

CHAPTER III

GOVERNMENT



GOVERNMENT

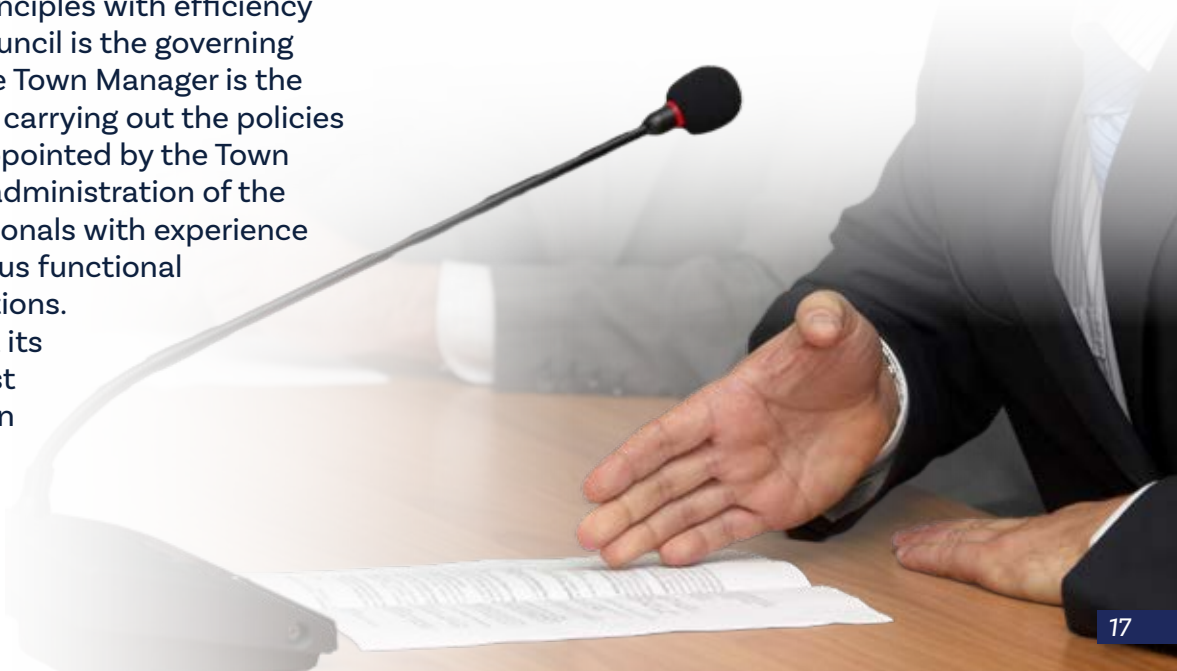
The success of a community depends in part on a local government that provides high-quality public services, plans for the future, and responds to the needs of its residents. The Town of Christiansburg is committed to providing open, responsive, and transparent government and delivering reliable and efficient public services. As the community continues to grow and evolve, the Town will need to continually strengthen organizational leadership and staff capacity, improve the efficiency and accessibility of government services, and adapt its programs and operations to meet changing community needs. Meaningful and innovative community engagement, effective communication, and strong partnerships with regional organizations, educational institutions, neighboring localities, businesses, and residents will be essential to fostering community connections, strengthening the Town's identity, and encouraging public participation.

The Town of Christiansburg operates under the Council-Manager form of local government. The primary features of the Council-Manager form of government are the reservation of legislative authority and responsibility in an elected Town Council and the assignment of administrative responsibility to a Town Manager appointed by Town Council. This provides a system, which combines democratic principles with efficiency of administration. The Council is the governing body of the Town, and the Town Manager is the Chief Executive Officer in carrying out the policies which Council defines. Appointed by the Town Manager to assist in the administration of the Town is a staff of professionals with experience and expertise in the various functional areas of municipal operations. The Town recognizes that its employees are its greatest asset and that investing in employee development, professional training,

and organizational capacity is essential to maintaining high-quality public services.

The Town Council consists of the Mayor and six Council members, all elected at large to represent the interests of the community. The Town Council establishes the community's vision, adopts local ordinances, resolutions, and policies, approves the annual budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and provides overall direction for municipal operations. The Council also appoints citizens to serve on various Town advisory boards and commissions. The Town Manager, appointed by the Town Council, is responsible for implementing Council policies, overseeing the Town's day to day operations, preparing the annual budget, managing Town departments and personnel, and ensuring that all laws and ordinances are enforced.

The Town is supported by a number of advisory boards, commissions, and committees that provide recommendations to the Town Council on a variety of issues, including planning, zoning, parks and recreation, historic preservation, and other community matters. These citizen advisory bodies promote public participation, provide technical and local expertise, and help ensure that community perspectives are considered during the decision-making process.



Town services are delivered through a range of departments that work together to provide essential public services and implement community priorities. The Town departments include Administration, Aquatics Center, Building, Cemetery, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Engineering, Finance, Fire, Human Resources, Neighborhood Services, Parks and Recreation, Planning, Police, Public Relations, Public Works, and Treasury. The Town also contracts with a Town Attorney to provide legal counsel and representation to the Town Council, Town Manager, and Town departments. Coordination among departments is essential to delivering efficient services, managing public infrastructure, supporting economic development, protecting public safety, and enhancing the quality of life for residents and businesses. As technology advances and community expectations and service demands continue to change, the Town will continue to evaluate new technologies, innovative practices, and operational improvements that enhance service delivery and organizational effectiveness.

The Town's annual budget serves as the primary financial planning tool and allocates resources to support municipal operations, services, and strategic priorities. The annual budget process begins with department heads submitting budget requests that outline the operational needs and priorities of their department for management review and evaluation. The Town Manager and the Director of Finance review these requests, evaluate available financial resources, and make recommendations that support the Town's objectives and goals and create a balanced budget. All staffing requests are evaluated and presented to Council. The proposed budget is presented to Council for consideration and further adjustments. The proposed budget is then presented to the public for review and comment. All comments are considered and the budget is adjusted, as deemed appropriate by Town Council, before finalization and adoption.

While the Town provides a wide range of municipal services, many important community services, including public education, courts, social services, and public health, are provided by Montgomery County or through regional organizations. Continued collaboration with these partners enhances service delivery, improves operational efficiency, supports regional planning efforts, and helps address shared opportunities and challenges throughout the New River Valley.

The Town actively participates in regional planning and transportation initiatives through partnerships with the New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the New River Valley Regional Commission (NRVRC). These organizations assist the Town with transportation planning, regional coordination, grant opportunities, technical assistance, data analysis, and implementation of projects that benefit both Christiansburg and the region.

Christiansburg also partners with Blacksburg Transit (BT) and the Town of Blacksburg to provide public transit services that connect residents to employment centers, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, shopping, and other destinations throughout the New River Valley. The Town also maintains mutual aid agreements with neighboring jurisdictions and regional public safety agencies to strengthen emergency response capabilities and enhance public safety.



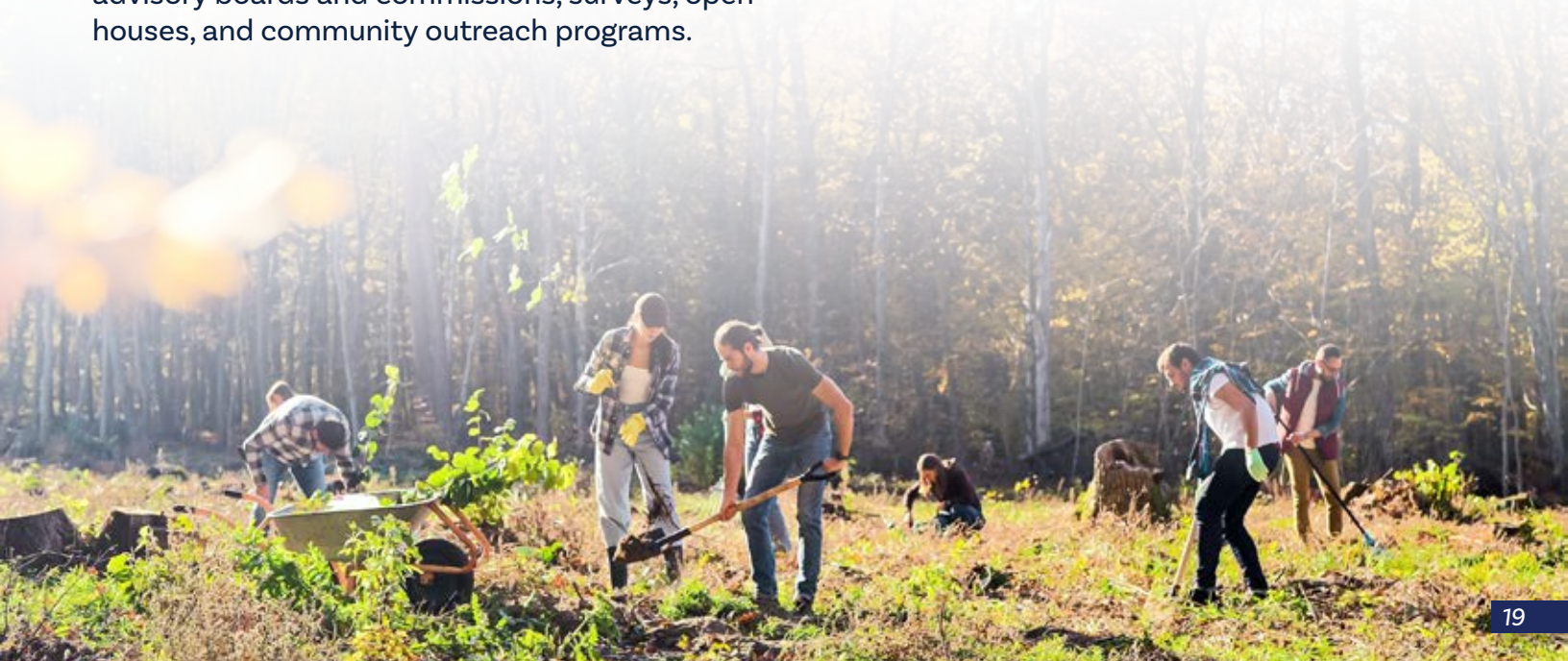
Education is supported through partnerships with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), which operates public schools serving Christiansburg residents, as well as several private schools located within the Town. Higher education opportunities are provided by New River Community College, Radford University, and Virginia Tech.

Residents and visitors are also served by the Christiansburg Branch of the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library, which provides access to educational resources, technology, lifelong learning opportunities, and community programming.

The Town of Christiansburg is committed to maintaining open, transparent, and responsive communication with residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. Effective communication promotes public awareness, encourages community participation, and helps residents stay informed about Town services, projects, public meetings, and community events. The Town's Public Relations Department serves as the primary liaison between the public, the media, and Town departments, coordinates public information efforts, and responds to requests for public records in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The Town also encourages two-way communication by providing opportunities for public participation through public meetings, advisory boards and commissions, surveys, open houses, and community outreach programs.

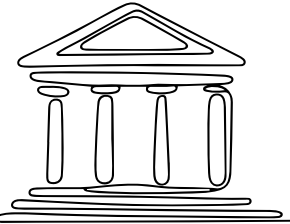
The Town utilizes a variety of communication methods to reach diverse audiences, including its website, social media platforms, news releases, newsletters, utility bill inserts, public presentations, and emergency notification systems. Residents can access meeting agendas and minutes, Town Council meeting videos, online forms, project updates, and other public information through the Town's website and notification services. The Town will continue to enhance its communication tools and public outreach efforts to provide timely, accurate, and accessible information and strengthen public engagement.

The Town fosters community identity and encourages civic engagement by promoting volunteerism, recognizing community achievements, supporting local events, and providing opportunities for residents to participate in community life. The Town partners with schools, higher education institutions, community organizations, and regional agencies to promote public education, internship opportunities, and youth engagement in local government. Through public outreach, community events, coordinated branding, and educational programs, the Town helps strengthen community pride, increase awareness of local government, and encourage active participation in shaping Christiansburg's future.



GOVERNMENT

Goals, Objectives, & Policies:



Goal G.1: *Promote excellence in governance by strengthening organizational leadership and internal capacity, enhancing communications with residents and fostering meaningful community engagement and collaborative planning, and regional partnerships that enhance the Town's identity, economic vitality, and quality of life.*

Objective G.1.1: Support high-performing governance by developing Town leadership and staff capacity, engaging residents meaningfully in decision-making, and strengthening regional partnerships that enhance community identity and prosperity.

Policy G.1.1.1:

Invest in leadership development, professional training, and staff support systems to ensure the Town maintains a skilled, high-performing workforce capable of delivering effective and responsive public services.

Policy G.1.1.2:

Enhance transparency, communication, and accountability in Town operations by regularly reviewing policies, evaluating outcomes, and encouraging innovation and process improvements across all departments.

Policy G.1.1.3:

Continue to utilize citizen advisory groups to provide grassroots input and strengthen community participation in Town governance.

Policy G.1.1.4:

Strengthen collaboration with Montgomery County, regional agencies, and neighboring localities to align planning efforts, share resources, and pursue initiatives that support shared economic, educational, and quality-of-life goals.

Policy G.1.1.5:

Work with surrounding Public Schools and colleges to emphasize technology in the school system as a strategy to attract high-tech industry.

Policy G.1.1.6:

Collaborate with Montgomery County to plan for development or redevelopment of county-owned properties, including former school properties and other strategic sites.



Community Engagement & Communication

Policy G.1.1.7:

Provide accessible, inclusive, and meaningful opportunities for resident involvement in Town decision-making, using a variety of engagement tools and methods to reach diverse audiences.

Policy G.1.1.8:

Regularly update and implement the Town's Communications Plan to reflect new technologies, evolving community needs, and best practices in public outreach.

Policy G.1.1.9:

Adopt a proactive communication model that provides information early, reduces misinformation, and answers common questions before issues arise.

Policy G.1.1.10:

Establish a Town-wide Communications Guide with consistent branding, messaging, and representation across all departments.

Policy G.1.1.11:

Promote positive Town identity by highlighting community assets, events, amenities, and success stories through coordinated media and outreach efforts.

Policy G.1.1.12:

Improve internal communication processes to ensure timely sharing of closures, outages, project updates, and departmental information with staff and the public.

Policy G.1.1.13:

Partner with Virginia Tech School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) and other colleges to provide internship and learning opportunities related to local government.

Policy G.1.1.14:

Promote civic engagement by actively reaching out to residents and local schools to increase awareness of local government activities and opportunities for community participation.

