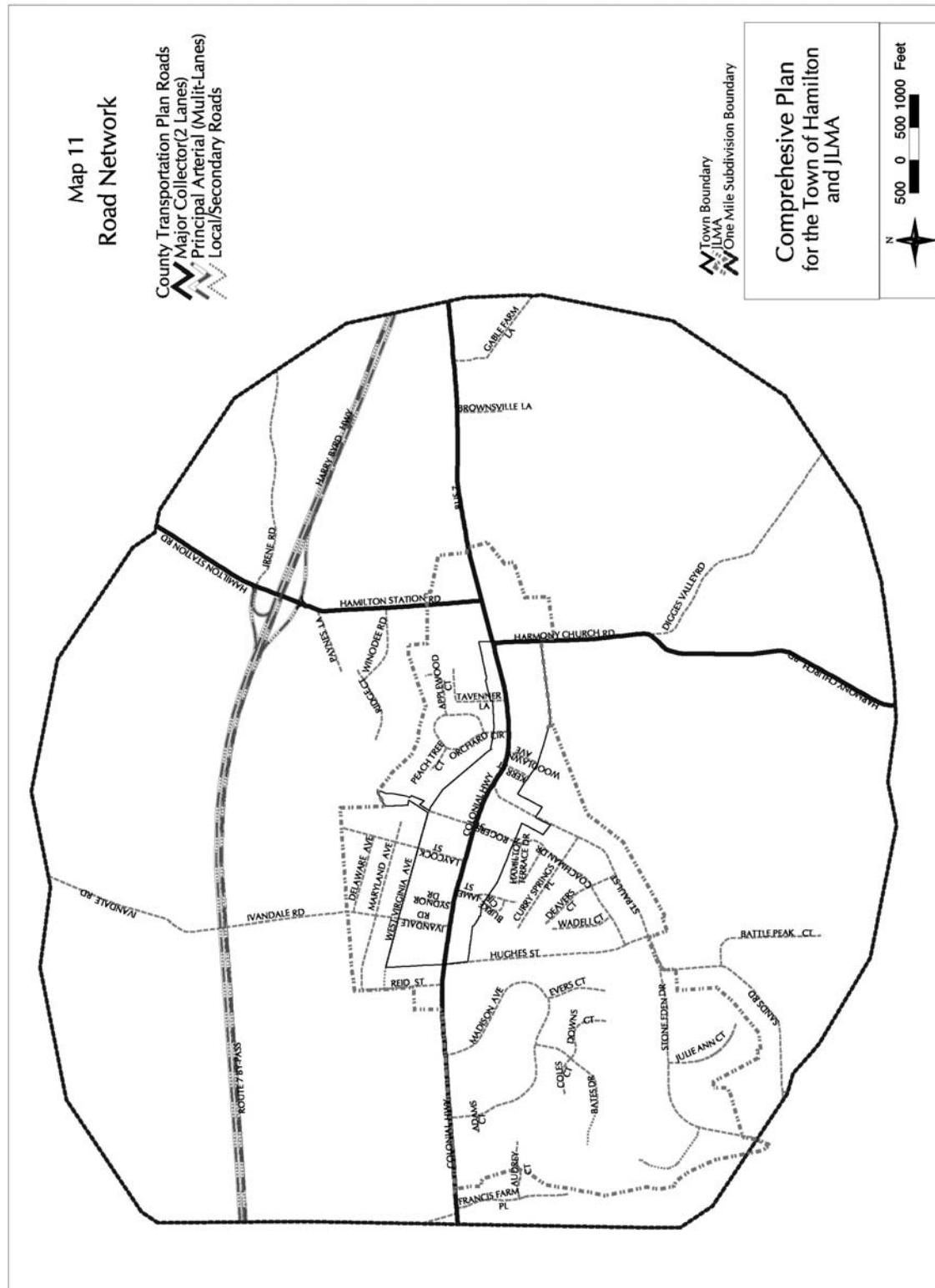
1. Implement traffic calming methods for Hamilton’s present and future streets, especially in trouble spots including, but not limited to, intersections on Business Route 7 at St. Paul Street and Hughes Street.
2. Develop and implement strategies (fines, “children at play” and “no through trucks” signs, citizen monitoring, public awareness campaigns) to encourage residents and visitors to follow traffic laws and enforcement measures, especially speed control.
3. Develop strategies in coordination with Loudoun County and VDOT to improve vehicle-hazardous intersections and roadways within the Town limits, as well as in the JLMA. In particular, address current or potential safety problems at the following locations.
  - a. Colonial Highway (Business 7) and S. St. Paul Street.
  - b. Colonial Highway (Business 7) and the offset intersection with 704 (Hamilton Station/Hamilton Church Roads).
  - c. Speed control issues on Hughes Street, St. Paul Street, Ivandale and Colonial Highway.
  - d. Ingress and egress from the West Colonial Highway junction associated with the new Harmony Middle School.
  - e. Ingress and egress from Hamilton Elementary School.

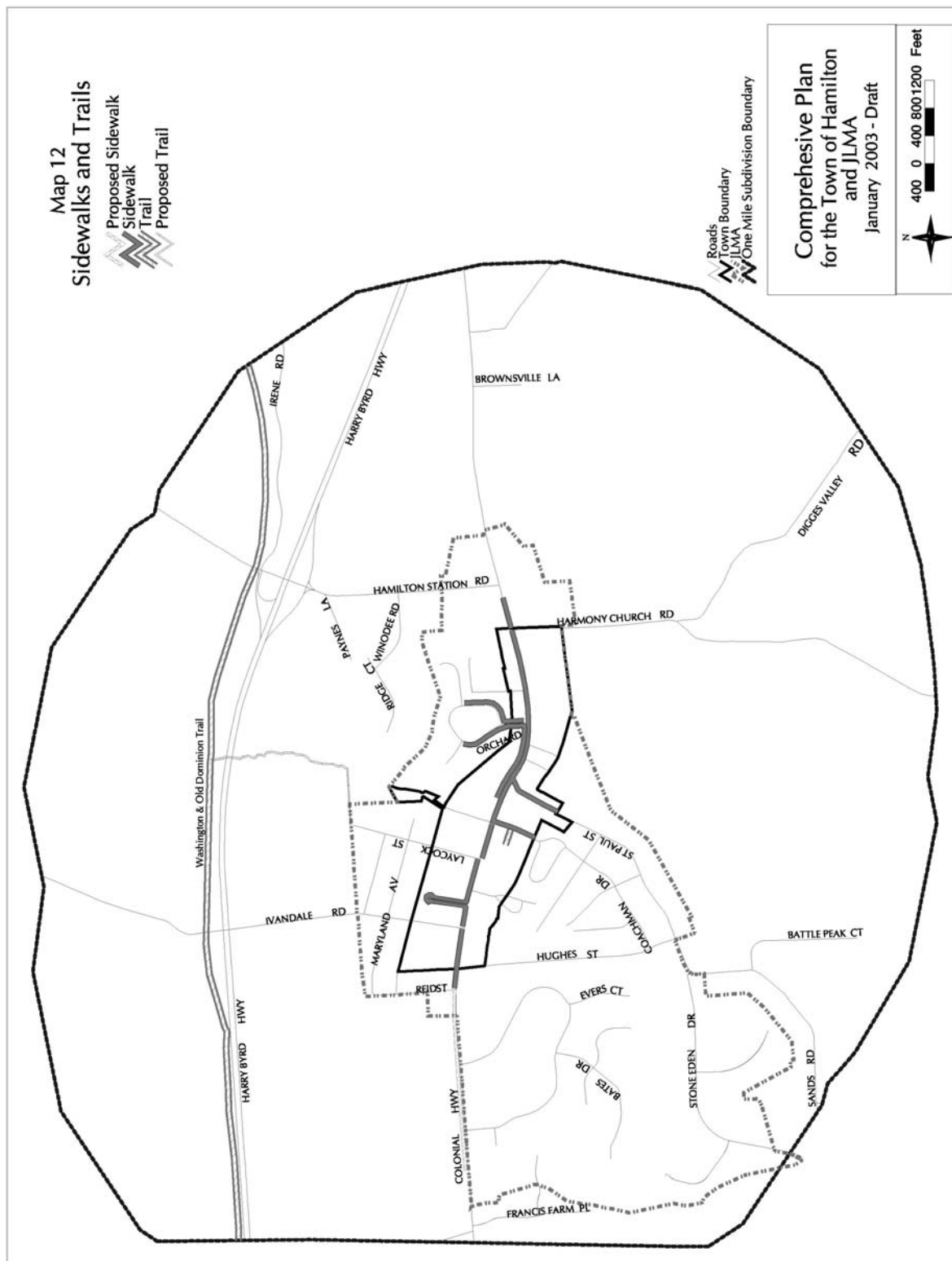
4. The Town and Loudoun County will work with Purcellville and VDOT to consider transportation policies and improvements that encourage through traffic to use Route 7 Bypass and Route 287, rather than Business Route 7 through Hamilton.
5. Implement an interconnected network of pedestrian connections throughout the Community, through the following steps.
  - a. Seek planning assistance from Loudoun County and the Commonwealth of Virginia to complete sidewalk repair/construction within Town as well as other pedestrian improvement projects.
  - b. Research and obtain grants to assist with completion of sidewalk repairs and new sidewalk construction within the Town.
  - c. Connect existing sidewalks/paths/trails by obtaining access easements from current residents to allow for those features across or through their property or street fronts.
  - d. The Town will amend ordinances to ensure that sidewalks, paths, or trails (whichever will reflect the nature of the area) which interconnect to existing pathways will be provided in new developments.
  - e. Provide sidewalks/paths/trails to both Hamilton Elementary and the new Harmony Intermediate School.
  - f. Provide access from the existing sidewalk network in the Town and JLMA to the W&OD Regional Trail.
  - g. Provide painted or alternate road surface crosswalks at several intersections near major destinations/features within and just outside of Town (elementary and intermediate schools, Town office, post office, public park, convenience store).
6. Establish a citizen's committee of volunteers under a Town Council Member's chairmanship to:
  - a. Monitor traffic safety;
  - b. Facilitate resolution of transportation-related concerns of citizens; and
  - c. Identify and implement strategies that address transportation-related issues, especially the policies and actions in this Plan.
7. Investigate the feasibility of constructing a "roundabout" at the intersection of Colonial Highway and St. Paul Street to facilitate traffic calming.
8. The Town, in coordination with the County, will work with VDOT to reduce minimum pavement widths for subdivision street standards and secondary road standards for new road projects.

9. Revise the Town zoning ordinance to assure adequate access and parking for all development.
10. Develop strategies with local commercial property owners to improve parking amenities in the center of Town.
11. Name streets and public facilities after Hamilton historic events, public figures, and natural features.
12. Encourage use of public transportation with park-and-ride lots and ridesharing.
13. Enact an ordinance that prohibits on-street parking where appropriate.
14. Encourage designated pedestrian and bicycle lanes along roads.
15. Seek a reduction in the speed limit within the JLMA.
16. Assess the transportation needs of the Town and JLMA by conducting a comprehensive transportation study including determination of existing and projected traffic counts and intersection levels of service.

*Source: Virginia Department of Transportation*







## **VIII. HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **Housing**

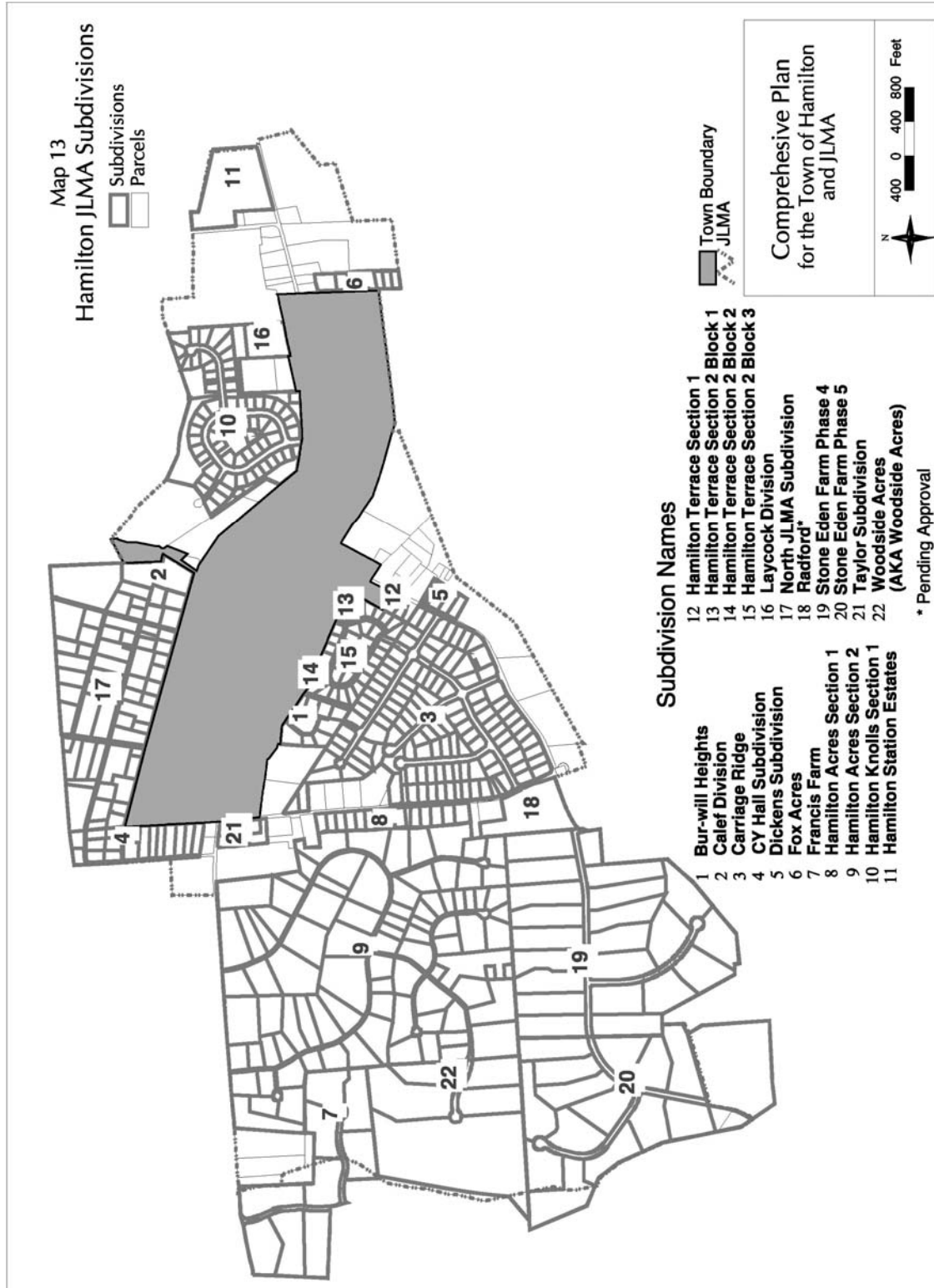
Housing in the Town of Hamilton is about 90% single family detached (SFD) dwelling units, and 10% consisting of single family attached (SFA) units. There are also a small number of mobile homes within the corporate limits.

According to the 2000 US Census data, there are 226 occupied dwellings within the Town. Of these units, approximately 40% of the housing was built before 1939 or earlier with 30% of the residential buildings constructed before 1900. Twenty-three percent (23%) of the housing in town was constructed between 1940 and 1970. A growth spurt occurred between 1970 and 1979 producing 30% of the housing stock with the remaining 7% being built from 1980 to 2000. Owner-occupied dwellings in the Town stands at 75% while rental occupancy has not changed much over the past decade and stands at 17%.

Housing in the Joint Land Management Area (JLMA) and the surrounding area is nearly all single family detached dwelling units. Over 90% of existing residences in the JLMA were built in the 1960-2000 time period. There are three general residential density patterns represented in the JLMA. The northwestern portion of the JLMA is approximately 1.34 units per acre. The Hamilton Knolls subdivision on the north side of the JLMA and the Carriage Ridge area on the south side are approximately 2.5 units per acre. The subdivisions in the western portion of the JLMA are one unit per three acres.

**TABLE 8  
SUBDIVISIONS IN THE JLMA**

| <b>Subdivision</b>                    | <b># of Platted<br/>Lots in<br/>JLMA</b> | <b>Area<br/>(acres)</b> | <b>Zoning</b>          | <b>Vacant<br/>Lots<br/>within<br/>JLMA</b> |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Bur-Wil Heights Subdivision           | 9                                        | 6.69                    | JLMA2                  | 0                                          |
| Calef Division                        | 2                                        | 4.02                    | JLMA2                  | 0                                          |
| Carriage Ridge                        | 118                                      | 48.89                   | JLMA2                  | 6                                          |
| CY Hall Subdivision                   | 17                                       | 8.25                    | JLMA2                  | 1                                          |
| Dickens Subdivision                   | 5                                        | 1.99                    | JLMA2                  | 2                                          |
| Fox Acres                             | 8                                        | 2.83                    | JLMA2, RC              | 0                                          |
| Francis Farm                          | 4                                        | 28.50                   | JLMA3                  | 9                                          |
| Hamilton Acres<br>Section 2           | 88                                       | 129.12                  | JLMA1, JLMA2,<br>JLMA3 | 1                                          |
| Hamilton Knolls Section 1             | 72                                       | 27.45                   | JLMA2                  | 7                                          |
| Hamilton Station Estates<br>Section 3 | 8                                        | 8.79                    | JLMA1, JLMA2, RC       | 8                                          |
| Hamilton Terrace Section 1            | 2                                        | 0.74                    | JLMA2                  | 0                                          |
| Hamilton Terrace<br>Section 2 Block 1 | 8                                        | 2.62                    | JLMA2                  | 0                                          |
| Hamilton Terrace<br>Section 2 Block 2 | 21                                       | 4.85                    | JLMA2                  | 0                                          |
| Hamilton Terrace<br>Section 2 Block 3 | 13                                       | 3.53                    | JLMA2                  | 0                                          |
| Laycock Division                      | 3                                        | 3.93                    | JLMA2                  | 0                                          |
| North JLMA Subdivision                | 58                                       | 45.09                   | JLMA2                  | 10                                         |
| Radford                               | Pending                                  | 6.99                    | JLMA2                  |                                            |
| Stone Eden Farm Phase 4               | 22                                       | 69.35                   | A3, JLMA1, JLMA3       | 0                                          |
| Stone Eden Farm Phase 5               | 16                                       | 86.68                   | AR1, A3, JLMA3         | 12                                         |
| Taylor Subdivision                    | 4                                        | 2.35                    | JLMA2                  | 0                                          |
| Woodland Acres                        | 5                                        | 37.83                   | JLMA3                  | 4                                          |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>497</b>                               | <b>536.63</b>           |                        | <b>60</b>                                  |



## **Community Institutions**

Hamilton has five religious institutions within and adjacent to the Town which meet spiritual needs and also serve as centers of community activity and identity. Hamilton Elementary School is the Hamilton community's sole primary education facility and is a focal point of many Town activities. The Town Park, located off Colonial Highway, was initially constructed in 1986 as a community-built playground. Part of the playground was closed in 1999 for liability and safety reasons. The Hamilton community organized to raise funds and erect a new playground in its place. It remains a wonderful resource for recreation and picnicking and serves as a focal point in the greater Hamilton area.

The Town Office serves not only as a center of government for the Town of Hamilton but it is also a place of many civic meetings. The Town has discussed the need for additional space for civic meetings.

Local civic groups draw membership from the Town and surrounding area. The Hamilton Ruritans, the Hamilton Book Club, Concerned Citizens of Hamilton, and the Boy and Girl Scouts are some organizations that are active.

Local activism and volunteerism is very much alive in the Hamilton community. Aside from the formal groups listed above, there are ad hoc groups that have formed in the past to address issues such as school issues or development pressures in the JLMA. The Concerned Citizens of Hamilton serves as an informal information network with an active membership who keep each other informed about local issues of importance.



Church of the Holy Scripture

## **GOALS – HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

1. Provide a range of housing types for differing age groups and economic levels in a pleasing environment while also maintaining and protecting the historic and small-town charm of Hamilton.
2. Achieve a sustainable community that provides employment opportunities that are compatible with the residential character of the Hamilton community. These opportunities may exist through home based businesses deemed appropriate for residential settings or through a locally based telecommuting center. Employment opportunities may also be available through traditional businesses that are located in the Town business core, as identified in this Plan, and commercially zoned areas in the JLMA.
3. Maintain the small-town, close-knit atmosphere of the Hamilton community and develop closer ties among the people.

## **POLICIES – HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

1. Continue to promote and support civic activities and organizations as the foundation of community spirit and solidarity.
2. Coordinate all land development policies, public facilities and service efforts so as to reinforce the identity of Hamilton and the JLMA as a unified community.
3. Establish criteria and zoning that allows a balanced mix of housing for various groups in the Hamilton community.
4. Improve the quality and quantity of communication between the Town's governing body and the Town population regarding community building and planning.
5. Coordinate with Loudoun County to ensure that new development in the JLMA and one-mile subdivision area is compatible in character, scale, and layout with the existing Town fabric.
6. Continue to encourage the active participation and cooperation of all area residents and groups in the development of Town policies, programs, facilities and services.

## **ACTION ITEMS – HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

1. Create a plan for businesses, civic groups, or associations to adopt roadway segments for litter control and landscaping.
2. Increase the communication between Town officials and population through frequent and accessible sharing of information and active solicitation of input. Examples could include a prominent outside bulletin board, more frequent newsletters, more information on the web site, or development of an email list.

3. Encourage business owners and civic groups to cooperatively undertake a beautification program for the Town's main street and commercial core, including sites outside the Town boundary and at key entrances to Town. The program could include signs, landscaping and walkways.
4. Develop a Town welcoming committee to make new members of the community feel welcome.
5. Review zoning and development requests to ensure a desired balance of housing development and to protect historic homes.
6. Develop an in-town open space plan or streetscape plan as an investment in the economic viability of the downtown as well as quality of community life and do a feasibility study to acquire identified open space areas.
7. Conduct a housing study to assure availability of housing at various income, social, and age levels.
8. Explore the feasibility of locating a community center facility within the Town business core for multi-purpose uses such as the relocation of Town government, civic or group meetings, educational classes, daycare, a garden co-op, and recreational uses.

## **IX. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

A variety of small businesses currently operate within and adjacent to Hamilton's corporate limits. The commercial activity of Hamilton is presently composed of locally based small-scale retail, professional service and tourism-based businesses. (See Maps 14 & 15) The neighboring Towns of Purcellville and Leesburg provide a large portion of the area's major needs for retail and professional goods and services.

Hamilton can make use of its many assets to support economic development. The Town is a coveted residential location in Loudoun County. Natural environmental features as well as historic structures are well preserved. The community is inviting with tree-lined streets that look much the same as they did when the Town was a countryside retreat for visitors. The Town is welcoming and there is a business-friendly environment.

Economic development strategies in this Plan will reinforce and promote existing locally based businesses; expand the "community level" retail, office and restaurant uses; and promote the tourism-attracting image of the Town.

A central "core development district" within the town boundaries, focused near the center of Town, is the target area for attracting new commercial businesses and tenants. This business core area will serve as the focus of efforts to enhance and revitalize Hamilton's existing business sector. The architecture of new structures or adaptive reuse of existing structures should be compatible with the Town's historic character.

To further this vision the Town has been participating along with other western Loudoun towns in developing a comprehensive, countywide approach to economic development within the historic communities in Loudoun. This work has culminated in the formation of Main Street Loudoun (MSL); a countywide program based on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center Four-Point Approach. Hamilton is currently a participating member of Main Street Loudoun and plans to address economic development issues or projects in Hamilton using the resources available through the program. A Hamilton Main Street committee has been established to work with Town Council, local community volunteers, and the MSL program to focus on economic development, historic preservation, tourism, and planning-related efforts.

Another area of economic development in the Hamilton community relates to home-based businesses as well as telecommuters. It is the intent of the Plan to promote policies that allow residents to live and work in the same community thereby decreasing commuter traffic. In addition, rural enterprises located in the Town or the Joint Land Management Area (JLMA), such as garden centers, eco-tourism (pick-your-own) and business retreats would support farming operations and help to preserve Loudoun's rural heritage.

Industrial or commercial uses of a large scale or high density will be discouraged as incompatible with the quiet residential atmosphere of the Hamilton community.



The Natural Mercantile

An important part of the economic development strategy in the Plan is recognition of the value of open space and recreational facilities in locational decisions of businesses. Land conservation is an investment that produces important economic benefits and prevents the higher costs of unplanned development. That is, planned open space, conservation areas, and recreation areas not only improve the quality of life for Town residents and make the community more attractive, but also serve to make the community more appealing for the location of new businesses. Natural areas and recreational facilities also boost the tourist appeal of Hamilton.

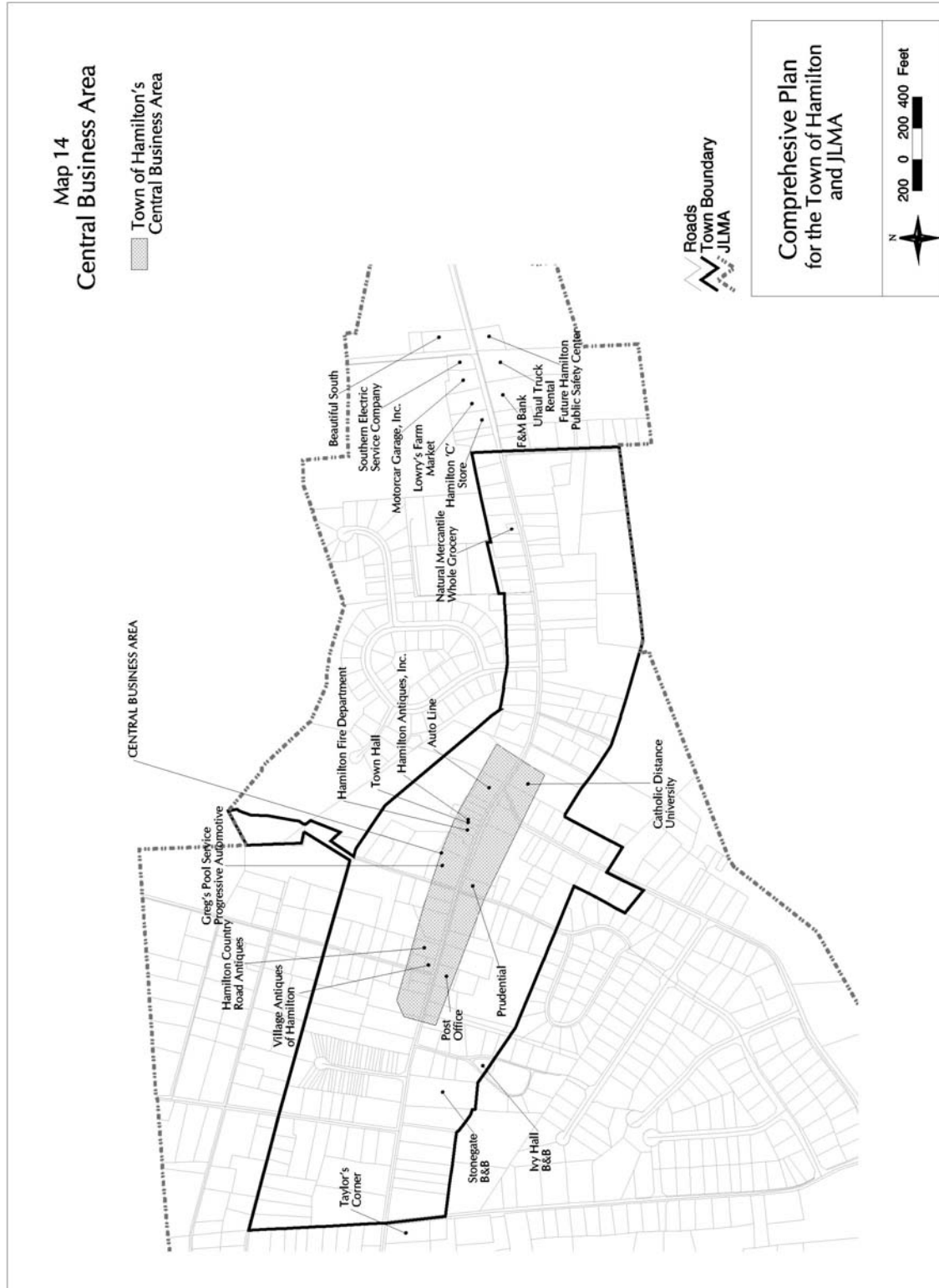
An economic development goal in Hamilton is to sustain the Town's fiscal health through a diverse commercial tax base while still retaining the natural, scenic residential environment. This goal recognizes the intimate connection between economic prosperity and maintenance of high quality physical and social environments.

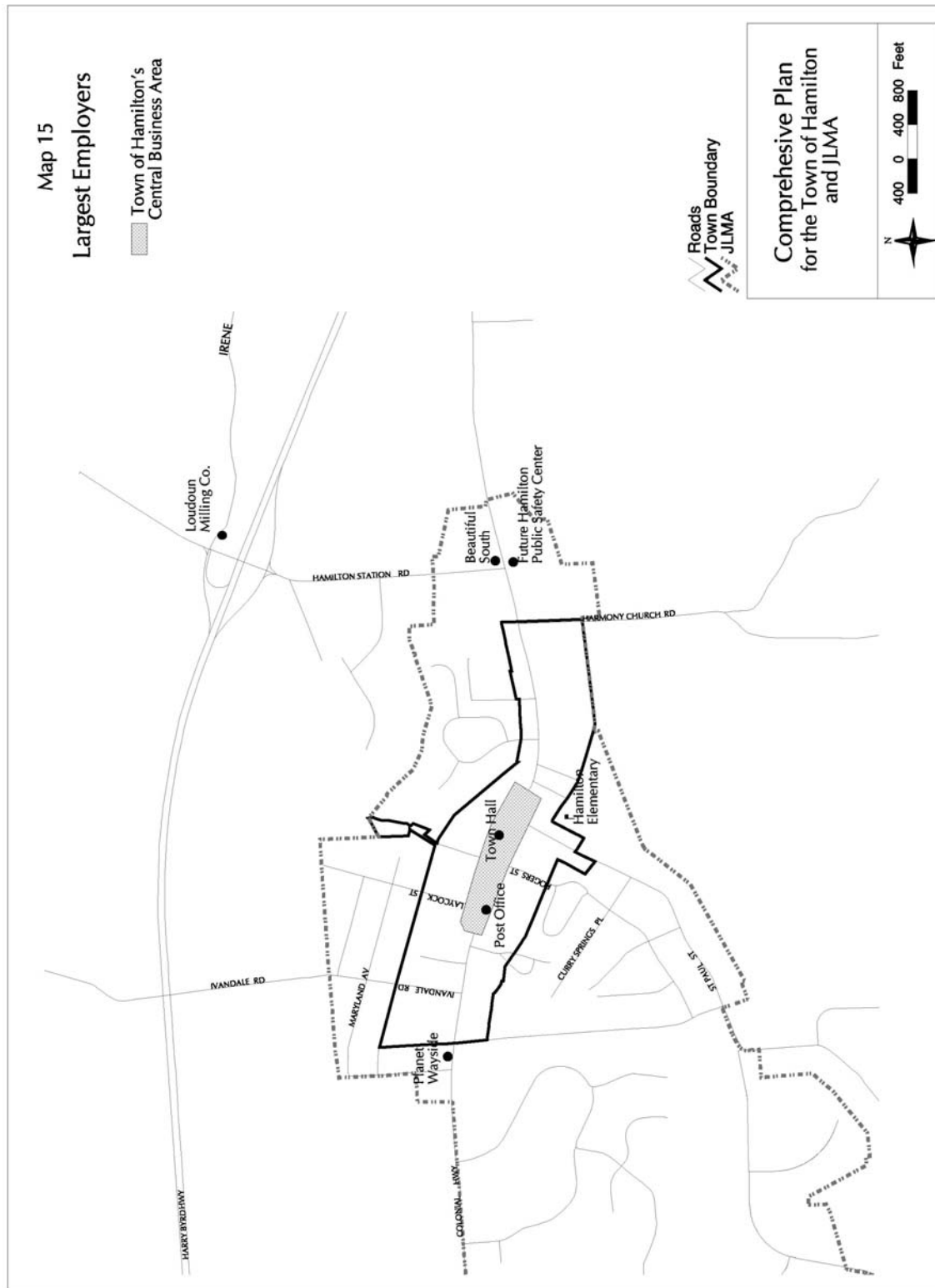
The Town may seek advice and financial assistance towards implementing a community economic development plan, which could include:

- Development and distribution of a Town business directory;
- A focus on re-development of the Town's core commercial district;
- Research to identify rural enterprises that match the Town's character; and
- Do market research, including surveys, to identify potentially successful small businesses and create strategies to attract these businesses.

## **GOALS – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1. Create and stimulate a favorable climate for economic development within the existing commercially zoned properties in the Town and JLMA, recognizing the intimate connection between economic prosperity and maintenance of high quality physical and social environments.
2. Focus commercial development within the core commercially zoned areas within the Town. Target small-scale professional services/offices, specialty retail, lodging and tourism. Consider rural enterprises such as farm markets and garden centers within the Town's JLMA.
3. Enhance Hamilton's position as an attractive tourist destination.
4. Improve the Town's accommodation to the walking public, including improved streetscape, thorough interconnected sidewalk networks, traffic calming within the Town, welcome signs, and pedestrian and bicycle-accessible services and shopping.
5. Preserve existing agricultural lands and expand and encourage new agribusiness.
6. Improve appearance of commercial areas and properties.







Planet Wayside

## **POLICIES – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1. Maintain a core commercial district within the Town boundaries focused near the center of Town. Commercial development, or re-development, will be encouraged to locate on existing commercially zoned tracts in the Town business core and in the JLMA.
2. Encourage public and commercial improvements within the core commercial district that are compatible with the Town's historic architectural character.
3. Maintain and invest in the Town's parks and open space, sidewalk system, and streetscape environment as an incentive for spurring future private sector investment in the Hamilton business community.
4. Identify and recruit new small businesses that provide employment opportunities for residents, meet the needs of Hamilton's population, or that provide goods and services to the local community or to the tourist population.
5. Promote and protect the security of existing businesses by encouraging diversity of new businesses and avoiding duplication of existing goods and services.

6. Encourage revitalization and renewal of the Town's historic central core, including preservation and rehabilitation of historic structures, development of new commercial structures compatible with the existing buildings, and inclusion of a central green space.
7. Utilize available funding and grants to improve the Colonial Highway corridor for streetscape, surfacing, and traffic calming improvements.
8. Prohibit industrial or commercial use of a large scale or high density within the Town and JLMA.
9. Develop Hamilton's tourist potential by capitalizing on the Town's rich historic heritage and historic homes and antique shops.
10. Foster a good relationship between Town government and local businesses.
11. Seek to retain and attract retirees as part of our economic development strategy.
12. Encourage recycling by in-town businesses through information, incentives, services and/or awards.
13. Support and expand arts and cultural enterprises as contributors to the Town's economy.
14. Locate new business and institutional development within or immediately adjacent to the existing Town limits.
15. Work with the County to promote rural agricultural economy uses over residential development of currently open land. Examples include: beef and hay production, Christmas tree farms, wineries/orchards, nursery-grown tree farms, and direct-to-buyer fruit and vegetable growers.

#### **ACTION ITEMS – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1. Establish a committee of interested elected officials, businesses and residents to formulate and implement a community economic development plan with advice and assistance from the Loudoun County Department of Economic Development and Loudoun Convention and Visitors Association.
2. Explore the viability of promoting and packaging Hamilton as a visitor destination for quiet weekend escapes or retreats.
3. Review zoning, development, and annexation requests to ensure a healthy balance of residential and commercial uses in Town.
4. Revise the Town zoning ordinance to promote new commercial structures that will be compatible with the traditional visual character of the existing Town architecture.
5. Develop and maintain adequate funding sources (grants, funds) to implement capital improvements programs.

6. Promote availability of high speed Internet access to accommodate telecommuters and small-scale high-tech service businesses.
7. Actively support existing businesses by developing and distributing posters, brochures, directories, and advertisements that feature and promote our local in-town and JLMA businesses.
8. Consider allocating a portion of the lodging tax receipts towards tourism development.
9. Work to enhance the visual appearance of the entrance corridors to create an attractive small business environment.
10. Plan and develop accommodations/programs for small bus group tours.
11. Continue to support the Hamilton Day Festival and other community events that promote tourism.
12. Research options for acquisition of in-town open space and/or development of streetscape plans particularly for the business core area as an investment in the economic viability of the downtown and the community.
13. Implement design, sign, and landscaping guidelines for commercial areas.

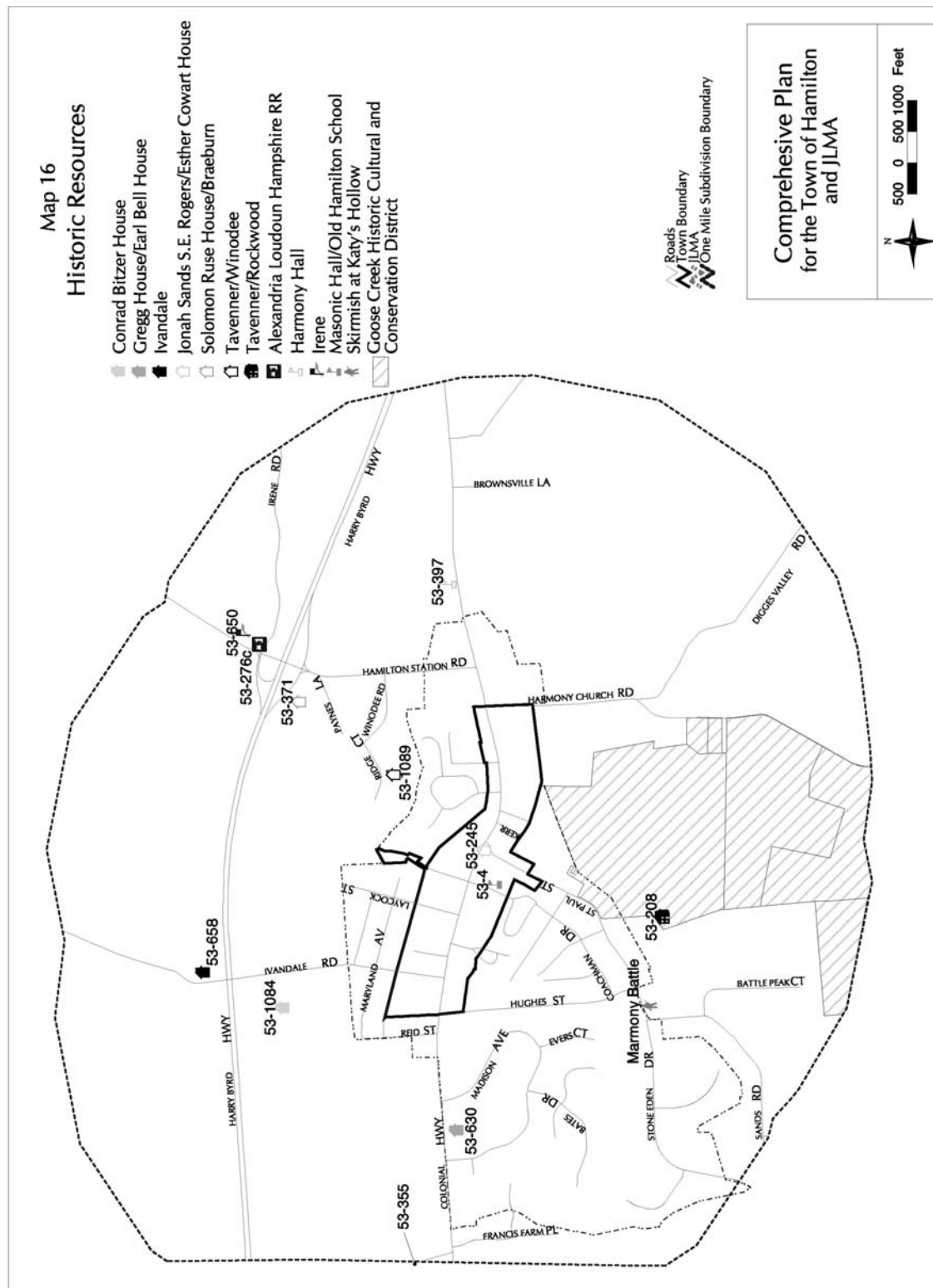
## **X. HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

The Town of Hamilton and its surrounding area are rich in historic sites and structures. The plan area contains a significant Civil War battlefield site located south of town along St. Paul Street and Route 709. On March 21, 1865, Confederate Colonel John S. Mosby and 128 men of his 43<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry surprised and defeated Union soldiers commanded by Colonel Marcus Reno in a skirmish known as the Hamilton or Harmony Fight. Mosby inflicted over 50 casualties on the Federals at a cost of only two men killed, two captured, and several wounded. The Hamilton Fight was the last important action in Loudoun County during the Civil War.

In addition to historic sites, there are many buildings dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that remain in good condition and are in active use. Some of these sites have been surveyed by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR, formerly Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission). These surveyed sites are listed on page 76. The survey forms are on file with the Loudoun County Department of Planning. New survey work is planned to assess additional historic and cultural resources in the County. The County anticipates conducting a countywide survey of historical structures and resources during 2003. The County also anticipates conducting survey work within some of the towns in Loudoun County, including Hamilton. This survey work will be conducted to assess whether the historic area in Hamilton could potentially be a historic district. This information will be submitted to VDHR for a determination as to whether the district is eligible for nomination to state or national registers.

In addition to these surveyed sites, the Town has many other older buildings, with a total of about 70 structures of approximately 100 or more years of age. Most of these buildings are located along the Colonial Highway in the center of Town. See Map 17 (pg. 77) for locations of structures approximately 100 years old. The area also contains some non-structural historic sites such as a portion of the rail bed of the Manassas Gap Railroad.

In addition to historic sites and structures, the 10,000-acre Goose Creek Historic Cultural and Conservation District lies at the southern edge of the planning area. It is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places and was designated in 1977 by Loudoun County as a zoning overlay district, in which new, non-farm construction is subject to architectural review. Development that occurs in this historic district must be sensitive to the cultural and horticultural significance of the area and is subject to review for conformance to historic district guidelines adopted by the County.



**Surveyed Sites by the VDHR**

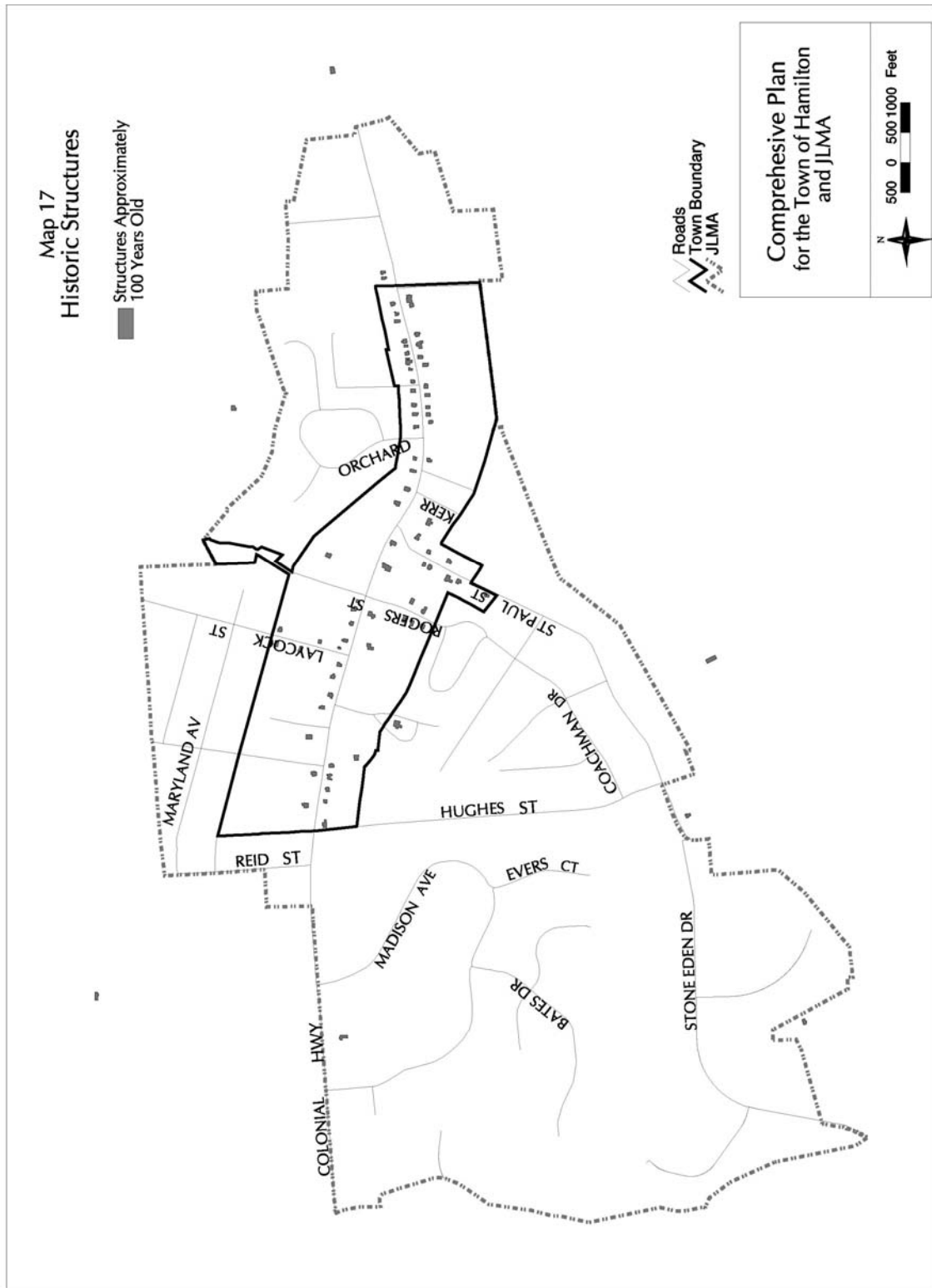
| <u>Survey Number</u> | <u>Name</u>                                    |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 53-1084              | Conrad Bitzer House                            |
| 53-1089              | Tavenner/Winodee                               |
| 53-208               | Tavenner/Rockwood                              |
| 53-245               | Jonah Sands-S.E. Rogers/Esther<br>Cowart House |
| 53-371               | Solomon Ruse House/Braeburn                    |
| 53-397               | Harmony Hall/Nancy & Richard<br>Tavenner       |
| 53-4                 | Masonic Hall/Old Hamilton School               |
| 53-630               | Gregg House/Earl Bell House                    |
| 53-650               | Irene                                          |
| 53-658               | Ivandale                                       |
| 53-276c              | Alexandria Loudoun Hampshire RR                |
| 53-355               | Ballenger House/Nichols Residence              |

**GOALS – HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

1. Preserve and protect the Town’s historic and cultural features that make it unique and enhance the small-town atmosphere and quality of life.

**POLICIES - HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

1. Recognize that the Town’s historic and cultural resources are fragile and irreplaceable and must be protected and preserved.
2. Use the Town’s historic and cultural resources as part of the framework for the Town’s strategic land use planning policies. Preservation of the identified framework, which includes historic features and public facilities, will help preserve the Town’s property values, aesthetic appeal and quality of life.
3. Develop and implement holistic and integrated growth management strategies to ensure that land use planning and development decisions respect and preserve the historic character of the Town.
4. Encourage the preservation, rehabilitation and enhancement of historic structures by ensuring that the Town’s land development ordinances permit compatible home-based businesses, provide for reasonable expansions and improvements to historic structures and permit new development to be compatible in character with historic structures.
5. Encourage citizens with significant older homes to seek historic status and maintain architectural styles in keeping with the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century character of the Town.



## **ACTION ITEMS – HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

1. Investigate designating a historic overlay zoning district to encourage preservation of historic structures and 19<sup>th</sup> century aspects of the Town. A historic overlay district protects areas of historic significance within the Town through a mapping process and special zoning provisions designed to preserve these areas for present and future generations.
2. Develop a Historic Resource Management Database with the assistance of the VDHR to support the overlay district program by recording and documenting site-specific information relating to the Town's historic resources. Such information is critical to develop and support preservation and protection programs as well as the general administration of the Town's policies and ordinances.

It is proposed that this database document and support the following:

- Location of identified historic and cultural features, such as:

Braeburn/Solomon Ruse House, Branch House/Ivy Hall (1880s), Brownsville School, Charles Bennett Hamilton/Miss Jane's Kindergarten/Miltonia, Claude Lowe House, Conrad Bitzer/C.Y. Hall Farmhouse, Earl Bell House/Gregg House, Edgewood, Jonah Sands/Esther Cowart House, Farmer's and Merchant's Old Bank Building (1910), Love House (1847), Laycock's/Mercantile Store, Hamilton Baptist Church (1899), Hamilton Milling Company, Richard Tavenner House/Harmony Hall, Harmony Methodist Church (1833) and Cemetery, Hamilton School/Masonic Hall/Green Enterprises (1873), Irene, Katy's Hollow, Lakeview Cemetery, Laycock/Norton House (1880s), Manassas Gap Railroad, Mansfield, Maple Lawn, Miltonia/Rogers Cowart House, Mount Olive Baptist Church, Mount Zion Methodist Church, Nichols House (Ballenger Lane), Offley/Maplewood/McCann House (1780), Railroad Cut at Brown's Farm, Sears Roebuck House, Snicker's Gap Tollhouse, Spring House behind Firehouse, St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1877), Taylor/Hoge House/Waverly Villa (1872), George and Tabitha Tavenner/Winodee Farm (1763), and Telephone Building.

- Identification of historic and specimen trees and tree stands of special significance, such as:

Bald Cedar Tree on St. James, Cucumber Magnolia Tree on West Colonial Highway, tree buffer at future Harmony Middle School, Katy's Hollow, buffer around Water Treatment Plant.

3. Implement a public outreach and education program with the assistance of the VDHR to ensure public awareness of and participation in the implementation of the Town's historic and cultural resources policies. At a minimum, this outreach program should include providing information to historic property owners regarding the state and federal tax incentives available for preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties and the positive economic benefits of historic preservation within a community.

4. Investigate designating a historic zoning district to encourage preservation of historic structures and 19<sup>th</sup> century aspects of the Town.
5. Should the VDHR determine that there is a definable historic district area and that such area has nomination potential, the Town will analyze this information and consider nomination of such district to the Virginia Landmarks Register and/or the National Register of Historic Places.
6. Develop and implement community design guidelines for residential and commercial structures to address visual quality and to further preserve the historic character of the Town.

## **XI. ANNEXATION**

Annexation is a traditional and logical extension of the increased role played by a town in the provision of public services and utilities to surrounding areas, allowing the town limits to reflect the community of interest. Annexation also allows the owners of property added to a town to have a direct say in managing the services to which they financially contribute. An important part of this Plan is to outline a process for discussing and developing an annexation strategy between the Town and the County. The following guidelines will provide assistance to Town and County officials on matters pertaining to corporate boundary adjustments. These guidelines are also intended to provide basic information to citizens and landowners in the Hamilton area who have an interest in corporate boundary issues.

- The Town will conduct a fiscal analysis as a starting point to determine the comprehensive, fiscal impact of corporate boundary changes on the Town of Hamilton. Such analysis will thoroughly assess the responsibilities of the Town for the expansion of service provision as well as expanded utility service. The study will analyze the fiscal impact of these service and utility responsibilities from the Town's perspective regarding financial and budgetary considerations. The Town may also choose to consider expanding the study to assess the fiscal impacts of annexation from the perspective of typical property owners in the Town and JLMA.
- The fiscal analysis will be used to determine whether the Town should annex portions of the JLMA by proceeding incrementally or initiate a single annexation of the entire JLMA.
- Once the Town has reached a thorough understanding of the fiscal impacts of annexation, the Town and the County will begin discussions of which legal mechanism is preferred for making a corporate boundary adjustment. There are a number of options that could be considered:

*Corporate Boundary Line Adjustments:* These permit the Town and County to agree to move the Town corporate line, subject to approval of the circuit court. This procedure is streamlined, but allows no conditions or terms of agreement beyond the location of the new line. It creates no period within which additional annexation is barred.

*Voluntary Settlement of Annexation:* This is a type of annexation agreement whereby a specific area is sought to be annexed. It may be initiated by the Town or by petition of 51% of the voters of an area. This process entails hearings before the Virginia Commission on Local Government and a specially appointed panel of judges. Terms and conditions may be included and ordered by the Court which, unless otherwise agreed, will prevent the Town from seeking further annexation for a period of ten years.

*Agreements Defining Annexation Rights:* This type of annexation agreement, as was adopted for the Purcellville area, allow the Town and County to enter into an agreement defining what area and under what conditions the Town may annex. The Town must reject its right to ever seek city status, but gains the right, but not the obligation, to annex all, or a portion, of the defined area by ordinance. The agreement is reviewed only by the Virginia Commission on Local Government.

- Any property located within the JLMA that is presently served by Town sewer and/or water may be considered for annexation by the Town.
- When a property is annexed, the property may be rezoned at the discretion of the Town subject to any legally vested property rights. The property may be placed into a transition phase, T-1 or the lowest zoning density. The Town will rezone the property to a zoning district that is consistent with the land use policy and proffer guidelines in this Plan.

## **GOALS – ANNEXATION**

1. Enter into an annexation agreement with the County, subsequent to the adoption of this Plan by both the Town and the County, that will provide for the orderly planning by the Town of land within the JLMA in accord with the land use policies of this Plan.
2. The Town will only consider annexations that will maintain or further strengthen the infrastructure and fiscal viability of the Town and which are consistent with the policies of this Plan.
3. The annexation of properties should result in a reduction of the tax burden for the Town residents associated with the provision of sewer and water services.
4. The annexation of properties should increase the potential for cost reduction as a result of economies of scale.
5. Provide for a contiguous and manageable town limit that maintains the existing sense of community.

## **POLICIES – ANNEXATION**

1. Tracts in the JLMA which are already fully developed and currently served by Town utilities (except for the 1999-2000 sewer extension to solve failing septic systems in the County) will be considered for eventual annexation.
2. Undeveloped parcels may be considered for annexation subject to compliance with the land use and utility policies in this Plan.

## **ACTION ITEMS – ANNEXATION**

1. The Town will conduct a fiscal impact analysis of the costs and benefits of annexing all of the JLMA versus annexing portions of the JLMA incrementally.
2. Upon adoption of this Plan, the Town and County will hold discussions and decide whether an annexation agreement is the appropriate mechanism to address corporate boundary issues in the Hamilton JLMA.
3. The Town (and the County, if appropriate) will provide information to the public about annexation proposals and solicit public input on such proposals as early as possible in the annexation process.

## **XII. IMPLEMENTATION**

The Hamilton Plan contains over 80 action steps that are recommended for implementing the policies contained in the Plan. A wide range of tasks will be necessary to address the policies in the Plan, which include revisions to ordinances, updating guidelines, conducting new studies, and forming new partnerships. Some are more important than others in terms of overall Plan implementation and a part of the implementation strategy contained in this chapter is designed to highlight key actions that are considered instrumental for implementation. The implementation strategy will serve as a basis for future work programs. It also serves to provide a basis for resource planning at the Town, and between the Town and the County, when cooperative efforts are recommended between the two jurisdictions.

The following list identifies key implementation actions:

1. Monitor the number of sewer and water taps granted for new development in the Town and surrounding area to protect the finite groundwater resources for the Town and Joint Land Management Area (JLMA).
2. Evaluate existing Town and County zoning district regulations and the Zoning Map for their compatibility with the goals and policies of this Plan, and identify necessary or desirable amendments.
3. Review Town ordinances and regulations accordingly to ensure that growth is managed to avoid overtaxing public services.
4. Conduct a new water and sewer study that reflects the policies in this Comprehensive Plan.
5. Expand and enhance the Town's long-range capital program by conducting an infrastructure needs analysis, code-compliance analysis and maintenance needs analysis, and establish funding plan for long term capital needs for all public facilities and utilities.
6. The Town will consider participating in the County's wellhead protection program to protect groundwater from contamination and ensure an adequate level of drinking water for the residents. Establish appropriate protection zones around each of the Town's wells.
7. Assist local landowners/developers to maintain open space, identify, and designate specific natural features and locations in and around the Town for public open space. Suggested means include: bike paths, streambed trails, community gardens, wildlife refuges, old railroad right-of-ways, and historically significant places.
8. Work with the County to develop and promote rural open space preservation alternatives to dense residential development of currently open land in the JLMA and the area subject to one-mile subdivision authority of Hamilton. Alternatives for open space preservation may include land trusts, tax incentives for land conservation, agricultural, forest and historical districts, open space easements, and the purchase of development rights.

9. Implement traffic calming methods for Hamilton's present and future streets, especially in trouble spots including, but not limited to, intersections on Business Route 7 at St. Paul Street and Hughes Street.
10. Develop and implement strategies (fines, "children at play" and "no through trucks" signs, citizen monitoring, public awareness campaigns) to encourage residents and visitors to follow traffic laws and enforcement measures, especially speed control.
11. Implement a network of pedestrian connections throughout the community, through the following steps:
  - a. Seek planning assistance from Loudoun County and the Commonwealth of Virginia to complete sidewalk repair/construction within Town as well as other pedestrian improvement projects.
  - b. Research and obtain grants to assist with completion of sidewalk repairs and new sidewalk construction within the Town.
  - c. Connect existing sidewalks/paths/trails by obtaining access easements from current residents to allow for those features across or through their property or street fronts.
  - d. Amend ordinances to ensure that sidewalks, paths, or trails (whichever will reflect the nature of the area) which interconnect to existing pathways will be provided in new developments.
  - e. Provide sidewalks/paths/trails to both Hamilton Elementary and the Harmony Intermediate School.
  - f. Provide access from the existing sidewalk network in the Town and JLMA to the W&OD Regional Trail.
  - g. Provide painted or alternate road surface crosswalks at several intersections near major destinations/features within and just outside of Town (elementary and intermediate schools, Town office, post office, public park, convenience store).
12. Encourage business owners and civic groups to cooperatively undertake a beautification program for the Town's main street and commercial core, including sites outside the Town boundary and at key entrances to Town. The program could include signs, landscaping and walkways.
13. Review zoning and development requests to ensure a desired balance and pace of housing development and to protect historic homes.
14. Review zoning, development, and annexation requests to ensure a healthy balance of residential and commercial uses in Town.

15. Investigate designating a historic overlay zoning district to encourage preservation of historic structures and 19<sup>th</sup> century aspects of the Town. A historic overlay district protects areas of historic significance within the Town through a mapping process and special zoning provisions designed to preserve these areas for present and future generations.
16. The Town will conduct a fiscal impact analysis of the costs and benefits of annexing all of the JLMA versus annexing portions of the JLMA incrementally.
17. Upon adoption of this Plan, the Town and County will hold discussions and decide whether an annexation agreement is the appropriate mechanism to address corporate boundary issues in the Hamilton JLMA.

### **Community Involvement**

One of the important objectives of this Plan is to involve the local citizenry in implementing the policies of this Plan. This builds on an existing local climate of citizen involvement in Town government and community activities. There are specific actions in this Plan that call for citizen involvement to assist the Town with implementation strategies such as the formation of citizen committees to accomplishing specific tasks. For example, the Transportation chapter recommends the formation of a citizen committee to monitor traffic safety and facilitate with transportation related issues.

Other actions in the Plan may be well suited as civic projects by local organizations or clubs. For example, in order to better understand wildlife habitats and protect them, an action step in the Natural Resources chapter recommends that a survey be completed to document wildlife habitats in the Hamilton area and list endangered or threatened species. This might be an excellent project for a service organization or scouting project. It would not only provide valuable information to the Town and the County but would also serve to involve the community.

### **Conclusion**

This Plan was written with the intention of being a dynamic, living document—not one that will sit on a shelf. To that end, the implementation strategy described above is to maintain a focus on key implementation strategies necessary to implement this Plan. The remaining actions are seen as complementary to the key actions and will further implement the Plan. This strategy will provide a focus for implementation especially for purposes of planning work schedules or budgets and for inter-jurisdictional coordination. Work may be done on the secondary tier of actions at any time, either with first tier actions or after, depending on resource and monetary allocations. Finally, the implementation strategy, by design, also recognizes the importance of community involvement. The Plan was written for the citizens of Hamilton and the JLMA and through its implementation, it will continue to be a plan for the citizens.