

UNIVERSITY

2046 VISION

The Virginia Tech campus of 2,600 acres includes more than 150 buildings close to the heart of Blacksburg. The core campus adjacent to the Downtown area is circled by open and agricultural lands stretching across the Route 460 Bypass towards Hethwood. To the south are the Virginia Tech Airport and the Corporate Research Center.

Virginia Tech continues to be a primary employer in Blacksburg and ranks nationally among the top universities for its academic and athletic programs. The heart of campus activity continues to be the Drillfield. The campus core consists of pedestrian-scaled quadrangles and courtyards that provide reasonable walking distances within and between academic, research, residential and athletic areas, and the Downtown. This core campus area extends west along Prices Fork Road, as far as the Route 460 Bypass, and includes the Duck Pond, Solitude House, and Smithfield Plantation.

The core is surrounded by a greenbelt, including extensive parklands and reforested areas that weave through the campus, connecting with the greater townwide greenway network. The trail network is extensive, providing ample opportunity for cycling and walking to campus destinations and throughout Town. The agricultural and pastoral landscape between the Route 460 Bypass and the campus core is partially retained and links the campus with the surrounding regional environment.

The Corporate Research Center is an international research park featuring many technology-based industries. The center has expanded around the airport toward Southgate Drive; a grade-separated interchange at the Route 460 Bypass connects to Hubbard Street. An east-west cross-county connector road parallels Prices Fork Road along the Town boundary to a grade-separated interchange at the Route 460 Bypass, south of the Corporate Research Center to Main Street and Ellett Road. The Virginia Tech/Montgomery Executive Airport serves the New River Valley.

UNIVERSITY PLANNING SECTOR IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS

- A. ***University Planning Sector watersheds include Cedar Run, Slate Branch, and Stroubles Creek.*** The Eastern Continental Divide runs through the eastern edge of this planning sector, with a small section of the headwaters of Cedar Run at the Virginia Tech Airport. Most of the University land area is in the Stroubles Creek watershed. Stroubles Creek is a tributary of the New River (Gulf of Mexico drainage), and downstream riparian areas of Stroubles Creek are within the Creek Valley Overlay. Virginia Tech is actively implementing recommendations and BMPs in the Stroubles Creek TMDL-IP, and has improved riparian buffers on the University Farms in this sector. The spring rising from Solitude near the Virginia Tech Duck Pond is another example of the historic groundwater resources of the area.

- B. ***Virginia Tech is a primary employer in Blacksburg***, with more than 5,800 employees (faculty and staff as of Fall, 2006). There are more than 28,000 enrolled students at Virginia Tech, approximately 9,000 of whom reside on campus (Fall, 2006).
- C. ***The University infuses cultural activity into the community***. Students and faculty from around the world are drawn to this land-grant university, bringing with them an array of cultural traditions, enriching the community through a number of organizations and events, including the annual spring International Street Fair. Performing and visual art exhibitions and shows are regular events in Blacksburg, many of which are associated with Virginia Tech.
- D. ***University agricultural properties are a major contributor to the aesthetics of the Town, especially those adjoining the Route 460 Bypass***. Virginia Tech holds large parcels along this corridor, which are used for agricultural research. These lands contribute significantly to the rural and scenic quality of the area, so highly prized by residents and visitors alike. As the Corporate Research Center expands into the fields adjacent to the airport, preservation of open space and the center's visual impact on this corridor should be carefully planned, designed, and constructed. Other university open space should be just as carefully planned if the land is converted from agricultural use to housing, satellite parking, recreation, or other uses. These highly visible lands provide an opportunity to demonstrate best management practices for the general public.
- E. ***Open space on the University core campus is important to the University, and its preservation is a Town priority***. The University open space on the core campus, such as the Drillfield, Henderson Lawn, and the Duck Pond, offers community centers of activity. The scenic views along the Route 460 Bypass and Prices Fork Road are essential for maintaining Blacksburg's aesthetic appeal and the University's unique character. Both the Drillfield and the Duck Pond areas are at the center of the core campus and are jewels in the campus greenway system. The Duck Pond needs to be maintained in an environmentally sensitive manner. Pollution prevention and reduction measures, such as better stormwater management upstream, are encouraged. Daylighting of portions of Stroubles Creek and related tributaries as feasible on campus will increase open space on campus and help protect existing areas environmentally and aesthetically.
- F. ***There are historic structures on the campus, including Smithfield Plantation and Solitude***. Smithfield Plantation, circa 1773, is located amidst the University's agricultural fields east of the Route 460 Bypass and is the birthplace of two Virginia governors. Solitude House, built in 1859, was part of the original site on which Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Virginia Tech) was established in 1872. It is located adjacent to the Duck Pond.
- G. ***Connections must be made between the pedestrian, bicycle, and greenway systems on Campus to the Town system***. The University Master Plan recommends that the existing Town bikeways be further extended onto the campus to provide better access for commuters and resident students, and that extensions be made to the Town system. Coordination of the two systems is emphasized. Pedestrian connections are particularly important where the University and Town interface. In addition, the University owns large portions of property

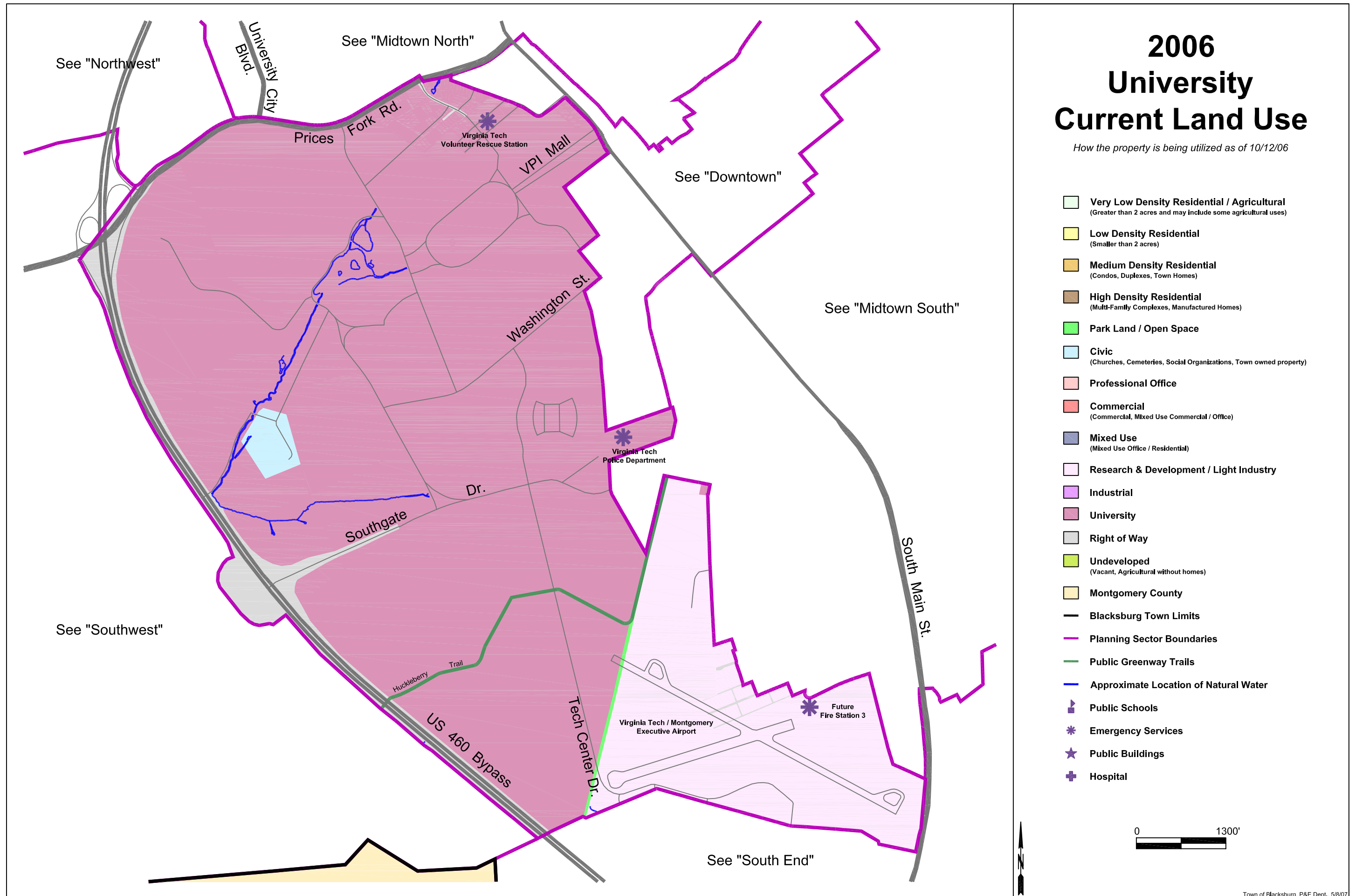
adjacent to the Hethwood community that will be vital for implementing the planned greenway connections throughout this area.

- H. ***Public safety is excellent on-campus and townwide.*** The Town and University have a productive relationship and interface regularly through the Town/Gown Community Relations Committee and the Town/Tech Liaison Committee. The campus and Town police, fire, and rescue departments have good joint cooperation between agencies; the Judicial Affairs program is productive.
- I. ***Downtown properties adjacent to the Virginia Tech Campus are most likely to be converted to University related uses, regardless of the best use for the property.*** These include the block of properties along Roanoke Street across from the Architecture Annex, the group of properties between Washington Street, Otey Street, Kent Street, and Wall Street, and the block bounded by Washington Street, Kent Street and the University tennis courts.
- J. ***Special Purpose Housing should be expanded on campus.*** The Town encourages Virginia Tech to expand the vision to house all Greek organizations on-campus. The difference in lifestyle of these organizations within traditional neighborhoods can cause many social problems among off-campus residents.
- K. ***Undergraduate housing will continue to be provided near the current level on campus.*** New dormitories are possible but are neither planned nor currently funded. Future housing development, on and off campus, should focus on upgraded amenities, better protection and education of students' rights and responsibilities, and more housing services.
- L. ***Graduate student enrollment and research positions will be increased.*** As Virginia Tech approaches its goal of becoming a nationally ranked research institution, its graduate enrollment could increase by as many as 1,000 students, plus new research positions and support staff employed at the Corporate Research Center. Even with the creation of the Graduate Life Center that includes graduate housing opportunities on campus, the need will increase for more affordable housing off campus for this diverse population that often includes spouses and families. The Town and the University will need to partner together to provide and promote housing options and the development of essential services to this underserved population.
- M. ***Game Day Housing Demand.*** As the number of Virginia Tech alumni increases every year, more alumni and fans return primarily for major athletic events on campus. Many individuals or businesses are purchasing housing off campus to be used only a few times a year on game days and during similar events. While there is little impact on the public school system and utilities, the supply of housing near the campus is further limited because of the resulting sporadic owner involvement and contribution to Blacksburg society. Game day housing is a relatively new trend that requires careful evaluation of its impacts on the quality of life in Blacksburg.

- N. ***Access to the Corporate Research Center and the Virginia Tech Campus must be provided from all directions to prevent traffic congestion and promote development equally throughout the Town.***
- a. The primary entrance from the North to the University has been reoriented and focused on the Prices Fork Road/West Campus Drive intersection near where the Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center have been constructed. This reorientation will bring visitors through a portion of Blacksburg as they enter the University, increasing traffic and economic development opportunities.
 - b. From the East, the University has the existing Alumni Mall entrance connecting the Drillfield to Main Street.
 - c. From the Southeast, a cross-county connector road is proposed to connect Ellett Road to South Main Street, to Ramble Road to a new proposed grade-separated interchange at the Corporate Research Center and Route 460 Bypass. This connector road is proposed to extend west of the 460 Bypass, parallel to Prices Fork Road.
 - d. From the West, a grade-separated interchange at Southgate Drive is proposed. One of the Town's top road-project priorities is the extension of Hubbard Street from Airport Road to Southgate Drive/Route 314 with bike lanes, sidewalks, and streetscaping to help alleviate traffic congestion in neighborhoods.
- O. ***There is a need to decrease traffic on campus and throughout Town.*** Virginia Tech should seriously consider limiting the number of vehicles registered to legally park on campus while promoting alternative transportation options within the Town. An increase in student parking fees could also be used to subsidize the expansion of the pedestrian/bicycle paths and transit system that allow for easy transportation throughout campus.
- P. ***The expansion of parking facilities is anticipated.*** The 2006 Virginia Tech Campus Master Plan identifies parking structures to be constructed on the perimeter of the campus in conjunction with construction of new buildings on campus. Parking demand on campus today results in an overflow of University parking into surrounding commercial and residential areas, creating some conflicts in lifestyles. The University and the Town should partner together to solve parking issues.
- Q. ***A performing arts center is proposed to be constructed near the Downtown, adjacent to Henderson Lawn. In conjunction with the new Experimental Theater, the performing arts center will serve as the centerpiece for the arts in this region. The performing arts center will anchor one end of the proposed Blacksburg arts district that extends beyond Henderson Lawn to College Avenue and the Lyric Theater, increasing visibility and cultural activity for the Downtown. A Downtown Arts District may affect traffic patterns in the Downtown area.***

2006 University Current Land Use

How the property is being utilized as of 10/12/06



- Very Low Density Residential / Agricultural
(Greater than 2 acres and may include some agricultural uses)
- Low Density Residential
(Smaller than 2 acres)
- Medium Density Residential
(Condos, Duplexes, Town Homes)
- High Density Residential
(Multi-Family Complexes, Manufactured Homes)
- Park Land / Open Space
- Civic
(Churches, Cemeteries, Social Organizations, Town owned property)
- Professional Office
- Commercial
(Commercial, Mixed Use Commercial / Office)
- Mixed Use
(Mixed Use Office / Residential)
- Research & Development / Light Industry
- Industrial
- University
- Right of Way
- Undeveloped
(Vacant, Agricultural without homes)
- Montgomery County
- Blacksburg Town Limits
- Planning Sector Boundaries
- Public Greenway Trails
- Approximate Location of Natural Water
- Public Schools
- Emergency Services
- Public Buildings
- Hospital

