

**Report on the
Town of Bridgewater - County of Rockingham
Agreement Defining Town
Annexation Rights**



**Commission on Local Government
Commonwealth of Virginia**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMISSION	1
SCOPE OF REVIEW	2
EVALUATION OF THE AGREEMENT	3
Orderly and Regular Growth of Town and County	4
Equitable Sharing of Resources and Liabilities	8
Best Interest of the Community at Large	18
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	25
CONCLUDING COMMENT	26

APPENDICES

Appendix A	The County of Rockingham and the Town of Bridgewater Annexation Agreement
Appendix B	Statistical Profile of the Town of Bridgewater, County of Rockingham, and the Bridgewater Growth Area
Appendix C	Map of the Town of Bridgewater and the Bridgewater Growth Area

**REPORT ON THE
TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER - COUNTY OF ROCKINGHAM
AGREEMENT DEFINING ANNEXATION RIGHTS**

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMISSION

On August 15, 1996 the Town of Bridgewater and Rockingham County submitted to this Commission for review a proposed agreement defining the Town's future annexation rights that had been negotiated under the authority of Article 1.1, Chapter 25 of Title 15.1 of the Code of Virginia. Consistent with the Commission's Rules of Procedure, the Town also submitted data and other material to this body to assist it in its review of the proposed agreement and concurrently gave notice of the submission to 12 local governments with which they were contiguous or with which they shared functions, revenue, or tax sources.¹

Following its receipt of the proposed agreement, the Commission met in Bridgewater on October 28, 1996 to tour the Town and relevant areas in Rockingham County, to receive oral presentation from local officials regarding the agreement, and to conduct a public hearing for the purpose of receiving citizen comment.² The public hearing, which was advertised in

¹Town of Bridgewater and County of Rockingham, **Proposed Annexation, Submission to the Virginia Commission on Local Government** (hereinafter cited as **Joint Submission**). The proposed agreement represents the second such accord negotiated by the Town and County. In 1985 the Commission reviewed an agreement defining annexation rights between Bridgewater and Rockingham County which was subsequently adopted and implemented by the two jurisdictions. (See Commission on Local Government, **Report on the Town of Bridgewater - County of Rockingham Agreement Defining Annexation Rights**, Mar. 1985; and Agreement Defining Annexation Rights between the Town of Bridgewater and the County of Rockingham, Jun. 11, 1985.) The agreement that was filed with the Commission on August 15, 1996 contains elements which reaffirm or extend the terms of the 1985 settlement.

²Due to illness, Commissioner Harold S. Atkinson did not take part in the October 28, 1996 proceedings and, accordingly, was not a participant in the discussions, deliberation, drafting, or approval of the Commission's

accordance with Section 15.1-945.7(B) of the Code of Virginia, was attended by approximately 45 persons and produced testimony from seven individuals. In order to receive additional public comment, the Commission agreed to keep open its record for written submissions through November 11, 1996.

SCOPE OF REVIEW

In 1979 the General Assembly amended the annexation laws of the Commonwealth to authorize towns to negotiate agreements with their counties by which the municipality is permitted to annex, in accordance with conditions specified in such an agreement, merely by the adoption of a municipal ordinance.³ Thus, where town annexations are pursued under such agreements, the State's general annexation process whereby proposed boundary adjustments are decided by the courts subsequent to Commission review is supplanted by the simple and direct process of annexation by town ordinance. The formal and final adoption of such agreements by a town and county, however, divests the town permanently of its authority to seek city status.

While the Code of Virginia grants broad authority to towns and counties to fashion such annexation agreements to meet their peculiar needs and circumstances, there are certain statutorily prescribed criteria which must be met in their development. Based upon those statutory criteria, this Commission is directed to determine in its review:

. . . whether the proposed agreement provides for the orderly and regular growth of the town and county together, for an

report on this agreement defining annexation rights.

³Article 1.1, Chapter 25, Title 15.1, Code of Va.

equitable sharing of resources and liabilities of the town and county, and whether the agreement is in the best interest of the community at large⁴

It should be noted here that whatever the findings and recommendations of the Commission regarding an agreement negotiated under the previously referenced statutory authority, the local governing bodies are free to adopt or reject the proposed agreement as they see fit. If, however, the Commission's review of an agreement of this nature is "unfavorable," the local governing bodies may not adopt the agreement until after they have jointly held an advertised public hearing on the issue.

EVALUATION OF THE AGREEMENT

Briefly stated, the principal provisions of the agreement negotiated by the Town of Bridgewater and Rockingham County would:

1. authorize the Town to annex by municipal ordinance property within a specified area in the County, designated the Bridgewater Growth Area (BGA), following the effective date of the agreement;
2. require the Town to take measures to protect agricultural properties which might be annexed under the agreement;
3. require the Town, simultaneously with the adoption of the agreement, to equalize water and sewer rates charged all non-resident customers in the BGA with those rates charged customers within Bridgewater's current boundaries; and⁵

⁴Sec. 15.1-1058.2, Code of Va.

⁵Following Bridgewater's acquisition of a portion of a water line in the BGA from Rockingham County and its assumption of service to connections along that line, and in anticipation of the current agreement, the Town proceeded to equalize water user fees for all connections in the BGA in late 1995. (Robert F. Holton, Superintendent, Town of Bridgewater,

4. commit the Town not to seek to annex any other areas of the County until the entire BGA is annexed.⁶

In addition, the agreement reaffirms the Town of Bridgewater's permanent renunciation of its authority to seek city status which was effected as an element in a 1985 accord between the two jurisdictions.

As indicated previously, the Commission is required to determine in its review whether the proposed Town – County annexation agreement (1) provides for the orderly and regular growth of the Town and the County together, (2) permits an equitable sharing of the area's resources and liabilities, and (3) is in the best interest of the community at large. In the following sections of this report the Commission endeavors to analyze the proposed Town of Bridgewater - Rockingham County agreement on the basis of these three general criteria.

ORDERLY AND REGULAR GROWTH OF TOWN AND COUNTY

Demographic data indicate that during the decade of the 1980s the rate of population growth in the Town of Bridgewater exceeded that in Rockingham County generally. Between 1980 and 1990 the population of

communication with staff of Commission on Local Government, Jan. 10, 1997.) Further, according to a Town official, Bridgewater does not impose a surcharge on sewer user fees for municipal customers located in the BGA. (Holton, communication with staff of Commission on Local Government, Jan. 3, 1997.)

⁶See Appendix A for the complete text of the proposed County of Rockingham and Town of Bridgewater Annexation Agreement (hereinafter cited as Annexation Agreement).

the Town increased from 3,289 to 3,918 persons, or by 19.1%.⁷ During this same period, the total population of the County increased from 57,038 to 57,482, or by only 0.8%.⁸ The Commission notes that demographic changes encountered by the Town and the County since 1980 were influenced significantly by local boundary change actions. The County population growth during the period in question was reduced significantly due to the annexation by the City of Harrisonburg on December 31, 1982 of 4,702 persons and that of Bridgewater increased by four annexations, which collectively added approximately 290 persons to the Town's populace.⁹ Recent population estimates reveal that since the decennial census both the Town and the County have experienced comparable rates of population

⁷U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, **1980 Census of Population, Number of Inhabitants, Virginia**, Table 4; and, **1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, Virginia**, Table 2. In 1990 there were 989 persons, or 25.2% of the Town's total population, residing in college dormitories or nursing home facilities. (**1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, Virginia**, Table 5.) See Appendix B for a statistical profile of the Town of Bridgewater, Rockingham County, and the Bridgewater Growth Area. See Appendix C for a map of the Town of Bridgewater and that portion of Rockingham County subject to annexation under the terms of the proposed agreement.

⁸**1980 Census of Population, Number of Inhabitants, Virginia**, Table 4; and, **1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, Virginia**, Table 2. Population statistics for Rockingham County include persons residing in the Towns of Bridgewater, Broadway, Dayton, Elkton, Mt. Crawford, and Timberville, and that portion of the Town of Grottoes which lies within the County.

⁹Between 1986 and 1990 the Town expanded its boundaries on four occasions, which accounted for 46% of the population increase experienced by Bridgewater during that period. Since 1990 the Town has effected two annexations, but the territory added to the municipality was essentially uninhabited.

increase. According to these estimates between 1990 and 1994 the population of both jurisdictions increased by 7.2%.¹⁰

With respect to fiscal resources, recent real property assessment data reveal that growth in the Town has been substantially in excess of that experienced in the County generally. From FY1989-90 and FY1995-96 the value of locally assessed real property in Bridgewater increased from \$108.0 million to \$183.8 million, or by 70.2%.¹¹ During the same span of years such values in the County overall grew from \$2,561.0 million to \$2,616.7 million, or by 2.2%.¹² Thus, these property values, the principal source of revenue for both jurisdictions, indicate the considerable growth that has occurred in the Town during that seven-year period.

The prospects for future development within the current boundaries of the Town of Bridgewater appear quite limited. Recent land use statistics reveal that 121 acres, or only 9.8% of Bridgewater's total land area, remain vacant.¹³ Further, of this vacant land, 98 acres are situated within the 100-

¹⁰Julia H. Martin and Donna J. Tolson, **Virginia's Population, 1995 Estimates** (Charlottesville: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, June 1996), and unpublished data from the U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, May 1995 (Town).

¹¹**Joint Submission**, Tab 18. A portion of the increase in Bridgewater's assessed real property values has been due to land and development annexed by the Town pursuant to its 1985 agreement with Rockingham County.

¹²**Ibid.** Assessed property values for Rockingham County include those within Bridgewater, five other incorporated towns, and that portion of the Town of Grottoes located within the County.

¹³**Ibid.**, Tab 13. The vacant land inventory in Bridgewater does not include two tracts, which contain collectively 112 acres, for which development proposals have been approved by the Town.

year floodplain or are located on slopes exceeding 25%.¹⁴ Consequently, only 23 acres, or 1.9% of Bridgewater's land area, are located on vacant land environmentally suited for development.

Although the inventory of vacant land suitable for development within the Town is quite limited, there are two undeveloped tracts, totaling approximately 108 acres, located adjacent to Bridgewater and currently subject to municipal annexation under the terms of the 1985 agreement with Rockingham County. However, one parcel is actively used for agricultural purposes and may not be available for development in the immediate future, and both may have severe constraints on their development potential imposed by environmental factors.¹⁵ Further, a Town official has indicated that neither parcel will be annexed without request by the affected property owners.¹⁶

Under the terms of the proposed agreement the Town would be permitted to annex by ordinance property within an area, specified as the Bridgewater Growth Area, comprising 2.2 square miles of territory and currently containing an estimated 156 persons and approximately \$11.3 million in assessed real property values.¹⁷ While the Town of Bridgewater has indicated that it does not propose to annex any portion of the BGA

¹⁴**Ibid.**, Tab 13.

¹⁵Holton, communication with staff of Commission on Local Government, Dec. 16, 1996.

¹⁶Presentation of J. Jay Litten, Assistant Town Attorney, Town of Bridgewater, **Transcript of Hearing Held before the Commission on Local Government** (hereinafter cited as **Transcript**), Oct. 28, 1996, pp. 36-37.

¹⁷**Joint Submission**, Tabs 14, 16; and Litten, communication with staff of Commission on Local Government, Jan. 16, 1997.

immediately following the adoption of the agreement, that area contains a significant amount of land suitable for development.¹⁸

It is the Commission's judgment that the proposed agreement does promote the orderly and regular growth of the Town and County together. The agreement will help ensure the continued vitality of Bridgewater by affording it the opportunity to annex adjacent areas which are of immediate relevance to the future economic and social viability of the Town. Moreover, the enhanced viability of the Town and its expanded fiscal resources will facilitate the continued economic development of the general area for the benefit of all citizens of Rockingham County. Finally, the proposed agreement permits the parties to modify the annexation accord by joint consent, if such is subsequently deemed appropriate.¹⁹ This provision provides latitude to the jurisdictions such that the agreement may be adapted to meet future circumstances and needs which cannot now be foreseen.

EQUITABLE SHARING OF RESOURCES AND LIABILITIES

The second criterion established by statute for consideration in agreements of this nature calls for an equitable sharing by both jurisdictions of the resources and liabilities of the area. In our judgment, this criterion necessitates an opportunity for both the Town and County to benefit from the growth in the general area sufficient to meet the needs of their

¹⁸**Joint Submission**, Tab 14. The BGA currently contains two residential subdivisions and one commercial operation.

¹⁹The Commission notes that Rockingham County has waived the provision in their 1985 agreement with Bridgewater which required the Town to annex all of the territory subject to municipal annexation under the terms of that accord before seeking further expansion of the Town's boundaries. (Presentation of Litten, **Transcript**, p. 32; and Annexation Agreement, Sec. 11.)

respective residents and commensurate with the contribution each locality makes to the social and economic viability of the general area. The following paragraphs review this consideration.

Resources

As indicated in the previous section of this report, Bridgewater, unlike the vast majority of Virginia towns, experienced a significant increase in its population during the past decade. Further, in recent years the Town has benefitted from growth in its real property tax base surpassing that of the County generally. Much of the Town's growth in population and tax base in recent years has been due to its periodic annexations and limited amount of vacant land remaining in the municipality appropriate for future development will constrict Bridgewater's ability to continue to share in the growth of its area.

While, as noted above, Bridgewater has experienced growth in its fiscal base during the past decade, the evidence indicates that in recent years the Town's general fund revenues have been insufficient to cover its general governmental expenses.²⁰ A Town official has reported that revenue from the operation of the municipal utility systems routinely has been used to subsidize general governmental services.²¹ These interfund transfers include a charge to recover costs borne by the general fund for the

²⁰The deficit in the Town's general fund has ranged from \$60,288 in FY1992-93 to \$318,790 in FY1994-95. (Town of Bridgewater, **Financial and Compliance Reports, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1992 - Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1996.**)

²¹Presentation of Holton, **Transcript**, p. 81.

administration of enterprise activity and substantial additional revenue.²² A representative of Bridgewater has indicated that this interfund transfer policy is followed to reduce the real property tax burden on the significant elderly segment of the Town's population.²³ The impact of the real estate tax on the resident population of the municipality is increased due to the fact that tax exempt properties within the Town comprise a major portion of Bridgewater's fiscal base.²⁴

With respect to the issue of an equitable sharing of resources and liabilities, it is relevant to note the significance of the Town of Bridgewater to Rockingham County generally. In this regard, recent data indicate that as of the end of the first quarter of 1996 four manufacturing firms located in the Town employed approximately 1,080 persons, or 10% of the County's

²²According to the Town's audit reports, the interfund administrative fee was instituted during the FY1992-93 period. (**Financial and Compliance Reports, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1992 - Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1996.**) Transfers from the Town's enterprise fund to its general governmental accounts have increased from \$238,000 in FY1991-92 to \$1,043,058 in FY1994-95. (**Ibid.**)

²³Presentation of Holton, **Transcript**, pp. 81-82. Located in the Town is a major comprehensive extended care facility for individuals of retirement age. The presence of that facility in the Town is reflected in the demographic profile of Bridgewater. Despite the presence of the students enrolled at Bridgewater College, as of 1990 (the most recent year for which data are available) the percentage of Bridgewater's population age 65 years or older was 21.1%, or more than double the comparable figure for the State generally (10.7%). (**1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, Virginia**, Table 2.)

²⁴Data presented by the Town reveal that in FY1995-96 tax exempt property comprised 21.7% of Bridgewater's total real property assessables. (**Joint Submission**, Tab 18; and Town of Bridgewater, **Town of Bridgewater's Response to the Commission on Local Government's Request for Additional Information Dated October 3, 1996**, (hereinafter cited as **Town Response**), Oct. 28, 1996.)

total of such employment.²⁵ Bridgewater is also one of Rockingham County's retail centers, with the commercial establishments in Bridgewater accounting in 1992 (the latest year for which the data are available) for nearly 8% of the total retail trade in the County.²⁶ Further, the Town is the site of Bridgewater College, an institution which enhances the educational, cultural, and social milieu of the general community. Thus, Bridgewater contributes substantially to the economic life of Rockingham County.

The simplified annexation procedure authorized by the proposed agreement would permit Bridgewater to annex territory within an area embracing a significant amount of land suitable for future development. While Bridgewater does not propose to exercise this annexation authority immediately following the adoption of the agreement, Town officials have indicated that annexations within the BGA will be undertaken upon request of the affected property owners or when the Town determines such to be appropriate.²⁷ By means of annexations authorized under the proposed agreement, Bridgewater would be permitted, in our judgment, an equitable opportunity to share in the fiscal assets of the area.

While the annexation authority extended to Bridgewater under the terms of the proposed agreement will promote the continued viability of the

²⁵**Town Response**; and Virginia Employment Commission, "Covered Employment and Wages in Virginia for the quarter ending March 31, 1996."

²⁶U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, **1992 Census of Retail Trade: Virginia**, Table 4. Bridgewater in 1992 contained seven wholesale establishments which also contributed to the economic vitality of the County. (U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, **1992 Census of Wholesale Trade: Virginia**, Table 4.)

²⁷Annexation Agreement, Secs. 7 and 8. The Town has stated that, as a "general rule," it will annex property in the BGA only when a developer or property owner agrees to assume the cost of extending utility lines throughout a proposed development. (**Joint Submission**, Tab 21.)

municipality, any negative impact on County resources resulting from the Town's exercise of such authority should be modest and shortlived. Town annexations in Virginia, unlike those of cities, do not remove property from a county's tax rolls. While town annexations do constrict some of a county's secondary revenue sources (e.g., automobile license taxes, consumer utility taxes, and local option sales taxes), no significant loss of revenue to Rockingham County is anticipated as a result of annexations effected by Bridgewater under the terms of the proposed agreement.²⁸ Moreover, any development facilitated by the extension of Bridgewater's services to annexed areas will benefit not only the Town, but the County as well. On the basis of these considerations, the Commission concludes that the proposed agreement should provide the Town of Bridgewater and Rockingham County with an equitable sharing of the area's resources.

Liabilities for Services

Bridgewater plays an important role in the provision of public services to its general area. In terms of utilities, the Town not only provides water and sewerage to residents, businesses, and other facilities within its corporate limits, but also serves a limited number of connections beyond its present boundaries.²⁹ With respect to future needs in the areas adjacent to Bridgewater, the Commission notes that the current Rockingham County comprehensive plan, which was based upon an in-depth analysis of the County's needs and anticipated growth, calls for future development to be

²⁸Estimates developed by the Town indicate that, assuming the annexation of the entire BGA immediately after the formal adoption of the agreement, the County would experience a reduction of approximately \$15,000 in general fund receipts during the first year after annexation. (Litten, letter to staff of Commission on Local Government, Dec. 2, 1996.)

²⁹The availability of Town utilities has been instrumental in the development of property annexed by Bridgewater under the terms of the 1985 agreement with Rockingham County.

concentrated adjacent to Bridgewater and, thus, within the territory subject to annexation by the Town under the terms of the proposed agreement.³⁰ If such development occurs, the Town would be, in our view, the appropriate entity to provide urban services to those areas.

Annexations by Bridgewater under the terms of the proposed agreement will, therefore, place additional service responsibilities on the Town. While this expanded responsibility for public services constitutes a liability to be borne by the Town, the extension of such services by Bridgewater will provide the municipality with additional utility revenue which will assist it with that financial responsibility.

Water. Bridgewater's water treatment plant, according to its rated capacity, can receive and treat 1.5 million gallons per day (MGD) of water from the North River.³¹ The Town's water distribution system, which serves 1,774 connections within its current boundaries and seven connections in the BGA, currently requires approximately 0.7 MGD, leaving the system with an unused reserve of 0.8 MGD, or 53% of its rated capacity.³² In terms of storage capacity, the Town has four tanks, which

³⁰County of Rockingham, **Comprehensive Plan for Rockingham County, Virginia: Summary**, p. 17, and Map, "Land Use Plan." A Rockingham County official has indicated that, consistent with the comprehensive plan, the County has a policy of encouraging growth in and around its towns. (Presentation of Joseph S. Paxton, Deputy Administrator, County of Rockingham, **Transcript**, pp. 43-44.)

³¹The Town is also developing a groundwater well to be used as an alternative to the North River in the event of an emergency. (Presentation of Litten, **Transcript**, p. 18.)

³²**Town Response.** As noted previously, the Town no longer places any surcharge on either water or sewer connections and user fees for customers located in the BGA. Bridgewater also serves 20 water connections beyond the BGA. (**Ibid.**) In 1983 the Town of Bridgewater signed an agreement with Rockingham County and the Town of Dayton which permits the County to purchase up to 0.35 MGD of potable water from Bridgewater. Since that

collectively hold 1.1 million gallons of treated water, or 157% of the system's average daily demand.³³ In view of the excess capacity in the municipal system, we believe that Bridgewater is capable of meeting the needs of the BGA for the foreseeable future. Further, although a portion of the BGA is traversed by water lines owned by the County, the Town is currently the only source of treated water available to serve the BGA and its environs.³⁴

Sewage Treatment. The Town of Bridgewater operates a sewage collection system which presently serves 1,698 connections, including four in the BGA.³⁵ The sewage collected by the Town's system is treated by the Harrisonburg - Rockingham Regional Sewer Authority (HRRSA) at a plant located in Mount Crawford. Bridgewater, which is a member of the HRRSA,

date, the County has developed its own water source and purchases from Bridgewater have been reduced significantly in recent years. The 1985 agreement also allows the Town to purchase water from the County in times of emergency. (**Ibid.**)

³³**Ibid.** Since March 1985 the Town has almost doubled its capacity to store treated water.

³⁴Rockingham County owns a 12-inch water line that extends along State Route 1310 (Mt. Crawford Avenue) and State Route 257 (Dinkle Avenue) from the current corporate limits of the Town to the eastern boundary of the BGA. That County-owned line formerly served seven connections in the BGA. Bridgewater's recent purchase of a segment of the County's water line along Mt. Crawford Avenue has transferred responsibility for serving those customers to the Town. (Holton, communication with staff of Commission on Local Government, Jan. 10, 1997.) Under the terms of the proposed agreement, the Town is required to purchase from the County the remaining portion of the water line when it is annexed by Bridgewater. (See Annexation Agreement, Sec. 9.)

³⁵**Town Response.** There are also four connections to County sewer lines in that area. (**Ibid.**)

is authorized 1.12 MGD of treatment capacity at the regional facility.³⁶ Since Bridgewater currently discharges an average of 0.65 MGD of effluent to the HRRSA plant for treatment, it retains 42% of its allocation for future use.³⁷ In our judgment, the Town of Bridgewater has the capacity to assume responsibility for meeting the sewerage needs of the areas eligible for annexation under the terms of the proposed agreement.

Other Urban Services. With respect to other urban service considerations, the evidence indicates that the Town of Bridgewater currently offers a broad array of services to its residents and, in our judgment, has the capacity to extend those services to the areas annexed as the need arises. First, the Town provides its residents, on a fee basis, twice-weekly solid waste collection and recycling services.³⁸ Residents in the BGA, and those in the general area, can currently contract directly with private entities for collection services or dispose of their household waste directly at the County landfill.³⁹ Second, the Town's planning and land development control activities which are administered by a planning commission, guided by a comprehensive plan, and implemented through zoning and subdivision ordinances, are well designed to guide development in the BGA in a manner to protect the distinctive character of the

³⁶The HRRSA plant is authorized to treat 16.0 MGD. The average daily flow to that facility in 1995 from all sources was 8.14 MGD, or 51% of its permitted capacity. (**Town Response.**) In addition to Bridgewater, the City of Harrisonburg, the Town of Dayton, and Rockingham County are also members of the HRRSA.

³⁷**Town Response.**

³⁸Presentation of Holton, **Transcript**, p. 75. The Town charges its residents \$9.50 per month for refuse collection and recycling.

³⁹According to Town officials, private collectors serving the BGA charge \$13.00 per month for solid waste collection services. (**Ibid.**, pp. 75-76.)

community and its natural setting.⁴⁰ Although Bridgewater does not employ a full-time professional planning staff, the Town administers and enforces its planning and development control ordinances through other staff, principally the Town Superintendent (i. e., its chief administrative officer).⁴¹ Third, crime prevention and protection services offered by the Town's police department will provide a valuable overlay of law enforcement activity. The duty shifts of the department, which consists of six full-time sworn officers, are structured so that the Town is regularly patrolled 24 hours per day.⁴²

In addition, Bridgewater has been attentive to the public works needs of its community. The Town's development control instruments require the installation of curbs, gutters, and stormwater drainage systems in all new subdivisions.⁴³ Streetlighting is also provided by Bridgewater with additional lights being installed upon requests from citizens, and upon a determination by the Town that they are appropriate.⁴⁴ Further, the data

⁴⁰Bridgewater adopted its most recent comprehensive plan in 1992 and modified its zoning ordinance in 1996. Although the Town's current subdivision ordinance was adopted in 1990, it has been amended periodically to reflect changes in State statutes and to accommodate changing development patterns in Bridgewater. The Commission notes that Bridgewater does not have an adopted five-year capital improvements program as part of its comprehensive planning process.

⁴¹Presentation of Holton, **Transcript**, p. 78.

⁴²**Town Response**.

⁴³Town of Bridgewater, **Land Subdivision Ordinance, Sec. 5-25.1 and Addendum - Standards for Improvements** (Sec. 5-28). Although Bridgewater does not have policies for the provision of these facilities in existing developments at citizen request, curb, gutters and sidewalks are often installed as part of the Town's continuing street improvement activities.

⁴⁴**Town Response**.

indicate that between Fiscal Years 1990/91 and 1994/95, the Town of Bridgewater expended approximately \$1.0 million of local funds to improve and maintain the public streets within its current boundaries.⁴⁵

Finally, it is incumbent upon this Commission to acknowledge Bridgewater's notable effort to enhance the quality of life for its residents and the general community through the provision of recreational facilities, the maintenance of open space, and the adoption of measures to protect and promote the aesthetic qualities of the Town. Since 1985 the Town has almost tripled the amount of public land within its municipal boundaries that is devoted to park and recreational purposes.⁴⁶ As a consequence, the Town currently owns and maintains seven parks, collectively comprising approximately 86 acres, and a community center.⁴⁷ In terms of aesthetics, the Town requires the planting of "green" strips to buffer all new parking lots and has instituted a program, which has merited an award from the Virginia Urban Forestry Council, of planting trees along its public thoroughfares.⁴⁸ Moreover, the Town proposes to develop a greenway park for passive recreational use in the floodplain of Cook's Creek which traverses

⁴⁵**Ibid.** Local contributions by Bridgewater represented 56% of the total funds expended by that municipality for street maintenance and improvement between Fiscal Years 1990/91 and 1994/95.

⁴⁶Presentation of Litten, **Transcript**, p. 20. The Town assigns two full-time employees to the maintenance of public properties within its jurisdiction. (Presentation of Holton, **Transcript**, p. 57.)

⁴⁷Town of Bridgewater, **Comprehensive Plan**, Oct. 12, 1992, pp. 55-56. One of the Town's parks contains a nine-hole golf course, which was constructed by municipal employees and students from a County high school. That park is located in the area annexed by the Town under the terms of its 1985 agreement with Rockingham County.

⁴⁸Presentation of Holton, **Transcript**, p. 57. Using local funds and financial assistance from the Small Business Administration, the Virginia Department of Forestry, and Bridgewater College, the Town has planted one tree for every housing unit in the municipality.

the BGA.⁴⁹ In our judgment, the efforts by localities to protect and preserve their aesthetic qualities and distinctive features address a critical public concern and are essential for the preservation of a sense of community and civic pride. In an era marked all too frequently by nondescript development and intrusive outdoor advertising which diminish the human experience, the attention of the elected and administrative leadership of Bridgewater to this fundamental issue requires our recognition.

Summary. Under the terms of the proposed agreement, the simplified annexation authority which was granted the Town of Bridgewater by the 1985 accord with Rockingham County will be extended to encompass additional unincorporated territory adjacent to the municipality. While the Town does not propose to exercise this authority immediately following the adoption of the current agreement, the extended annexation authority will provide Bridgewater with an opportunity for future growth, while concurrently committing it to providing appropriate services to the annexed areas in a timely manner. From our perspective, the proposed agreement does allow for an equitable sharing of the area's resources and liabilities.

BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE

The third criterion prescribed by statute for Commission consideration in reviewing an agreement defining a town's annexation rights is whether such an agreement is in "the best interest of the community at

⁴⁹As part of the proposed greenway, the Town has constructed the Cook's Creek Arboretum on property dedicated for public purposes by the developer of an adjacent multi-family complex. As other parcels located in the BGA along Cook's Creek are developed in the future, the Town will seek the public dedication of floodplain land so that the greenway can eventually extend the full length of that stream in the municipality. (Town of Bridgewater, "A Tour of Bridgewater as the 1985 and 1996 Annexation Perimeters," Oct. 28, 1996.)

large.”⁵⁰ In the preceding sections of this report, the Commission has found that the proposed Town of Bridgewater - Rockingham County agreement provides for the orderly and regular growth of the Town and County and facilitates an equitable sharing of the area’s public resources and liabilities. These attributes are clearly promotive of the best interest of the community at large. There are, however, additional aspects of the agreement which are relevant to this criterion and which merit comment in this report.

Enhancement of Development of the Bridgewater Environs

The proposed agreement can facilitate the growth of the Town of Bridgewater and provide that municipality with additional fiscal resources which can be used to improve and extend its public services. Bridgewater’s increased capacity for the provision of public services can be a positive factor in supporting desirable development in the area. Any development which does occur in areas annexed will benefit both the Town and Rockingham County. This ramification of the proposed agreement is clearly in the best interest of the community at large.

For purposes of analyzing the prospective impact of the proposed agreement on the "community at large," it is relevant to review the ramifications of the preceding agreement between the two jurisdictions on the annexed areas and the general community. As a previous section of this report has indicated, between 1985 and 1996 the Town utilized the simplified annexation procedure authorized by that earlier accord to expand its borders on six occasions, collectively adding slightly more than 1.0 square mile of territory and approximately 290 persons to the municipality. The 1985 accord required the Town to extend water and sewerage to all properties annexed within five years of the effective date of their

⁵⁰Sec. 15.1-1058.2, Code of Va.

annexation, if such services were needed or requested by the affected property owners. According to uncontested testimony by a Town official, water and sewer lines were extended to annexed properties well within the specified five-year period.⁵¹ In that endeavor, the Town has installed or replaced approximately 5.0 miles of water lines and approximately 4.5 miles of sewage collection lines in the annexed areas since 1985.⁵² Further, Bridgewater made other improvements to its utility systems in those areas, such as the construction of a new 510,000 gallon water storage tank, the installation of fire hydrants, and the repair or upgrade of sewage pump stations.⁵³

In addition, the Town extended other municipal services, such as solid waste collection, law enforcement, street maintenance, and street lighting, to each annexed area immediately following the effective date of its incorporation into Bridgewater. In terms of law enforcement, this Commission's report on the 1985 agreement between Bridgewater and Rockingham County recommended that the Town strengthen its police department in order to assume additional responsibilities in areas annexed

⁵¹Presentation of Holton, **Transcript**, p. 71.

⁵²**Town Response**. The totals do not include those constructed by developers and subsequently turned over to the Town for maintenance. As indicated previously, the Town adheres to a policy that requires developers to install utility lines throughout a proposed development as a condition of annexation by the municipality. [**Subdivision Ordinance, Addendum – Standards for Improvements** (Sec 5-28).] Some of the utility projects undertaken by the Town in the annexed areas were completed with the assistance of State and federal grants.

⁵³The construction of the new water storage tank, as well as the installation of new mains and fire hydrants, improved water pressure and fire flow to the areas annexed by the Town.

under that instrument.⁵⁴ Since that date, Bridgewater has increased the size of its police force from four to six full-time, sworn law enforcement officers, with the additional officers enabling the Town's police department to patrol within its jurisdiction 24 hours a day. It is reasonable to conclude that the added patrols contributed to the fact that as of 1995 Bridgewater had the lowest rate of reported major crime amongst all of the 29 towns in Virginia with a 1990 population of 3,500 persons or more which participated in the Uniform Crime Reporting System.⁵⁵ Further, the average clearance rate for major crimes occurring within the Town increased from 6.95% in the 1982-1985 period to 21.01% during the 1992-1995 time frame.⁵⁶ These statistics suggest that the Town has improved significantly the law enforcement services provided within its boundaries.

Virtually all of the territory annexed by Bridgewater under the terms of the 1985 instrument was vacant at the time of its incorporation into the Town. The development which has subsequently occurred in those areas has been due, in large part, to the availability of municipal services. Those areas currently contain six residential subdivisions, three multi-family

⁵⁴See **Report on the Town of Bridgewater - County of Rockingham Agreement Defining Annexation Rights**, pp. 14-16.

⁵⁵Virginia Department of State Police, **Crime in Virginia, 1995**, Table VIII. In 1995 the Town's crime rate was 714.29 per 100,000 population. The category of "major crime" consists of murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.

⁵⁶**Ibid.** A crime is "cleared" when it is solved by arrest or exceptional means. (**Ibid.**, p. 2.) "Exceptional means" are those instances where law enforcement officers know the identity and location of a suspect and have information to support arrest, charging, and prosecution, but they are prevented from taking action by circumstances outside police control. (U. S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, **Dictionary of Criminal Justice Data Terminology**, 1981, pp. 39-40).

developments, a County high school, and a bank.⁵⁷ Further, the extension of Bridgewater's boundaries permitted a major retail firm to expand its distribution center in Bridgewater and thus, to remain a significant component of the County's economic base.⁵⁸ Not only did Bridgewater facilitate the physical development of the areas annexed through the provision of basic urban services, but the visual quality of those areas has been enhanced by the application of the Town's planning and land development control ordinances and civic beautification programs. In our judgment, the Town of Bridgewater has properly managed the areas it annexed under the previous agreement. The historical evidence strongly supports a conclusion that the continued expansion of Bridgewater's boundaries under the terms proposed in the current agreement is in the best interest of the community at large.

Relinquishment of Authority to Seek City Status

Under the prior agreement between the Town and Rockingham County, Bridgewater relinquished in perpetuity its authority to seek independent city status.⁵⁹ The proposed agreement currently before this Commission is, essentially, an extension of the previous instrument and constitutes a reaffirmation by the Town of its previous commitment to

⁵⁷**Town Response**. The residential development that has occurred in the areas annexed by the Town currently contain approximately 500 dwelling units. Bridgewater has also approved a development plan for a shopping center which will be located in the area annexed by the Town pursuant to the prior agreement. (Litten, communication with staff of Commission on Local Government, Nov. 14, 1996.)

⁵⁸**Ibid**. The distribution center currently employs approximately 700 persons, or almost 3.0% of the County's total nonagricultural wage and salary employment in 1996. ("Covered Employment and Wages in Virginia for the quarter ending March 31, 1996.")

⁵⁹Agreement Defining Annexation Rights between the Town of Bridgewater and the County of Rockingham, Jun. 11, 1985, Sec. 1.

remain a constituent element of Rockingham County. The Town's population and its fiscal assets, thus, will be preserved as part of Rockingham County, supporting the needs of the County generally. Unless a variance in political values and service needs creates insurmountable differences, the best interest of the community at large is, from our perspective, served by this arrangement.

Simplification of Annexation Process

The proposed agreement continues the application of the authority granted the Town of Bridgewater by the earlier accord to annex property within a specified area by municipal ordinance. As previous sections of this report have indicated, the simplified annexation process has permitted the growth of the Town in a manner which has avoided protracted and expensive adversarial annexation proceedings. Although the State's traditional annexation process has many commendable features, experience has shown that such proceedings can be costly in terms of legal fees, consultants' charges, administrative time, and other expenses incidental to litigation. Moreover, contested annexation cases have often resulted in strained interlocal relations which often inhibit cooperative efforts, collaboration on mutual problems, and long-range planning. The continuation of this nonadversarial boundary extension policy will permit the growth of Bridgewater with a minimum of attendant costs. This element in the proposed agreement is in the general interest of the community at large.

Protection of Agricultural Properties

The proposed agreement contains several provisions which reaffirm Bridgewater's commitment to protect agricultural operations in the territory subject to its annexation authority.⁶⁰ First, the agreement states:

⁶⁰Annexation Agreement, Sec. 7.

The Town has no desire to annex acreage which is principally and actively devoted to agricultural production unless such acreage is largely embraced by property appropriate for annexation and cannot, in the judgment of the Town, be reasonably excluded therefrom.

While this provision would allow the incidental annexation of agricultural properties which might be inseparable from developed areas, it is intended to prevent any large and indiscriminate annexation of such properties by the Town.⁶¹ Second, the proposed agreement commits the Town to protect existing farmlands incidentally annexed "through the use of zoning and land use ordinances, including the land use assessment system."⁶² This Commission recognizes and fully supports the State's strong concern for the preservation of agricultural properties, and we are cognizant of the fact that Rockingham County is the premier agricultural resource of the Commonwealth.⁶³ We consider the provisions of the current agreement which continues the Town's commitment to protect agricultural lands to be fully consistent with the best interests of the community at large.

⁶¹According to a Town official, Bridgewater has never annexed any active agricultural operations under the terms of the 1985 agreement with Rockingham County. (Presentation of Holton, **Transcript**, p. 72.)

⁶²The Town of Bridgewater's zoning ordinance contains provisions for two agricultural zones which are designed to permit farming and other related activities. Neither zone allows residential subdivisions as permitted uses. Such accommodations which prevent encroachment into agricultural properties are rare for a municipality the size of Bridgewater. The Commission notes, however, that the Town has not adopted a use value assessment ordinance, which could be beneficial in instances in which active agricultural properties are incidentally annexed. (Litten, communication with staff of Commission on Local Government, Nov. 14, 1996.)

⁶³The average market value of agricultural products sold by farms in Rockingham County in 1992 was \$199,033, while the comparable figure for the State collectively was \$48,694. (U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, **1992 Census of Agriculture, Virginia**, Table 1.)

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission finds that the proposed agreement, as required by statute, provides concurrently for the orderly and regular growth of the Town of Bridgewater and Rockingham County, facilitates an equitable sharing of the area's public resources and liabilities, and is in the best interest of the community at large. Based on such findings, we report the proposed agreement "favorably."

Although the Commission does not recommend any modifications to the proposed agreement, we wish to offer comment with respect to several of the Town's current fiscal procedures. During our review of the proposed agreement, the Commission was presented with data indicating that in recent years Bridgewater has adhered to a practice of transferring significant funds from its water and sewer enterprise accounts to support its general governmental activity. We recognize the extent to which this practice occurs in Virginia municipalities and the ramifications of that policy for a jurisdiction with a demographic profile such as that of Bridgewater. However, such a practice should only be utilized upon careful consideration by a local governing body and upon a determination that it is fair and reasonable. It should not be permitted to delay essential adjustments in general fund revenues and expenses. Therefore, we recommend that the Town institute a critical review of its general fund receipts in order to avoid the necessity of undue reliance on transfers from its enterprise accounts. Further, we strongly recommend that the Town adopt and annually revise a capital improvements program as authorized by Section 15.1-464 of the Code of Virginia.⁶⁴ With future expansions of the Town boundaries and the

⁶⁴Section 15.1-464, Code of Virginia authorizes local planning commissions to prepare and revise annually a five-year capital improvements program, based on the comprehensive plan for the locality, for submission to the governing body or chief administrative officer of the affected jurisdiction. The adoption of a capital improvements program assists localities in the proper implementation of their development control

consequent increase in Bridgewater's fiscal responsibilities, a capital improvements program will grow in significance.

Finally, the Commission has been advised that the parties are giving consideration to amending the proposed agreement to permit annexations effected under its terms to occur at times other than the end of the calendar year.⁶⁵ Such an amendment would be consistent with the general law provisions governing the traditional annexation process by which the affected jurisdictions can agree to have annexations occur at any date of their selection.⁶⁶ Accordingly, if the Town of Bridgewater and Rockingham County agree to amend their proposed agreement to provide flexibility in the establishment of effective dates for annexation, such an amendment would be consistent with general law and endorsed by this Commission.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

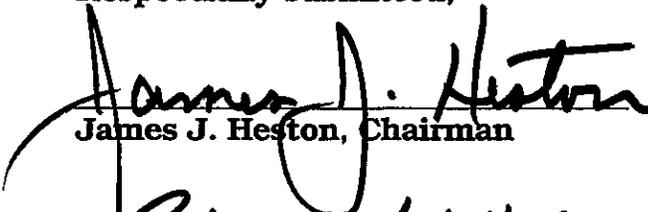
As stated previously in this report, agreements defining a town's annexation rights are significant documents containing major grants and concessions of legal authority by the two jurisdictions which are parties to them. We commend the leadership of the two jurisdictions for their collaborative efforts to serve their residents.

measures.

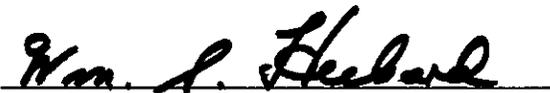
⁶⁵Litten, communication with staff of Commission on Local Government, Jan. 16, 1997.

⁶⁶Sec. 15.1-1041(d), Code of Va.

Respectfully submitted,


James J. Heston, Chairman


Geline B. Williams, Vice Chairman


William S. Hubbard


Frank Raflo

**THE COUNTY OF ROCKINGHAM
AND THE TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER**

ANNEXATION AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into this 9th day of August, 1995, by and between Rockingham County, Virginia, a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia, (County) and the Town of Bridgewater, Virginia, a municipal corporation of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Town).

RECITALS

A. The County adopted a Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Rockingham County which promotes growth in and around the incorporated towns of the County and encourages the development of an Annexation Agreement between the Town and County for the annexation into the Town of those areas shown on Exhibit A and designated by this agreement as the Bridgewater Growth Area (BGA).

B. The Town and County wish to enter into an Agreement defining annexation rights pursuant to § 15.1-1058.1 of the Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended.

C. The Town and County have agreed to allow the Town to annex as much of the BGA by ordinance as the Town deems necessary, subject to this Agreement.

D. The Town has relinquished its right to seek independent city status as set forth in a previous annexation Agreement between the Town and the County dated June 11, 1985, and reaffirmed in this Agreement.

E. The Town and County have negotiated this new Agreement regarding annexation which will be in the best interests of all the citizens of the County, including the citizens of the

Town and the BGA.

Pursuant to § 15.1-1058.1 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, the Town and County, in consideration of the mutual covenants and agreements contained herein, agree to perform the following acts and to be bound by the following statements and principles in settlement of all annexation issues.

1. Relinquishment of City Status. The Town hereby reaffirms that it has permanently relinquished its right to seek city status effective the 11th day of June, 1985.

2. Annexation of All or Portion of Land. The Town shall have the right to annex all or any portion of the BGA by ordinance(s) enacted any time after the effective date of this agreement; provided, however, that any area annexed shall be contiguous with the then corporate Town limits. Any annexation ordinance adopted shall meet all requirements of law and, whether required by law or not, the Town shall first hold a public hearing on such ordinance and advertise the hearing for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town and County. The Town shall give written notice of the hearing to the County. Any annexation ordinance(s) adopted shall provide for an effective date of December 31 of the year of final adoption. Certified copies of any and all annexation ordinances shall be filed where required by law, including with the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Rockingham County, Virginia, the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and all other appropriate local, state and federal agencies that require notice of annexation, but the failure to file with any such local, state or federal agency shall not affect the validity of any such ordinance.

3. The Annexation Ordinance. Any annexation ordinance adopted by the Town shall include, but not be limited to:

- a. A metes and bounds description of the property to be annexed.
- b. A map showing all parcels to be annexed.
- c. An accurate census of the area to be annexed.

4. Extension of Services. The Town shall extend water and sewer services to

the property lines of all property owners, including residential, commercial and industrial, in any annexed area in accordance with then existing policies of the Town, such extension of water and sewer services to be concluded within five (5) years from the date of annexation if those services are requested by property owners. Other municipal services, in addition to water and sewer, will be extended by the Town into annexed areas on the effective date of each annexation. All such services will be of the same quantity and quality as are available generally within the entire town.

5. *No Reimbursement of Revenues.* Each party shall be entitled to keep whatever revenues flow to it by reason of any annexations, without any reimbursement of revenues by the Town to the County. This provision is subject to the terms of the joint water agreement among the County, the Town, and the Town of Dayton, dated April 11, 1983 as amended.

6. *Equalization of Utility Charges.* The Town agrees that simultaneously with the execution of this Agreement, it will equalize the rates it charges for water and sewer customers outside of its boundaries but within the BGA so that the rates are the same as those charged within its corporate boundaries.

7. *Agriculture.* The Town has no desire to annex acreage which is principally and actively devoted to agricultural production unless such acreage is largely embraced by property appropriate for annexation and cannot, in the judgment of the Town, be reasonably excluded therefrom. The Town commits that it will continue to protect existing farm lands within any annexed area through the use of zoning and land use ordinances, including the land use assessment system. The Town states its intention to allow the continued agricultural use of any farm land which it annexes by way of favorable ordinances, subject to best management practices.

8. *Development of Area.* Although the Town does not commit itself to annex any of the land within the BGA it does intend to consider seriously requests for annexation and the needs therefor and the feasibility thereof within these areas from time to time. The goal of both the Town and County is to provide for orderly development of the land and to serve the needs of the

area as and when they arise. The County pledges that as to any lands within the BGA that it will consult with the Town before approving subdivisions and rezoning. The County's obligation to consult shall be complied with if the Town is given twenty (20) days to comment on any final subdivision plat. As to zoning, the County shall give thirty (30) days written notice of each public hearing date to the Town and the Town shall give its written comments to the County at least seven days prior to such public hearing. The right to make such changes prior to annexation is reserved by the County but the Town shall be consulted in each instance. No public hearing concerning the unannexed portion of the BGA, either *de jure* or *de facto*, shall be held by either body without at least twenty days notice to the other.

9. Water and Sewer Lines Owned by the County. County Customers.

The parties agree that the Town will purchase from the County the water line or portion thereof, along Routes 1310 and 257 upon the annexation of the land on both sides of the water line and said roads. The purchase price shall be calculated as follows:

Original cost of the line				Life expectancy of the line less the years it has been in service
+		X		÷
6% simple interest from the date it was installed				Life expectancy of the line

The Town and the County agree that the original total cost of the entire water line along Routes 1310 and 257 from its beginning at the old corporate limits of the Town to the easternmost line of the real estate presently designated as tax map number 137-A-5A (which is a part of the southeastern boundary of the BGA) was \$110,087.35; that the line was installed on August 14, 1984; and that the life expectancy of the line is 50 years.

The purchase price shall be paid at least 10 days prior to the effective date of an annexation of land lying on both sides of said roads. As used in this section, the term "water line" means all pipe and the easements and appurtenances associated with it. If only a portion of the water line is purchased, as provided above, the obligations of this section shall be pro-rated accordingly.

Further, if on the effective date of any annexation made under this agreement the County owns any other water and sewer facilities in the area annexed, the Town shall purchase (and the County will sell) those facilities in accordance with the principles set forth in this section.

Any real estate annexed by the Town under this Agreement which is connected to County water or sewer lines shall become a water and sewer customer of the Town within ninety days from the time the Town extends water or sewer service to the property.

10. Planning. A comprehensive plan for the use and development of the entire BGA shall be developed no later than two years from this date by the Town. Before adopting the plan the Town shall refer it to the Planning Commission of Rockingham County who shall study and comment on it to the Board of Supervisors of the County. The County, through the Board of Supervisors, shall then make whatever comments it desires to the Town. The County and Town agree to promptly notify each other of any requested or planned changes in land use, zoning, special use or development regulations which would affect the BGA. The County and the Town further agree to solicit, welcome, and carefully consider the views of each other in this regard.

11. Waiver of Portion of Previous Agreement. The provisions of paragraph nine (9) of the existing Annexation Agreement dated June 11, 1985 between Bridgewater and Rockingham County are hereby waived.

12. No Annexation Outside Agreed Area. Town agrees that until the entire BGA is annexed it will not voluntarily seek to annex any other areas. Citizen petitions for annexation shall be processed in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Code of Virginia in effect at the time of the petitions.

13. Sections are Severable. In the event any section of this Agreement is found to be illegal or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such finding shall apply only to that section and all other provisions shall remain in full force and effect, except that if the Town's renunciation of city status is held illegal or unenforceable County shall have the right to withdraw its consent to annexation and Town shall have the right to rescind its agreement under paragraph

six (6) to equalize utility charges.

14. Costs and Attorney's Fees. Each party to this Agreement shall pay its own attorney's fees; all other costs of annexation shall be paid by Town.

15. Right to Modify or Amend. The Town and County reserve the right to modify this Agreement by joint consent and in writing whenever the needs of the Town and County and of the citizens of each require such modification or amendment.

16. Entire Agreement. This written Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the County and Town on the issue of annexation of the BGA.

WITNESS the following signatures and seals.

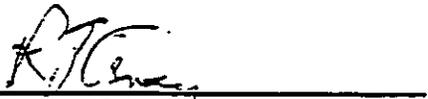
COUNTY OF ROCKINGHAM

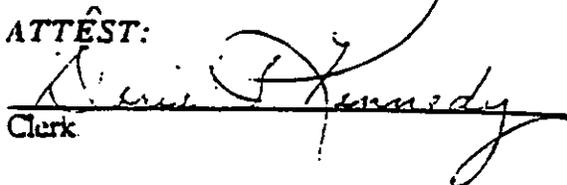
By 
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

County Administrator

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER

By 
Mayor

ATTEST:

Clerk

**STATISTICAL PROFILE OF THE TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER,
COUNTY OF ROCKINGHAM, AND THE BRIDGEWATER GROWTH AREA**

	Town of Bridgewater	County of Rockingham	Bridgewater Growth Area
Population (1994)	4,199	61,600	156
Land Area (Square Miles)	1.93	853.42	2.22
Real Estate Assessed Values (FY1996)	\$183,817,900	\$2,616,664,580	\$11,300,000
Existing Land Use (Acres)			
Residential	555	8,954	128
Commercial	26	N/A	2
Industrial	75	N/A	2
Public and Semi-Public	140	N/A	N/A
Streets or Rights-of-Way	63	N/A	N/A
Agricultural, Wooded, or Vacant	233	534,694	1,287
Other	142	N/A	N/A

NOTES:

N/A=Not Available

Population estimate for the Bridgewater Growth Area is for 1996.

Land use data for Rockingham County are for 1990.

SOURCES:

County of Rockingham, Comprehensive Plan for Rockingham County, Virginia, Summary, Dec. 1993.

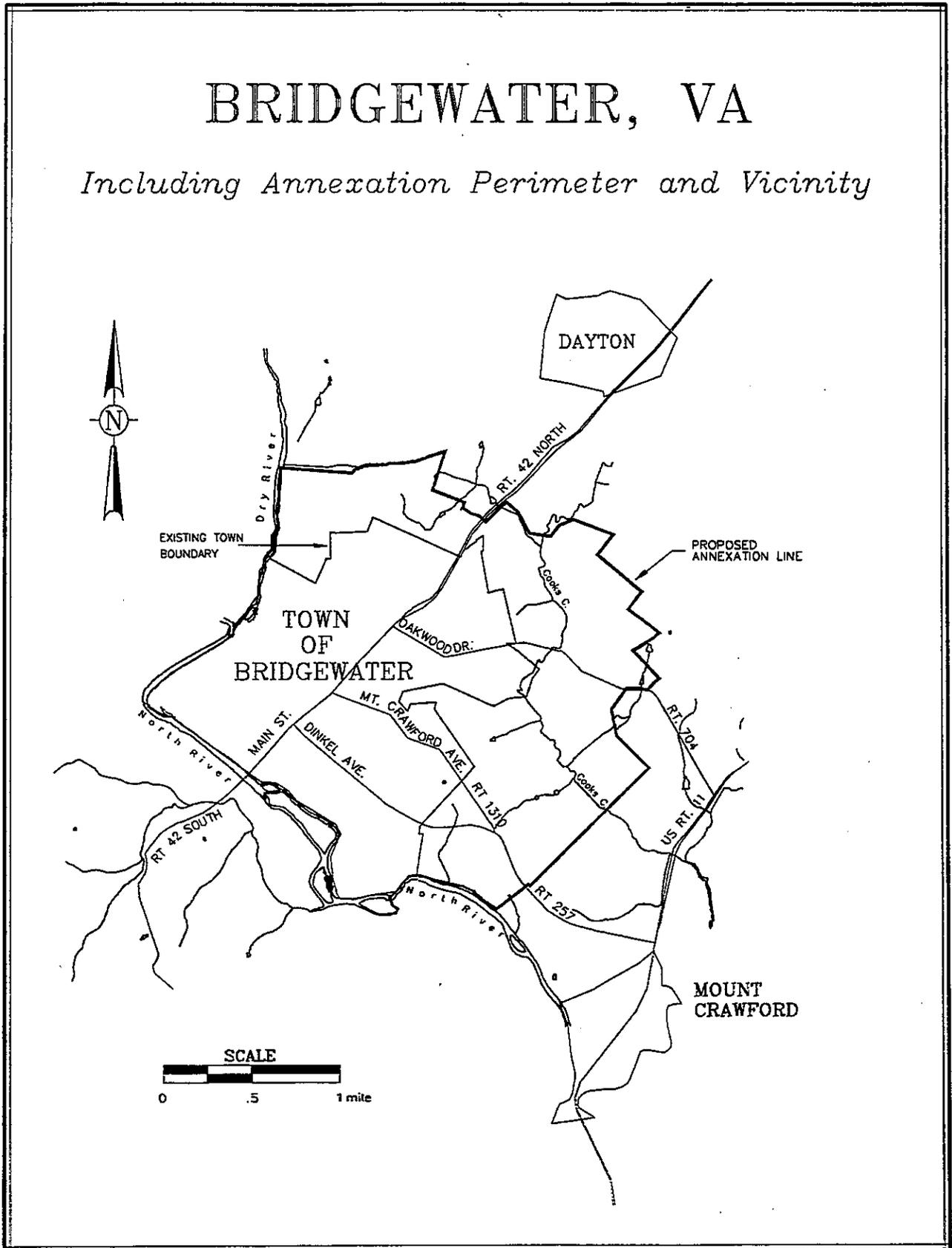
J. Jay Litten, Assistant Town Attorney, Town of Bridgewater, communication with staff of Commission on Local Government, Jan. 16, 1997.

Julia H. Martin and Donna J. Tolson, Virginia Population, 1995 Estimates; and unpublished data from the U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, May 1995.

Town of Bridgewater and County of Rockingham, Proposed Annexation Agreement, Submission to the Virginia Commission on Local Government.

BRIDGEWATER, VA

Including Annexation Perimeter and Vicinity



Source: Town planning staff