



Nelson Route 29 Economic Development Corridor Plan: Strategic Recommendations for the Corridor

June 2017



Acknowledgments

This corridor planning study was initiated by the Nelson County Board of Supervisors. While the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission conducted this study, several other groups played a significant role in conducting this planning effort. The TJPDC would like to thank those who contributed their time, resources, and creativity to this process.

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- Mr. Allen Hale, East District
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Executive Summary

Project Background

Unique, pristine natural beauty, and rural charm, three qualities that Nelson County exemplifies. Overwhelmingly, residents cited that these traits are what make Nelson so special. The County has had tremendous success with the agri-tourism and recreation industries, especially along the 151 corridor in the northern quadrant of the County. How to capitalize on that success and focus economic development efforts to the 29 corridor is the question this plan aims to answer.

In December of 2015, the Nelson County Board of Supervisors held a strategic planning session to identify priority action areas for the County to undertake in the coming years. Two of the top priorities that were identified were **economic and business development**, which fell into one of the top two priority areas, and the increasing need for **corridor planning**, which was a top nine priority. The Board of Supervisors determined that corridor planning efforts should focus on the U.S. 29 corridor, as the 151 Corridor had been an area of significant focus in the past. The Supervisors were clear that any plans and subsequent strategies should be focused and direct in providing direction and recommendations that are realistic and measurable. This plan is a direct result of the strategic planning session initiated by the Board of Supervisors and incorporates the identified priorities into one, holistic plan.

To meet these priorities, the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission was contracted by Nelson County to analyze the study area's current conditions using spatial analysis, assess the community's attitudes and priorities towards economic development through public surveying efforts, review the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats effecting the corridor, create of a robust inventory of current businesses located in the corridor, and a draft a finalized list of prioritized action items and recommendations for Nelson County to implement to achieve the economic development goals set forth through this effort. 310 Ltd. of Richmond was subcontracted to develop a strategic marketing strategy for the 29 corridor.

With the help of an advisory working group consisting of staff and local



View of U.S. 29 in Lovington. Image courtesy panorramio.com

elected officials from Nelson County, TJPDC staff, 310 Ltd. staff, and staff from the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development, the following key deliverables were met with the culmination of this project.

Key Deliverables:

- A concise historical narrative of the Nelson 29 Corridor study area
- A corridor boundary map
- A public outreach and communication plan
- An electronic and paper community survey
- A short narrative of survey results
- Maps of area assets
- A map and list of business clusters
- A County-wide economic development marketing plan for business attraction and growth
- A completed Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (S.W.O.T) analysis

- Strategies and recommendations in response to the S.W.O.T analysis
- A completed U.S. 29 Economic Development Corridor Plan

These deliverables were used as the basis of the key findings and helped create the prioritized list of action items that the Board of Supervisors can use as a tool for implementation.

Key Findings:

The key findings summarize broad trends and feedback received throughout the planning process and serve to define and direct the strategies and recommendations that are to follow. Based on feedback received from the working group, public survey and the current conditions analysis, one thing is clear, residents, visitors, and business owners alike agree that Nelson County is a special place, one full of unique charm that is not easily replicated. It is this somewhat intangible charm that is highly valued. In addition to this, several additional key findings were discovered in this planning process and are outlined below.

Challenges

1. Balancing economic growth that provides opportunity for Nelson residents without detracting from the areas unique sense of place is one of the key challenges that residents feel must be met.
2. A recurring theme in the survey responses was that Lovingston in its current state was underutilized and unwelcoming.
3. The study area terrain north of Lovingston will make development difficult. There are no development ready sites within the corridor and less than 75 parcels are 20 or more acres with existing power and paved access to the site.
4. Skilled workforce attainment level is lower than surrounding localities
5. The distance of developable property from Interstate 64.
6. Current competitive economic status of Nelson County lags behind other economically progressive localities.

Opportunities

1. Community support for economic development is high, however many believe that future development should be harmonious with the rural charm of the County. The community is also highly engaged, as seen by the tremendous response rate to the survey of 453 responses providing

1008 comments. Leveraging this interest and engagement will be crucial for successful economic development efforts to occur.

2. Lovingston is prime for revitalization and has the available infrastructure to support growth.
3. The southern portion of the study area is relatively unencumbered by steep slopes and has available parcels that could support development.
4. Approaching economic development from a regional perspective is increasingly important. Nelson County will have to compete for business attraction with other localities, leveraging regional support and assets will be key.
5. There is an existing strong agri-business/agri-tourism industry, especially along the Route 151 corridor, to build upon and support.
6. U.S. Route 29, a divided four-lane highway, provides direct access to Interstate 64
7. There is an extensive existing network of broadband fiber along Route 29.
8. There are very large single-owner sites south of Lovingston that provide an opportune parcel(s) for the County to pursue for site control.
9. The majority of the workforce commutes outside of the County for employment and is available to work within in the County and there is an opportunity for the County to promote its strategic location perfectly situated between two economic regions.

Strategies and Recommendations:

The broader key findings helped to inform the specific strategies and recommendations for Nelson County to undertake in order to meet its intended goal of guiding strategic economic development to the U.S. 29 Corridor. The chart below provides the basic framework, with more detail provided in the Strategies and Recommendations section of this plan.

TJPDC Recommendations	Timeline
STRATEGY 1: Actively participate with Regional Plan of GO Virginia	FY17-FY18
Maintain an Active Role and Participation with the Region 9 GO Virginia Council	FY18
BOS, Staff and Business engagement with the Regional Plan Development	FY18

Pursue 1 to 2 Large Sites to Work Toward Feasibility and Site Control for Commercial or Industrial Development as a Regional Economic Development Project with Partners from Region 9 and Region 2	FY18
Monitor Region 2 Activities for Regional Opportunities for Nelson	FY18
STRATEGY 2: Revitalize Downtown Lovingsston	FY18-FY20
Create a Revitalization Committee	FY18
Review 2006 Downtown Revitalization Plan	FY 18
Pursue Funding for Redevelopment	FY18
<i>TJPDC and Proposal</i>	FY18
<i>CDBG Planning Grant</i>	FY18
<i>Other</i>	FY18
Implement Plan	FY19-FY20
Pursue Capital Investments	FY19-FY20
Encouraging Private Reinvestment	FY19-FY20
STRATEGY 3: Pursue 3 to 4 Sites for Commercial/Industrial Development	FY19-FY21
Create a Property Development Committee consisting of County Staff and Consultants	FY19
Review Past Preliminary Engineering Report on Property	FY19
Pursue Control of the Property- at a Minimum, Evaluate an Option to Purchase	FY20
Conduct a Marketing Analysis/Plan for the Property and implement it	FY19-FY21
Pursue Capital Investments	FY19-FY21
STRATEGY 4: Promote Home-Based Occupation (Broadband)	FY19-FY20
Review Zoning Ordinance	FY19
Map Broadband Access Deficiencies	FY19
Develop Broadband Area of Need	FY19

Pursue Funding for Extending Fiber Network to Deficient Areas	FY20
STRATEGY 5: Update the County's Comprehensive Plan to Promote Home-Based Business and Industry	FY19-FY21
Develop a Project Scope	FY19
Conduct Plan Update	FY19-FY20
Complete Final Review and Approval of the Plan	FY20
Implement the Policies outlined in the Plan	FY21

Conclusion:

This executive summary includes the common findings of the TJPDC's corridor planning and 310 Ltd.'s report of economic development, marketing, and industry recruitment. The TJPDC was tasked with conducting an in-depth analysis of the corridor's current conditions, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The key findings from research and community input informed several of the final strategies recommended by the TJPDC and 310 Ltd. Both reports are included separately with common recommendations found in the executive summary.

This plan recognizes that the County has many assets and many strengths. While we are in challenging times, we have the opportunity to prosper and realize goals that will maintain the rural character of the area while simultaneously building a sustainable community economy. By thinking strategically, acting in concert and measuring our progress, and thinking both locally and regionally, the future economic development opportunities of Nelson County can indeed be bright.

Introduction

Formally established in 1807, Nelson County, Virginia is largely defined by its beautiful rural landscape – a place where the Blue Ridge Mountains form the western boundary and the James River forms the eastern boundary. Nelson County’s location in Central Virginia is approximately 30 miles south of Charlottesville and 30 miles north of Lynchburg. Connecting those two metropolitan areas, and running through the center of Nelson County, is U.S. Route 29.

Nelson County benefits from the connectivity provided by this four-lane divided highway – yet it still retains abundant natural heritage, authentic rural character, outstanding natural scenery, a unique sense of place, and numerous local attractions.

Nelson County is also the proud home of an entrepreneurial business community which has successfully utilized local assets to establish a place-based economy; including:

- **A thriving tourism economy**, which is primarily successful due to Nelson’s exceptional natural beauty, sweeping mountain vistas, and proximity to recreational amenities such as the Appalachian Trail as well as the entrances to the Blue Ridge Parkway and Shenandoah National Park/Skyline Drive;
- **A burgeoning craft beverage industry**, which includes award-winning craft breweries, vineyards and wineries, distilleries, and a certified organic coffee roaster and kombucha tea brewery;
- **The emerging special events and performing arts industries**, which have recently taken root in Nelson County and which have brought nationally- and internationally-acclaimed talent to our local farms and Blue Ridge foothills;
- **A long-standing resort industry**, with Wintergreen Resort located high on the crest of the Blue Ridge offering year-round adventure, escape, and events; and
- **An authentic and evolving agricultural legacy**, including orchards, vineyards, livestock, farming, and forestry – as well as a thriving agritourism zone (primarily located in the Rockfish Valley).

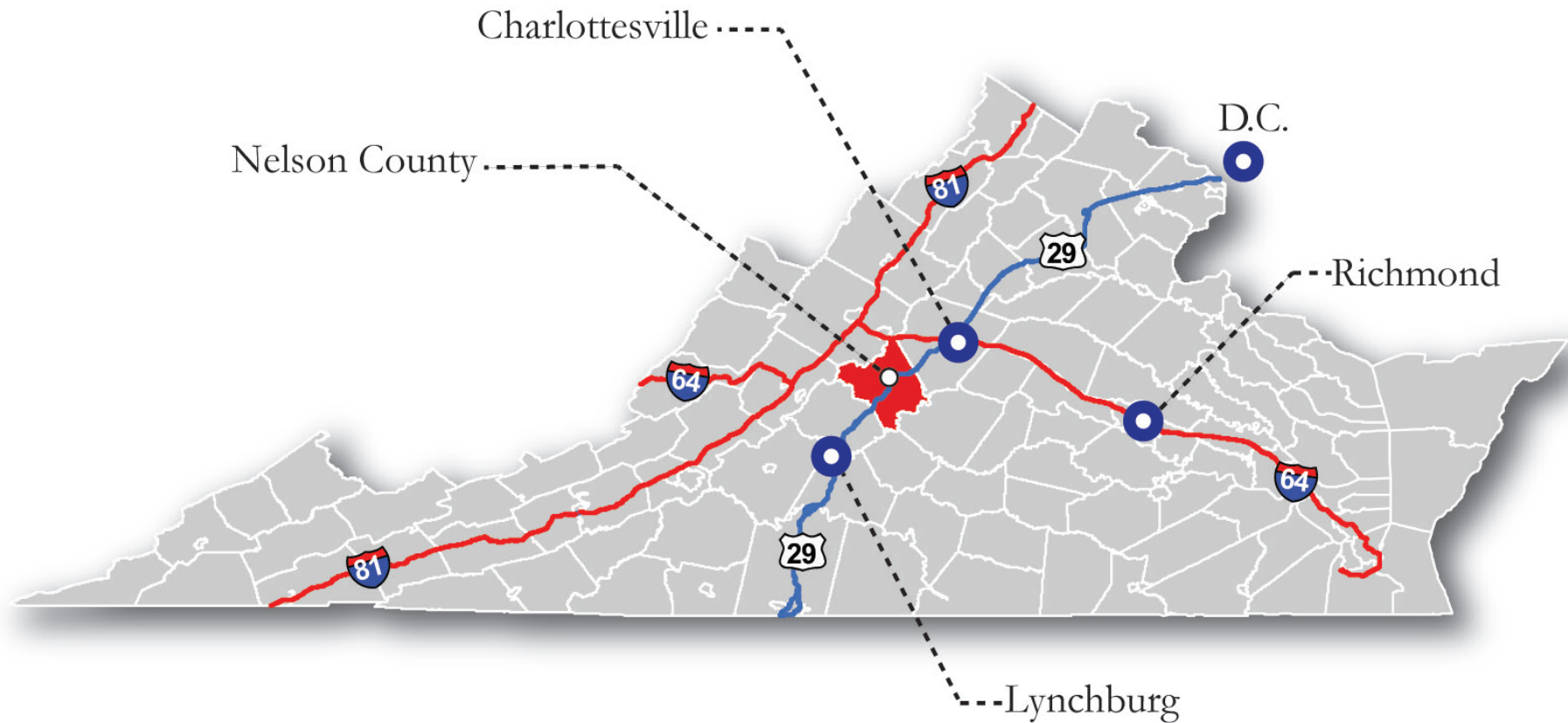
As growth and development continue, it is becoming increasingly important to guide economic development efforts into designated growth areas. This approach is most beneficial because it utilizes existing infrastructure and best preserves balance between land development and rural preservation. *Nelson County’s primary designated growth area is the Route 29 Corridor*, for the following reasons:

- the Route 29 Corridor contains water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure;
- the Route 29 Corridor contains a variety of zoning districts, including commercial, industrial, agricultural, and residential land use designations;
- the Route 29 Corridor is the location of public schools, the Nelson County Courthouse and local government complex, and the Lovingston Historic District; and
- the Route 29 Corridor provides direct access to Interstate 64, and to neighboring Charlottesville and Lynchburg, via a divided highway that is also designated a Virginia Scenic Byway.

U.S. Route 29 Corridor Quick Facts:

- U.S. Route 29 is a major north-south interstate highway which runs from Florida’s Gulf Coast to the Chesapeake Bay in Baltimore. This crucial transportation infrastructure facilitates the north-south movement of goods and people, serving as an opportune economic engine for the localities throughout the Piedmont region of the Southeastern U.S. Major metropolitan areas along Route 29 include Atlanta, Charlotte, and Washington D.C.
- Virginia contains a total of 248 miles of U.S. Route 29, connecting Danville in Virginia’s Southside region and Washington, D.C. in the nation’s Capital region. In between, Route 29 passes through Lynchburg, Charlottesville, and Fairfax.
- The Commonwealth of Virginia has designated Route 29 a “Corridor of Statewide Significance” which results in additional resources and funding advantages over other transportation corridors.
- Nelson County contains a total of 21 miles of Route 29, which pass through the areas of Colleen, Lovingston, and Woods Mill – and which provides a direct connection to the neighboring communities of Lynchburg and Charlottesville.

- In Nelson County, Route 29 is locally named the “Thomas Nelson Highway” in honor of Thomas Nelson Jr. who was one of the U.S. Founding Fathers and Virginia’s fourth Governor.
- The Commonwealth of Virginia has designated a portion of Route 29 in Nelson County as a Virginia Scenic Byway.
- The “Future Land Use Plan” in the Nelson County Comprehensive Plan identifies multiple areas along the Route 29 corridor as designated growth areas which support appropriate commercial, industrial, residential, and civic land uses. Other stretches of the Route 29 corridor are identified as areas where rural preservation is the priority.



Nelson County's location along the U.S. 29 Corridor

Historical Narrative

Early History

The forested mountains, narrow coves, and river bottoms located in what is now Nelson County have long been productive agricultural areas and fertile hunting grounds. The Monacan Indians (and other tribes) were present when American Colonial settlement began in the early 17th century. Historical patterns of development have been almost entirely constrained to locations along river bottoms and stream valleys; and even now, Nelson County's mountainous terrain has a limiting influence on the amount and location of areas which are suitable for development.

Local economic activity in the Route 29 corridor has traditionally been comprised of agriculture and forestry. In the 19th and 20th centuries, orchards (primarily apples) and timber/lumber were a major component of the local agricultural industry and local economy. Distribution of local agricultural products was greatly enhanced by the construction of railroads, two of which are still active to this day: one along the James River (operated by CSX) and another through the Blue Ridge foothills near Route 29 (operated by Norfolk Southern and containing Amtrak passenger services). These railroads supported numerous small communities along the lines which typically contained a cold storage facility, supporting services, and other commercial and civic uses. Examples of such railroad villages in Nelson County include Arrington, Shipman, and Piney River. Historically, the economic and civic hub of Nelson County has been the village of Lovingson – the County seat which is centrally located in a scenic mountain valley along Thomas Nelson Highway. The village is a designated Historic District and contains the County Courthouse and local government complex.

Recent History

Route 29 was originally constructed in the 1930's as a two-lane country highway, and was reconstructed and expanded to a four-lane divided highway in the 1960's and 1970's. This era of expansion included the construction of a highway bypass around the village of Lovingson, which resulted in Front Street being re-designated as "Route 29 Business."



Vintage postcard of downtown Lovingson. Image: usgswararchives.net

Currently, the only traffic light in Nelson County is located on Route 29 in Lovingson at the intersection with Front St. / Route 29B.

In August 1969, Hurricane Camille originated in the Gulf Coast and stalled over the Blue Ridge Mountains, producing extreme rainfall, severe flash flooding, and catastrophic erosion in several areas of Nelson County. Some of the areas hardest hit by this "thousand year storm" are located within the Route 29 corridor – including Lovingson, Davis Creek, and Woods Mill. While natural disasters are unavoidable, Nelson County has taken precautionary measures to mitigate or avoid such impacts by adopting a strict floodplain ordinance that provides zoning overlay protection to our waterways and surrounding riparian areas – and which restricts the dangerous or otherwise inappropriate siting of structures and infrastructure.

More recently, Nelson County has undertaken numerous major infrastructure projects within the Route 29 corridor. The following is a brief summary of such projects within the past 20 years:

- The Nelson County Service Authority (NCSA), which operates and maintains public water and sewer utilities within the Route 29 corridor, has:

- upgraded and expanded the water supply and water treatment systems for improved services to Colleen, Lovingston, Shipman, and Piney River;
 - completed the provision of water and sewer services to two new public schools located on Route 29; and
 - co-led the creation of the Colleen Business Park, which required \$6.15 million in capital

- Nelson County constructed two public schools on Thomas Nelson Highway: the Tye River Elementary School opened in 1995, and the new Nelson County High School and Middle School opened in 2003.
- The Nelson County Board of Supervisors and NCSA joined with the Central Virginia Electric Cooperative (CVEC) in 1998 to develop the Colleen Business Park. This major public-private partnership project, which was made possible by local and state assistance, included provision of water and utility services for the park as well as the construction of an industrial access road connecting to Route 29. The project also included the placement of water and sewer lines along the four-mile stretch of Route 29 between Lovingston and Colleen, as well as the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant in Colleen. The Colleen Business Park now contains CVEC, NCSA, Blue Mountain Barrel House, and California Sidecar – and with the recent acceptance of Trager Brothers Coffee, the park is now fully leased.
- The Nelson County Broadband Project has successfully provided a major infrastructure asset which distinguishes Nelson County from other rural communities. Two major phases of the Broadband Project have been completed by Nelson County:

1. The initial phase included the design and construction of a combined fiber-optic and wireless “middle mile” network. Completed in 2013, this established a high-speed network backbone through Nelson County – including 31 miles of fiber-optic cable and four communication towers from Afton in the north to Colleen in the south. This state of the art infrastructure provides a ‘highway’ for

private service providers to enhance and expand broadband internet services into un-served and under-served areas of our county. The network backbone is located along Route 29 between Colleen and Woods Mill (and continues along Route 6 into the Rockfish Valley).

2. A second phase was designed to establish an additional 8.1 miles of “last mile” fiber-optic cable along the Route 151 corridor in the Rockfish Valley. Completed in 2016, this second phase extended the network along Route 151 from the intersection with Route 664 (Beech Grove) to the Albemarle County line (Afton). This broadband network expansion also includes the installation of fiber-optic cable along a short portion of Route 6 (Afton Mountain Road).

Future Growth Along Nelson’s Route 29 Corridor:

Looking forward, Lovingston and the entire Route 29 corridor represent Nelson County’s most promising opportunity for growth and development, as this area:

- contains previously-developed areas with access to water, sewer, and broadband fiber utilities;
- has connection to a four-lane divided highway with direct access to Charlottesville and Lynchburg;
- is designated for future growth and a mix of land uses, and contains relatively flat land which is generally more suitable for development.

To best achieve local economic prosperity, Nelson County is a partner locality of the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development since 1995. CVPED (Partnership) represents nine local governments located on or near U.S. Route 29 from Nelson County in the south to Culpeper County in the north, and helps to create new jobs and attract new investment in Central Virginia. Local services provided by the Partnership include the Central Virginia Small Business Development Center and Piedmont Workforce Network.

Recently, the Virginia Growth and Opportunity Initiative was formed by the Virginia General Assembly in 2016; this initiative established a slightly broader economic region for public-private economic initiatives. Nelson County is within a new Virginia GO region which includes the original CVPED region, plus Fauquier County and Rappahannock County in Virginia’s Tidewater region.

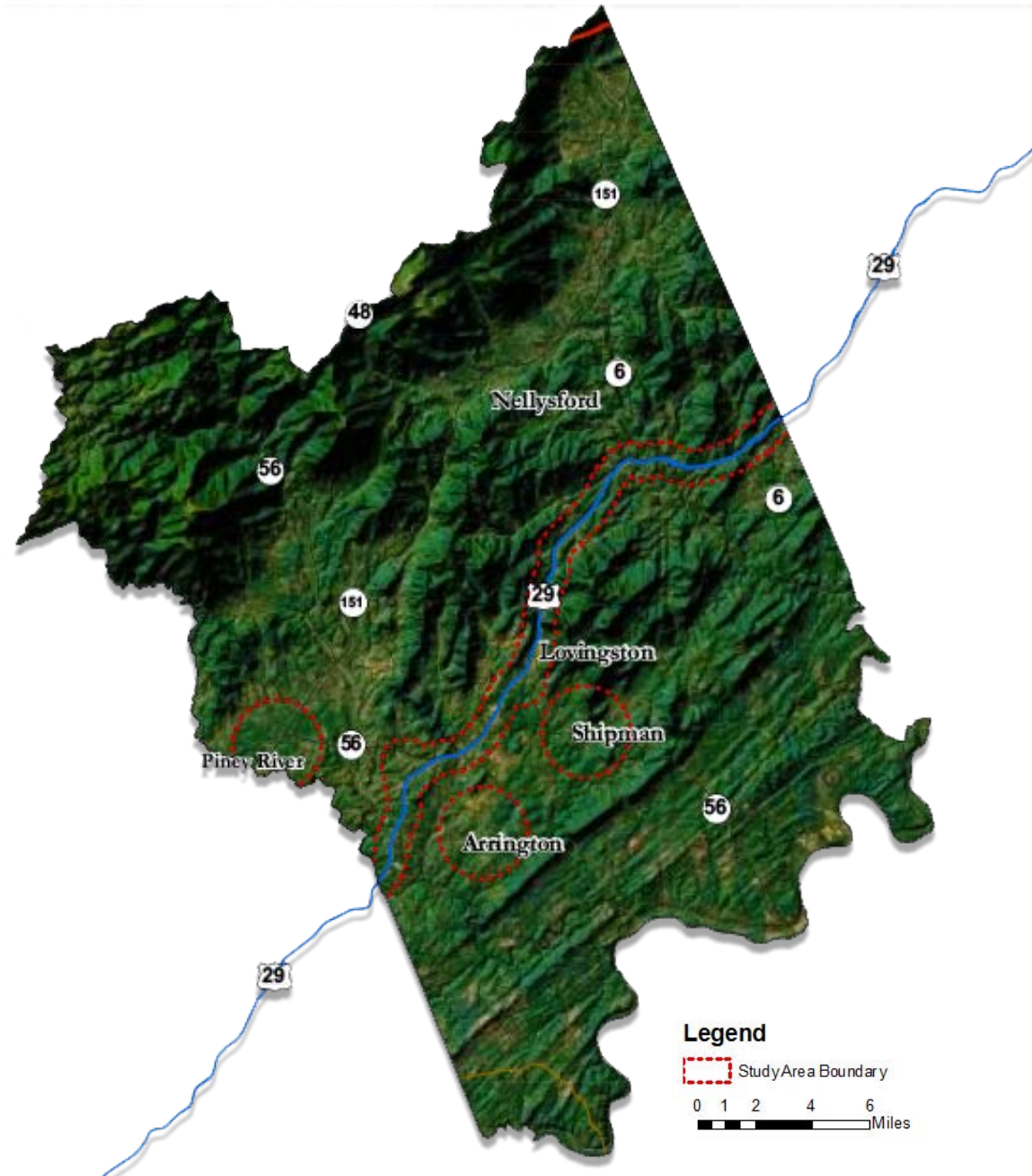
The Study Area

One of the first steps in the planning process was to define the boundaries of the study area. To do this, the TJPDC developed an initial methodology that was presented to members of the advisory group. Based on feedback received from those working group meetings, the study area boundaries were revised. It was decided early on that the towns of Shipman, Arrington, and Piney River were to be included in addition to Lovingston. These areas were included due to their close proximity to the corridor. With those parameters in mind, a half-mile buffer was created along the 21-mile section of the U.S. 29 corridor that passes through Nelson County from the Amherst County line to the Albemarle County line. The result of the half-mile buffer and the inclusion of the aforementioned towns resulted in the final boundary map to the right.

The defined boundaries helped guide the analysis of this project by focusing study efforts to this location. However, as this project progressed, it was decided that certain data analysis efforts would look at the County as a whole, and not be constrained to the initial study area. This included looking at potential developable parcels for industry attraction and site distances to I-64.

Study Area Quick Facts:

- **Study Area Size: 42.5 square miles**
- **483 businesses within study area**
- **Major employers include: Central Virginia Electric Co-op, California Sidecar, and Food Lion**
- **21 miles of U.S. 29 pass through the study area**



Map showing the Nelson 29 Corridor study area boundaries

Current Conditions Analysis

Gaining a better understanding of the current conditions that exist in Nelson County, and specifically within the study area, is a crucial step in the planning process. In order to thoroughly comprehend where Nelson County is presently, the project team analyzed the existing conditions using a six-pronged approach by reviewing current land use and zoning, transportation infrastructure and facilities, environmental resources, utility infrastructure, community demographics, and finally, cultural and historic resources.

The current land use component reviewed the present zoning designations established with the adoption of the 1977 zoning map.

The transportation facility analysis included the review and mapping of a number of different data metrics, such as:

- JAUNT routes in the County and the location of park and ride lots
- The average annual daily traffic volumes on U.S. 29 and routes 56 and 6
- The percentage of that traffic that is truck traffic
- Crash data highlighting safety hotspots along U.S. 29 were mapped, but were not included in this plan.

Analyzing environmental resources involved review and mapping of:

- Steep slopes with a grade greater than 25%
- The 100 year flood plain
- Lands in conservation and easement
- Wetlands and water bodies

Utility availability involved mapping:

- The location of communication towers
- The existing broadband fiber network
- Areas with access to public water and sewer

Community demographics looked at a number of data variables including:

- Median household income
- Assessed tax values per acre
- Median age
- Educational attainment

The cultural and historic resources component mapped:

- Locations of sites identified by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Current Land Use

Transportation Facilities

Environmental Resources

Utility Availability

Community Demographics

Cultural & Historic Resources

Potential Development Sites

Total Study Area Acreage by Zoning Type:

This graphic shows the breakdown of the amount of land within the study area that falls into each zoning category.

Agricultural District

A-1 accommodates farming, forestry, and limited residential use. While it is recognized that certain desirable rural areas may logically be expected to develop residentially, it is the intent, however, to discourage the random scattering of residential, commercial, or industrial uses in this district.

Approximately 29,900 Acres (71% of total acreage)

B-1 Business District

This district covers that part of the community intended for the conduct of general business to which the public requires direct and frequent access, but which is not characterized by constant heavy trucking other than stocking and delivery of retail goods, or by nuisance factors other than occasioned by incidental light and noise of congregation of people and passenger vehicles.

321 Acres (.7% of total acreage)

B-2 Business District

Generally, this district is intended to provide for commercial uses, which by nature of their associated traffic, noise production or lighting are less disruptive than those uses provided for in B-1.

21 Acres (.05% of total acreage)

SE-1 Service Enterprise District

This district is designed to allow limited service-oriented commercial uses not in conflict with the low-density appearance and quiet, rural atmosphere. It is anticipated that the zone shall consist of mixed agricultural, residential and service-oriented commercial uses in an overall atmosphere maintaining a low-density appearance and rural quality of life.

6.5 Acres (.015% of total acreage)

R-1 Residential

This district is composed of certain quiet, low density rural residential areas where similar residential development appears likely to occur.

1,106 Acres (2.6% of total acreage)

R-2 Residential

This district is composed of certain quiet, medium density residential areas plus certain open areas where similar residential development appears likely to occur and where public water and/or sewer service is available.

149 Acres (.35% of total acreage)

RPC Res Planned Community

This district is intended to permit development in accordance with a master plan thereof of cluster-type communities containing not less than three thousand contiguous acres under one ownership or control, in a manner that will protect and preserve the natural resources, trees, watershed, contours and topographic features of the land, protect and enhance the natural scenic beauty and permit the greatest amount of recreational facilities by leaving as permanent open area not less than twenty-five (25) percent of the total acreage.

None present in study area

C-1 Conservation District

This district covers portions of the County which are occupied by various open spaces such as steep slopes, forests, parks, farms, marshland, lakes or stream valleys. This district is established for the specific purpose of facilitating existing and future farming operations, conserving water and other natural resources, reducing soil erosion, protecting watersheds, reducing hazards from flood and fire and preserving wildlife areas of the County

None present in study area

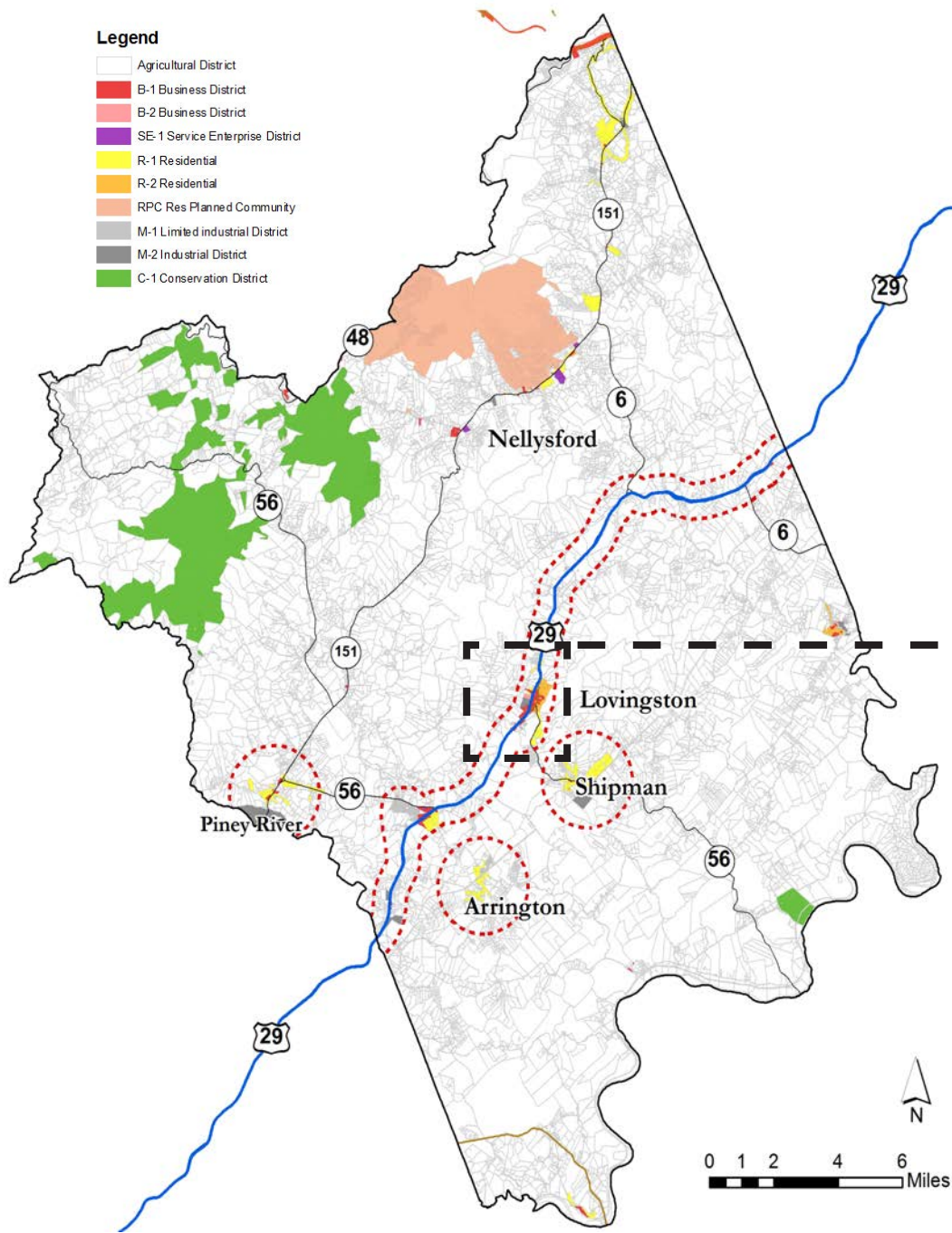
M-1 Limited Industrial District

M-2 Industrial District

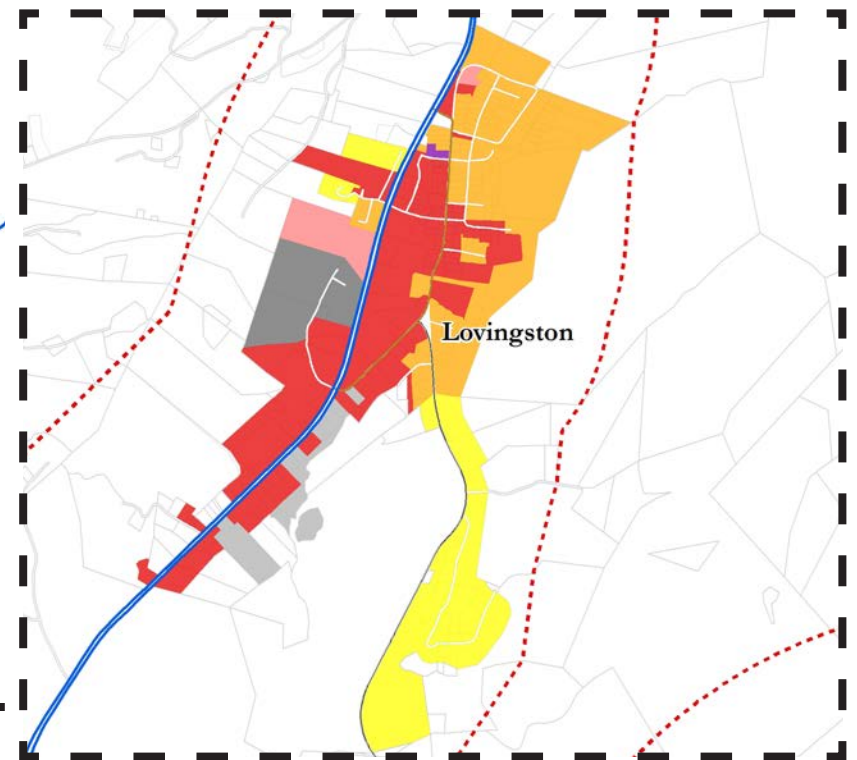
This district is established primarily for industrial operations and for heavy commercial operations, which may create some nuisance, and which are not particularly compatible with residential, institutional, or retail commercial uses.

298 Acres (.7% of total acreage)

538 Acres (1.3% of total acreage)



Map showing Nelson County's current zoning



Inset of Lovington zoning

Current County Zoning:

The current Nelson County zoning map (pictured left) was adopted in 1977 illustrates the legally-binding local regulations that dictate what is and is not permissible within the zoned parcels. The zoning categories can be seen in the legend of the zoning map. Zoning is used as a tool to regulate land uses and provide a comprehensive approach to area planning.

The vast majority of the U.S. 29 Corridor is zoned A-1 Agricultural, which allows for a large and variety number of permissible uses beyond what may traditionally be thought of as agriculture, such as residential units. Lovington is the exception, and includes a variety of zoning designations, primarily B-1 Business and R-2 Residential.

Transportation Facilities:

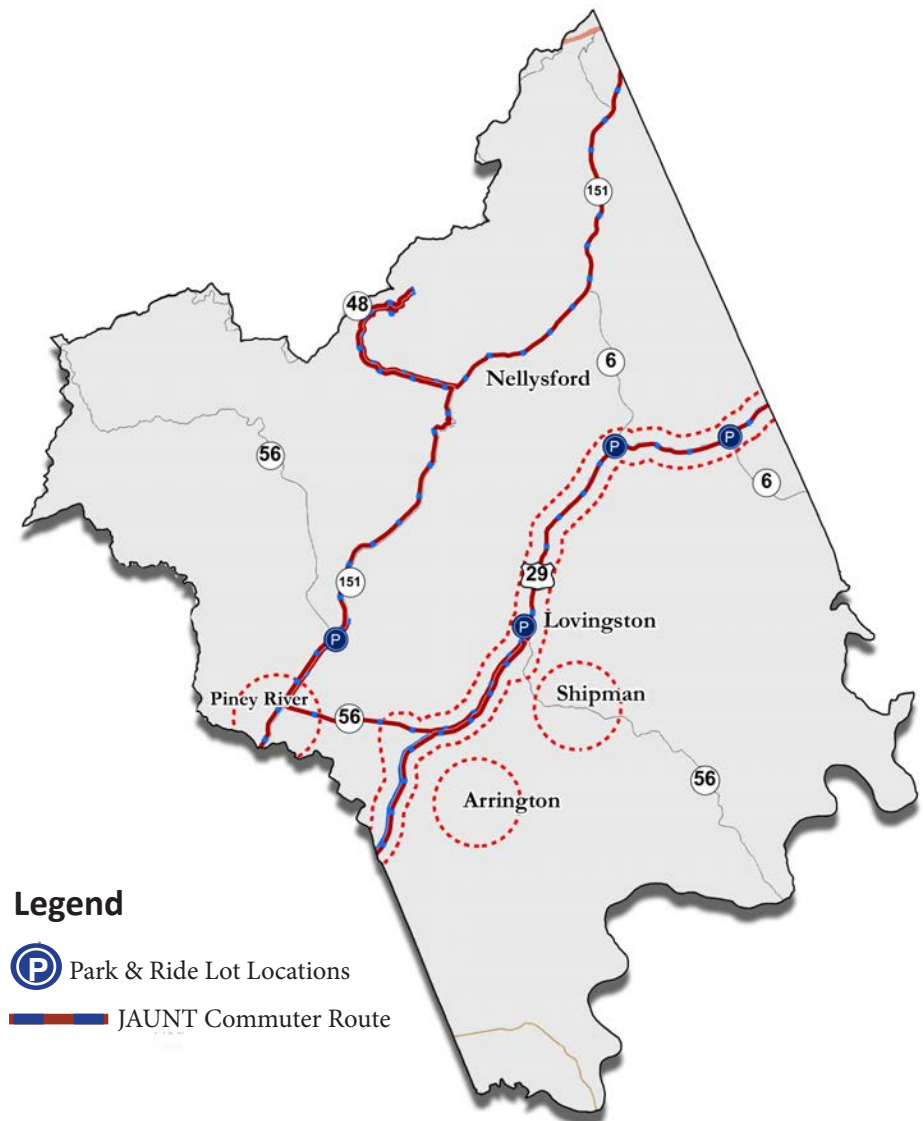
An efficient and safe transportation system is essential to the free flow of people and goods within and through Nelson County. The transportation network provides a crucial link to the metropolitan areas of Charlottesville and Lynchburg. Several planning studies conducted by VDOT have examined both 151 and U.S. 29 in great detail, identifying safety hot spots, recommending improvements, and providing a framework for secondary streets and complete networks. In addition to VDOT's studies, the TJPDC's Rural Long Range Transportation Plan identifies transportation projects in the rural localities.

In order to assess the current transportation facilities in the County, the project team reviewed relevant data provided by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). The major focus of the analysis centered on the U.S. 29 Corridor, but routes 6 and 56 were included due to their close proximity. Factors examined included identifying the location of park and ride lots and commuter services routes, analyzing the average annual daily traffic volumes, and identifying the percentage of the traffic volume that are heavy vehicles. A safety hot spot analysis was also conducted that identified areas along U.S. 29 with high numbers of serious crashes.

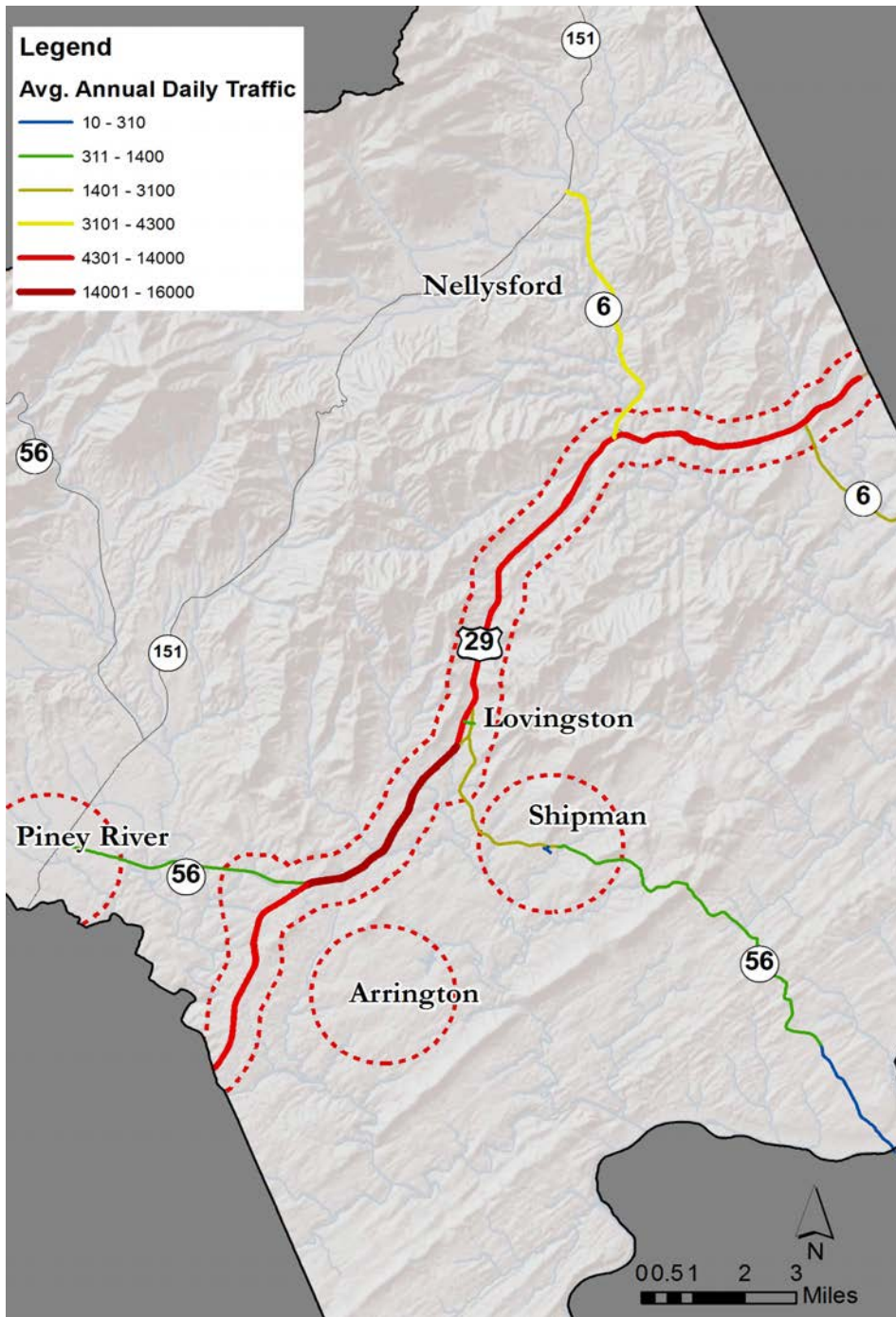
Providing various forms of transportation mode choice beyond the automobile helps improve the efficiency and accessibility of the transportation network. There are four park and ride lot locations throughout Nelson County, primarily along U.S. 29. These lots provide commuters with option of carpooling. JAUNT, a regional transit service, also operates several commuter routes in Nelson, including the Lovingson Express Route, the Roseland Route, and the Wintergreen Employment Route. The majority of JAUNT's commuter routes can be accessed at the Park and Ride lot locations.

Average annual daily traffic (AADT) is a measure used to assess average traffic volumes and congestion along the transportation network. The map on the following page reveals that the stretch of

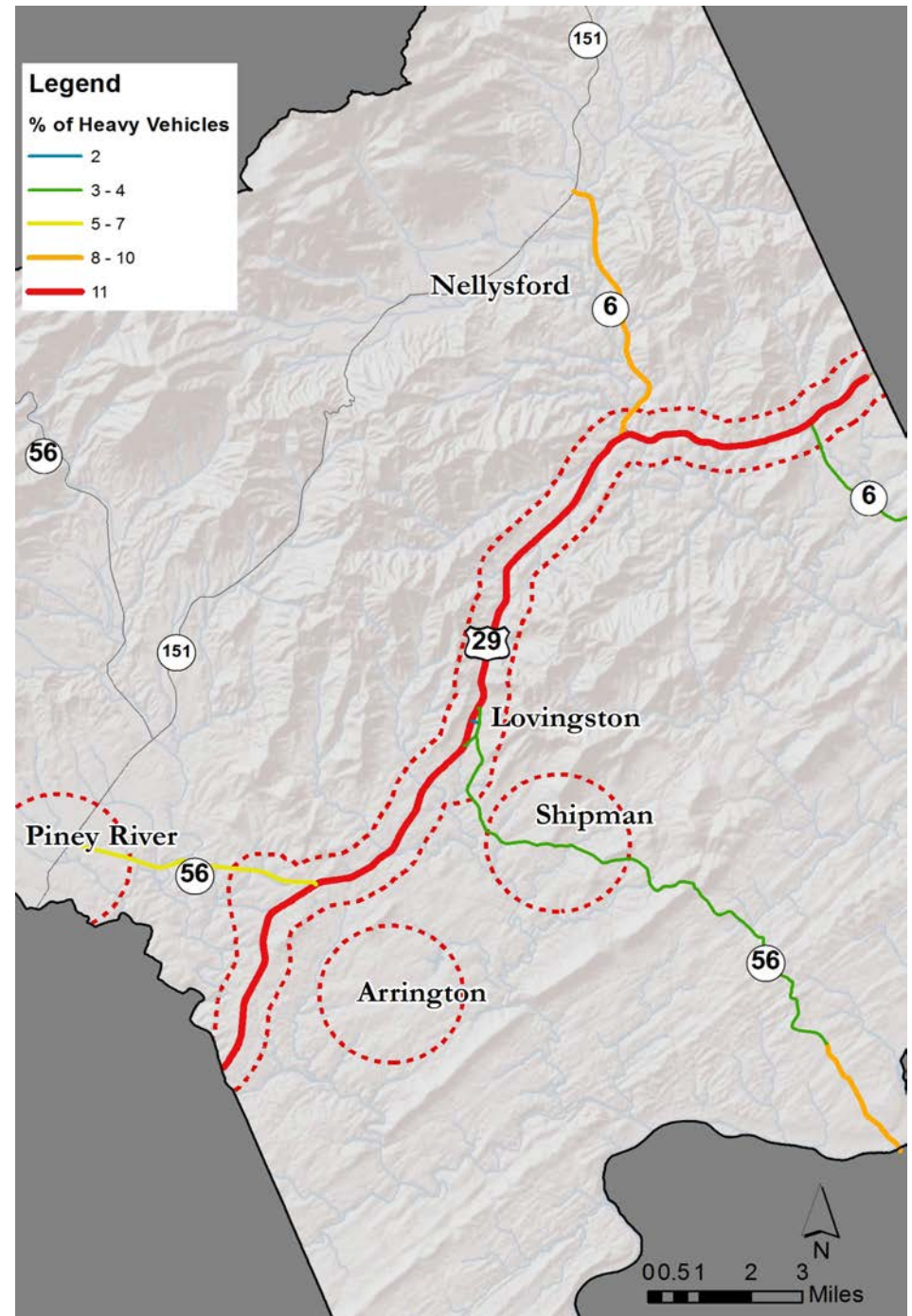
U.S. 29 between Lovingson and Arrington has the highest levels of average daily traffic volumes, at 14,000-16,000 vehicles per day. The same data set used to measure AADT is also capable of identifying what percentage of traffic volumes are heavy vehicles, such as trucks. The map on the following page reveals that all of U.S. 29 in Nelson County falls within the 11% category. Route 6 and portions of Route 56 fall into the 8-10% category.



Map showing JAUNT commuter routes and Park & Ride lots



Map showing average daily traffic volumes (2014 VDOT data)



Map showing the percentage of traffic that is trucks (2014 VDOT data)

Environmental Resources:

Long known to its residents, Nelson County is renowned for its natural and scenic beauty. Increasingly, this pristine rural character has become a draw for vacationers, retirees, and tourists wishing to experience the area's abundant outdoor recreational amenities. Residents and visitors place value on having access to these amenities and the rural heritage that Nelson County has become synonymous with. While there is little conservation land designated in the study area, vast natural resources abound. In an effort to visualize the environmental resources present in the study area, in Nelson County as a whole, and to better understand what constraints these environmental resources have on future growth, the project team mapped key environmental features.

The first map on the following page maps steep slopes, those with a grade greater than 25%. This visually represents land that may not be suitable for future development, given that preparing a site would require considerable expense. Most of the land in the study area south of Lovingston is relatively flat and is unencumbered by steep slopes, making it more suitable for future growth. Areas of the U.S. 29 corridor north of Lovingston are far more mountainous.

The second map depicts environmental resources in all of Nelson County. These include:

- Bodies of water (rivers and streams)
- Wetlands
- Lands held in conservation
- Conservation easements
- The 100 year flood plain

Several wetland habitats are scattered throughout the study area, most of which are in close proximity to the two main water bodies that cross U.S. 29, the Rockfish River and Dillard Creek.

Study Area Environmental Resources Quick Facts:

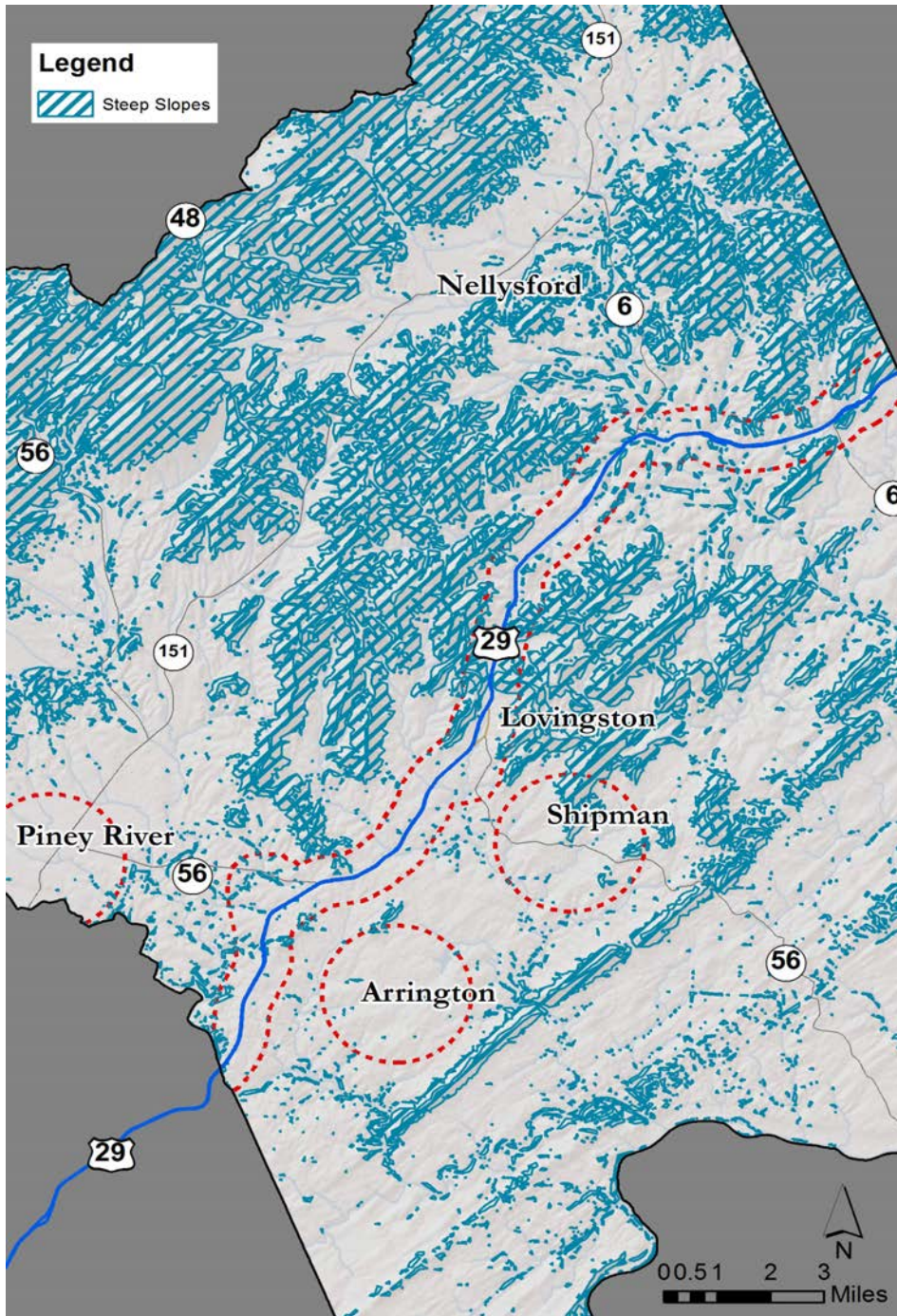
- 57 total miles of streams
- 1,193 acres of land are located within the 100 year flood plain
- 1,009 acres of wetlands
- 567 acres of land in easement



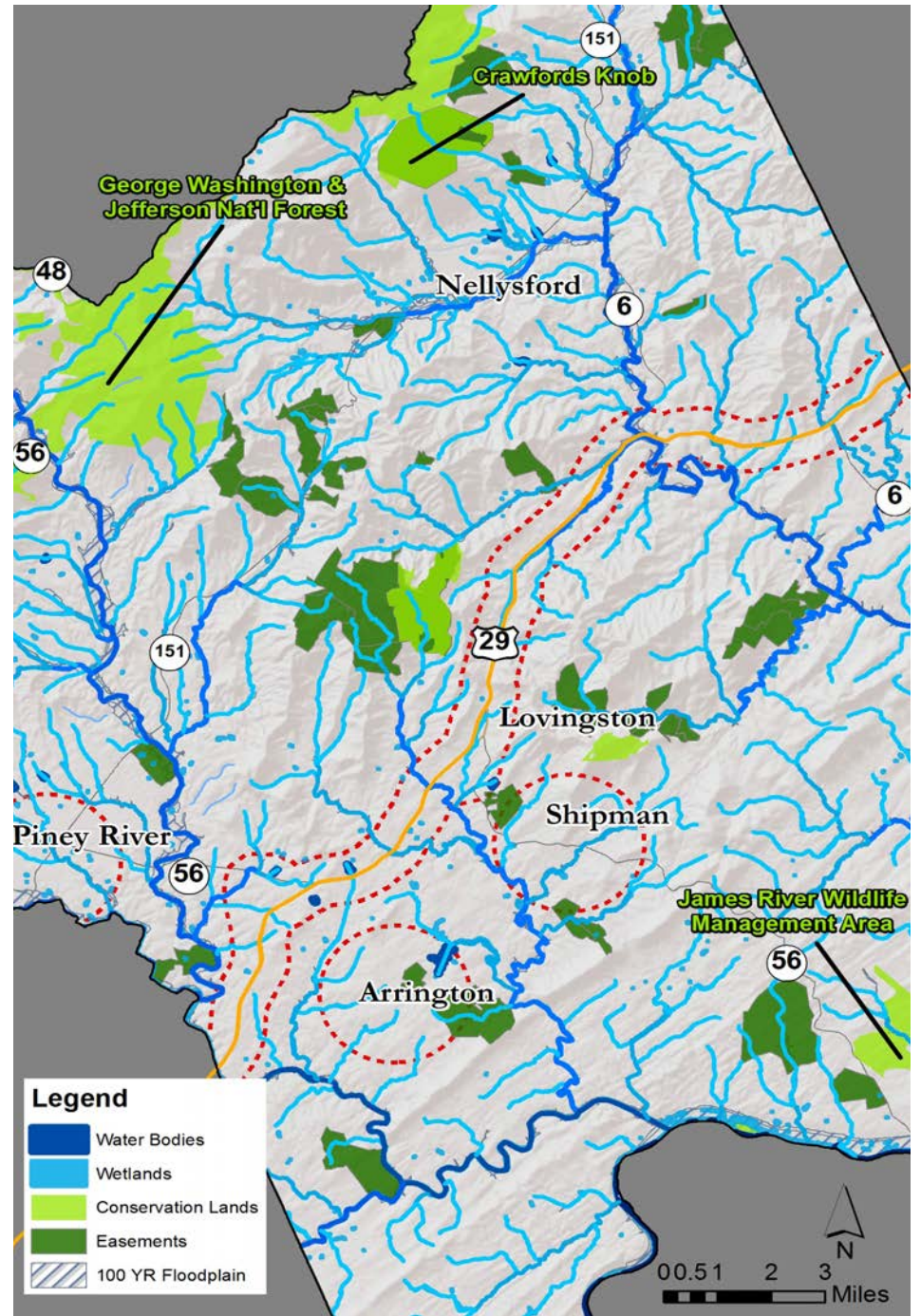
57 miles of streams and rivers are located within the study area



Scenic vistas of Nelson's unique natural beauty abound



Map showing slopes with a grade greater than 25%



Map showing environmental constraints

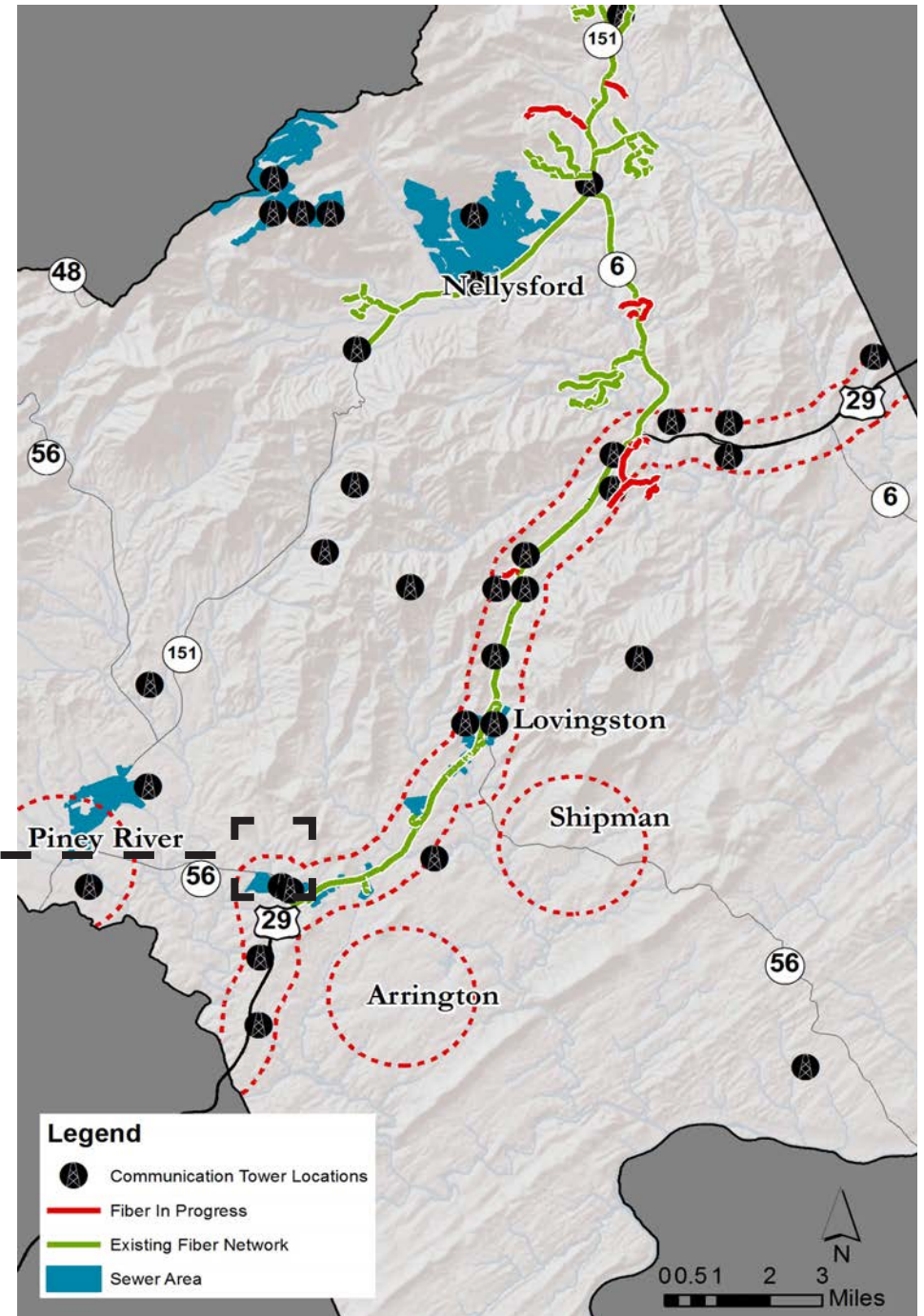
Utility Availability:

Utility infrastructure forms a crucial foundation for Nelson County's business and residential communities and the availability and capacity of this infrastructure can play a key role in business location decision making. It is essential that Nelson County's utility suppliers provide consistent, reliable, and affordable service. The map to the right shows the locations of the fiber optic broadband network, communication towers, and sewer service authority in Nelson. The broadband spine extends from route 6 down U.S. 29 to route 56 and along route 151 from Afton to Nellysford. Sewer service availability is concentrated in the developed and most populous portions of the County, including Lovingsion, Nellysford, Stoney Creek, Winter Green, and Piney River. A brief overview of the presently available infrastructure follows.



Water and Sewer System:

- *Lovingsion Water System*- The Lovingsion water system consists of six drilled wells, a booster pump station, four storage tanks, roughly 180 fire hydrants and approximately 476 connections and connects the communities of Shipman, Lovingsion, Colleen, and Piney River.



Map showing utility availability

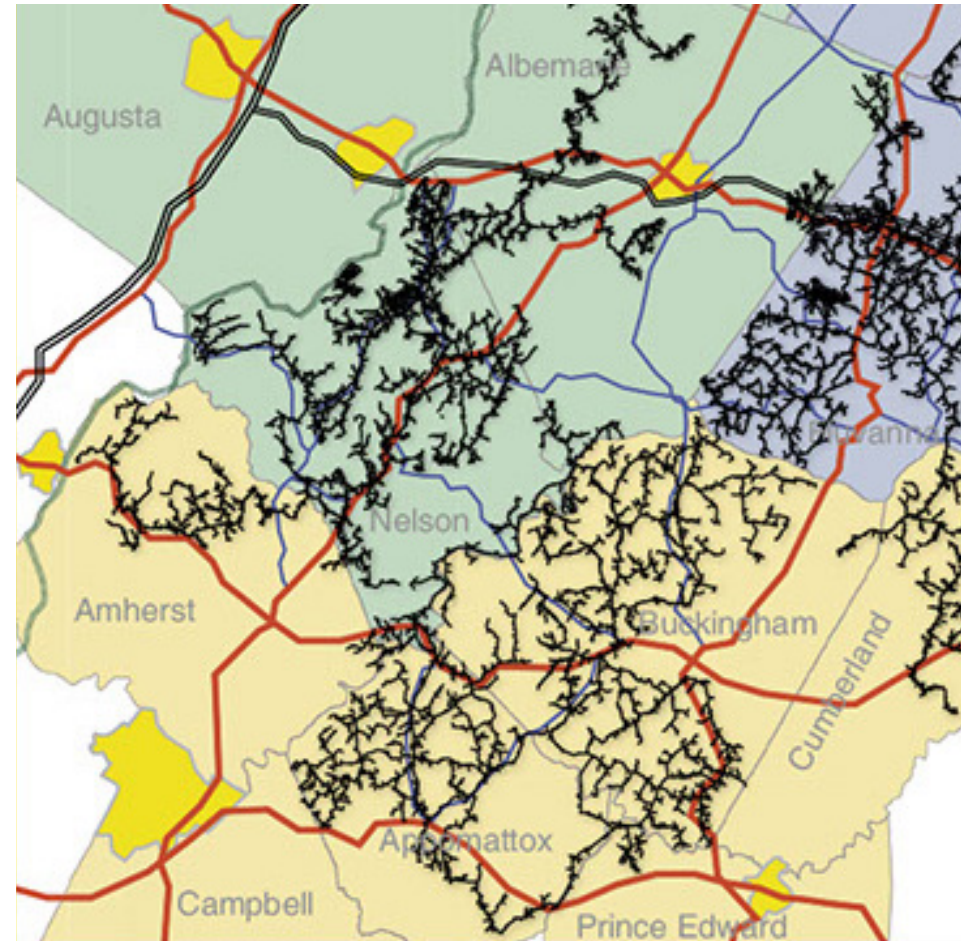
- *Lovingston Sewer System*- The Lovingston sewer system consists of gravity sewer that serves the residents and businesses along U.S. 29. The present system has approximately 265 connections
- *Nelson County Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility*- Opened in 1999, the regional plant includes two sequential bath reactor tanks, an influent pump station, a grit removal system, equalization tank, sand filtration, a chlorination/dechlorination system and tank, post aeration, a sludge holding tank, septage receiving station, a chemical and filter building, and a laboratory and maintenance building.
- *Black Creek Water Treatment Plant*- Constructed in 2005, the treatment plant is 5.6 acres in size and holds approximately 14 million gallons of raw water with a permitted withdraw of 231,000 gallons per day. The treatment plant consists of chemical treatment, adsorption clarifier and mixed media filtration.

Broadband:

The Nelson County broadband network consists of four towers and 39 miles of middle mile network and broadband fiber optics. The broadband network owned by Nelson County is administered by the Nelson County Broadband Authority, and is an open access network that enables competition from the private sector. The Broadband Authority charges local access rates to providers to use the network to connect customers. Local service providers include Nelson Cable, SCS Broadband Internet, and Ting Internet.

Electricity:

Founded in 1937, the Central Virginia Electric Cooperative (CVEC) is the primary electric service provider for Nelson County and 13 other Central Virginia Counties and operates on a non-profit basis. The cooperative currently serves 8,826 accounts in Nelson County. The map to the right, provided by CVEC, shows the location of lines within the County.



Map showing CVEC Lines in the Region. Map courtesy of CVEC

Community Demographics:

Demographic characteristics and trends are an important component in this analysis. Analyzing the trends and current conditions provides a snapshot of key variables that have an impact on a community's ability to attract and retain new business. This evaluation focuses on population change, educational attainment levels, median household incomes county-wide, and the tax assessed value of parcels specific to the study area.

Population Change:

The following 2016 population estimates were calculated by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service Demographics Research Group:

	2010 Census	2016 Estimate	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Virginia	8,001,024	8,411,808	410,784	5.10%
Region	234,712	249,855	15,143	6.45%
Nelson	15,020	14,835	-185	-1.20%

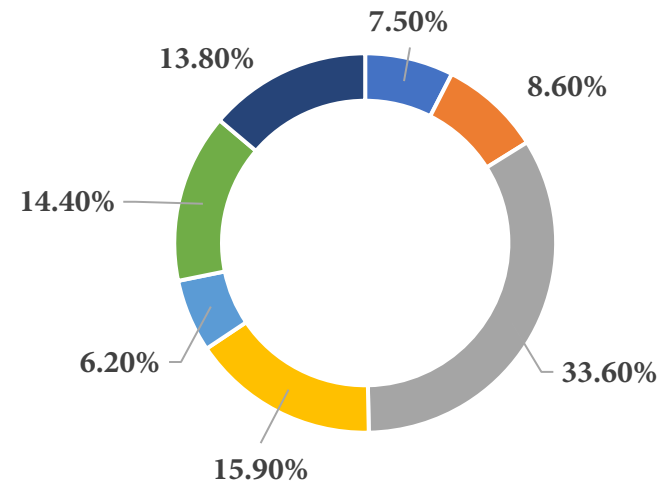
Nelson has experienced a slight decrease (-1.2%) in population in the past six years, while the region as a whole has seen an increase of 6.45%. College-aged residents leave to seek education and employment opportunities outside of the County and their replacement rate (new people relocating to Nelson, new births) has not kept pace.

Educational Attainment:

Slightly less than 34% of the population holds a high school diploma or its equivalent, 15.9% have some college but not degree, 6.2% hold an Associates degree, and 14.4% hold a Bachelor's degree. Nelson (28.2%) has a slightly lower percentage of the population holding a Bachelor's degree or higher than the regional population (32.7%). A skilled workforce is essential for business attraction, and Nelson's lower percentages of the population that have a college degree may be a detractor.

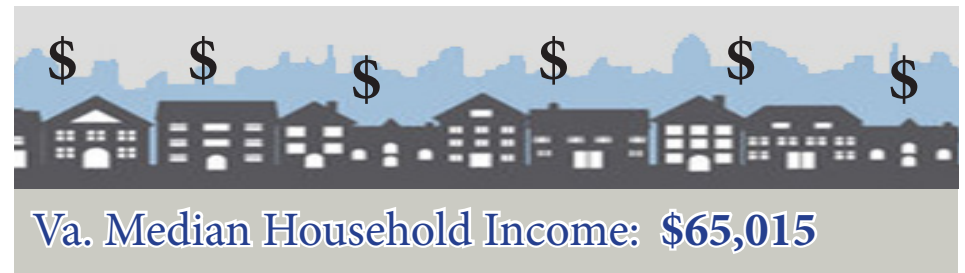
Median Household Income:

Nelson County's median household income is roughly \$12,500 less than that of the region, which includes the counties of Albemarle, Greene, Louisa, and Fluvanna and the City of Charlottesville, and around \$18,000 below the State's median household income.

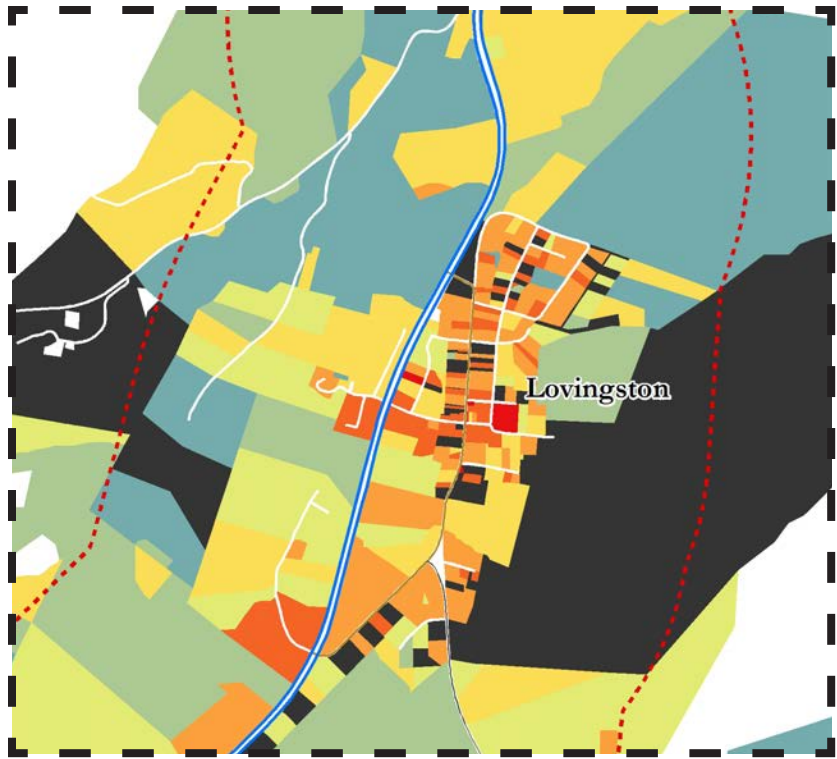


- Less than 9th grade
- 9th-12th (no diploma)
- High School graduate
- Some college, no degree
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate or professional degree

Educational attainment levels for Nelson residents over the age of 25



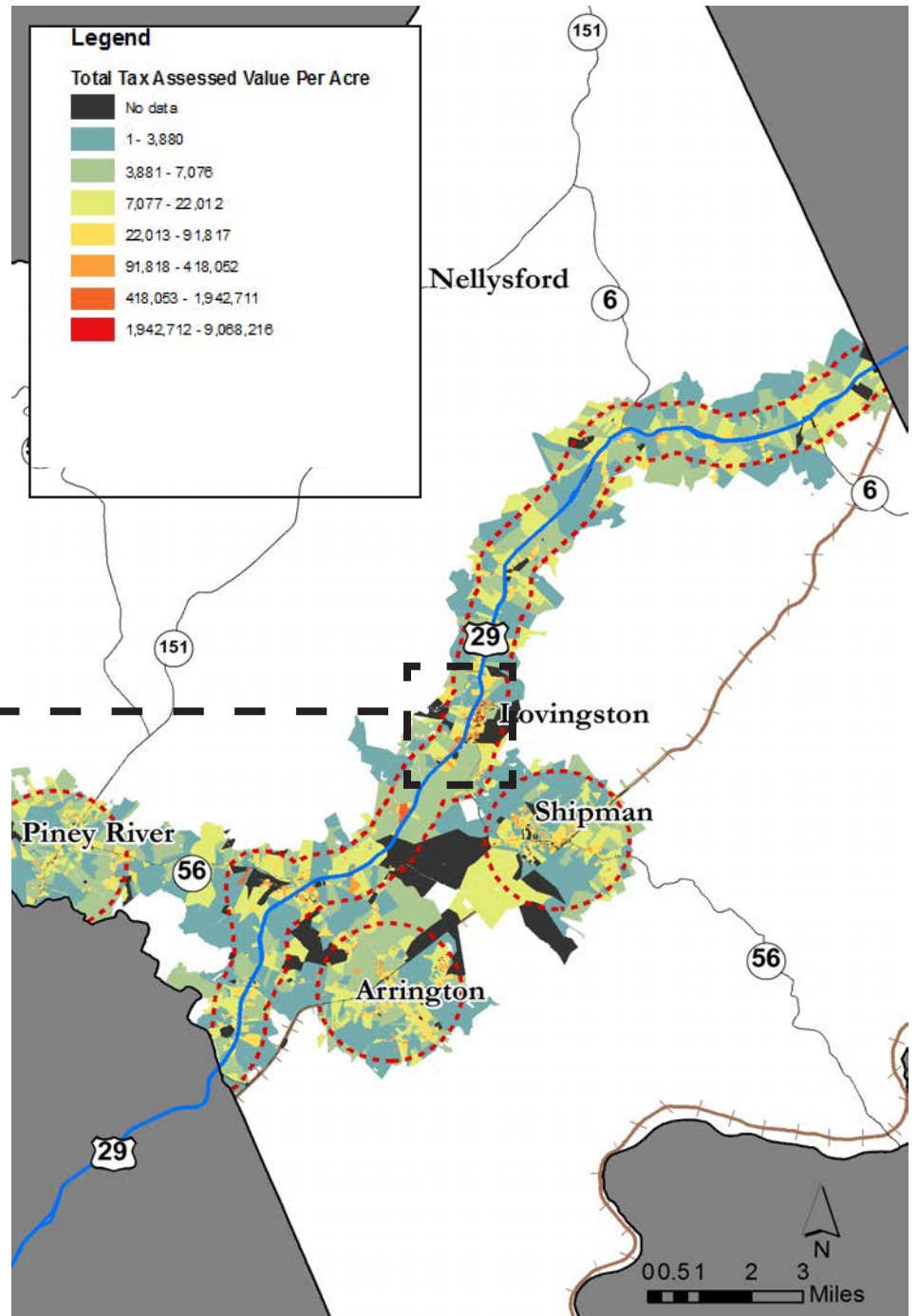
Median household incomes in Nelson, the region, and Virginia



Inset of Lovington tax values

Tax Assessed Value:

The map highlights the distribution of real estate values in the 29 corridor. The map illustrates the total taxable real estate as a value per acre of land. This value includes both the underlying land value and the value of improvements, such as dwellings and other structures. The data was sourced from the Nelson County Commissioner of Revenue and proceeded by Timmons Group. Note: Data is not available for every parcel and does not necessarily represent a taxable value of real estate due to factors including land use valuation, and other exemptions. Data was sourced from the Assessor Records in 2016.



Tax assessed value per acre

Cultural and Historic Resources:

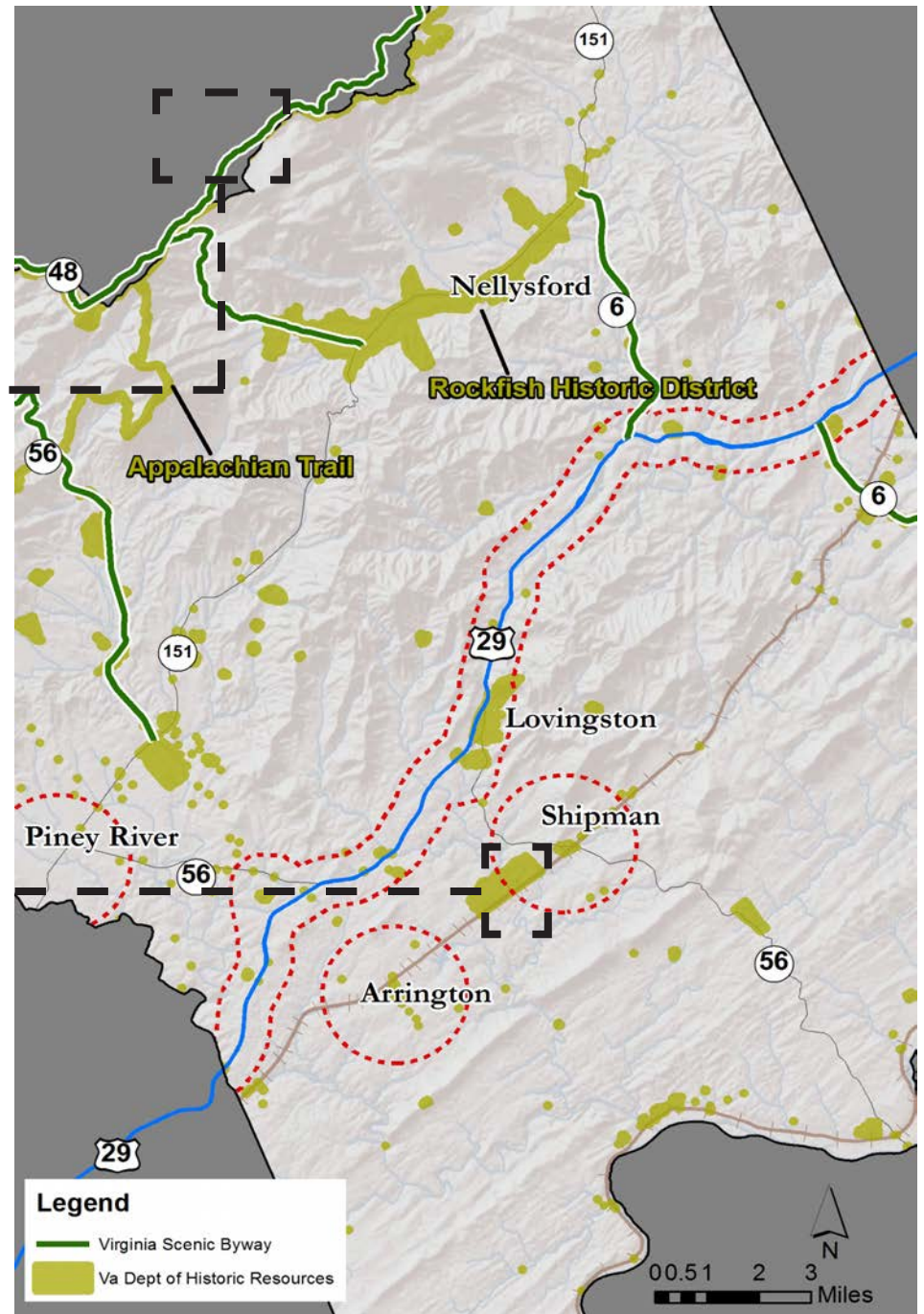
Maintaining a connection to the past and honoring Nelson's history is important to residents and visitors alike. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources has identified historically significant sites throughout the Commonwealth, and the map to the right shows the location of those sites in Nelson County, along with roadways designated as Virginia Scenic Byways. In addition to the agri-tourism industry, these historic sites are also a major draw for visitors to Nelson.



View of the Blue Ridge Parkway in early fall. The Blue Ridge Parkway is a designated Virginia Scenic Byway.



Oak Ridge Estate in Arrington, built in 1793, was visited by Thomas Jefferson in 1817. Image Courtesy of Oak Ridge



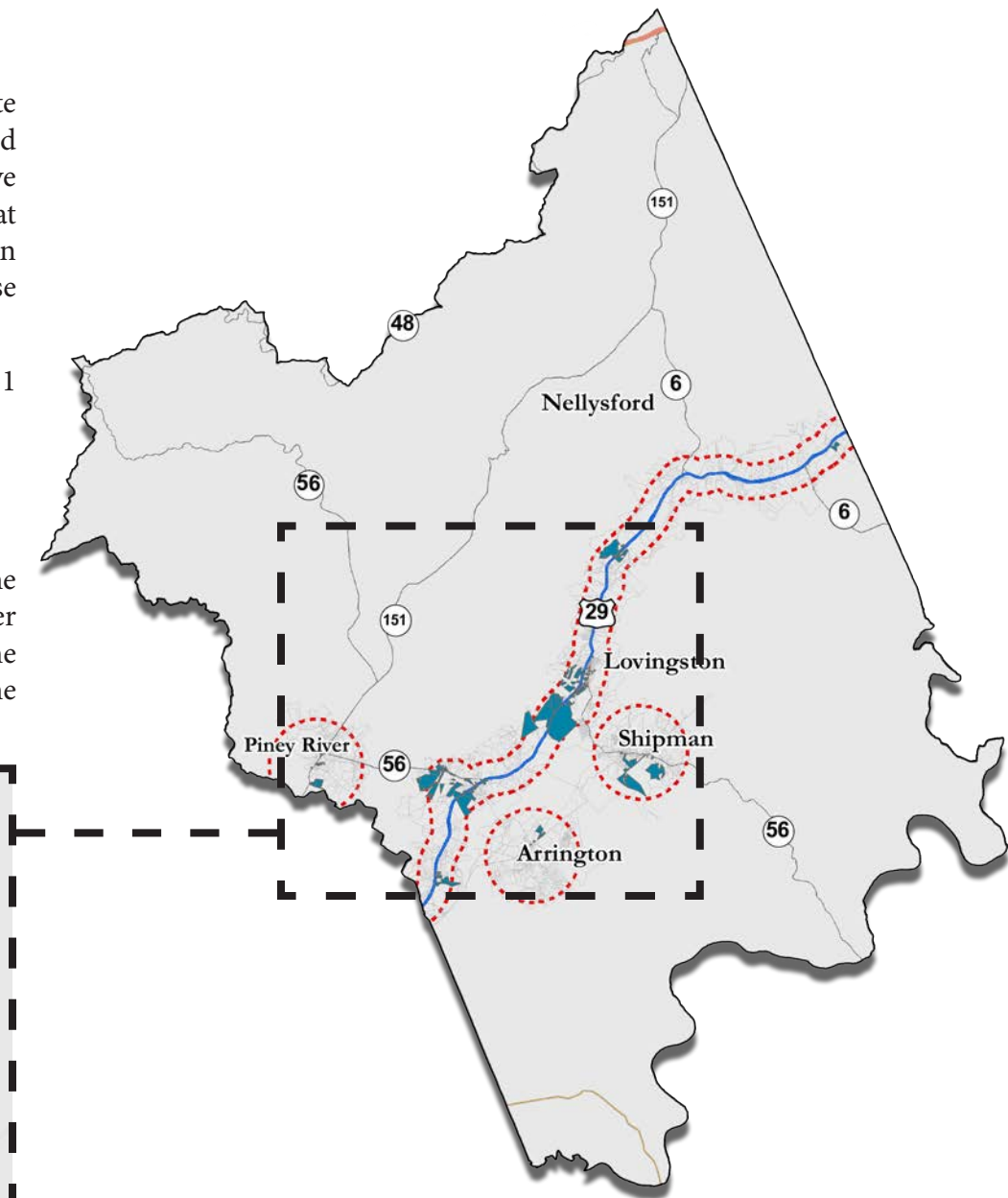
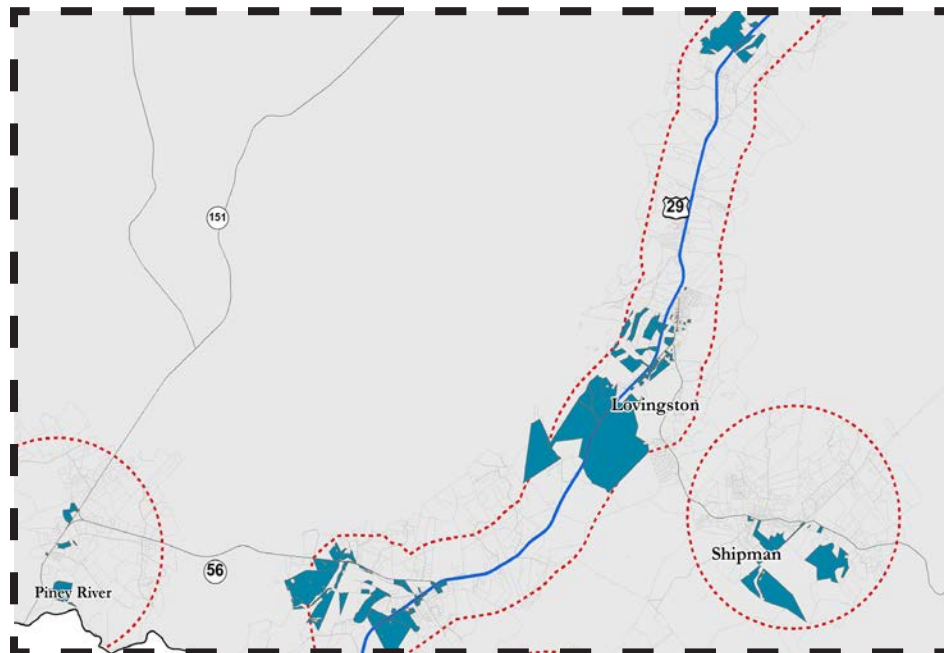
Map showing historical & cultural resources

Potential Development Sites

Nelson County lacks a site that is primed and ready for immediate development. To provide the Board of Supervisors with options that would have the potential to be developed in an expedited and fiscally conservative manner, the TJPDC developed a methodology for identifying parcels that would meet the two above criteria, and those parcels are highlighted in blue on the map to the right. The methodology used in selecting these parcels took into consideration the following data:

- The parcels were currently zoned B-1 Business, B-2 Business, M-1 Limited Industrial or M-2 Industrial
- They were unencumbered by steep slopes
- They were not located in the 100 year flood plain
- They were currently vacant of any large, existing structure

This resulted in 156 parcels within the study area that would have the potential to be developed. The identified parcels could then be further analyzed by an engineering specialist to determine final feasibility. The TJPDC's analysis only looked at parcels within the study area, however, the TJPDC's methodology could be used to assess parcels county-wide.



Map showing parcels in the study area best suited for new development

Demographics of Survey Respondents (#1-5)

The overwhelming majority (80%) of the people surveyed live in Nelson County and have for more than 10 years (79%). Respondents were also asked to enter their home and work zip code to better assess where people live and where they work. The majority of respondents live in either the 22949, 22922, or 2971 zip codes. The 22949 zip code had the highest number of responses (131) for where people worked. When asked how often they travel the 29 Corridor in Nelson County, 32% said they did so “more than 10 times per week”, with “5 to 10 times per week” (28%) being the second most common. The remainder of responses were split fairly even between “less than once a week” (11%), “1 to 3 times per week” (15%), and “3 to 5 times per week” (14%).

Economic Growth Now and in the Future (#6-7)

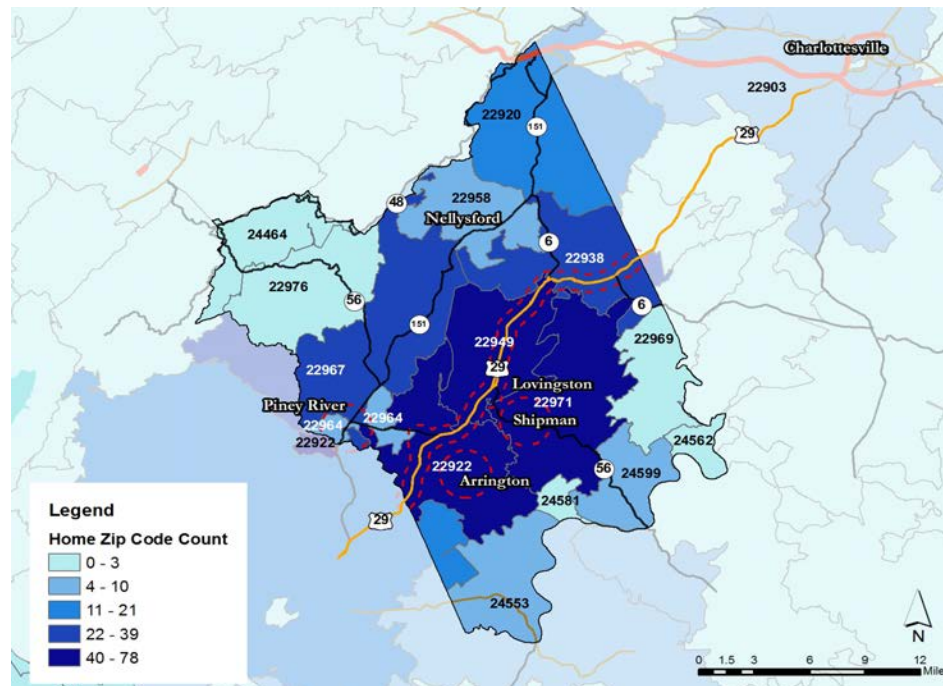
When asked to rate your opinion of current economic growth in Nelson County, the number one response was that there was currently “adequate growth (not too much & not too little)” (46%). A close second was “too little growth” (42%). The remainder said they were either not sure (8%) or that there was too much growth (4%). Looking to the future, when asked if they believed that Nelson County would be better off economically in the next five years, the most common answer was “about the same” (35%). The second highest response was “yes” (33%) with “not sure” (17%) and “no” (15%) making up the remainder.

Locating and Growing a Business in Nelson (#8-9)

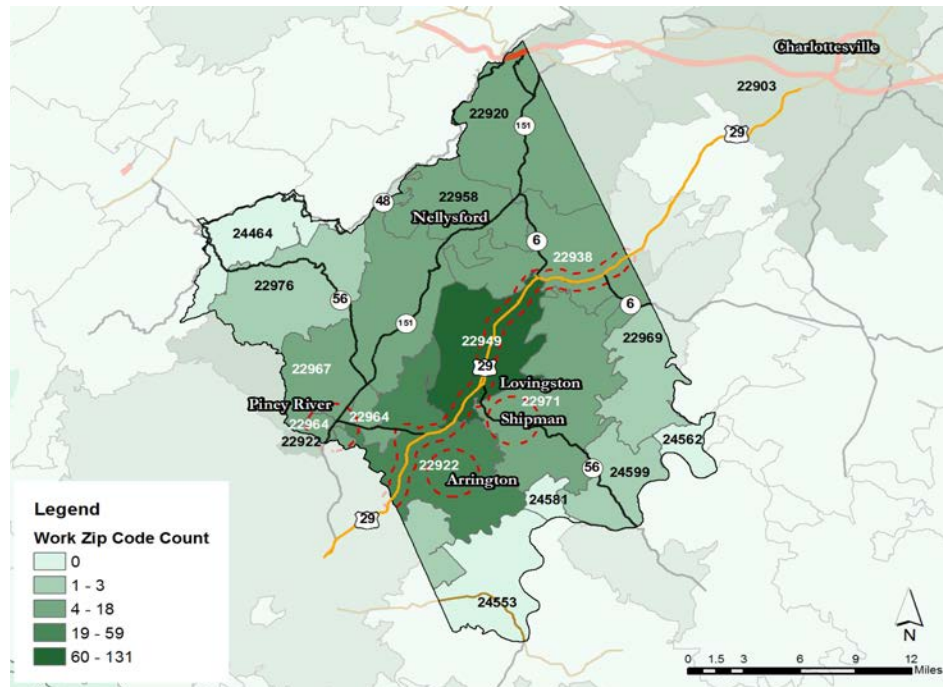
Overall, 74% of the people surveyed answered “yes” when asked if they believed Nelson County is a good place to locate a new business, with the remaining 26% saying that Nelson was not a good place to locate a new business. The distribution of answers was similar to the follow up question that asked if they believed that Nelson County was a good place to **grow an existing business**, with 76% saying “yes” and 24% saying “no”.

How Should Economic Development be Approached (#10)

Respondents were asked to indicate what they believed should be Nelson County’s approach to economic development. Half (50%) indicated to “encourage economic growth”, 37% said to “accommodate or manage growth”, 1% believe the county should “reduce economic growth”, with the remainder stating they were “not sure” (3%), or “other” (8%).

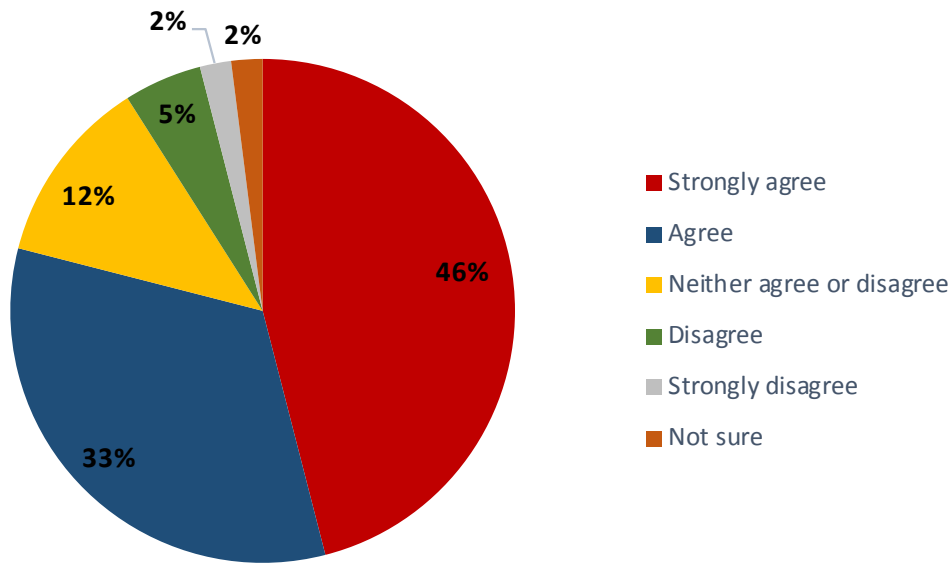


Map showing home zip code response

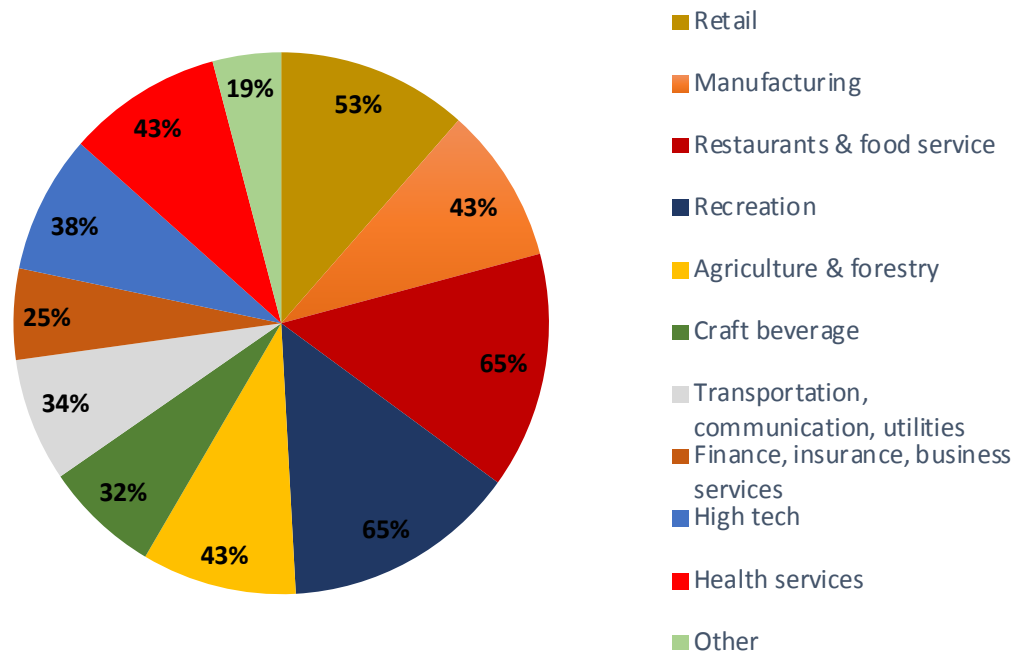


Map showing work zip code response

Do you agree that Nelson County should try to attract new business to the County? (#11)



If Nelson were to attract new businesses, which types should the County work to recruit (check all that apply)? (#12)



Rating the Quality of Services and Amenities (#13-14)

Survey takers were given a list of services and amenities and asked to provide a rating on a scale of “very good”, “good”, “neutral”, “poor”, and “very poor”. In terms of road safety, most people gave it a “good” rating (46%). Traffic congestion was rated “good” (44%), access to well-paying jobs as “poor” (41%), housing options were also ranked “poor” (41%), diversity in economic base was ranked “neutral” (42%), natural resource protection came in rated “good” (40%), variety of shopping options was ranked “poor” (51%) as was access to cultural amenities (34%). Recreational opportunities were rated as “good” (31%) and access to a quality education was also ranked as “good” (40%).

People were also asked to rate the level of importance of several factors. 51% said that access to well-paying jobs in Nelson County was “very important”. 38% said that increased variety in shopping and entertainment options in the County was “important”. Increasing the tax base for the county was evenly split between “important” (35%) and “neutral” (34%). Preserving rural character was ranked as “very important” (53%), and access to business/health/community services within the County was ranked as “important” (49%). Both access to public utilities and overall quality of life were rated as “very important” at 46% and 74% respectively.

Nelson’s Economic Strengths (#15)

Respondents were asked to check the five most important economic strengths of Nelson County. The highest rated factor was Nelson’s pristine rural setting (84%). The County’s overall quality of life was ranked as the second most important economic factor (68%), followed by natural resources and tourism assets, both at 63%. Rounding out the top five was the County’s access to local markets (57%). The rest were split among success of existing business (22%), affordable housing options (15%), an educated workforce (14%), strong community leadership (13%), the ease of starting a new business (12%), access to public infrastructure (11%), and the transportation network (10%).

Nelson's Economic Weaknesses (#16)

To assess potential economic weaknesses, respondents were asked to check the five weaknesses they saw as most harmful. Affordable housing options had the highest number of respondents, with 62% stating that the lack of affordable housing was a weakness. Access to public infrastructure, and more specifically broadband, also received 62%. The transportation network (54%), lack of an educated workforce (53%), and the lack of ease in starting a new business (45%) rounded out the top five. Strong community leadership (44%), success of existing businesses (34%) and access to local markets (22%) were also seen as weaknesses. Tourism assets (13.5%), overall quality of life (7%), natural resources (6%), and pristine rural setting (4%) received the least amount of votes.

Measures of Economic Success Most Important (#17)

Respondents were asked to state which measures of economic success were the most important to them. Creation of new jobs (69%), and access to higher paying jobs (63%) were ranked highest. Town revitalization (55%), growth of existing businesses (52%), and improved public infrastructure (48%) round out the top five. An increase in tourism (34%), increased tax revenue from new business (32%), population growth (15%), and other (6%) were the remaining measures.

Limits to Economic Growth (#18)

The final question before the additional comment section asked respondents to check which factors they thought impeded economic growth the most. The lack of access to public utilities, namely broadband, received the highest number of votes with 48%. It was closely followed by a lack of qualified workforce (47%), and lack of affordable housing (46%). Restrictive County regulations (42%) and access to the transportation network (40%) round out the top five. Other (17%), and lack of available land (12%) were the remaining factors.

The S.W.O.T. Analysis

A SWOT analysis aims to answer the question of “where are we now?” by assessing a community’s major Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This process can help to provide a framework for identifying local action items and priorities to achieve specified community goals and by establishing a “to do” list for local elected officials and County staff. This strategic planning tool can help decision makers to: build on the community’s strengths; address potential weaknesses; leverage opportunities; and prepare for and respond to threats.

Specifically, this SWOT analysis will assess these characteristics based on how they relate to economic development initiatives along the US 29 corridor in Nelson County. The items in this SWOT analysis originated from themes found in a recent community survey of 453 local residents that gauge their attitudes towards economic development in Nelson County, as well as review of Nelson County’s 2002 Comprehensive Plan.

STRENGTHS:

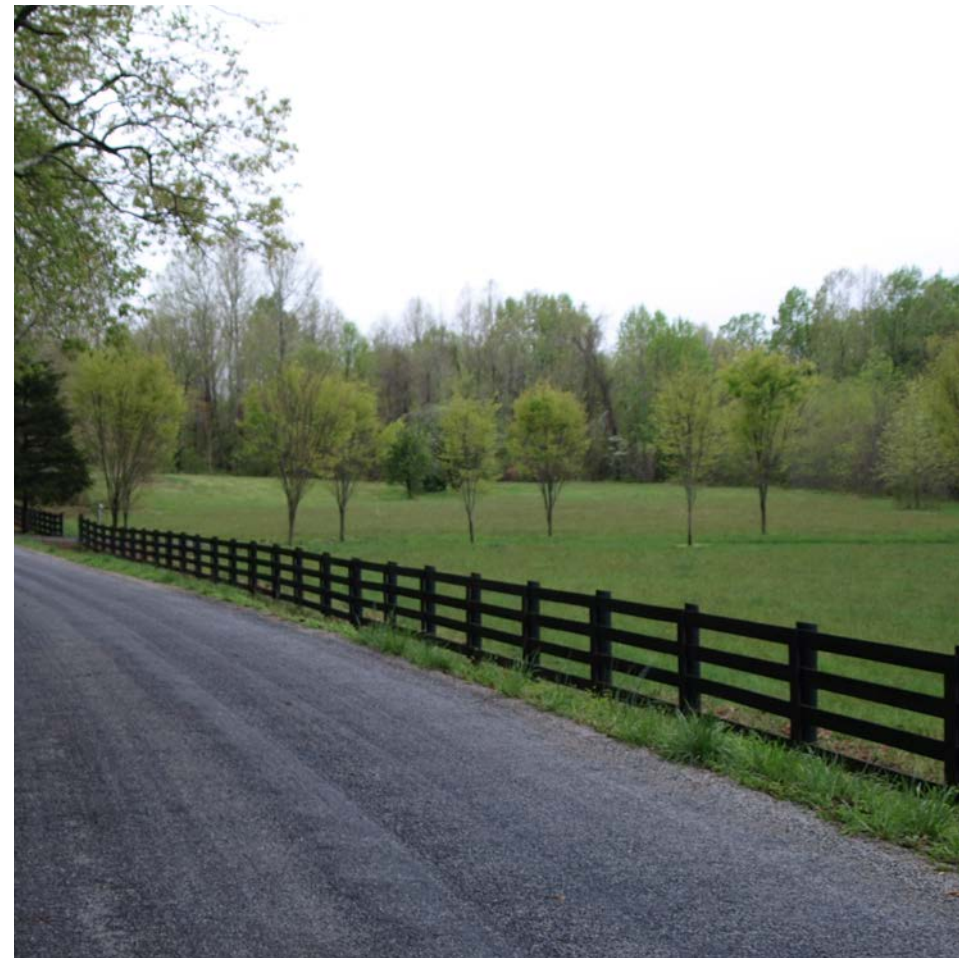
Strengths reflect a community’s existing features, infrastructure, amenities, and characteristics that contribute to its overall success. These include intangible attributes as well as physical assets. Successful communities reinforce, protect, and build upon their strengths.

Location:

Nelson County’s location, strategically situated between the metropolitan areas of Charlottesville to the northeast and Lynchburg to the southwest, provides residents easy access to employment opportunities, healthcare, shopping and cultural facilities. This is ideal for residents who prefer the rural charm that Nelson has to offer, but still want to remain a short commute away from daily commitments in the metropolitan areas. US 29, which bisects the County is also a corridor of statewide significance, a designation given by the State. High daily average traffic volumes associated with a corridor of statewide significance would be one deciding factor for new businesses wishing to locate in Nelson due to the high potential of new customers.

Rural Charm & Quality of Life:

A recurring theme seen in the public survey, Nelson’s rural character and unique sense of place were of crucial importance to Nelson residents. With the Blue Ridge Mountains as its backdrop, the distinct and varied geographic features were seen as major contributing factors to the areas high quality of life. Survey respondents frequently noted that preserving this rural character should be one of the County’s highest priorities, which is consistent with recommendations in the Comprehensive plan. The County’s access to recreational amenities also contributes to its high quality of life and its designation as a tourist destination.



Nelson’s rural charm on display

An Engaged Citizenry:

If anything was apparent from the community survey, it was how engaged local residents were in this effort. With 453 responses to the survey and over 1008 comments, it is clear that residents have a vested interest in the future of Nelson County. Their passion for their community and their high levels of involvement is indicative of a population that is heavily invested in shaping their environment.

Community Support for Economic Development:

Many residents communicated their support of economic development efforts in the County and believed that growth was beneficial. 50% of survey respondents believed that the County should encourage economic growth. However, while most residents support growth and economic development, they believe that priority should be placed on attracting the right kind businesses that compliment, not detract from, Nelson's rural character and that haphazard development would be detrimental. Residents are also proud of their local businesses and would like to see them expanded and new local businesses to come in, as opposed to national chains which may not fit harmoniously with the character of the community.

US 29:

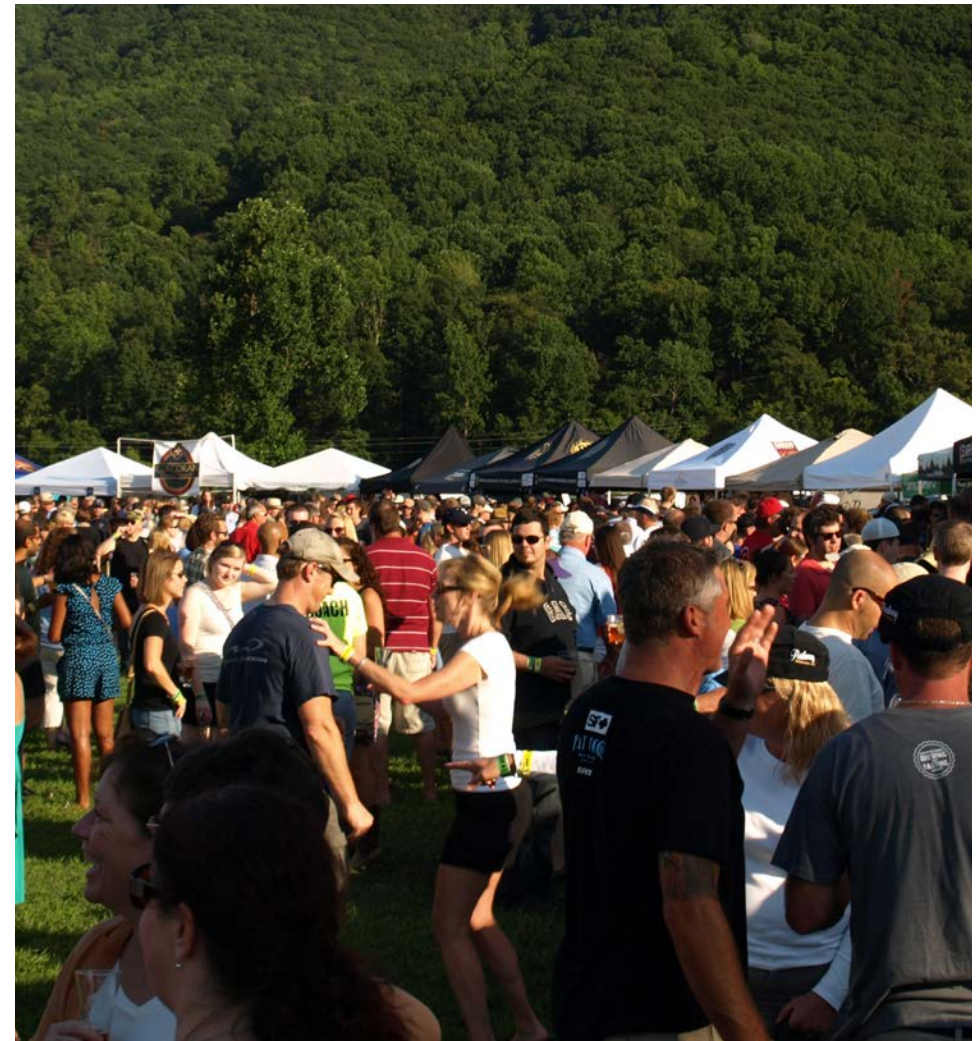
US 29 is itself a strength. As mentioned previously, it is a corridor of statewide significance providing strategic connections between regions and fulfilling statewide transportation goals. It serves as a major tourism route and gateway into the Blue Ridge Mountains. US 29 provides easy and efficient access to major markets outside of the County, making it attractive for new business.

Affordability:

Nelson County provides a high quality of life without the high cost of living in the metropolitan areas to the north and south. Real estate taxes in the County are lower than those of the City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County along with personal property tax rates. Real estate prices are also lower, making entry into the market more attainable.

Success of the Tourism Industry:

While some residents noted this as a weakness, many believe that the success of the tourism industry in Nelson County has been extremely beneficial to the community. Many noted that the tourism industry is in character with the community's rural charm. Nelson County has become synonymous with the agri-tourism industry thanks to its many wineries, distilleries, and breweries, along with its superb recreational amenities and has helped to create a place-based brand for the County.



The tourism industry in Nelson continues to thrive

WEAKNESSES:

Weaknesses are existing features, conditions or problems that may hinder a community from realizing its goals. A community should consider ways to address or overcome these obstacles.

Uneven Broadband Coverage:

The County has made significant strides in providing high speed internet access to residents. The existing fiber network serves many of the most densely populated portions of the County. However, many community members noted that they did not have reliable or affordable internet access. This was one of the most common comments received on the public survey, and many believed that without this service, it would be challenging to attract new businesses to the area.

Access to Jobs Within the County:

A lack of access to well-paying jobs in Nelson County was an issue many community members feel is an area that needs improvement. Survey results showed that 41% of the respondents rated access to these jobs as “poor” and that roughly 50% said that having access to jobs was a top priority. Many of the survey comments reiterated this, stating that the service industry jobs that are prevalent in the community did not provide a high enough wage to support a family. Many communicated the need to commute to Charlottesville or Lynchburg for greater employment opportunities and that they would like to see more job prospects in the County.

Lack of Shopping & Entertainment Options:

Many citizens noted that there is currently a void in dining, shopping, and entertainment options in the County. This was communicated through the community survey which showed that an overwhelming majority of respondents ranked increasing the variety of these venues as either “very important” or “important”.

Vacancy in Downtown Lovingson:

Residents feel that downtown Lovingson is underutilized and a number

of vacant or deteriorating buildings are detrimental to its character. Many feel that Lovingson is a logical place to direct growth, with its walkability, quaint character, supporting infrastructure and location directly off of 29, but that potential businesses and tourists are deterred by the existing conditions.

Inadequate Growth Management:

Throughout the planning process, residents communicated that without a clear strategy or up-to-date plan for managing growth, the County runs the risk of ruining the rural character that so many residents value. Some cited that past development, such as the Family Dollar in Lovingson, do not fit with the community’s historic character.



An example of a broadband tower. Image courtesy of Fauquier Times

OPPORTUNITIES:

Opportunities differ from strengths and weaknesses in that they are more forward-looking. These are future prospects that could help a community realize its goals. A community should consider how to strategically take advantage of these opportunities.

Expansion of Broadband:

Improved access to reliable and affordable internet is a top priority for many in the community. The County has successfully brought broadband service to the most heavily populated parts of the community, and with the help of state and federal resources, can continue to improve the reliability and access to this crucial service.

Revitalization of Downtown Lovington:

Downtown Lovington has the potential to become more of a destination and to enhance its sense of place. Many residents feel that in its current state, with vacant or derelict buildings, that tourists and businesses are deterred. Leveraging state and federal grant programs aimed at rural town revitalization could provide community enhancements that have the potential to entice business growth. Previous efforts were undertaken in 2006 to develop a master plan for Lovington. A review of the 2006 study's recommendations could provide a starting point for revitalization efforts.

Diversified Housing:

While many noted that Nelson has a lower cost of living when compared to some of the surrounding counties, it was voiced that few options exist other than the typical single family home. Many would like to see alternatives to this, such as multi-family housing, that may reduce the barrier to entry for some young families.

Community Support:

While also listed as a strength, maintaining local support for economic development provides an opportunity for the County. With the right growth management strategy and assurance that any new business is harmonious

with the character of the community, residents seem to be supportive of the continuance of economic development activities. Leveraging this wave of support will be crucial for the success of future economic development endeavors, especially engaging the community, as they have made it clear through their participation in this process, that they have a vested interest in shaping the growth of Nelson County.



Lovington master plan schematic from 2006 study

THREATS:

Similar to opportunities in that they are more forward-looking than strengths and weaknesses, threats look at future challenges that could hinder a community from realizing its goals. A community should consider ways to avoid or mitigate threats.

The Pipeline:

One of the most prevalent comments seen in the surveying effort dealt with the proposed Dominion Pipeline. Many residents noted possible negative environmental impacts that could deter from Nelson's rural charm. Other residents saw the pipeline as an opportunity for gainful employment for county residents. The divisive nature of this issue could serve as a threat for future community-wide efforts.

A Changing Population:

Like many rural Virginia counties, Nelson is faced with an aging population. Younger residents are migrating out of the County to seek educational or occupational opportunities elsewhere, while retirees are migrating in. An influx in of a retiree-aged population will have impacts on population numbers as well. Nelson County is one of the few counties in the Commonwealth that is expected to have a decrease in population over the next 20 years. This has the potential to threaten economic development efforts, as the local workforce will be increasingly limited.

Safety Along the 29 Corridor:

As a major transportation corridor, US 29 will continue to see increased levels of traffic. Recommendations made in VDOT's 29 Corridor Study for mitigating against safety concerns and increased levels of demand will be tantamount in ensuring the safety and efficiency of the corridor, not only for residents and visitors to the County, but also for the new businesses who rely on an efficient transportation network to ship goods to other markets. Residents also voiced concerns over safety of US 29 as potential growth may affect it in the future.

Unplanned Growth:

The community was largely in agreement with the notion that any future development should be strategically managed and that business recruitment efforts should focus on attracting industries that are harmonious with the areas rural character and charm. Many residents felt that the wrong kind of development that lacks community context could detract from what makes Nelson County so special.

Strategies and Recommendations

To meet the Nelson County Board of Supervisors goal of evaluating the economic development potential of guided growth along the U.S. 29 Corridor, the TJPDC has created a prioritized list of action items that the Board can use as a guide for implementation. These strategies were derived based on feedback from an analysis of the existing conditions, feedback received from an extensive public survey and from stakeholders on the project advisory committee, and an analysis of the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. These specific strategies pave a way forward for the County and provide clear, actionable items for the Board to undertake in the coming years.

STRATEGY 1: Actively Participate with Go Virginia

Go Virginia is the State's initiative program to promote private sector growth and job creation through State incentives for regional collaboration among stakeholders. Nine regional boards will oversee incentive funds and local investments and help identify local economic development priorities. Local participation by elected officials and County staff will be crucial so that Nelson County can have an active say in this process.

Tasks to be Performed in FY18:

Task 1: Nelson County staff and elected officials should continue to maintain an active role and participation with the Region 9 GO Virginia Council.

Task 2: The Board of Supervisors, County staff, and the business community should be engaged with the development of the GO Virginia Region 9 Regional Economic Development Plan.

Task 3: County staff should begin to pursue one to two large properties as possible candidates for a regional economic development project. To increase competitiveness, Nelson County should look to partner with other localities from Region 9 or from Region 2.

Task 4: County staff and elected officials should begin to monitor Region 2 activities for possible regional partnership opportunities that are consistent

with Nelson's economic development goals.

STRATEGY 2: Revitalize Downtown Lovingson

Downtown Lovingson provides the County with a unique opportunity to leverage its historic charm to turn it into a destination. However, in its current state, Lovingson is viewed by residents as uninviting due to vacant and derelict buildings and its lack of commercial spaces that would attract visitors. Lovingson is a prime location for future growth and development due to its existing broadband and water/sewer assets that can support an increase in density.

Tasks to be Performed in FY18:

Task 1: Create and staff a Lovingson revitalization committee to serve in an advisory capacity to local elected officials and be the conduit for public engagement efforts for revitalization efforts.

Task 2: County staff and the newly formed Lovingson revitalization committee should review the previous 2006 revitalization study to determine if its recommendations are consistent with the County and community's vision for Lovingson.

Task 3: With a committee formalized and the previous 2006 plan reviewed for relevancy, County staff can pursue funding opportunities for redevelopment initiatives. The County could choose to do this by:

Contracting with the TJPDC

Applying for a CDBG Planning Grant

Pursue other funding sources

Tasks to be Performed in FY19-FY20:

Task 4: Once a strategic plan for Lovingson has been delivered, the County can work to implement the recommendations and strategies identified through the planning process

Task 5: The County should continue to pursue opportunities for capital investments, such as sidewalk improvements, street beautification projects, and place-making initiatives. Partnering with State and Federal agencies

like the Virginia Department of Transportation, could provide funding streams for the needed capital improvements.

Task 6: The County should encourage and promote private reinvestment in Lovingston.

STRATEGY 3: Pursue 3 Sites for Commercial/Industrial Development

Currently, there are no development-ready parcels in Nelson County, but there are many that have the potential to be perfectly suited for development. Identifying three to four sites that can be analyzed for development feasibility will provide Nelson County with a tangible and marketable product for business recruitment. Several large parcels south of Lovingston have already been identified in previous engineering reports and studies.

To meet identified housing objectives, properties should be considered for multi-use opportunities that would combine affordable residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational uses. This would require an update to both the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Tasks to be Performed in FY19:

Task 1: County staff should form a property development committee that consists of County staff and site selection/engineering/development consultants to establish a formal group of knowledgeable stakeholders who can strategically pursue potential project sites.

Task 2: County staff should review the previous preliminary engineering reports that exist for any of the properties that have been identified as priorities for development.

Tasks to be Performed in FY20-FY21:

Task 3: County staff should begin to pursue control, at a minimum an option to purchase, one of the identified parcels.

Task 4: This task should run in tandem with Task 3. The County should conduct a marketing analysis and develop a plan for the properties identified and work towards implementation.

Task 5: The County should work to pursue additional capital investments identified in the implementation plan.

STRATEGY 4: Promote Home-Based Occupations

The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in Nelson County. The majority of the 483 businesses located within the study area are home-based businesses. Such businesses require little infrastructure investment on behalf of the County and do not require large, developed parcels. In order to foster the growth in this sector, equitable and reliable access to the broadband fiber network will be essential.

Tasks to be Performed in FY19-FY20:

Task 1: County Staff should begin to review the current zoning ordinance to find discrepancies in the zoning code that would deter home-based businesses

Task 2: County Planning & Zoning staff should work together with the Nelson Broadband Authority staff to produce a map showing broadband access deficiencies, not simply a map of fiber lines.

Task 3: Based on the deficiency mapping, County staff should develop a broadband area of need

Task 4: The broadband area of need will inform strategic decision making that elected officials and County staff can undertake to pursue funding for extending the fiber network to the identified deficient areas.

STRATEGY 5: Update the County's Comprehensive Plan to Promote Home-Based Businesses and Industry

A review and update of the County's comprehensive plan as it pertains to home-based businesses and industry is a less exhaustive process than updating the entire comprehensive plan.

Tasks to be Performed in FY19:

Task 1: County staff should work to create a project scope for the update process of the Comprehensive Plan, keeping in mind that it would require significant public engagement.

Task 2: This task will begin in FY19 and run through FY20. County staff should conduct the plan update.

Tasks to be Performed in FY20-FY21:

Task 4: Staff should work to complete the final review of the plan and work to Approve it.

Task 5: Staff should implement the policies outlined in the final, approved plan.