



County of Clarke Economic Development Advisory Committee

*Jim Barb, Bryan Conrad, Christy Dunkle, Christina Kraybill, John Milleson,
Eric Myer, Elizabeth Pritchard, David Weiss*

Agenda

1:00 pm, Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Meeting Room AB Berryville / Clarke County Government Center
101 Chalmers Court, 2nd Floor, Berryville, Virginia

1. Call to Order

2. Adoption of Agenda

Proposed motion: Move to adopt agenda as [presented] or [as amended - title of agenda item[s] not listed on the published agenda provided to the public.]

3. Approval of Minutes: May 17, 2017, Regular Meeting.

Proposed Motion: I move to approve the minutes of May 17, 2017, as [presented] or [as amended citing specific amendment].

4. Real Estate Seminar Planning with Bob Adams, Housing Virginia, Robert J. Adams, Executive Director, 804-240-3755, www.housingvirginia.org

5. Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 19, 2017

6. Adjourn

Supporting Material:

- Building Department YTD New Single Family Dwellings
- TA 17-02 Wireless Communications Facilities Planning Staff Report prepared for the Board of Supervisors Public Hearing PH 17-07 June 20, 2017
- June 7, 2017, Winchester Star Article by Cathy Kuehner *Berryville officials talk town growth*

Clarke County Economic Development Advisory Committee
May 17, 2017 Minutes

A meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) held in the Berryville/Clarke County Government Center, Berryville, Virginia, on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at 1:00 PM.

Board: Jim Barb, Christina Kraybill, Eric Meyer, John Milleson, Elizabeth "Betsy" Pritchard

Absent: Bryan Conrad, Christy Dunkle, David Weiss

Staff: Lora B. Walburn

1. Call to Order

At 1:00 pm, John Milleson called the meeting to order.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Add to New Business: EDA and IDA Exchange of Information

Dr. Meyer, seconded by Jim Barb, moved to adopt the agenda as amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

Jim Barb	-	Aye
Bryan Conrad	-	Absent
Christy Dunkle	-	Absent
Christina Kraybill	-	Aye
John Milleson	-	Aye
Eric Myer	-	Aye
Elizabeth "Betsy" Pritchard	-	Absent
David Weiss	-	Absent

3. Approval of Minutes

Christina Kraybill, seconded by Jim Barb, moved to approve the April 19, 2017, minutes as presented. The motion carried as follows:

Jim Barb	-	Aye
Bryan Conrad	-	Absent
Christy Dunkle	-	Absent

Christina Kraybill	-	Aye
John Milleson	-	Aye
Eric Myer	-	Aye
Elizabeth "Betsy" Pritchard	-	Absent
David Weiss	-	Absent

4. Economic Development and Tourism Update

Highlights of update by Len Capelli, Clarke County Economic Development Director, include:

- Attended agri-tourism conference in Richmond followed by a Go-Virginia Initiative event.
- Go Virginia Initiative very frustrating and a confusing environment.
- Facility Construction:
 - Could build on land by the business park.
 - Explore public private partnership
 - Facility could include offices, warehouse space, and rooms for use as a manufacturing incubator.
 - To address current regional labor shortages, consider using facility for training.
- Visited a farm-based brewery.
- Farm Tour:
 - o Agri-tourism initiative
 - o Well attended
 - o May structure differently next year.
 - o Each farm had items for sell.
- Hosted Virginia Department of Economic Development in conjunction with local jurisdictions over the past two days,.
- Value-added farming:
 - o Distributed survey
 - o Met with LFCC this week.
- Spirit Trail: Do not have final approval.
 - o Tourism Partnership: Joint marketing of region. Kicking off a major event at the regional airport next week.

At 1:20 pm, Betsy Pritchard joined the meeting.

5. Old Business

Equine / Livestock Survey Discussion

Highlights include:

- Questions: What is EDAC's mission? Is it being asked to endorse the survey?
- Len Capelli:
 - Does not endorse a survey and has never endorsed a survey.
 - Willing to work with people that are willing to do it.
 - Has offered to work with Dr. Myer and Equine Alliance on a survey.
 - He has never gotten anyone telling him what questions they want and what they are going to do with the answers.
 - The County hasn't changed that much in the ten to twelve years since the last survey.
 - He can see Equine Alliance's point that they want to come together and form a strong, leverage organization that can help promote more equine operations and improvements.
 - Market to have Clarke recognized as one of the top equine places in the state.
- Dr. Meyer:
 - Equine alliance does promote a survey.
 - Several studies available that provide good information but are not specific to the area.
 - Want to see what the activity level is in Clarke County, which he opined had changed since the 2004 survey.
 - Can re-evaluate when more member feedback is available.
 - Marketing leverage seems a good direction.
 - Could enlarge the scope of the survey to include all farm animals, which would also get greater participation.
- Betsy Pritchard:
 - Dynamic has changed in the County over the years.
 - Agree with the marketing approach.
 - What will the survey do? Is there some monetary gain? Is it just the facts? What does the Alliance hope to gain beside statistics? Would there be more funding?
- Jim Barb:
 - Equine Alliance needs to evaluate activity and create an inventory to establish a base to aid in determining what will be marketed.
 - Could check tax records how much has been invested in riding rinks and other equine businesses.

- Could check permits in the Building Department as to what may have been built over the last ten to fifteen years.
- John Milleson:
 - There are times caution is required for the results may not be as hoped.
 - The Board of Supervisors member did not appear enthusiastic about the proposed survey. Christina Kraybill concurred.

In conclusion, Chairman Milleson summarized:

- Economic Development Advisory Committee will not take action at this time.
- It will wait for Len Capelli to help with any marketing.
- It will wait for the Equine Alliance to get more information.

Real Estate Seminar Planning

Highlights of discussion include:

- Over the next few years, four to five thousand jobs will be added in Winchester not including those being added in Loudoun and Berkeley Counties.
- To prepare for this influx, the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission should review demographics.
- By consensus, the Committee agreed to develop a seminar to be presented to the Industrial Development Authority, Clarke County School Board, Berryville Town Council, Boyce Town Council, Clarke County Planning Commission, and the Clarke County Board of Supervisors.
- The Committee asked staff to research contact information for Housing Virginia.

Len Capelli Response to Statement in April 19, 2017, EDAC Minutes Equine Alliance Presentation by Chris Bates

Mr. Capelli stated that he wanted to go on the record and say that two statements that were purportedly made by him were not.

Lora Walburn noted that Mr. Capelli's April report reflected that he had written "and I will write a grant request to the Virginia Tourism Corporation." She opined that Mr. Bates might have misunderstood; and, Mr. Capelli, at the May 17 meeting, was clarifying that his intent was not to write a grant for a survey as believed by Mr. Bates.

Mr. Capelli responded that it was a marketing grant. He added that he had written a grant for the studio tour, The Gathering, The Barns, and offered to write one for equine marketing. He stated that it was always a Virginia Tourism marketing grant.

6. New Business

Industrial Development Authority and Economic Development Advisory Committee

Highlights of discussion include:

- Previously, the two public bodies had a cross-over member, David Juday, who now serves as the IDA Chair.
- In 1999 when the Economic Development Advisory Committee was established, it was tasked with review of a bi-annual financial report to review revenue to identify potential revenue shortfalls and make recommendations. Staff will research this report.
- Jim Barb provided historic information on reviews performed by the EDAC.
- Len Capelli commented:
 - Outside his presentation, there is very little discussion at the IDA meetings, which is why the content is similar.
 - The IDA issues bonds but is more reactive than proactive.
 - IDA is looking at changing its investments but the Treasurer has not attended the last two quarterly meetings.
 - It takes a long time to get things done there.
 - The IDA provides funding to the SBDC and Dale Maza, SBDC, gave a presentation at its April meeting.
- Christina Kraybill put forth that the EDAC was to be a proactive, visionary group; and the IDA is the reactive group.
- Lora Walburn provided the following:
 - Alton Echols requested information specific to the 2011 Industrial Development Authority of the Clarke County \$4,300,000 bond to Berryville United Methodist Housing, L.P., to finance the costs of acquiring, rehabilitating, equipping, and furnishing Mary Hardesty House, a multifamily rental residential facility consisting of 60 dwelling units for persons and families of low and moderate incomes.
 - Berryville – Clarke County Industrial Development Corporation stock has no value.
 - David Weiss is the BoS liaison to both the IDA and the EDAC.
- By consensus, the Board agreed to include IDA minutes in future packets.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 21, 2017, 1:00 pm.

8. Adjournment

Being no further business, at 1:49 pm, Chairman Milleson adjourned the meeting.

Minutes recorded and transcribed by Lora B. Walburn



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ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The underlying economic conditions in the Commonwealth will play a major role in shaping housing demand in the coming decade. We are just now emerging from the deepest recession (housing depression) since the 1930s.

The recovery from this event is multifaceted and complex. Christine Chmura, President of Chmura Economics and Analytics, worked with Housing Virginia to explore the recovery of the housing industry and how it will impact housing choices in the future. Employment and income growth, increased student debt, and the loss of home equity are some of the economic "bottom line" issues reviewed in this section of Housing 2020.

June 21, 2017 Economic Development Advisory Committee



HOUSING VIRGINIA

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▶ Start Here.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Key Economic trends include:

- Virginia's economy is recovering, faster than many states, but big differences in regional growth will influence regional markets.
- Virginia's strong dependence on federal spending is a concern. Reductions in federal spending will be a major drag on Virginia's overall recovery.
- The housing industry is a significant contributor to economic growth - often leading to recovery. A strong economic rebound must include a robust housing sector as a key element.
- Student debt has been growing at geometric rates over the past decade. It has now reached levels where it is a significant factor in housing choices and affordability.
- While Virginia's unemployment is lower than in many other states, Millennials still face difficulty finding full-time employment paying decent wages. This negatively affects their participation in the housing market.
- Increasing home prices are critical to restoring the billions in lost home equity. This equity is the largest component of wealth for many families and its loss has hurt consumer confidence and spending.



MEETING HOUSING NEEDS IN RURAL VIRGINIA: TRENDS, NEEDS, GAPS, SOLUTIONS

APRIL 2017



HOUSING VIRGINIA

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Data compiled by: Jonathan Knopf (Housing Virginia)
Preliminary survey analyzed by: Alise Newman (Housing Virginia)
Report created by: Bob Adams, Jonathan Knopf, Alise Newman (Housing Virginia)
Staff support by: Lynn Bivens (Housing Virginia)

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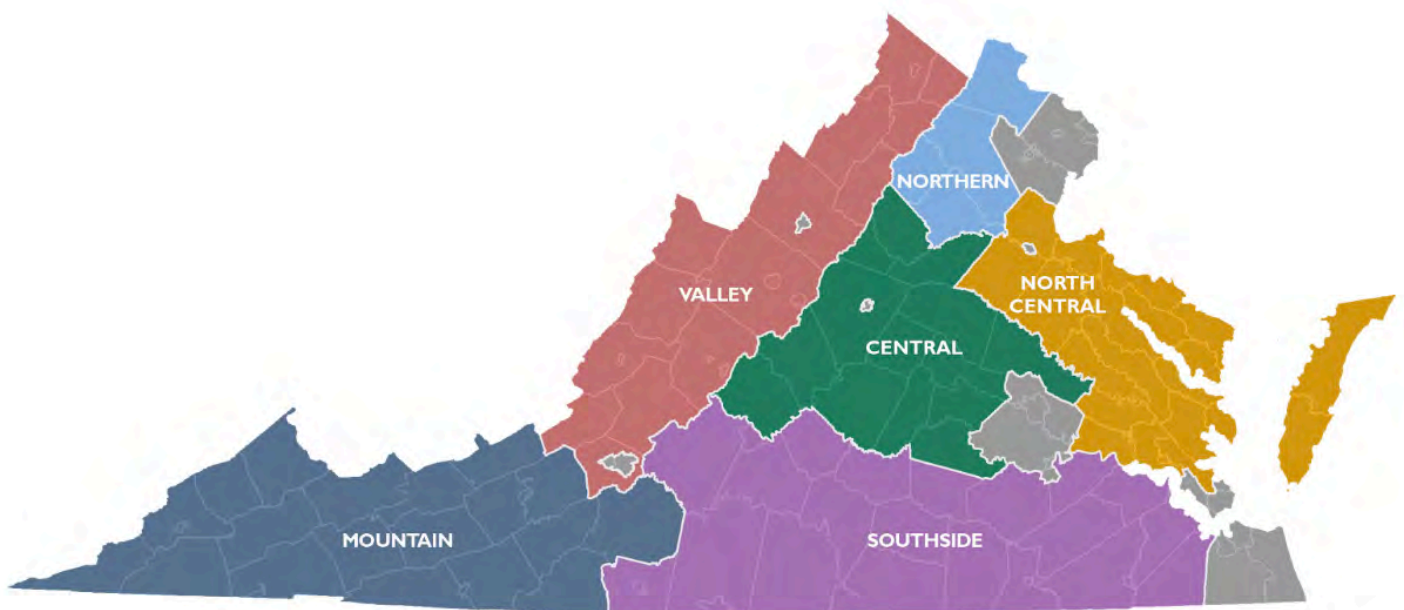
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I. INTRODUCTION

Housing Virginia launched its Rural Housing Initiative in the fall of 2015 to explore the state of housing needs in rural Virginia. With much of our housing focus at the national and state level targeting urban areas with high growth and escalating housing costs, the unique and changing housing needs in rural areas have not received as much attention. Over the past year, we have surveyed rural housing and service providers about their needs and gaps and analyzed demographic and housing data for rural regions across the state. This information, along with best practice research and policy recommendations, has shaped a report that we hope will assist rural providers and improve the lives of their clients. The recommendations outlined in this report are the focus of a series of meetings by housing funders and providers in the spring and summer of 2017.

Based on discussions with housing providers and housing services organizations, Housing Virginia created six unique rural regions for our analysis (Map 1). Major metropolitan areas and some medium-size cities are excluded from these regions. Dividing the state into distinct regions reveals the similarities and differences in housing needs throughout Virginia and helps develop targeted, evidence-based solutions. A full list of localities by these six regions is included in the appendix.

Map 1: Housing Virginia's six rural regions



See Appendix: List of Jurisdictions by Study Area on p.59 for locality names

II. CURRENT STATE OF HOUSING IN RURAL VIRGINIA

Like its population, the housing needs of Virginia are dynamic and diverse. While many demographic and socioeconomic trends hold true for the entire state, there are significant differences between Virginia's urban cores and its rural areas. Even more, "rural Virginia" is not a homogenous entity — different regions have different housing needs, gaps, and trends that warrant unique approaches.

To help craft meaningful and effective solutions for affordable housing across Virginia's rural landscape, Housing Virginia has analyzed data on housing conditions, demographics, changing economies, and real estate markets. Datasets were collected at both the county level and Census tract level, when available, to illuminate variations within individual jurisdictions.



Population Trends

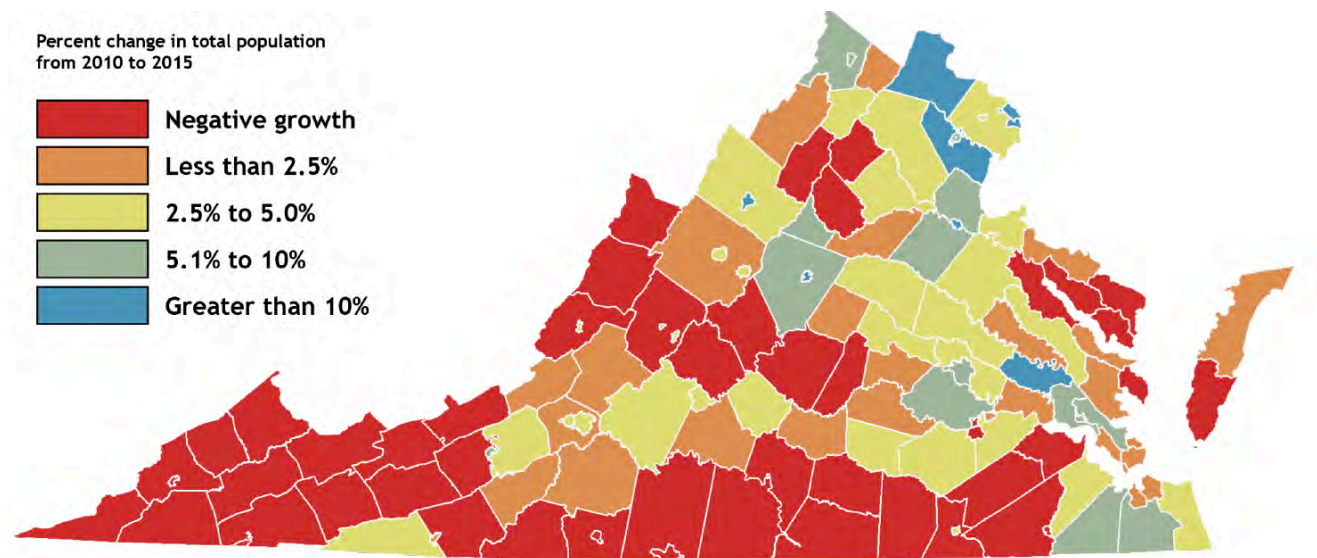
Between 2000 and 2010, the population of Virginia grew by 923,000 to 8 million total people. However, only 6% of this growth was in rural areas. Since then, rural population growth has continued to lag behind the statewide average. Between 2010 and 2015, Virginia's population grew by 4.8%; the rural population grew by only 3.3%.

Many counties, especially in the Mountain and Southside regions, have experienced net population losses in the past five years (Map 2). The Mountain region lost 0.5% of its population, and the Southside region only grew by 1.4% (Table 1). Some rural counties, however, saw significant growth, especially in the Northern and Central regions. The Northern region grew at nearly three times the state average, driven primarily by Loudon County.

Table 1: Percent change in population from 2010 to 2015¹

Virginia	All Urban	All Rural	Central	Mountain	Northern	N. Central	Southside	Valley
4.8%	6.2%	3.3%	3.1%	- 0.5%	15.5%	5.1%	1.4%	2.3%

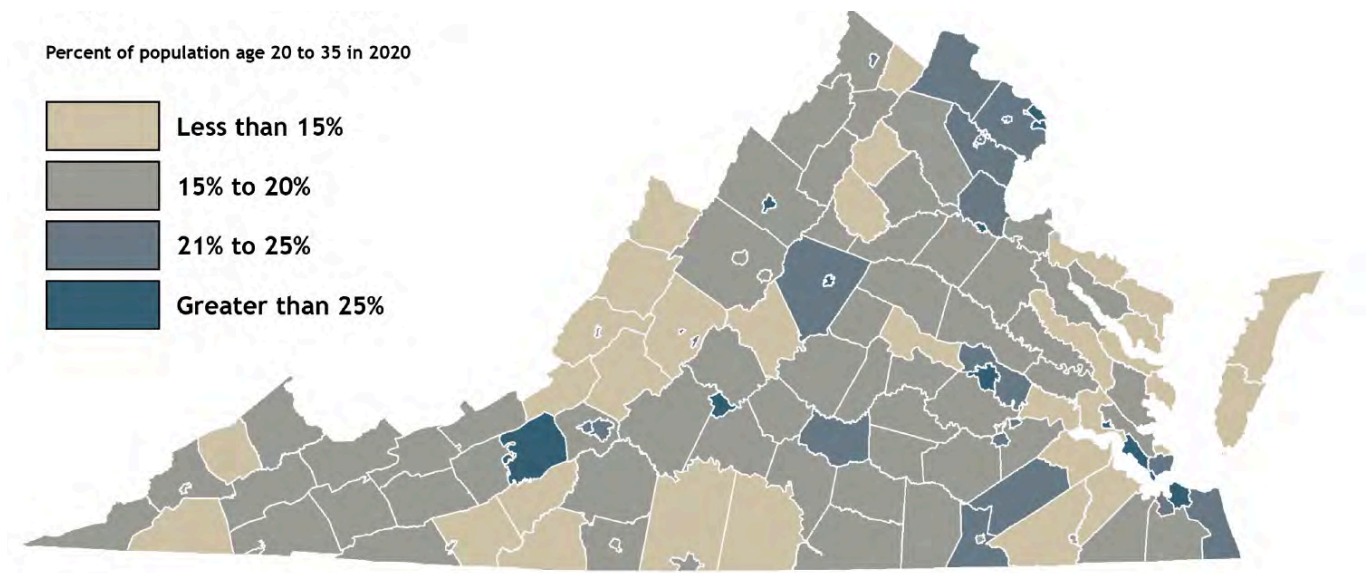
Map 2: Percent change in population from 2010 to 2015 by county¹



¹ UVA Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

The decline in Virginia's rural population is the result of two major trends: outmigration of millennials to urban areas and a growing share of baby boomers who have already passed child-rearing age. Young adults from rural communities are more commonly staying in their college towns or migrate to cities and suburbs to find employment.

Map 3: Projected Millennial population as percent of total in 2020²

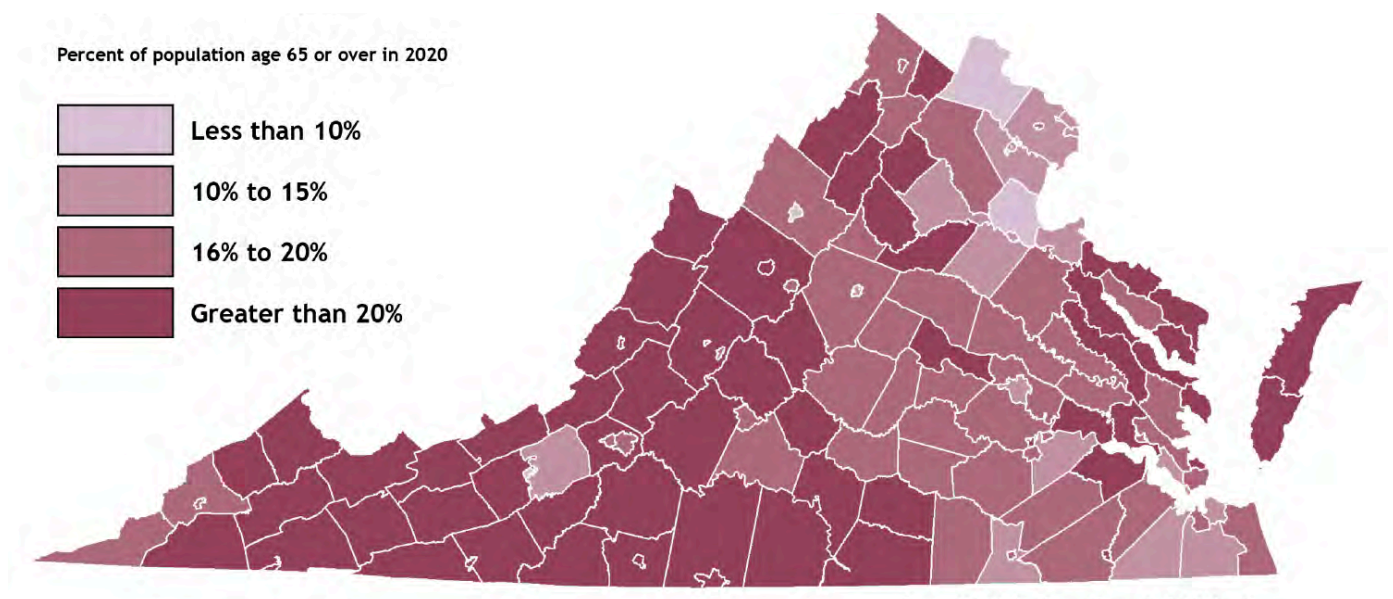


When Millennials choose to have children, they will likely not return to their hometown. As a result, birth-rates in rural Virginia have steadily declined over the past decade. By 2020, young adults will account for less than 15% of the population in many rural counties (Map 3).

By 2020, young adults will account for less than 15% of the total population in many counties...

At the same time, the population reaching or already past retirement age continues to increase in rural communities across Virginia. Many seniors are choosing to age in place, and some baby boomers in suburbs and cities are actually moving to rural counties on the outskirts of metropolitan areas. While this migration does not offset the larger population losses, it contributes to the “graying” of rural Virginia.

Map 4: Projected senior population as percent of total in 2020³



Beyond Virginia’s Urban Crescent (the area connecting Northern Virginia, Richmond, and Hampton Roads), seniors will account for over 20% of the population in most counties by 2020 (Map 4).

...but seniors will grow to over 20% of the population in those same areas.

As life expectancy continues to increase, the number of elderly persons living alone is also increasing, especially in rural areas. Throughout communities in the Mountain, Southside, and North Central Regions, householders that are age 75 or over and living by themselves account for 10% or more of the population (Map 5). This segment of the population will continue to increase as the boomer generation ages.

In some rural areas, elderly single-person households account for 10% or more of the total population

Map 5: Percent of elderly persons living alone by Census tract (2014)⁴

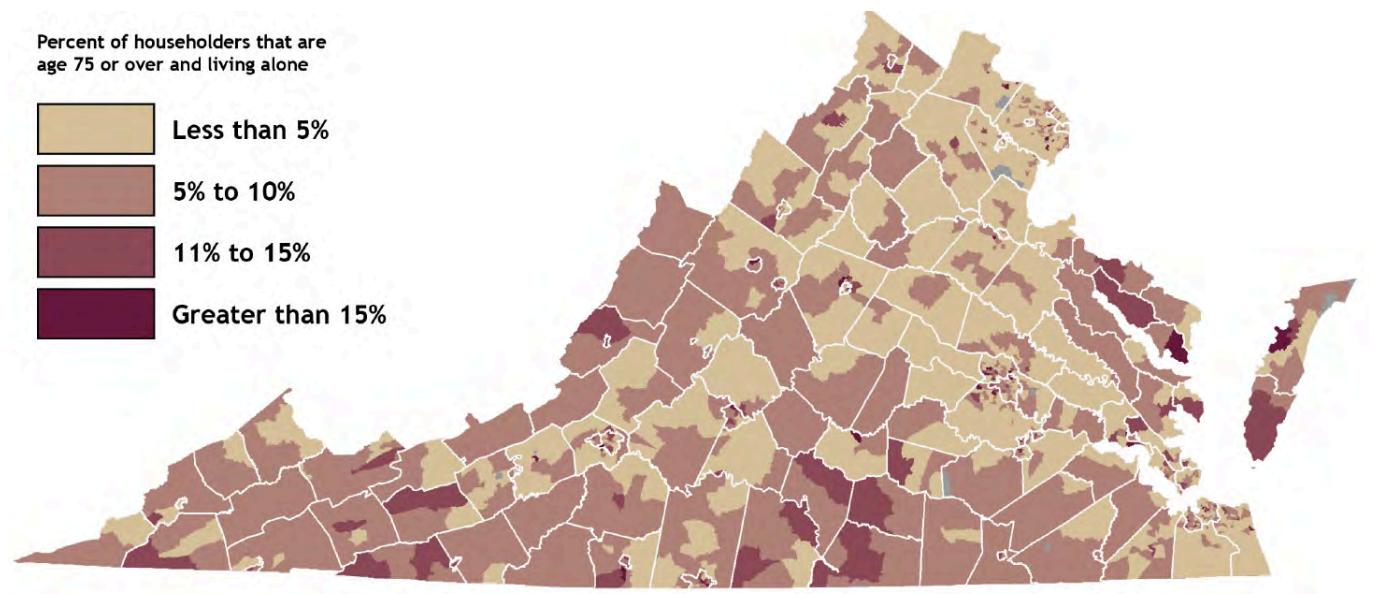


Table 2: Number of persons age 75 or more living alone in 2014⁴

Virginia	All Urban	All Rural	Central	Mountain	Northern	N. Central	Southside	Valley
146,951	69,575	77,376	8,658	17,308	4,190	12,466	19,412	15,342

4 2014 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates

Socioeconomic Trends

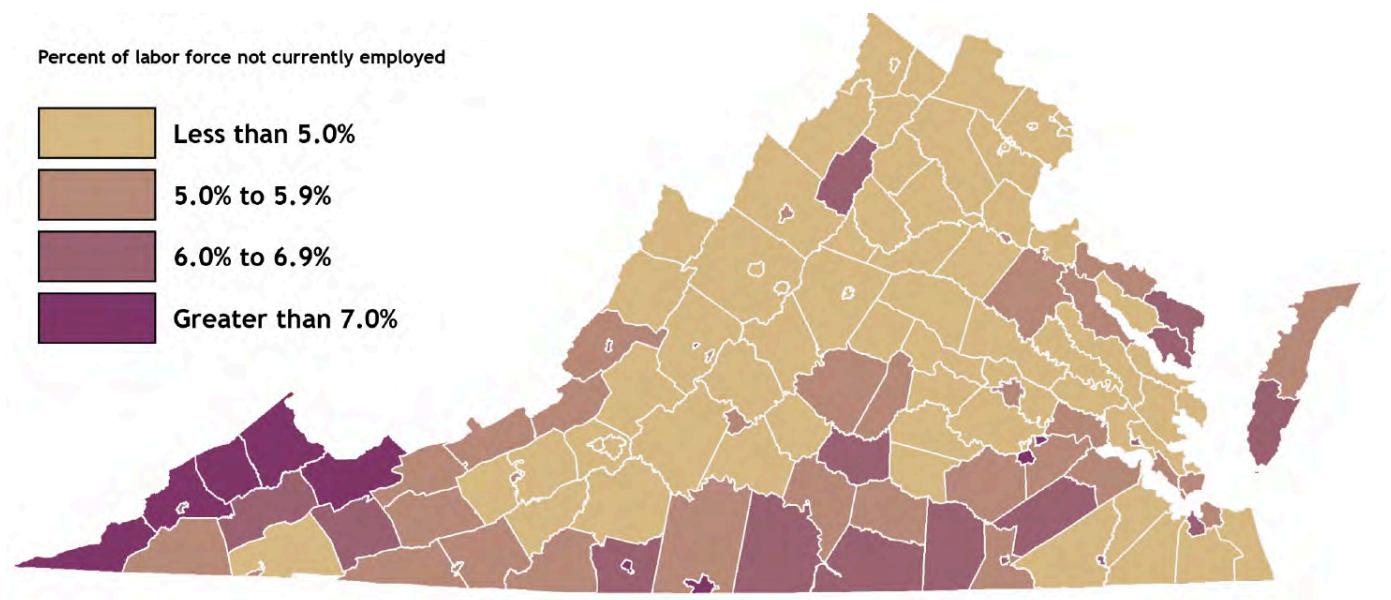
In the past, rural Virginia's economy traditionally relied on manufacturing and agriculture, but these two industries have lost 79,000 and 3,000 jobs, respectively, since 2000. While unemployment rates have rebounded somewhat since the Great Recession, the majority of new jobs created between 2000 and 2014 in rural areas are in retail (23,000 added) and education / healthcare (109,000 added).

As of 2015, the unemployment rate in rural Virginia is 4.7% — slightly above the statewide rate. The Mountain and Southside regions, which have seen significant declines in manufacturing jobs, both have unemployment rates above 5.0%.

Table 3: Unemployment rate in 2015⁵

Virginia	All Urban	All Rural	Central	Mountain	Northern	N. Central	Southside	Valley
4.4%	4.2%	4.7%	4.1%	5.7%	3.7%	4.7%	5.5%	4.4%

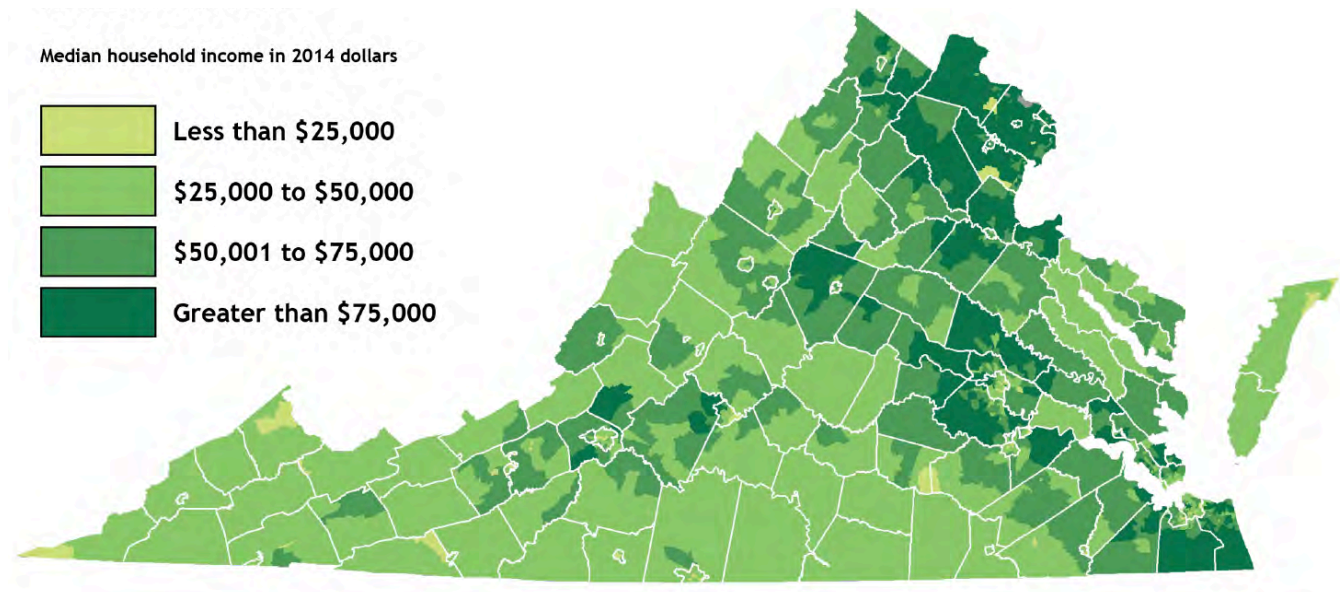
Map 6: Unemployment rate by county (2015)⁵



⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Local Area Unemployment Statistics*, 2015

As the economies in rural Virginia underperform, so do household incomes. As Map 7 shows, communities with the highest median household incomes are concentrated throughout the Urban Crescent, with additional small pockets of higher incomes in Charlottesville and Roanoke. Nearly one in three rural households earn less than \$35,000 annually.

Map 7: Median household income by Census tract (2014)⁶



Lower wages in rural Virginia correspond with higher poverty rates. Among all rural regions, the poverty rate is one point above the state average. However, the highest rural poverty is concentrated in the Mountain and Southside regions, where nearly one in five adults live below the poverty line (Table 4). While the Northern region has the lowest poverty rate (4.8%), its total population in poverty has nearly doubled since 2000 (Table 5).

Nearly one in three rural households earn less than \$35,000 annually

In the Mountain and Southside regions, nearly one adult in five lives in poverty.

Table 4: Overall poverty rate in 2014⁶

Virginia	All Urban	All Rural	Central	Mountain	Northern	N. Central	Southside	Valley
11.5%	10.8%	12.4%	9.4%	19.4%	4.8%	9.0%	16.9%	10.9%

Map 8: Poverty rate by Census tract (2014)⁶

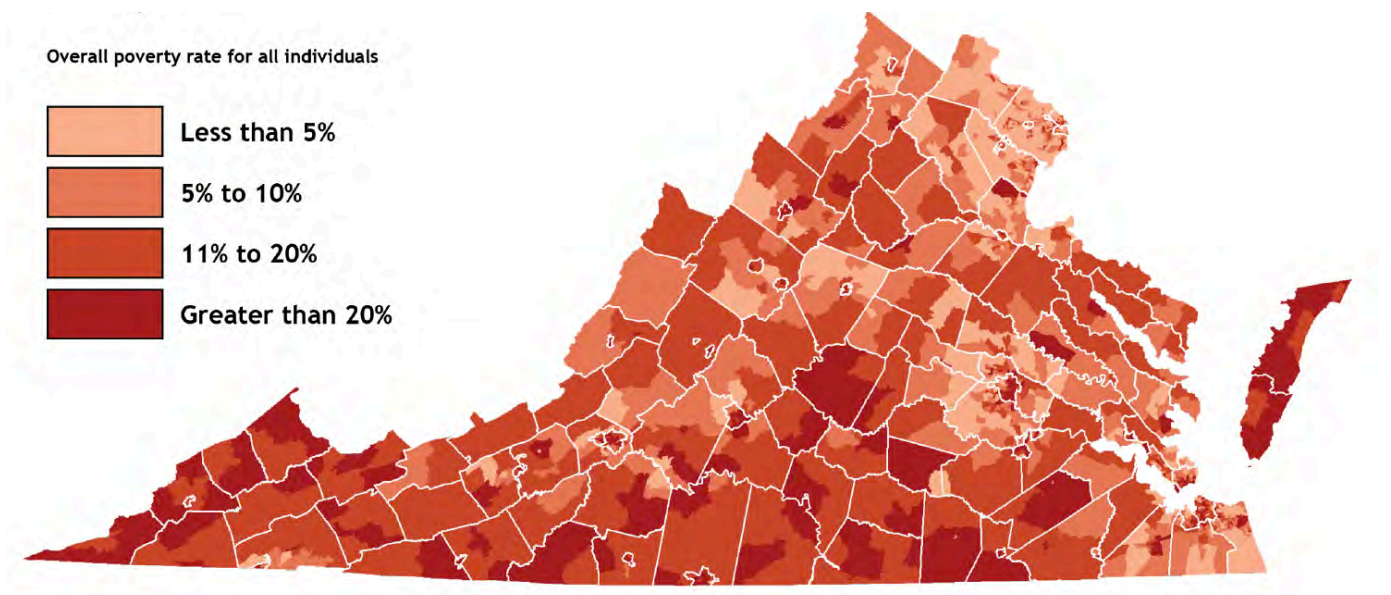


Table 5: Percent increase in number of persons in poverty from 2000 to 2014⁷

Virginia	All Urban	All Rural	Central	Mountain	Northern	N. Central	Southside	Valley
39%	39%	39%	46%	23%	98%	48%	36%	58%

6 2014 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates

7 2014 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates; 2000 U.S. Census SF3 data

Housing Cost Burden

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a household as “housing cost burdened” if they pay 30% or more of their income on housing costs. As of 2014, three in ten families in Virginia are housing cost burdened, up from two in ten in 2000.

Households in rural Virginia are slightly less cost burdened than average, but cost burdened households in rural Virginia have been growing much faster since 2000 than urban households (Table 7). In the Northern region, where the population and land values have significantly increased, the number of cost burdened households more than doubled. Overall, cost burdened households in rural regions increased by 85% over the past 15 years.

Table 6: Percent of households that were housing cost burdened in 2014⁸

Virginia	All Urban	All Rural	Central	Mountain	Northern	N. Central	Southside	Valley
30%	34%	26%	25%	23%	30%	27%	27%	26%

Map 9: Percent of housing cost burdened households by Census tract (2014)⁸

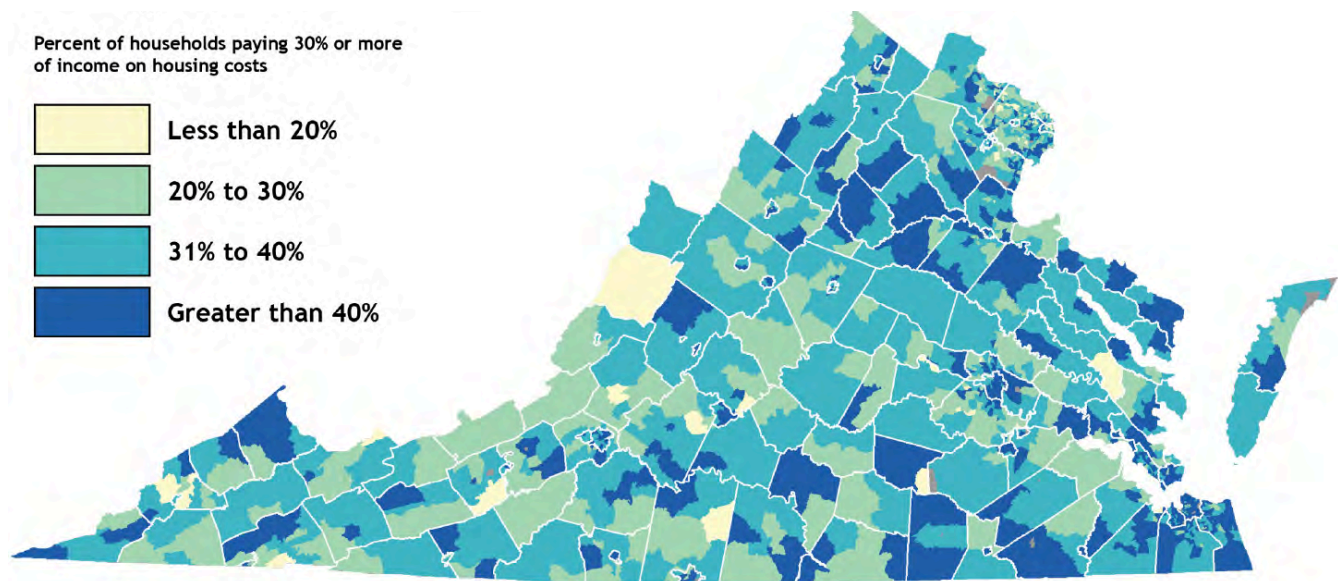


Table 7: Percent increase in total housing cost burdened households, 2000-2014⁹

Virginia	All Urban	All Rural	Central	Mountain	Northern	N. Central	Southside	Valley
64%	53%	85%	89%	66%	157%	87%	74%	81%

8 2014 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates

9 2014 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates; 2000 U.S. Census SF3 data

The increase in housing cost burden among homeowners has disproportionately affected one age group more than any other: seniors. Households reaching and passing retirement age are still facing years of mortgage payments. baby boomer homeowners have dipped into their home equity to fund their children’s college tuition and help pay off other debt, adding to their debt burden. The total number of seniors with mortgages increased by 61% (over 202,000) between 2000 and 2014 (Table 8). Rural Virginia accounted for 63% of this growth.

Senior households with a mortgage increased by 125%

Table 8: Percent increase in number of seniors with mortgages, 2000-2014¹⁰

Virginia	All Urban	All Rural	Central	Mountain	Northern	N. Central	Southside	Valley
61%	47%	74%	111%	68%	162%	72%	55%	66%

Map 10: Percent of seniors with mortgages by Census tract (2014)¹⁰

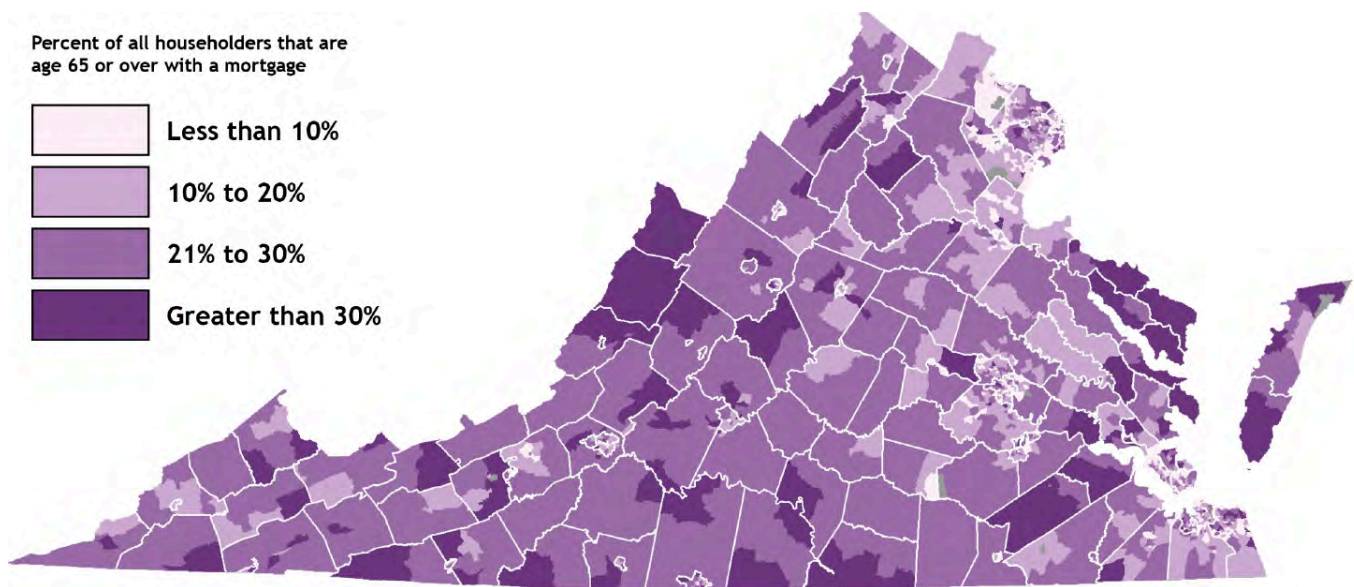


Table 9: Percent increase in mortgage-burdened seniors households, 2000-2014¹¹

Virginia	All Urban	All Rural	Central	Mountain	Northern	N. Central	Southside	Valley
111%	98%	125%	25%	111%	30%	27%	97%	26%

10 2014 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates; 2000 U.S. Census SF3 data

11 2014 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates; 2000 U.S. Census SF3 data

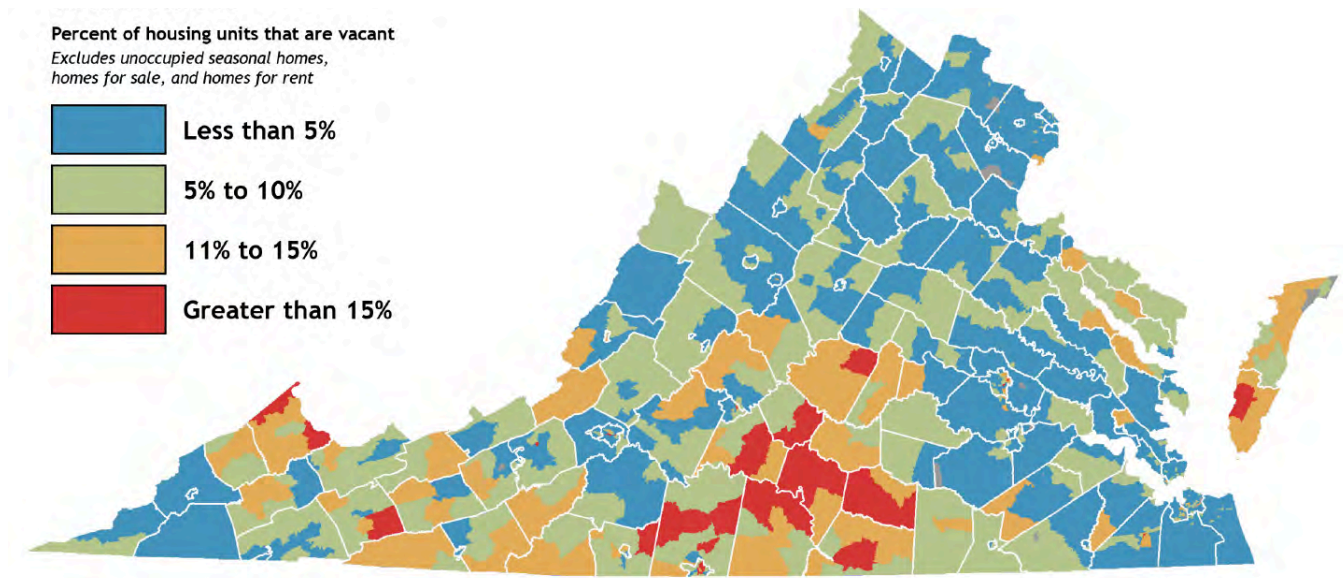
Housing Quality

Rural regions face much different challenges related to housing quality than most urban areas. Single-family detached homes, which have inherently more repair and rehabilitation needs, account for 10% more of rural housing stock than urban housing stock. As of 2014, over 6,600 homes in rural Virginia do not have adequate indoor plumbing, and 8,700 homes do not have complete kitchen facilities. Although these numbers have declined over the past decade, reaching isolated households with such housing problems remains a major problem for communities with few resources to combat the issue.

Table 10: Percentage of all housing units classified as “other” vacant in 2014¹²

Virginia	All Urban	All Rural	Central	Mountain	Northern	N. Central	Southside	Valley
3.6%	2.1%	5.3%	4.4%	6.0%	1.9%	4.2%	7.9%	4.6%

Map 11: Home vacancy rate by Census tract (2014)¹²



A second housing challenge unique to rural Virginia is the high home vacancy rate. While one in ten homes across Virginia are not occupied year-round, the majority of these are either on the market or only used seasonally. The remainder are classified as “other” vacant by the Census bureau.¹³ This category includes units that are abandoned by their owner, being used as storage, going through foreclosure, and many other reasons. No matter the cause, it is difficult for localities to return “other” vacant units to occupied status. Across rural Virginia, “other” vacant homes are over twice as prevalent than in urban areas (Table 10). The highest concentration of these units is in south central Virginia (Map 11).

12 2014 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates

13 June 21, 2015. U.S. Census Bureau. Developing Vacancy Counts and Definitions (2016): www.census.gov/housing/hrs/data/definitions.pdf

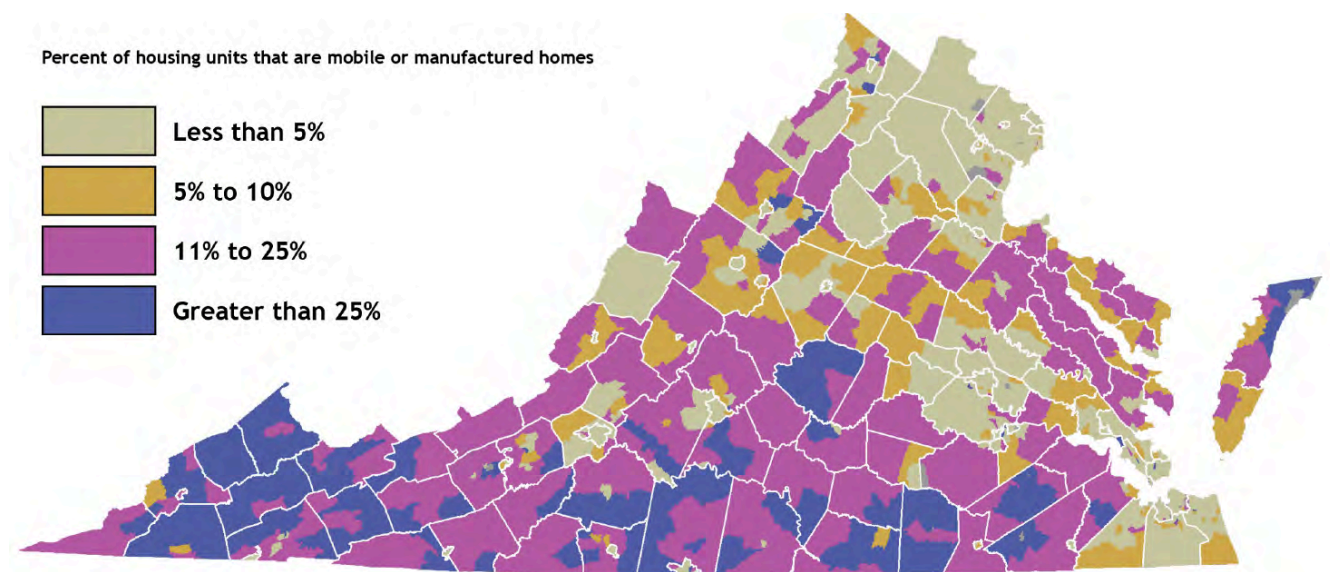
Unsurprisingly, manufactured (or mobile) homes comprise a large segment of Virginia's rural housing stock. These units include both single-wide homes and modern factory-built modular (double-wide) housing that is transported and placed on site. Today, over 163,000 rural families live in a manufactured home. The highest prevalence of manufactured housing is in the Mountain region (19.2%) and the Southside region (13.6%) (Table 11).

Table 11: Percentage of housing units that are manufactured homes in 2014¹⁴

Virginia	All Urban	All Rural	Central	Mountain	Northern	N. Central	Southside	Valley
5.3%	0.9%	10.3%	7.3%	19.2%	1.1%	7.4%	13.6%	6.4%

Although this type of housing is often the most affordable path to homeownership in rural regions, it is not without significant challenges. According to a recent study by the Virginia Center for Housing Research at Virginia Tech, 21% of the manufactured homes in Appalachian Virginia were built before HUD began regulating safety and quality standards for manufactured housing in 1976.¹⁵ These homes are far less durable, structurally sound, and energy efficient than their modern counterparts. Because manufactured homes are almost always titled as personal property rather than real estate, repairs and upgrades do little to build equity for their homeowners.

Map 12: Share of manufactured homes by Census tract (2014)¹⁴



14 2014 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates

15 VCHR, "Mobile and Manufactured Homes in Central Appalachia and Alabama" (Sept. 2016):

http://www.vchcr.org/assets/pdf/State_of_Appalachian_Manufactured_Homes_VIRGINIA.pdf

Real Estate Market

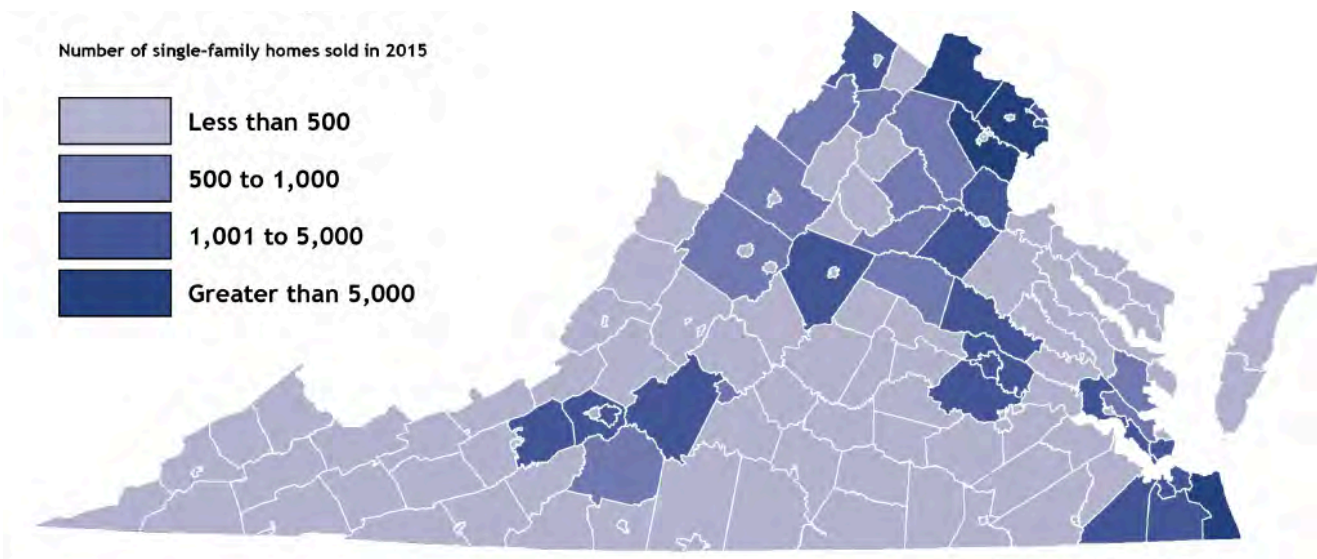
Buying and selling a home in rural Virginia is more challenging than in urban parts of the state. Based on the most recent data from the Virginia Association of REALTORS®, it is evident that rural Virginia’s real estate market lags far behind the rest of the state. Excluding the Fredericksburg region, northern Shenandoah Valley, and Roanoke region, most rural counties saw less than 500 total homes sold in 2015 (Map 13).

Average home sales prices varied dramatically between rural regions in 2015.¹⁶ In the Northern region, where land values are high, the average price of a single-family home was \$475,000. In the Mountain and Southside regions, average home prices were just above \$180,000. Across all rural areas, the average price was \$282,000 — nearly \$50,000 less than the statewide average.

Table 12: Average single-family home sales price in 2015 (in thousands of dollars)¹⁷

Virginia	All Urban	All Rural	Central	Mountain	Northern	N. Central	Southside	Valley
\$331	\$383	\$282	\$294	\$181	\$475	\$279	\$182	\$218

Map 13: Total number of single-family homes sold in 2015¹⁷



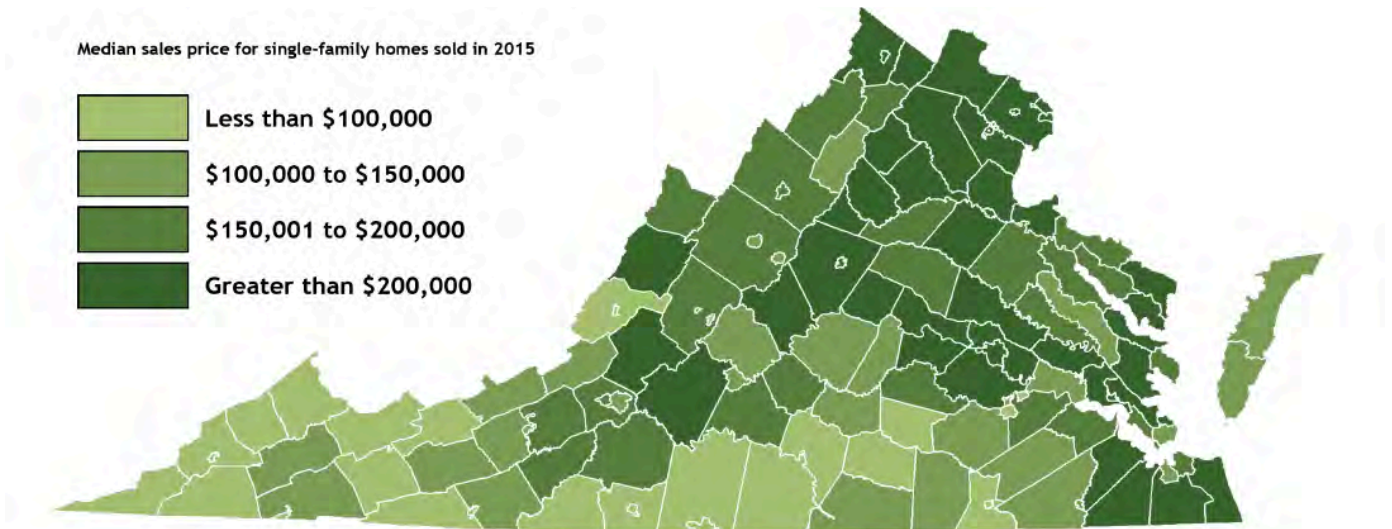
The amount of time a home stays on market before purchase is often an indicator of the health of the region’s real estate market. Shorter periods on market generally indicate an active real estate market and more available capital in a community. In 2015, the median number of days on market for single-family homes across Virginia was 47. In rural areas, this time period was over double (Table 13). Many homes in the Mountain, North Central, and Southside regions stayed on the market for over 100 days (Map 15).

16 Average home sales prices skew higher than median values because of high-value transactions. Aggregated median values for rural regions were not available.

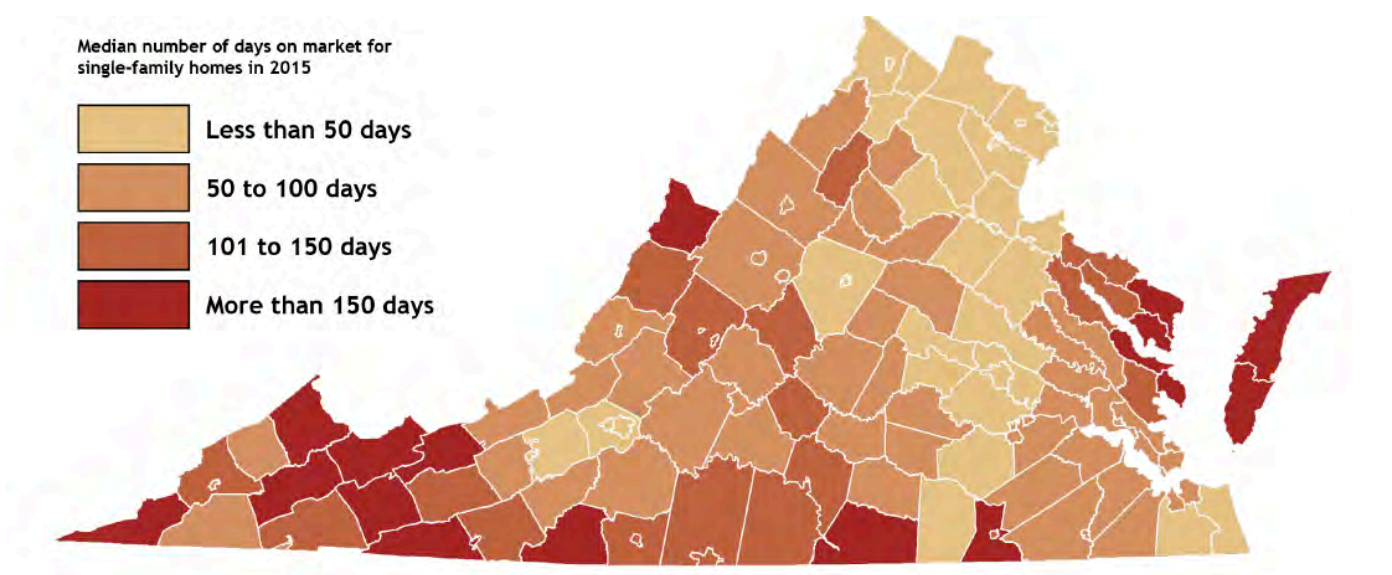
Table 13: Median number of days on market for single-family homes in 2015¹⁸

Virginia	All Urban	All Rural	Central	Mountain	Northern	N. Central	Southside	Valley
47	37	97	62	124	47	100	109	83

Map 14: Median sales price for single-family homes in 2015¹⁸



Map 15: Median number of days on market for homes sold in 2015¹⁸












III. NEEDS AND GAPS: HOUSING PROVIDER FEEDBACK

Housing Virginia's Rural Housing Initiative began with a preliminary survey of rural housing and service providers, followed by a pre-conference session for 50 of these providers at the 2015 Virginia Governor's Housing Conference. There, we discussed the findings and probed further about their most pressing needs and the trends they are seeing in their communities. We gathered additional input at the 2016 Governor's Housing Conference for this report.

Preliminary Survey Responses

Virginia's rural housing providers — regional nonprofits, Community Service Boards, Area Agencies on Aging, and the like — understand the unique and growing pressures that their clients are facing, and they are struggling to serve them effectively as resources continue to decline. Housing Virginia's preliminary survey of rural providers showed the following:

Top Needs	Top Gaps	Top Trends
 <p>Rehabilitation of Substandard Housing</p>	 <p>Lack of Affordable Financing</p>	 <p>Increasing Demand for Rental Housing</p>
 <p>Shortage of Affordable Rentals</p>	 <p>Poor Infrastructure (Public Transit, Water/Sewer, etc.)</p>	 <p>Flat/Declining Incomes</p>
 <p>Home Accessibility Modifications for Aging in Place</p>	 <p>Limited Capacity of Providers</p>	 <p>Growing Senior Population</p>

Housing Virginia met with over 150 housing providers during the course of the study.

Participants identified the top three needs in their service area as the need for rehabilitation of substandard housing, the need for more affordable rental housing, and the need for more home accessibility improvements for seniors to age in place. The need to address ending homelessness also ranked highly among participants.

The top three gaps identified by the survey respondents reflected the struggles faced by smaller nonprofits in particular. Besides the limited availability of funding available, participants cited a lack of affordable financing, lack of infrastructure (public transportation, water/sewer, broadband/cellular access, etc.), and limited capacity of housing providers as the three most urgent gaps in each of their service areas. A number of respondents also pointed out a lack of community support as another gap that needs to be addressed.

Three demographic changes and housing trends stood out as significant, according to participants: an increasing demand for rental housing, flat or declining incomes, and an increasing senior population. Half of the respondents also pointed to a declining job market as a worrying trend in their areas. These trends correspond with Housing Virginia's own research discussed in the previous section. Together, the quantitative findings and survey feedback helped shape the discussions we brought to providers around the state.



The study launched at a pre-conference session of providers at the Governor's Housing Conference.



Regional provider meeting in Fauquier County.

Regional Discussions with Providers

All of the issues reflected in our preliminary provider survey were also raised during our regional dialogues with a wider group of local housing and service providers.

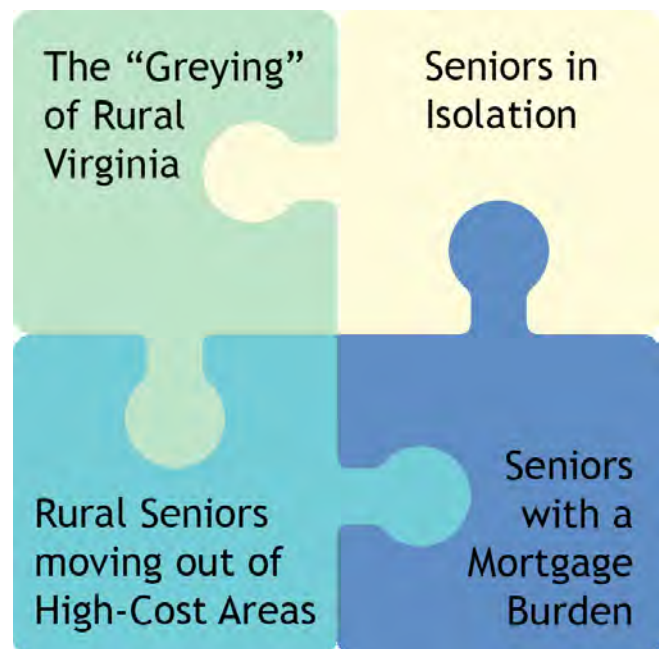
In partnership with five local REALTORS® Associations, Housing Virginia presented regional demographic and housing data to over 150 rural providers around the state and engaged in an in-depth discussion about their region’s needs, gaps, and trends.

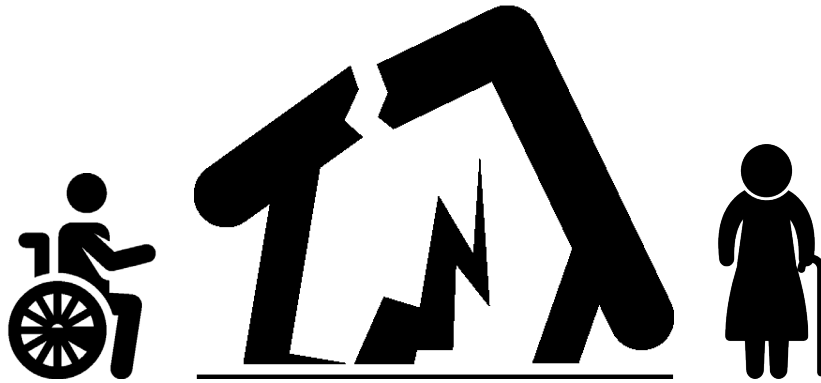
What Providers Said About the Aging Population and their Housing Needs

By 2020, seniors will account for more than 20% of the population in most rural communities. Along with that demographic change comes issues unique to the senior population.

For example, due to the lack of affordable senior housing communities, assisted care facilities, or nursing homes in rural areas, many seniors remain isolated in their homes with limited access to transportation for medical visits, to buy groceries, or simply to socialize.

In addition, many of these seniors live in areas isolated from hospitals, emergency transport, and caregivers, all of which contribute to the safety and health of the individual. For those seniors who wish to switch to renting closer to a town center because of these factors, many cannot afford the market rate rent for even a one-bedroom apartment on their fixed incomes (SSI, retirement savings, disability, etc.). They must compete with each other, and in the case of communities without age restrictions, also compete with struggling families for the sparse number of subsidized rental housing units that are available.





Inability to maintain a home allows small problems to become health and safety concerns.

Seniors living in isolation in rural areas are often unable to maintain their homes and property. Especially when a spouse passes away, many seniors' physical and mental health prevent them from being able to conduct preventative maintenance on their homes, address minor repairs as they crop up, or maintain their yards. Small problems, like a roof leak, become much more serious if they are not addressed in a timely fashion. By the time a nonprofit specializing in emergency home repair receives a request for assistance, there are often so many necessary repairs that they can only address one or two of the most critical due to funding limitations.

Weatherizing older homes can help prevent damage from moisture or mold, as well as drastically reduce the cost of heating and cooling simply by installing insulation and sealing windows. However, nonprofits providing weatherization assistance struggle to provide services to everyone who needs them due to lack of funding available and the limited capacity of their organizations. The longer a household is on the waiting list for such services, the further their home's condition declines. This entire cycle

of being unable to maintain their homes contributes to the declining condition of that housing stock as a whole.

Additionally, many seniors who choose to age in place cannot afford the accessibility modifications required to do so on their fixed incomes. While a wheelchair ramp is less expensive and simpler to install, it is much more difficult for seniors to find financing to widen their doorways to accommodate mobility assistance equipment or install a roll-in shower in their bathroom.

To address the needs and gaps surrounding seniors in particular, it will be critical to develop and implement creative and collaborative initiatives that can tackle each of these issues while combining resources as effectively as possible.

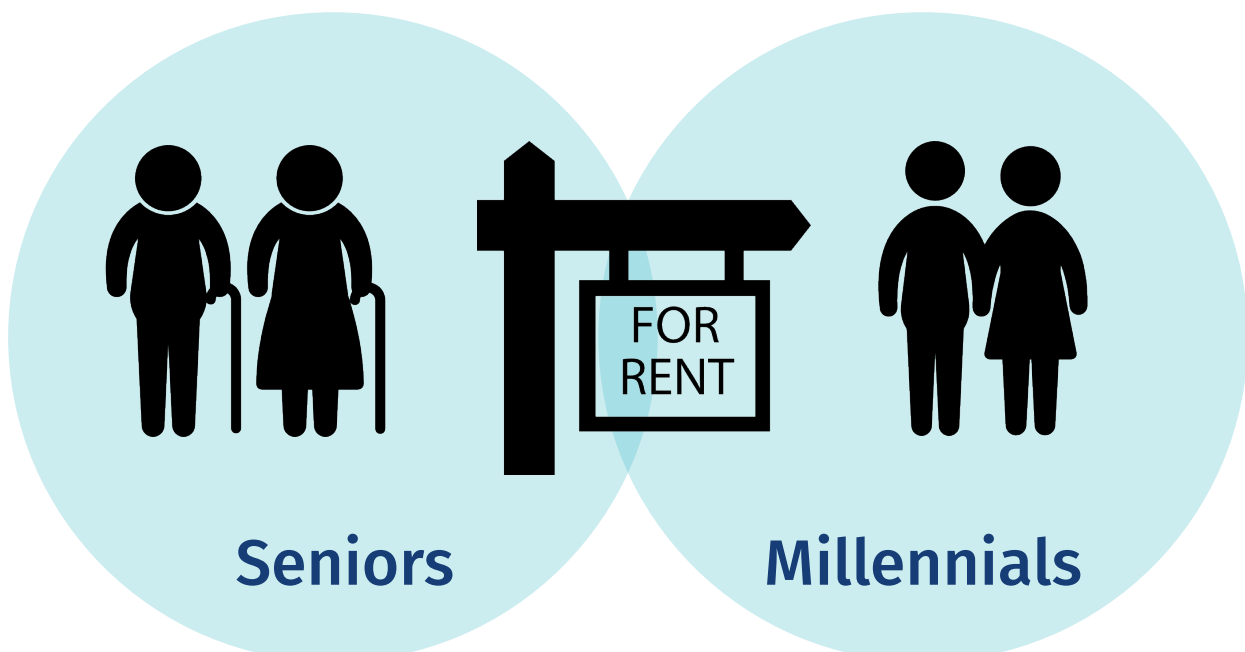
What Providers Said About Rental Housing

The need for more quality, *affordable* rental housing topped both our preliminary survey group and in-person provider discussion group's priority lists. Many people associate rural areas with high homeownership rates — so what accounts for the drastic rise in demand for rental housing?

This question mirrors the rise in demand for rental housing across the state and nation — the rise in temporary / contract jobs prevents the young workforce from anchoring themselves in a community by purchasing a home, for example. Seniors are looking to downsize to a smaller living space with a landlord who will provide maintenance. The housing crash caused a large number of households to foreclose on their homes, and either their credit has not yet recovered enough to try homeownership again or they are wary of another crisis and do not want to risk buying a home again. The main difference in rural areas is that the number of available units for rent is much fewer than in urban or suburban areas, so the competition for affordable units is significantly higher.

Multifamily housing is not nearly as common in rural areas as it is in urban and suburban ones; in rural areas, it is much more common for a private homeowner to rent out a single-family detached home. Unfortunately, the stock of single-family rental homes may be poor quality because often the owner and landlord cannot afford to complete critical home repairs, and most rehab home assistance programs require the home to be owner-occupied to qualify. As a result, just as with the seniors who cannot maintain their homes, these single-family rentals fall into disrepair and grow the stock of substandard housing.

When it comes to subsidized housing, providers explained that there is not nearly enough to meet demand, especially in areas far away from larger metro areas such as Roanoke or Richmond. For the limited units of subsidized housing that *are* available, most have wait lists that are months or even years long.



The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, which facilitates the development of affordable multifamily housing through a federal tax credit and incentive for private investors, is one of the leading sources of quality subsidized housing in the state. However, rehabilitation is favored in rural areas over new construction. Despite minimal population growth, some new construction is needed in these areas to push out the worst of the existing stock to support the “housing life cycle” of the region.

Many nonprofit developers in rural Virginia expressed that it is also difficult to demonstrate the need for subsidized multifamily development in their regions when applying to the LIHTC program, which is an important component in proposal ranking.

Many rural Virginia counties feature pockets of poverty in close proximity to affluence, and though there are many existing homes for sale, the quality of the stock is substandard. Counties with areas of high wealth among areas with households making less than \$50,000 a year, such as Fauquier and other Northern Virginia counties, have Area Median Incomes (AMI) that are skewed higher than average. This is also true of many rural counties that are technically part of larger metro areas, since income limits are determined by Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

This means that the rent limits for subsidized housing — up to 60% of the AMI for LIHTC developments or up to 50% of the AMI for Section 8 housing — also skew higher, which means that often the “affordable” rents are still out of reach for those who need it the most.

Table 14: Comparison of HUD Income Limits for Family of Four, 2016¹⁹

Locality	Area Median	30% AMI	50% AMI	80% AMI
Fauquier County	\$108,600	\$32,600	\$54,300	\$70,150
Shenandoah County	\$58,900	\$24,300	\$29,800	\$47,700
Virginia	\$77,500	\$23,250	\$38,750	\$62,000

Note: Fauquier County’s AMI and Income Limits are determined by the Washington DC MSA. This chart demonstrates how counties with suburban and rural pockets, as well as Census tracts with median incomes below \$75,000, are affected by the high incomes of neighboring metro areas. Shenandoah County, in contrast, is outside of its closest MSA, which is the Winchester, VA MSA.

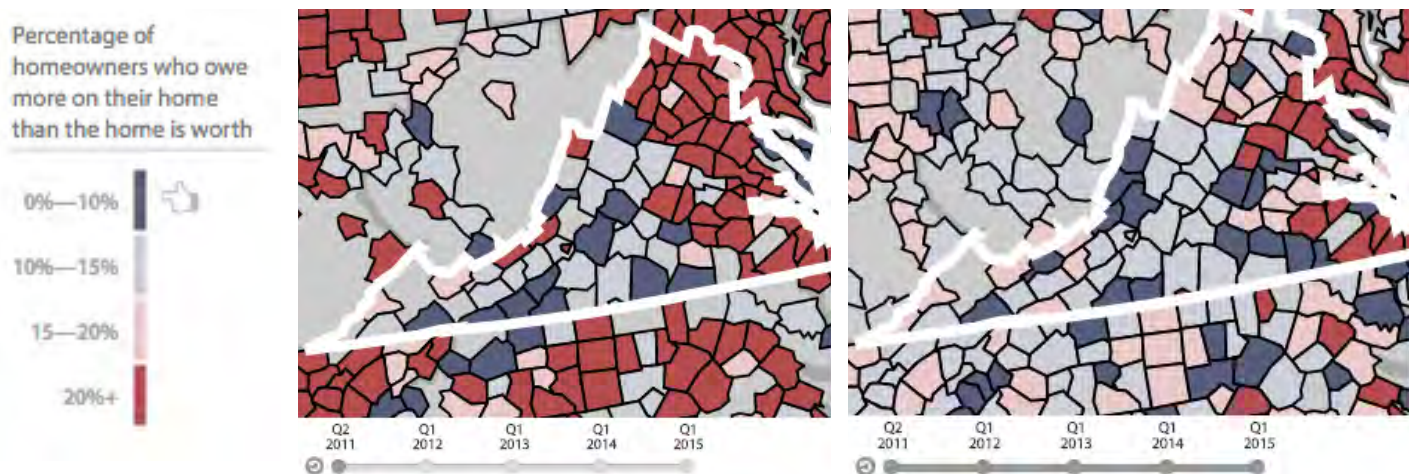
What Providers Said About Homeownership

Housing in rural areas is most commonly associated with high homeownership rates — and although the homeownership rate fell 2.2% in rural areas since 2000, it still remains above the state average. Homeownership carries unique challenges that are closely tied with economic activity.

For example, in 2015 the Center for American Progress conducted an analysis on recovery from the housing crisis in 2008, which found that “counties that are experiencing an increase in negative equity rates tend to be located in non-metropolitan and rural areas, which are less likely to be equipped with the resources that could ease the recovery.”²⁰ Further analyses by the Housing Assistance Council indicate that mortgages for homes in rural areas tend to cost more²¹ and the equity rural homes accumulate tends to be less than homes in urban or suburban areas.²²

Home Values: “Underwater” Counties (2011 and 2015)

Seven years after the housing bubble burst, nearly 1,000 counties nationwide present either stagnating or increasing percentages of underwater homes.



Source: Center for American Progress analysis of Zillow, “Additional Data Products: Negative Equity, 2011-2015,” available at <http://www.zillow.com/research/data>

20 Center for American Progress, *The Uneven Housing Recovery* (2015)

21 Housing Assistance Council, *Rural Research Note*, “Rural Mortgage Activity Declines. Home Purchases are Up, but so are High-Cost Loans” (2014)

22 June 21, 2017, Economic Development Advisory Committee Rooflines, “True Homeownership in Rural America” (2012)

One gap that providers raised at several regional discussions was the need for more quality “starter homes” — generally sized at 1,200 to 1,600 square feet. Many Realtors indicated that both millennial and senior clients are competing for this type of housing. Seniors are looking to downsize to smaller, one-story homes for easier maintenance and maneuverability as well as safety, and first-time homebuyers (typically millennials) are looking to start small and build equity for a larger home in the future when their families grow.

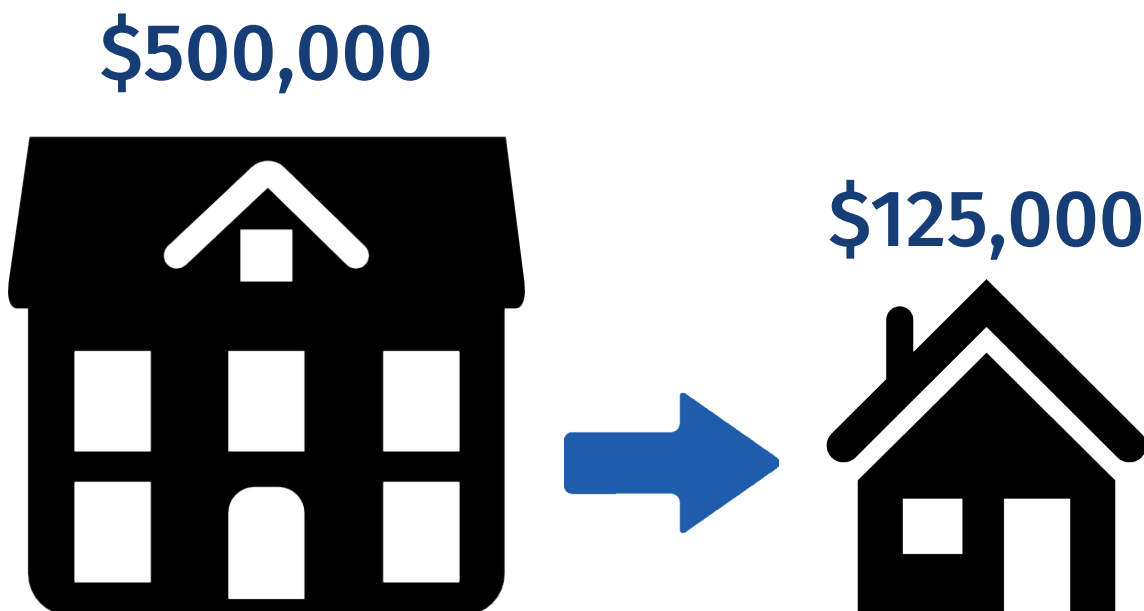
In the current market, many stakeholders suggested that not enough builders are targeting the construction of these types of homes. There is still focus on the larger custom homes that drove the market a decade ago. There are financial disincentives to the development of small homes where the profit margins are much thinner that reduces developer motivation.

The home building industry in general has been slow to recover from the housing crash, with only

1.2% of the state’s housing stock being built after 2010, reflecting the reduction in capacity within the homebuilding industry.

Areas that experienced a surge in the “McMansion” home building trend a decade ago are struggling to meet the demand for quality smaller homes. Some providers at our discussions suggested creative zoning policies that would allow for subdivisions that were originally designed for larger homes to be reshaped to provide for a mix of housing types, including zero lot line, duplexes, or townhouses.

One of the most pressing issues brought up in relation to homeownership involved barriers in access to mortgage credit, especially for households making 50% or less of the Area Median Income (AMI). Though mortgage consumer protections have increased with Dodd-Frank and the Consumer Protection Act in 2010, the qualifying process has become much stricter.



Many rural Virginians who lost their homes to foreclosure during the housing crash have yet to recover their financial footing and their credit rating, which limits their options for obtaining a mortgage for a home in their area.

Even though the cost of housing in rural areas is relatively cheaper than in urban and suburban areas, the lower wages of service industry and agricultural jobs cannot keep up with other expenses that may be higher as a result of living in rural areas, such as high energy and utilities costs, car maintenance and fuel (because of longer distance commuting), childcare, internet access, and healthcare. As a result, many rural Virginians are living paycheck-to-paycheck and falling deeper into debt.

In the Southwest corner of the state, the economy continues to struggle with job loss resulting from the decline in mining and manufacturing. The new jobs that have come into these areas tend to be concentrated into education and healthcare, which require retraining and new skills that can be a challenge for older workers near the end of their careers.

Additionally, some new positions are short-term or contract jobs, which make for a competitive and tight entry-level job market for millennials,

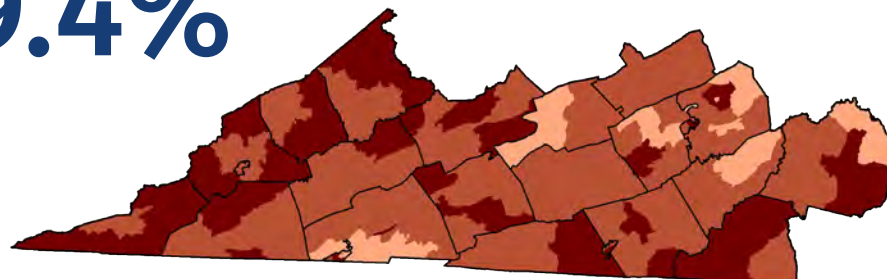
who are also saddled with student loan debt. Young workers who are unsure of whether or not their contracts will be renewed are hesitant to invest their limited resources into a home, which would commit them to an area where they might not have a job the following year. All of these economic factors contribute to a perfect storm of people who *want* to buy homes but *can't*.

Many of these struggling families could benefit from credit counseling services, which are provided by local and regional nonprofits around the state. But these small organizations are often unable to expand their housing and credit counseling, homeownership readiness education, and financial literacy programs due to limited staff capacity and resources.

Several of these service providers also noted that many of the people who are aware of these programs are unable to access them simply due to time restrictions (working multiple jobs), lack of reliable transportation, and lack of access to child care. One solution to this particular barrier would be to offer online courses. Realtors and loan officers also expressed a desire for comprehensive education on assistance programs available to their clients, which is something that could be explored through a new continuing education course or accreditation for expertise in homeownership assistance programs.

Rural Virginia's poverty rates are most concentrated in the Mountain region

19.4%



What Providers Said About Aging Housing Stock

A significant percentage of the housing stock in rural Virginia is in need of rehabilitation. Between an aging housing stock and circumstances that lead to these houses falling into disrepair, the need for comprehensive rehabilitation of substandard housing was echoed across the state by providers.

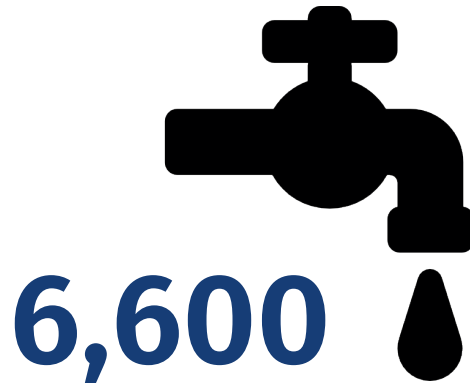
Most of these homes fall into disrepair due to either physical and/or financial inability on the part of owners to perform preventative maintenance and repairs as problems arise. Isolated seniors simply do not have the ability to fix problems themselves, and the longer these issues go unaddressed, the more serious they become. A roof leak that is not fixed immediately can lead to a much more expensive issue, such as a mold infestation or structural damage, if left alone. This is also true of households with little to no savings for emergencies — if they are struggling to pay for food, childcare, and healthcare every day, it is unlikely they will be able to afford roof repair or other critical maintenance issues.

A number of nonprofit organizations provide emergency home repair and accessibility improvements around the state; unfortunately, since the demand for their services is so high but the availability of funding and staff capacity is unable to keep up, these programs have long waiting lists for clients. In especially dilapidated homes, often the cost of making the home *completely* safe and healthy for the client is so high that the staff must prioritize the repairs in terms of how they can make the home *safer* with the money they have. This usually means that a home may have some of the more serious health hazards resolved, but still have major challenges with accessibility and safety remaining.

Some homeowners hesitate to apply for repair assistance because they fear their home will be subject to code enforcement if they use public funds. Regional nonprofits face challenges in securing funding that will prevent this very scenario from happening. For example, one of the stipulations for using HOME funding is that the home be brought up to code; in situations like the one above, that is often not a realistic endeavor with the money made available.



homes in rural Virginia are perpetually vacant and not on the market

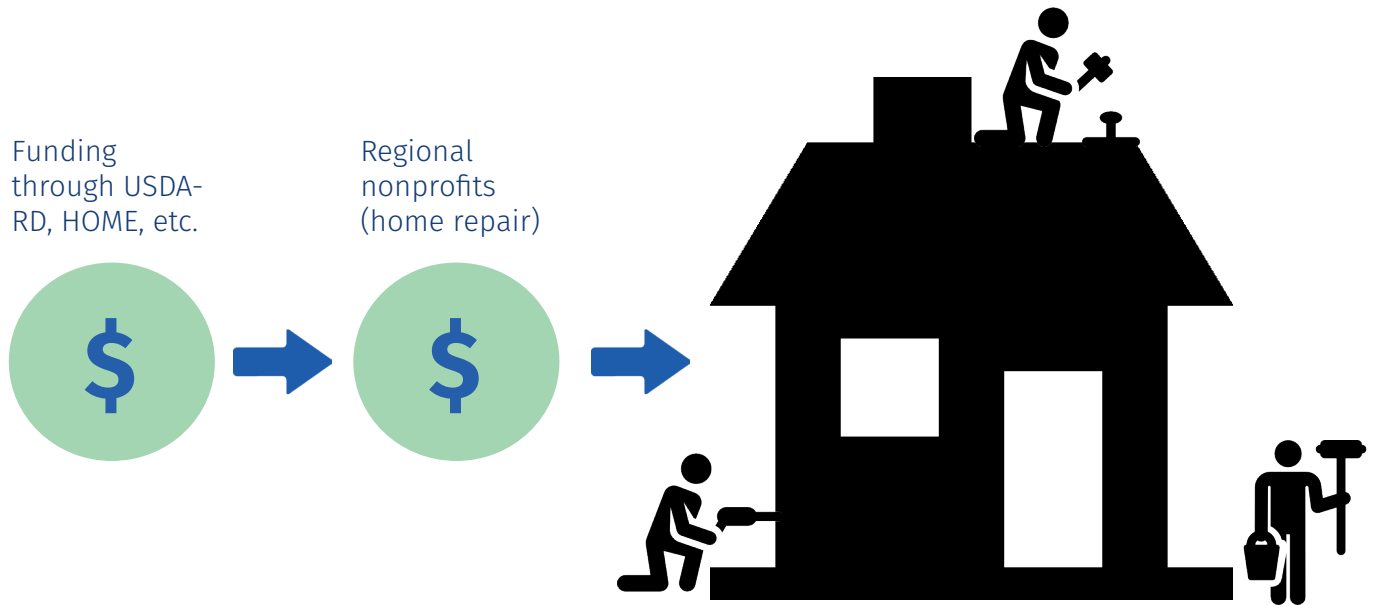


homes in rural Virginia do not have adequate indoor plumbing

As a result, the nonprofit performing the repairs can only use the HOME funds for a house already in better condition, and the people who need emergency home repairs the most cannot benefit from those funds. Other sources of funding for home repairs require a lien on the property, which can automatically disqualify some homes, but also is a significant disincentive for many older homeowners who are fearful of placing a lien on their home.

USDA - Rural Development offers assistance for home repairs through their Section 504 Home Repair program and homeownership assistance through their Section 502 Direct Loan program, but the funding available for these programs in Virginia is limited, despite the high demand.²³ Virginia could look at developing hybrid programs that partner funding sources to encourage match fund programs to fill the gap.

A good example of this is the Kentucky Housing Corporation’s HouseWorks Repair Program,²⁴ which funnels Affordable Housing Trust Fund money into nonprofits or local governments who provide home repair assistance. This program is often paired with the Section 504 funds to adequately cover the cost of safety repairs for clients. The key to successful utilization of such hybrid programs lies in cross-organizational coordination and communication.



23 USDA - Rural Development, 2016 Progress Report: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/files/USDARDProgressReport2016.pdf>

24 Kentucky Housing Corporation HouseWorks Repair Program: <http://www.kyhousing.org/Development/Single-Family/Pages/HouseWorks-Repair-Program.aspx>

What Providers Said About Land Use / Zoning Restrictions

Another barrier that affordable housing providers identified in almost every rural region is strict land use and building policies. As the housing and community development industry produces creative solutions to mitigate high housing costs, such as accessory units, tiny houses, and re-shaping large houses into duplexes, local zoning policies and building codes have yet to address these new housing types.

If local policies for subdivisions are especially strict, it may be difficult to meet these in a rural context where home prices are much lower than in high growth metropolitan areas. The development of smaller affordable multifamily developments also faces many challenges in terms of infrastructure availability and cost. Additionally, incidences of NIMBYism towards multifamily development can be more common in rural areas where neighborhood concerns about traffic, noise, and property values are compounded by the fact that multifamily housing is a much less common housing type and may be misunderstood and the subject of misperceptions.

Many rural housing providers suggested that some types of construction costs can be higher for building new multifamily housing in rural communities as compared to urbanized areas. While there is little difference in material costs, it is true that rural areas often have fewer developers that are interested and willing to take on projects of this type. The shortage of developers and builders can influence cost negatively. While land cost is typically lower than in urban areas, it can be challenging to find land that is zoned or acceptable for multifamily development.

Also, in areas with severe topography, it may be difficult and very expensive to develop land for multifamily housing. Some housing providers suggested that it would be helpful if they could subdivide large parcel farms into smaller acreage for housing development, but many localities' current zoning policies discourage this.

The limited number of public sewer systems also creates challenges for multifamily development with relatively high hookup fees for water and sewer when public systems are available. On-site systems can be expensive to develop and maintain, especially in areas with environmental restrictions, such as Chesapeake Bay watershed areas. Building code requirements, such as specific types of heat pumps, add to the costs. All of these factors contribute to the fierce competition for affordable options.



Manufactured Housing

Manufactured housing — formerly called “mobile homes” or “trailers” — is a significant facet of affordable homeownership in rural Virginia. Though manufactured housing faces a number of challenges, it is one of the largest sources of unsubsidized affordable homeownership. In Virginia, manufactured housing is most common in the Southside and Mountain regions, often as a standalone unit on a parcel of land either owned or leased by the homeowner. The unique nature of manufactured housing leads to challenges of roadblocks to titles, financing, and repair for tenants.

Unfortunately, many of these older units (especially those constructed before 1976 when federal standards were adopted) are substandard in quality and, in the case of leased units or land, have uncooperative landlords. Such behavior can range from refusal to maintain the infrastructure or unit to pressuring vulnerable people

— including immigrant families who may have language barriers — into signing lease-to-own agreements that are constructed to benefit the landlord. Though there are some home repair programs that can be applied to manufactured housing, such as the RD 504 loans and grants, there are stipulations that limit who can receive assistance. Often the unit must be built on a permanent foundation or exist on land owned by the homeowner (not leased) to qualify. These older deteriorating units need to be replaced completely by newer, high-quality units. The removal fees for the existing unit are often very expensive and can lead to unit abandonment on the property, which has implications for environmental impacts as well as the aesthetic quality of the area.

Insurance and interest rates can be significantly higher for manufactured housing than for traditional, “stick-built” housing, even though the loan



Nearly 14,000 pre-1976 mobile homes are still occupied in Virginia.

term tends to be much shorter. This is especially true for financing that is a “chattel” loan instead of a traditional mortgage. Chattel loans are made when the home is classified as “personal property” (like a vehicle) and not “real estate”. This is also one contributing factor to the way manufactured housing is appraised — as a depreciating asset instead of a traditional home that is expected to appreciate in value.

Although some urban and suburban communities face their own challenges with concentrated areas of manufactured housing in “mobile home parks,” many towns within the state do not permit some types of manufactured homes within the town limits. Most localities in the state are not favorable toward the development of new mobile home parks; indeed, there have been very few new parks developed in Virginia after the past 20 years.



Next Steps USA (www.nextstepsus.org)



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What Providers Said About Homelessness

Homelessness service providers from around the state all emphasized that rural homelessness is not as visible as in urban areas, which leads to a lack of awareness. Virginia is at the forefront of tackling Veteran homelessness, but rural homelessness faces a unique set of challenges that make addressing it more difficult than in urban areas.

A number of homelessness service providers noted that HUD’s definition of “homelessness” limits the ability of rural areas to demonstrate a need for assistance. HUD lists four categories of homelessness that are eligible for its emergency, transitional, and permanent housing programs:

1. Persons who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
2. Persons who are at imminent risk of homelessness
3. Persons who are homeless under other federal statutes
4. Persons who are fleeing / attempting to flee domestic violence

In more urbanized areas, service providers can document a large homeless population through movement in and out of emergency shelters, participation in rapid rehousing programs, and transition into permanent supportive housing. All of these are few and far between in rural areas, so documenting homeless individuals — and thus demonstrating a need for services in their locality — becomes a little more complicated.

One measure of a given locality’s homeless population is the annual Point in Time Count. However, even urban areas struggle to recruit enough volunteers to accurately count how many individuals are sleeping out on the street or in shelters on any given night. In rural areas, the area to cover is much larger and any homeless individuals sleeping outside or in their cars are not easily visible from the road anyway. Even without taking into account logistical challenges, rural homelessness service providers simply lack the organizational and financial capacity to conduct such a count. As a result, many of these pockets are grouped together as the “Balance of State”, which does not show a clear picture of the homeless population in these areas.

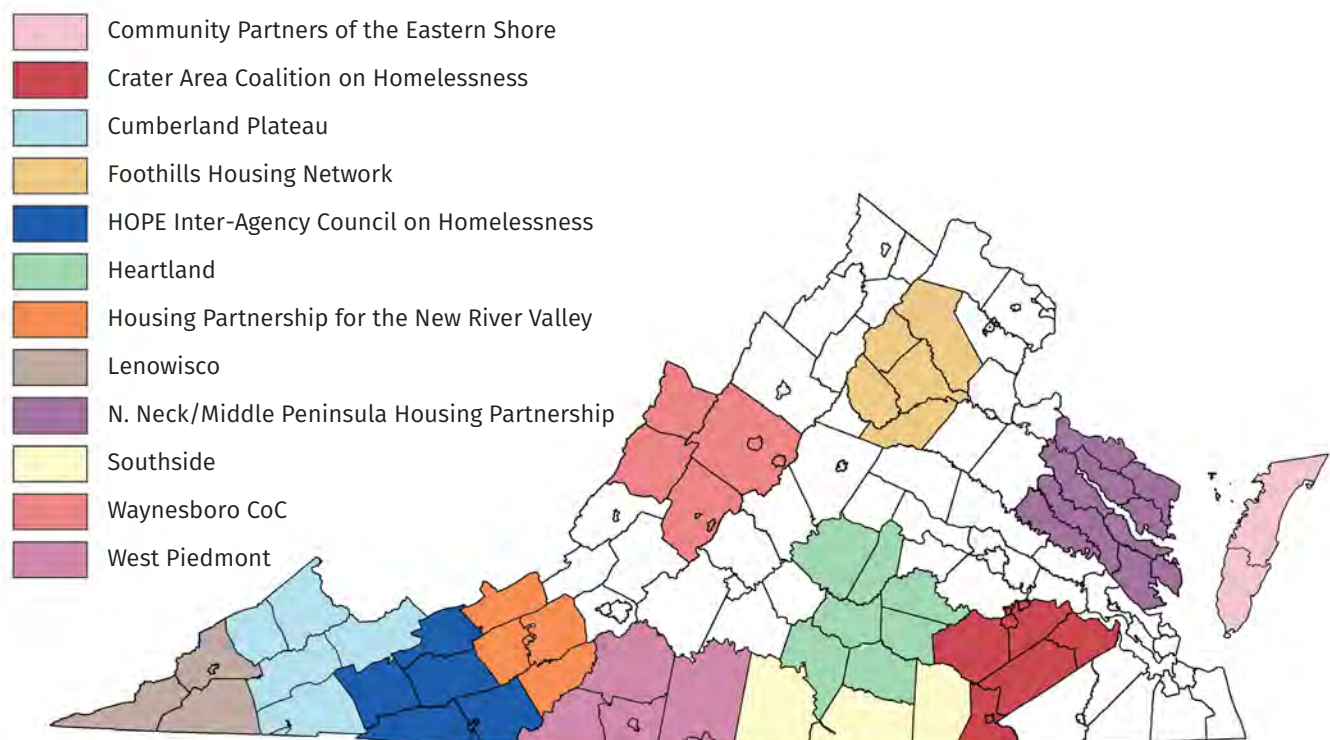
Rural homelessness is not as visible as in urban areas.

Homeless service providers in rural Virginia face limited funding and limited capacity.

As one might expect, the nonprofits, faith organizations, Community Action Agencies (CAAs), and Community Service Boards (CSBs) that carry out homelessness support services in rural areas are stretched thin with limited capacity. In the case of nonprofits, they are often the vehicle for federal and state funding to reach the homeless population through the local planning groups of the Balance of State Continuum of Care (COC). But these funds are distributed by demonstrated need, which, as outlined earlier, is difficult for these rural areas to show. In the case of the CAAs and CSBs, most cover a wide range of services (including mental health and emergency services) and geography (usually three or more counties) with limited staff.

Those localities that do have rapid rehousing or permanent supportive housing services for homeless families and individuals face the challenge of finding affordable housing near modes of transit that will get them to their new jobs. Often the housing further away from town centers and economic activity are going to be more affordable, but regional transit services have limited capacity to shuttle workers to homes at a greater distance.

Virginia Balance of State Continuum of Care – Local Planning Groups



V. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS NEEDS AND GAPS

The data as well as the input received from housing providers and other stakeholders reveals a number of clear housing needs in rural Virginia in the coming decade. Some of these are the result of changes in demographics, housing conditions, and economic conditions, while some have been persistent challenges in the past. We have grouped these challenges into five broad categories:

1. The growing population of seniors
2. The quality of the housing stock
3. A shortage of quality, affordable rental housing
4. Support for homeownership
5. Manufactured housing

For each of these areas, several policy options are identified. Most of these options may require an expansion or a re-programming of resources. In this report, we are not suggesting what those

funding actions might be, but rather, we recommend that a statewide policy group be formed to explore and adopt policy changes to address the above challenges. This group has been formed and will meet to consider these recommendations during the spring and summer of 2017.

This group would include rural housing providers (nonprofit and for-profit), lenders, housing manufacturers, local government, state agencies responsible for housing, economic development, seniors, persons with disabilities, health, and other related issues, and federal housing agencies. It is critical for the organizations that administer funding and programs be involved in examining the changing needs in rural Virginia and assessing the policy options for meeting them.

Based upon the data collected, the input received from providers, as well as best practices in place in other communities, we have developed the following series of policy options.

Policy Options for Housing the Growing Senior Population

As noted earlier in this report, seniors are becoming an increasingly large part of the rural population. This is the result of the natural aging of the very large “Baby Boomer” cohort of the population as well as the outmigration of younger individuals from rural areas to urban communities. The next generation of seniors has consistently indicated that they prefer to “age in place,” staying in their homes and remaining active in their communities. It appears that rural seniors are even more likely than their urban counterparts to follow this pattern.

We also know that the number of seniors living alone in rural areas is increasing rapidly. These individuals have less support and less income than when living with a spouse or other relative. Seniors who live alone are more challenged with home maintenance and accessibility issues. Social isolation and access to other important services, such as health care and grocery shopping, are also key concerns.

The number of seniors who are housing cost burdened is increasing rapidly. This applies to

both owners and renters. One factor that is of particular importance with respect to homeowners is that **the percentage of seniors with a mortgage has doubled in the last 15 years.** This is, for the most part, the legacy of the financial and mortgage crisis that began in 2008. Like many homeowners, some seniors took advantage of the rising home values in the lead up to the crisis to refinance their homes and take cash out. Others refinanced during the Great Recession to help themselves or family members weather a financial crisis. The result is that many of our retiring seniors are still facing a decade or more of house payments, unlike their parents’ generation, which was more likely to have taken care of their home debt by the time they retired.

Housing quality and in-home accessibility remain crucial concerns for many rural Virginia seniors. One aspect of housing quality is energy efficiency. The rural housing stock outside of towns is older than the urban housing stock. Older housing is far more likely to have some substandard conditions and more likely to perform poorly with respect to energy consumption.

Rural seniors are even more likely than their urban counterparts to prefer to “age in place.”



Home Safety and Accessibility

A program targeted to making the homes of rural seniors safer and more accessible would be highly desirable and would serve a large number of senior householders. This type of program could include stair repair, railings, ramps, door widening, and conversion of a downstairs room to a bedroom and bath. The kitchen and the bath are key areas to make accessibility changes.



Standard Protocols for Home Evaluation

Virginia needs a standard protocol for inspecting the homes of seniors to determine safety and accessibility needs. Every senior should have access to a trained and qualified inspector who can identify critical needs and place them in a priority listing of home improvements – as well as estimate cost and provide referrals to programs that can assist the homeowner with these needs.



Home Rehabilitation and Repair

Expansion of housing rehabilitation efforts in rural Virginia, especially targeted to senior homeowners, is an important strategy. Resources for this type of program have been far more limited in rural areas compared to urban and suburban. Repair programs that focus on critical housing conditions, such as leaking roofs, are also a significant need. Treatment of critical deferred maintenance can prevent more significant structural damage that threatens the habitability of the home. Targeting high poverty areas and raising the Area Median Income limits to qualify for such assistance could help direct the resources to those with the most critical needs.



Encourage/Facilitate Volunteer and Cooperative Self Help Models

There are successful programs, such as the “Village” model, that provide a template for seniors to help each other and for volunteers to also contribute. These programs can include a wide range of activities, such as home maintenance, transportation to services and shopping, and home visits to counteract social isolation.



New Affordable Senior Rental Communities Located Near Services

While many rural seniors wish to “age in place”, there are others who would prefer to move to rental housing. The continued development of some new senior housing near services and transportation is an important part of meeting the full range of senior housing needs.



Centralized Clearinghouse for Home Accessibility Resources

Seniors, caregivers, and service providers need easier access to accurate, comprehensive information about home accessibility resources. Virginia Accessible Housing Solutions is proposing to develop such a centralized, web-based resource center, which will come online in 2018. The center will provide program information as well as referrals for assistance.



Use of Medicaid for Home Improvements

Efforts to utilize Medicaid funding must continue as a resource for accessibility and other critical health related safety improvements to the home. Federal regulations allow states to adopt Medicaid waivers to permit certain repairs that can allow a senior to remain in their home to delay nursing home admission.



Policy Options for Improving Housing Quality

Housing quality and condition is a key issue in rural Virginia; however, the problem is not restricted to senior Virginians. It also affects families, households with a disabled member, and others. The average age of housing located in rural areas (not towns) is higher than urban areas, which correlates with substandard housing conditions.

Further, practitioners report significant levels of deterioration and unsafe conditions in the homes of clients that they visit. In particular, the energy efficiency of these homes is poor, which results in higher than necessary heating and cooling bills. Another indicator of housing quality issues is the high rate of housing vacancy in many rural regions compared to urban areas.



Expand and Develop New Housing Rehab and Repair Programs

As noted in the previous section on Senior Housing Needs, the expansion of these programs in rural areas is perhaps the most critically needed housing assistance effort. Programs that can address the wide range of housing needs through complete rehab are highly desirable but costly. The long-term demand for and the viability of the housing stock is also a consideration when deciding to make a major capital investment. For this reason, scaled-back, lower-cost repair programs may be a more effective tool — especially when combined with volunteer efforts.



Identify New Resources for Energy Efficiency Programs

By improving the energy efficiency of housing, it's possible to increase the affordability of that housing. The capacity to deliver energy efficiency improvements is high — principally through the Weatherization network of providers. However, federal resources for Weatherization have been in steep decline for the past several years as “stimulus” funding has come to an end. New resources must be identified to continue to improve the energy efficiency of our housing stock. One place to look for this is through utility-funded initiatives. Both of the state's major electric utilities have pilot programs underway, which should be studied and supported. Outreach should be undertaken to the electric co-ops as well as gas utilities to test similar model efforts.



Expand Utilization of USDA-RD 504 Rehab Program

The 504 Program provides resources for housing rehabilitation in rural communities. This program has been underutilized in Virginia, and efforts should be undertaken to enhance the effectiveness of the delivery system for 504 loans and grants.



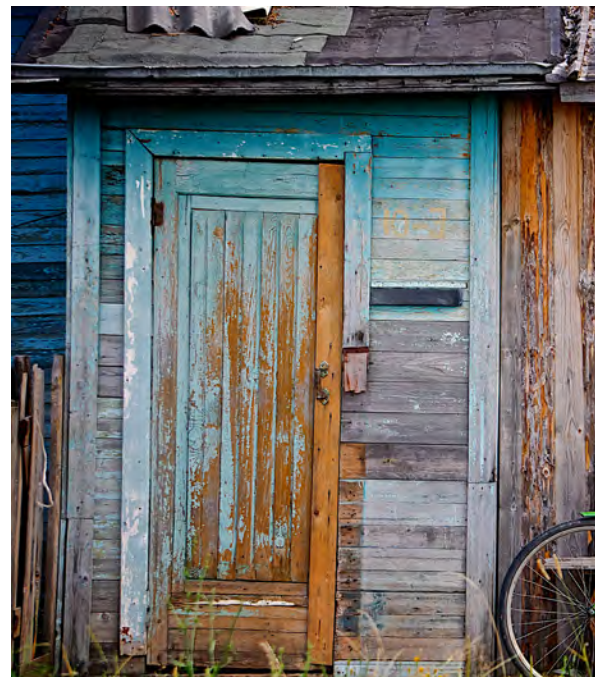
Encourage Habitat / Rebuilding Together Models that Utilize Volunteers

A certain reality is that there will not be sufficient new federal, state, or local financial resources to address all of the housing quality challenges in rural communities. For that reason, it will be important to incentivize and support the expansion of volunteer-driven housing programs. Both Habitat for Humanity and Rebuilding Together operate such programs, as well as the Appalachian Service Project. Virginia should explore ways to support the expansion of these initiatives alongside preventative maintenance education for homeowners, possibly with a match fund program.



Undertake a More Active Program of House Replacement

Many homes in rural Virginia are not suitable for rehabilitation — their condition is too deteriorated and/or the type of housing is obsolete and not appropriate for the next generation of occupants. For this reason, rehab is not the only answer in rural Virginia. In order to ensure that the housing stock remains healthy and viable, new homes need to be built to replace homes that need to be demolished and removed from the stock.



Policy Options for Increasing Affordable, Quality Rental Housing

There is a shortage of quality, affordable rental housing in rural Virginia. There has been limited new rental housing construction over the past several decades, while the emphasis was on preservation rather than new construction. Many rural housing markets have been weak and it has, therefore, been counterintuitive to think in terms of new construction. Often, new rental housing proceeds only when deep rental subsidies are available. Multifamily developers are rare in rural Virginia, and they are risk-averse to the development of market-based housing.

However, many stakeholders pointed to the lack of quality rental housing as one reason that it has been difficult to retain millennials in their communities — a shortage of attractive housing options is a contributing factor in their decision to leave. Many rural communities in the state have experienced some positive economic news with new jobs and economic activity. The development of new rental housing in these areas may be supported by the market and could add energy to local economic growth.



Increased Focus on Mixed-Income Projects in Towns

Accelerate efforts to create market-rate, mixed-income rental housing in the downtown areas of smaller communities. Make housing development a key component of downtown and economic revitalization strategies for these areas. Utilize historic tax credits where possible to increase affordability and reduce development risks.



Build New Rental Housing in Addition to Emphasizing Rehab

Replacing older, obsolete rental housing with new units that are designed to appeal to a new generation of renters is important to maintaining a healthy housing market. This can include new construction as well as adaptive re-use of spaces not previously used for housing, such as industrial and commercial buildings. Because of market considerations, consider the development of modest-sized properties in nearby communities to achieve greater management efficiency. Support developers with strategies to reduce risk through joint ventures with state-wide entities.



Support Development of New Rental Housing with LIHTC and Other Assistance Programs

Include new senior and family housing within the rural production for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and 515 programs. Encourage some older rental housing to exit the housing stock through demolition.



Develop Programs to Support/Incentivize Developers to Undertake Small, Rural Rental

Explore opportunities to support small rural developers through risk sharing, joint venture, insurance, and other strategies to reduce risk.



Increase Use of RD 538, RD 515 Preservation, FNMA Small Rental Programs

The availability of affordable financing is also a barrier to the development of new rural rental housing. Seek additional sources of rental financing, including the RD 538 loan guarantee program. A recent FHFA rule increases the obligations of the GSEs to serve rural areas and other underserved markets, such as manufactured housing. Monitor and be prepared to take advantage of new initiatives from the GSEs. Use current GSE small rental finance programs more effectively in rural Virginia.



Policy Options for Increasing Homeownership

The homeownership rate in rural Virginia, like the rest of the state, has been in decline since the housing crisis that began in 2008. There is a shortage of newly constructed, modestly-priced “starter homes.” These homes are sought after by both first-time homebuyers seeking to stay in the community as well as Baby Boomers that are interested in downsizing and moving closer to services and healthcare while still staying in the community. During the housing crisis, many single-family homes were converted to rental housing as a result of foreclosure — with foreclosed families moving from owning to renting and foreclosed homes being occupied by renters as a result of the weak market.

Many parts of rural Virginia have lengthy “days on market” averages, indicating a mismatch between demand and supply. Stakeholders suggest that most new product is in the higher price range and is being built on a contract basis with little spec housing of the type that is being sought.





Strategy to Re-Convert Single-Family Detached Homes Back to Homeownership

Develop programs to facilitate the return of the single-family rental stock back to homeownership.



Better Targeting of New Housing Development to Where New Jobs are Being Created

Provide better matching of new home development to regions where new jobs are being created. Assist with access to market data. Create better communication between economic development professionals at the local and regional levels with housing developers.



Support High Quality, Modest-Size and Cost New Home Development

Develop new modest-cost housing with amenities that are desired by the two primary market groups. For Baby Boomers, the key amenities are single-floor, accessible and adaptable for decreasing mobility, as well as locational access to healthcare and retail. For younger families, locational access to jobs and entertainment rate high as well as modern amenities in the kitchen and baths.



Improve Access to Mortgage Credit Repair and Counseling Classes

Homebuyer education, credit repair, and other types of pre-purchase counseling are not nearly as readily available in rural communities as urban. Expand the network of counseling and increase the capacity for the use of electronic training and communication.

Policy Options for Addressing Challenges in Manufactured Housing

Rural areas of the state, especially the Southside and Mountain regions, have significant numbers of manufactured housing within their housing stock. A significant amount of this housing was manufactured before the 1976 HUD manufactured housing standards were adopted, and even more predate building code updates in 1994 and 2000. Some of this housing is severely deteriorated.

Financing options are limited for manufactured housing that is “chattel” (not real property). This housing is generally located in a “mobile home park” or on land that is not owned by the occupant. Frequently, this housing is not placed on a permanent foundation, but rather installed on piers with skirting around the perimeter.

It is common for much of this stock to depreciate in value rather than to increase in value over time. For this reason, many affordable housing providers and advocates do not favor this housing for their clients.



Target Replacement of Older Manufactured Homes with New, High-Quality Product

Due to its original construction quality and deteriorated condition, this housing stock cannot be rehabilitated and should be targeted for replacement. Much of this stock is single-wide and should be replaced with new, well-constructed manufactured housing of similar size.



Encourage Quality Improvements while Retaining Affordability for New Units

The quality of manufactured housing has increased dramatically over the past 20 years, especially since higher energy efficiency standards were adopted in 1994. Creative design, combined with higher quality and permanent siting, can improve the value performance of this type of housing while still maintaining its affordability advantage over site-built housing — especially in areas where there is low capacity for traditional homebuilding.



Seek Improved Financing Options for Manufactured Home Buyers

Explore options for expanding access to home financing that more closely resembles traditional mortgage loans for real property with longer terms and more competitive interest rates. Follow GSE actions with regard to expansion of credit for chattel loans. Explore opportunities to reduce and simplify requirements for titling property as real property.



Mobile Home Park Revitalization / Infrastructure

A significant number of manufactured homes are located in mobile home parks. Some of these parks have major infrastructure challenges, including streets, lighting, water and sewer, electric pedestals and the like. Develop strategies for financing infrastructure improvements, including acquisition by residents or community land trusts, which will also restrain increases in lot rental.



Facilitate Placement of this Housing on Permanent Foundations and Owned Land

In non-park settings, facilitate and encourage the placement of this housing on permanent foundations and on land owned or subject to a long-term lease by the homeowner. This will allow the treatment of the home as real property, which in turn allows for improved financing options for residents of these homes.



VI. BEST PRACTICES IN RURAL HOUSING POLICY

The Village Model

Village to Village Network

Service Area: Nationwide

Issue Addressed: Housing needs for seniors

Website: www.vtvnetwork.org

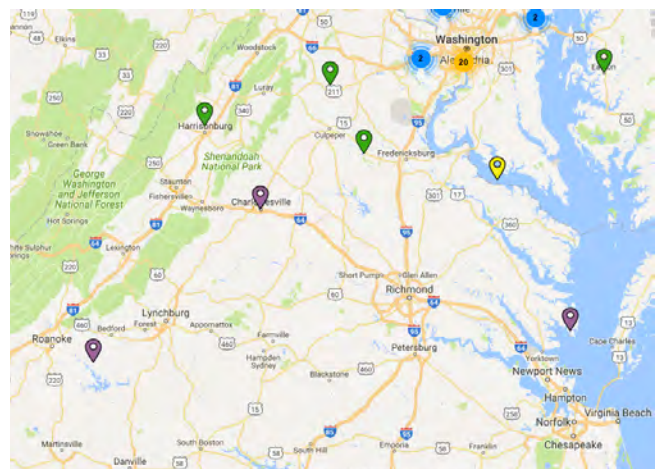
Villages are nonprofit, grassroots, membership organizations that are redefining aging by being a key resource to community members wishing to age in place. Villages are a social support network for their members that provide necessary services (such as transportation, technology assistance, running errands to the pharmacy or grocery store), community engagement activities and other important resources crucial to aging interdependently. A Village reflects the community it serves and transforms the “Silver Tsunami” of aging Baby Boomers into a “Silver Reservoir” that grows and strengthens its community.

Villages form key partnerships, provide services, and are an important resource to strengthening its community. Villages are a community-based model that provide a coordinated and comprehensive approach to engaging and meeting the needs of their members. Village members are a valuable resource that engage in projects to improve their communities through volunteering, advocating, and creating solutions to community issues.

A key function of the Village Model is its utilization of volunteer services. The organizing body recruits volunteers to provide transportation, health and wellness programs, home repairs, and social and educational activities to residents so they can safely and successfully age in place in their own homes.



Photo courtesy of Village to Village Network



The Villages in development (purple) or in operation (green) in VA

College Service Project Appalachia Service Project

Service Area: VA, TN, WV, KY

Issue Addressed: Housing quality

Website: www.asphome.org

The College Service Project (CSP) is a student-led, campus-based organization. Each chapter is nationally affiliated with the Appalachia Service Project (ASP) and follows its model for home repair projects in their local community.

Students involved in CSP take on these projects from start to finish. They find families in their local communities and encourage them to submit applications for repairs, conduct the initial home visits to select projects, and recruit volunteers to carry out the work. They also host fundraisers to raise funding for the projects.

Currently 10 CSP chapters are active throughout the region, including Virginia Tech. By tapping into motivated university students as a resource, the capacity of the organization to conduct home repairs becomes more robust.

The ASP provides a number of volunteer programs in rural Central Appalachia to repair homes for low-income families and even build new ones. In its most recent evaluation, ASP brought in over 16,000 volunteers who provided critical repairs for almost 500 families and constructed 26 new homes in one year.



Photos courtesy of Appalachia Service Project

Rural Community Facilities Development Program

Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP)

Service Area: VA, DE, MD, NC, SC, GA, FL

Issue Addressed: Lack of infrastructure

Website: www.sercap.org

SERCAP makes emergency grants to families to repair or replace damaged plumbing, pumps, and lines or for the construction of new facilities for individual, isolated households. This work involves cooperative efforts with local governing officials, community action agencies, departments of health and social services, and other nonprofits such as Habitat for Humanity. There is also financial assistance for tap fees and hookup costs to new municipal water systems for additional low-income households.

Major assistance is provided to communities to cover up-front costs for preliminary engineering studies, test wells, soil tests, and other analyses. Similarly, SERCAP works with rural localities to provide comprehensive development costs for community wells, storage tank rehabilitations, and other water system upgrades.



Seniors Safe at Home Campaign

Albemarle Housing Improvement Program (AHIP)

Service Area: Greater Charlottesville Area

Issue Addressed: Housing quality; seniors

Website: www.ahipva.org

Elderly households are among the most vulnerable. Senior citizens struggle with fixed incomes, diminishing resources, and health issues — which impair their ability to complete necessary home repairs. A typical social security income for a low-income senior is around \$10,000 per year.

Seniors Safe at Home sets out to make sure that no senior citizen has to wait for a critical home repair — while preserving a senior citizen's assets and helping them age in place. In 2016, this program helped 98 senior citizens with repairs and rehabs, or 53% of AHIP's clients.



Building Rural Economies Initiative

Rural Community Assistance Corporation

Service Area: 13 Western and Pacific states

Issue Addressed: Capacity of local providers;
economic development

Website: www.rcac.org

RCAC's Building Rural Economies (BRE) initiative provides training in comprehensive community economic development to support and develop local assets and talents. RCAC builds the capacity for local sponsoring organizations to network, plan, and implement economic development initiatives in rural communities. BRE increases local entrepreneurship and jobs, develops catalytic projects that seed additional investments, and develops a supportive, entrepreneurial environment for economic development to thrive.

The program takes place over three phases. In phase one, RCAC works with a local sponsoring organization to identify economic opportunities in the community and the leaders with the passion to take advantage of those opportunities. In phase two, RCAC implements its curriculum – Start, Grow, Revive Your Business – to help leaders develop skills necessary to launch or expand local businesses. It also focuses on sustainable business principles and regional networking. In the final phase, RCAC provides ongoing coaching and support for regional networking and economic development. RCAC works with both the sponsoring team and individual entrepreneurs to provide the technical, managerial, and financial assistance necessary to launch and expand local businesses.



JustChoice Lending

FAHE

Service Area: Central Appalachia (VA, WV, KY, TN, AL, MS)

Issue Addressed: Homeownership

Website: www.fahe.org / www.justchoicelending.com

JustChoice Lending (JCL) is the Mortgage Lending Department of FAHE that offers full service mortgage lending. JCL offers many types of mortgage loans, including USDA 502 Direct (low-income), USDA 502 Guaranteed (moderate-income), VA (little to no downpayment), FHA (less-than-perfect credit), Conventional (no income restrictions), and Refinancing. JCL is the only nonprofit third-party originator for Chase and has been instrumental in creating a national nonprofit packaging system for USDA RD 502 Direct loans.

Although JCL serves people of all income levels, they have the resources, experience, and know-how to work with people from lower-income backgrounds. In addition, no matter the income level, JCL also helps clients with less-than-stellar credit improve their scores so they can finally purchase a home.



Duty to Serve Program

Federal Housing Finance Agency

Service Area: Nationwide

Issue Addressed: Manufactured and rural housing

Website: www.fhfa.gov/duty-to-serve

Federal law requires the FHFA to issue a regulation to implement the Duty to Serve requirements specified in the Federal Housing Enterprises Financial Safety and Soundness Act of 1992, as amended by the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008. The statute requires Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to provide leadership to facilitate a secondary market for mortgages on housing for very low, low, and moderate-income families in three underserved markets: manufactured housing, affordable housing preservation, and rural housing. FHFA has issued a final rule that takes into consideration these underserved markets' needs, safety, and soundness.



Broadband Infrastructure Office North Carolina State Chief Information Office

Service Area: North Carolina

Issue Addressed: Lack of infrastructure

Website: ncbroadband.gov

The Broadband Infrastructure Office (Broadband IO) was established by the State Chief Information Officer in 2015 as a statewide resource for broadband access, first responder communications, and classroom connectivity initiatives led by the State of North Carolina.

Broadband IO aligns NC Broadband, the statewide effort to expand high-speed internet access across the state, with the FirstNet public safety initiative for improved resource-sharing across state agencies. The centralized and streamlined office provides the opportunity to work across agencies and identify infrastructure development needs across North Carolina.

The programs of this office include technical assistance – with an on-the-ground technical team that helps counties across the state with needed broadband expertise – and planning and policy. The Broadband IO works with partners on community planning by providing policy recommendations as well as guidance to government leaders and key stakeholders to foster digital infrastructure expansion, adoption, and use.



*Broadband
Infrastructure*

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

FIGURE 5. NORTH CAROLINA: A LEADER IN SOUTHEAST ON BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY

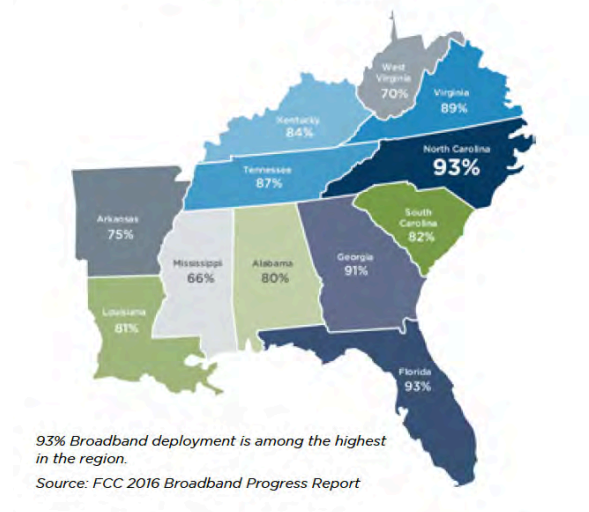
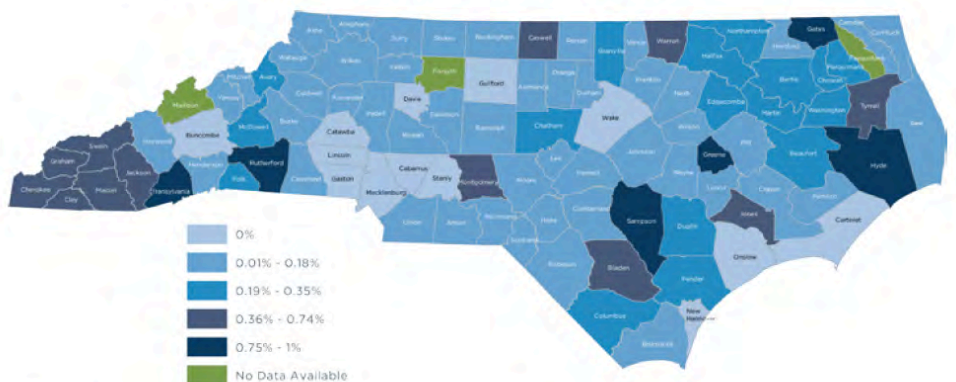


FIGURE 4. PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITHOUT BROADBAND ACCESS BY COUNTY



Figures 4 and 5 from “Connecting North Carolina: State Broadband Plan,” Broadband IO, <https://ncbroadband.gov/sbp>

Source: FCC 2016 Broadband Progress Report, data current as of December 31, 2014

I'M HOME Initiative

CFED

Service Area: Nationwide

Issue Addressed: Manufactured Housing, homeownership

Website: cfed.org

To ensure that low- and moderate-income families have the opportunity to build wealth, CFED works to support programs and policies that expand the asset-building potential of homeownership. CFED's work focuses on three areas: preparing people for homeownership, increasing the availability of affordable homes, and reducing the risk of homeownership.

This program –Innovations in Manufactured Homes (I'M HOME) Initiative – includes a special focus on manufactured housing, the largest source of unsubsidized affordable housing in the country. The goal of this program is to ensure that families who purchase manufactured homes are able to build wealth through homeownership.



Community Connect Grants

USDA-Rural Development

Service Area: Rural areas that lack any existing broadband speed of at least 4 Mbps downstream, 1 Mbps upstream

Issue Addressed: Infrastructure

Website: www.rd.usda.gov

The Community Connect program helps rural communities extend access where broadband service is least likely to be commercially available, but where it can make a tremendous difference in the quality of life for people and businesses. The projects funded by these grants help rural residents tap into the enormous potential of the internet for jobs, education, healthcare, public safety, and community development.

The funds can be used by state and local governments, federally recognized Tribes, nonprofits, and for-profits for initiatives that will deploy broadband service to all residential and business customers within the area and to all participating community facilities, such as public schools, fire stations, and public libraries.



Focus on Communities Utilizing Services (FOCUS)

Giles County Office of Health and Community Outreach

Service Area: Giles County, VA

Issue Addressed: Isolation, infrastructure

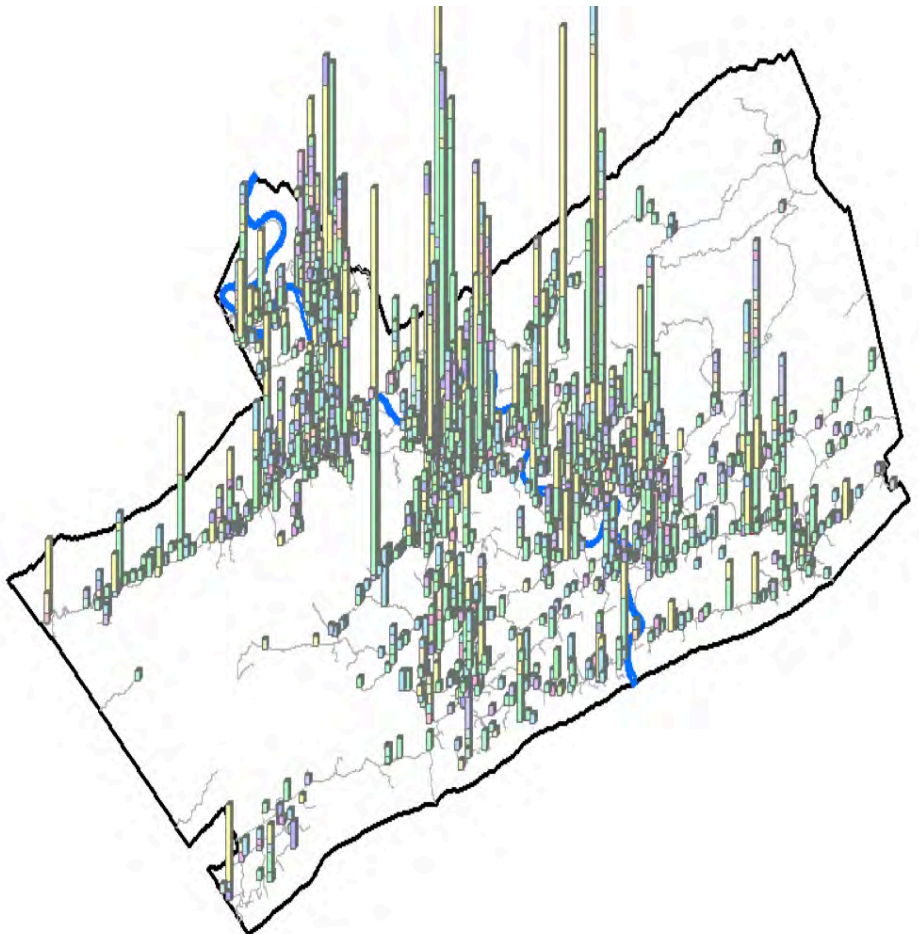
Website: virginiasmtnplayground.com

Giles County is changing the prevalence of poverty and its related symptoms through implementation of the FOCUS program.

Early in 2015, it was decided by Giles County Administration and the Board of Supervisors to take a detailed look at exactly where and by whom reactive services were being utilized within the county. The goal was to create a change in positive social norms within the identified high-use clusters through a more focused and efficient delivery of reactive services.

Twenty-two different data address points were collected. Incidents by address included: circuit and district court records/incarcerations, truancy, domestic calls, 911, police, fire, and many others. These were assembled on GIS overlays and assigned to the physical locations where these individual incidents occurred. It quickly became apparent that service expenditures were concentrated in distinct clusters within the county.

The process of a more efficient and accountable identification and referral system is being built by the county staff and the stakeholders. It is clearly understood that the tools necessary to help individuals and families break out of the cycle of poverty and multi-generational dysfunction can be delivered more effectively with a focused approach. The establishment of relationships and trust within the FOCUS Communities is what will provide the necessary access in order to affect future change.



Multi-Family Housing Loan Guarantees & Rental Assistance

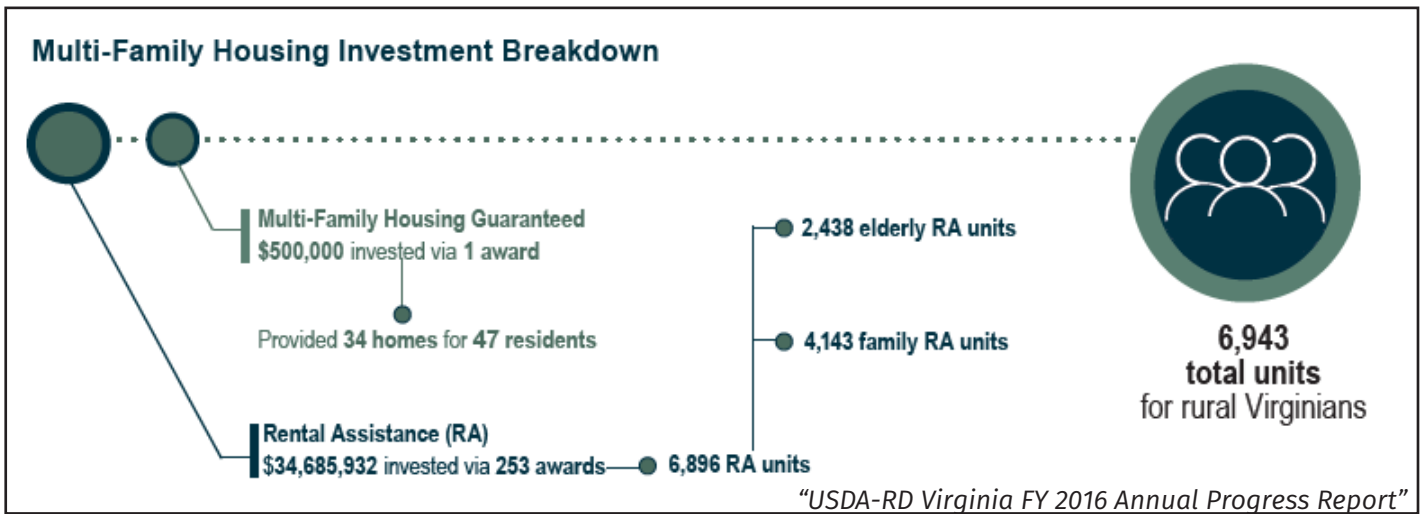
USDA-RD

Service Area: USDA-RD designated rural areas

Issue addressed: Affordable rental

Website: www.rd.usda.gov

The Multi-Family Housing Loan Guarantees program provides financing to construct or renovate affordable multifamily rental housing for low-to-moderate-income individuals and families in eligible rural areas. Under the program, USDA-RD provides guarantees on loans made by approved lenders that participate in the program. Rental Assistance payments may be made to owners of USDA RD-financed rural rental housing or farm labor housing apartment complexes on behalf of low-income tenants who are unable to pay market-rate rent to help them meet their monthly rent payments.



Online Homebuyer Education

eHome America

Service Area: Nationwide

Issue Addressed: Access to homebuyer education

Website: ehomeamerica.org

eHome America works closely with certified counseling agencies, housing finance agencies, lenders, and real estate professionals to help homebuyers and homeowners access online homebuyer education courses. These courses have been professionally created, reviewed by various agencies, and approved by governing bodies.

Depending on the partnering agency's capabilities, clients can find courses on home purchasing, money management, and foreclosure education. Some courses are even available in Spanish.

Online Homebuyer Education Wyoming Housing Network

Service Area: WY

Issue Addressed: Access to homebuyer education

Website: www.whninc.org

Because the state housing finance agency, Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA), requires homebuyer education for all its loans, the Wyoming Housing Network (WHN) developed an online homebuyer education course module to reach clients in the furthest corners of the state.

The WHN maintains a symbiotic relationship with the WCDA to sustain this program. Those applying for the loans, which include interest-free downpayment assistance, are directed to WHN's education program through a variety of media. WCDA also provides a financial incentive to the WHN for every client who completes the homebuyer education program.



Silver Rider Program Southern Nevada Transit Coalition

Service Area: Southern NV

Issue Addressed: Access to transportation; seniors

Website: www.sntc.net

Silver Rider Transit offers a variety of public transportation services for seniors and the general population around Southern Nevada. Depending on the user's location, they can utilize fixed route, express, dial-a-ride, or senior transit services via bus or handicap accessible van.

Some of the services for seniors include community trips to medical facilities, grocery stores, or other shopping areas. The program also sometimes partners with Meals on Wheels to access seniors in remote areas normally not feasible with the limited scope of the program.



Training House

Affordable Homes of South Texas

Service Area: City of McAllen, TX
Issue addressed: Housing quality
Website: www.ahsti.org

In 2016, Affordable Homes of South Texas, Inc. (AHSTI) opened its first ever Training House, which will serve as the location for AHSTI's home maintenance and repair classes.

Though the exterior looks like one of AHSTI's homes, the interior is a learning lab. Sections of the interior walls have been revealed to help class participants visualize what lies beneath the walls. Display versions of the air conditioning unit, sink, breaker box, and more are used to help class participants become familiar with and to instruct them on maintenance and repair of these items. The Training House will also feature a Free Tool Lending Library, which will serve as a tool resource for individuals who can't afford to buy their own tools for repairs.



Photos courtesy of Affordable Homes of South Texas

Support and Services at Home Cathedral Square

Service Area: VT
Issue Addressed: Seniors
Website: www.sashvt.org

SASH coordinates the resources of social service agencies, community health providers, and nonprofit housing organizations to support Vermonters who choose to live independently at home. Individualized, on-site support is provided by a Wellness Nurse and a trained SASH Care Coordinator.

SASH serves seniors and individuals with special needs who receive Medicare support and who live in congregate housing — or the surrounding community. Today, SASH touches the lives of approximately 5,000 people across the state of Vermont.



Photo courtesy of Cathedral Square SASH Team

Build Your Own Home Program Self-Help Enterprises

Service Area: CA

Issue Addressed: Homeownership

Website: www.selfhelpenterprises.org

Self-Help Enterprises aims to help low-income families in the San Joaquin Valley achieve the dream of becoming a homeowner. Through this program, eight to twelve families are grouped together and agree to help each other build their houses with skilled on-site supervision and guidance from Self-Help Enterprises construction staff.

The homes are built under the mutual self-help method of construction, where each family is required to contribute a minimum of 40 hours a week working on all the homes for a period of 9 to 12 months.

Family hours can be provided by the owners-to-be, any household member 16 years of age or older, and approved helpers. Together, families pour foundations, frame homes, install electrical wiring, hang doors and windows, and even lay tile and paint.

These labor hours, or “sweat equity,” are used as the down payment on their new home, reducing costs for a new home they could otherwise not afford. Self-Help Enterprises also assists each applicant with securing the loans needed to build their home. Special financing from USDA and the State of California makes these homes affordable.

Participants choose from three and four bedroom floor plans, which include a dishwasher and range, a two-car garage, a landscaped front yard, and energy-efficient features.

What makes the program so successful is that the participating families not only work on their own home, but everyone works on every house in the building group, and no one moves in until all houses are completed, creating a community bond.



Photos courtesy of Self-Help Enterprises

APPENDIX:

LIST OF JURISDICTIONS BY STUDY AREA

Central Region
Albemarle County
Amelia County
Amherst County
Buckingham County
Cumberland County
Fluvanna County
Goochland County
Greene County
Hanover County
Louisa County
Madison County
Nelson County
Orange County
Powhatan County
Mountain Region
Bland County
Bristol City
Buchanan County
Carroll County
Dickenson County
Floyd County
Franklin County
Galax City
Giles County
Grayson County
Lee County
Montgomery County
Norton City
Patrick County
Pulaski County
Radford City
Russell County
Scott County
Smyth County

Tazewell County
Washington County
Wise County
Wythe County
North Central Region
Accomack County
Caroline County
Charles City County
Essex County
Gloucester County
James City County
King and Queen County
King George County
King William County
Lancaster County
Mathews County
Middlesex County
New Kent County
Northampton County
Northumberland County
Richmond County
Spotsylvania County
Stafford County
Westmoreland County
Williamsburg City
York County
Southside Region
Appomattox County
Bedford County
Brunswick County
Campbell County
Charlotte County
Danville City
Dinwiddie County
Emporia City

Franklin City
Greensville County
Halifax County
Henry County
Isle of Wight County
Lunenburg County
Lynchburg City
Martinsville City
Mecklenburg County
Nottoway County
Pittsylvania County
Prince Edward County
Prince George County
Southampton County
Suffolk City
Surry County
Sussex County
Northern Region
Culpeper County
Fauquier County
Loudoun County
Rappahannock County
Valley Region
Alleghany County
Augusta County
Bath County
Botetourt County
Buena Vista City
Clarke County
Covington City
Craig County
Frederick County
Highland County
Lexington City
Page County

Roanoke County
Rockbridge County
Rockingham County
Shenandoah County
Staunton City
Warren County
Waynesboro City
Winchester City
Urban Areas
Alexandria City
Arlington County
Charlottesville City
Chesapeake City
Chesterfield County
Colonial Heights City
Fairfax City
Fairfax County
Falls Church City
Fredericksburg City
Hampton City
Harrisonburg City
Henrico County
Hopewell City
Manassas City
Manassas Park City
Newport News City
Norfolk City
Petersburg City
Poquoson City
Portsmouth City
Prince William County
Richmond City
Roanoke City
Salem City
Virginia Beach City



This report was made possible with the generous support of these organizations.

Building Department - Clarke County
New Single Family Dwellings 2017

	Battletown	Berryville	Boyce	Chapel	Greenway	Longmarsh	TOTAL	COMMENTS			
January		3					3				
February		2		1	2	2	7				
March	1			2	1	1	5				
April	1	2		2			5				
May	1	1			3	1	6				
June											
July											
August											
September											
October											
November											
December											
TOTAL	3	8		5	6	4	26				

ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT (TA-17-02)

Wireless Communication Facilities (WCFs)

June 20, 2017 Board of Supervisors Meeting – PUBLIC HEARING

STAFF REPORT – Department of Planning

The purpose of this staff report is to provide information to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to assist them in reviewing this proposed ordinance amendment. It may be useful to members of the general public interested in this proposed amendment.

Description:

Proposed text amendments to amend §3-A-1 (Agricultural-Open Space-Conservation District – AOC), §3-A-2 (Forestal-Open Space-Conservation District – FOC), §3-A-3 (Rural Residential District – RR), §3-A-12 (Neighborhood Commercial District – CN), §3-A-13 (Highway Commercial District – CH), §3-C-2-u (Monopoles for Telecommunication Antennae), §3-E-3 (Historic District), §3-E-4 (Historic Access Overlay District), §6-H-12 (Monopoles for Telecommunication Antennae), and Article 9 (Definitions) of the Zoning Ordinance. The purpose of the text amendments is to revise the requirements for the siting, construction, and modification of monopoles, towers, stealth structures, support structures, and associated equipment. Specific changes include but are not limited to:

- Maximum allowable height of a new WCF would be increased from 100 feet to 199 feet, subject to special use permit and site plan approval and compliance with new siting regulations.
- Use the County’s Telecommunications Infrastructure and Broadband Study as a guide in locating WCFs to maximize telecommunications service to residents and businesses and to minimize adverse impact on the County’s scenic and historic resources.
- New design requirements for stealth WCFs, including silos, flag poles, bell towers, and tree structures.
- New requirement for review of WCF applications by a third-party wireless telecommunications engineering consultant.
- New regulations for construction of amateur radio antennas consistent with State and Federal law.

Requested Action:

Conduct scheduled Public Hearing and take formal action on the proposed text amendment. Staff has no outstanding concerns with the adoption of this text amendment.

Update:

At the Board’s May 16, 2017 meeting, one minor change was requested to §3-C-2-u-1-b, Objectives:

4. *To facilitate deployment of WCFs to provide coverage to ~~all~~ residents and businesses of Clarke County in a manner consistent with the County’s character*

Members expressed concern that inclusion of the word, “all,” could create the expectation that the ordinance would ensure that county-wide telecommunications coverage would be

established. While such a goal is desired, the amended ordinance would help facilitate placement of WCFs to expand coverage – developing county-wide coverage, however, would be market-driven and heavily dependent upon the private sector to implement.

To avoid confusion, the word “all” has been removed from subsection 4 as shown above.

Background:

This text amendment was developed by the Planning Commission as a follow-up to the July 2015 adoption of a text amendment to bring the County’s monopole regulations into compliance with new Federal regulations regarding co-location of antennas on existing monopoles (TA-15-01).

In fall 2014, the County was contacted by attorney Frank Stearns (representing Verizon Wireless) regarding a possible project to add new antennas to an existing monopole (“co-location”) and at that time made Staff aware of the new Federal co-location requirements. Mr. Stearns also advised of additional concerns with the County’s monopole regulations including the maximum height requirement of 100 feet for all new monopoles and lack of clarity regarding the process for co-locating antennas on existing structures. He noted that the County’s regulations have not been updated in many years and do not take into consideration new technologies for wireless telecommunications and broadband service. These additional concerns were later summarized by Mr. Stearns in a June 2015 letter to Planning Staff.

To address Mr. Stearns’s concerns, the Planning Commission formed a Telecommunications Subcommittee in May 2015 consisting of three Commissioners (Robina Bouffault, Douglas Kruhm, and Jon Turkel) to evaluate these issues and recommend potential ordinance amendments. The Subcommittee held several meetings beginning in August 2015. County information technology staff assisted the process by developing a map depicting the location and heights of all existing towers and antenna support structures located within the County or in close proximity to its boundary. The Subcommittee also evaluated studies from Warren and Bedford Counties that were commissioned to help determine the location and heights of future towers in those localities. Mr. Stearns contributed provided a version of Bedford County’s tower ordinance that he modified to address the specific concerns he had with Clarke County’s regulations. The Subcommittee began their development of the text amendment with Mr. Stearns’s draft. Also to help provide direction for a proposed text amendment, the Subcommittee developed a series of “Goals and Objectives” utilizing a similar approach found in Bedford County’s study. The resultant Goals and Objectives are as follows:

Goals

1. *Encourage the location of wireless communication facilities to serve residential areas.*
2. *Protect residential areas and land uses from potential adverse impacts of wireless communication facilities.*
3. *Encourage users of wireless communication facilities to locate them, to the extent possible, in areas where the adverse impact on the County is minimal.*
4. *Encourage users of wireless communication facilities to configure them in a way that minimizes the adverse visual impact of the towers and antennas through careful design, siting, landscape screening, and innovative camouflaging techniques.*

5. *Enhance the ability of the providers of telecommunications services to provide such services to County residents quickly, effectively, efficiently, and unobtrusively.*
6. *Consider the public health and safety of wireless communication facilities.*
7. *Avoid potential damage to adjacent properties from tower failure through the engineering and careful siting of wireless communication facilities structures.*

Objectives

1. *All homes and business have access to broadband services and wireless for communication, business, education, and entertainment applications.*
2. *Integrate technology into scenic landscapes so that the natural beauty and quality of life is not compromised.*
3. *Encourage the co-location of antennas and equipment on existing towers and structures as an alternative to the construction of new monopoles. Facilitate co-location projects through regulations that allow for by-right installations and administrative review by Staff.*

By early 2016, the Subcommittee had developed a working draft of a text amendment that would propose, among several other items, increasing the maximum height of new monopoles to 199 feet. This is the maximum height that a tower can be constructed without mandatory safety lighting required by the Federal Aviation Administration. This would be a significant change from the County's current 100 foot maximum height requirement which helps to ensure that all new monopoles are predominantly concealed within tree coverage.

Planning Staff's primary concern with increasing the maximum height requirement was that the current special use permit requirements for monopoles do not include metrics that Staff, the Commission, and ultimately the Board of Supervisors could use to determine whether a new application should be approved or denied. Staff recommended that a third-party telecommunications engineering consultant be procured to establish these metrics through development of a County-wide study similar to those developed by Warren and Bedford Counties. The resultant study would ideally determine locations where new towers are preferred in order to maximize telecommunications and broadband services for County residents and businesses, and also would determine optimal heights and design features for new towers and support structures. The study then could be used to complete the development of the proposed text amendment and also be used as a guidance document in evaluating future applications to construct new towers. Staff further recommended that a telecommunications engineering consultant be retained on an as-needed basis to evaluate new tower applications including their proposed siting, necessity, capacity to serve County customers, and impacts on surrounding properties.

The Subcommittee's working text amendment draft and their Goals and Objectives statement were presented to the full Planning Commission on February 5, 2016 for discussion. Specific questions regarding the proposed increase in maximum tower height and the need for a telecommunications engineering study were also provided to aid the discussion:

Maximum Height Increase

- *What are the Commissioners' opinions of allowing 199 foot monopoles while retaining the prohibition on lighting?*
- *If the maximum height is increased to 199 feet, should more restrictive height requirements be imposed on areas such as the mountain ridge line? Other areas?*
- *If a maximum 199 foot height is not favored, is there support for a lesser maximum height that is higher than the current 100 foot limit?*

Telecommunications Engineering Study

- *What are the Commissioners' opinions of conducting a telecommunications study as described by Staff?*
- *If a study is generally supported, how should it mesh with the consideration of the proposed text amendment? Should the text amendment be evaluated by the engineer as part of the study?*
- *Are Commissioners supportive of retaining a telecommunications engineer to review special use permit applications for new monopoles?*

Commission members provided feedback to the Subcommittee and were generally supportive of the direction in which the members were proceeding with the text amendment and Staff's recommendation for a telecommunications engineering study. Following this meeting, the Subcommittee met on February 22 and agreed to proceed with the working draft text amendment recommending a maximum height of 199 feet. Planning Staff worked with the Board of Supervisors through the annual budget process to fund and select a telecommunications engineering consultant. The Board authorized the release of a request for proposals in April 2016 to conduct a telecommunications and broadband study and in July 2016 a contract was awarded to The Atlantic Group to complete the study within a 90-day time period.

Atlantic Staff worked with Planning Staff and also met with the Subcommittee through late summer and early fall. In addition to developing the study, Atlantic Staff also assisted with review and comment on the Subcommittee's text amendment working draft and suggested language that corresponded to the recommendations that were being developed in the study. Atlantic Staff ultimately completed the County's "Telecommunications Infrastructure and Broadband Study" in November 2016. The Study was presented to the Board of Supervisors on November 29 and accepted by the Board at their meeting on December 20. As part of their action to accept the Study, the Board's motion also requested the Planning Commission to use the Study as the basis for future recommendations that are advanced to the Board as well as for guidance in reviewing future applications for new telecommunications towers.

Of particular relevance to the Subcommittee's text amendment, the Study identified eleven potential locations where new towers in combination with existing towers could provide a potential County-wide network for wireless telecommunications and broadband service. These eleven locations are referred to as "Permitted Commercial Tower Development Areas" (PCTDAs) and are identified on a revised version of the County tower inventory map included in the Study. The PCTDA locations are typically plotted at or near a road intersection with acceptable sites for new towers to be located within a half-mile radius of the location. The Study also recommended a targeted height of 120 feet for each PCTDA but also noted that taller towers

up to 199 feet could be needed in some situations. Recommendations were included in the Study to help determine which types of situations warrant towers in excess of 120 feet.

The Subcommittee completed their work on the initial draft of this text amendment in January 2017 and presented it to the full Commission at their February 28 briefing meeting. The presentation included feedback from Mr. Stearns on the initial draft and the degree to which it addresses his original concerns.

Staff Analysis – Proposed Text Amendment Language

The major changes proposed in this text amendment are described separately by topic below:

Wireless Communication Facilities (WCFs) and Ordinance Objectives

The term “monopole” is currently used as the predominant term to describe telecommunications towers in Clarke County – a self-supporting, single-shaft structure as opposed to a tower with a lattice structure. While lattice towers will continue to be prohibited and “monopole” will still be used to describe the allowable antenna support structure, the term “wireless communication facility” or “WCF” will be used as the predominant descriptive term. As defined, “WCF” is a broader term that includes the antenna support structure (or “tower”), antennas, transmission cables, equipment shelters and cabinets, utility pedestals, ground equipment, fencing, signage, and all other infrastructure that makes up a tower site.

The text amendment also lists four objectives that the proposed WCF regulations attempt to accomplish:

1. *To reduce the adverse impact of such facilities.*
2. *To encourage the placement of WCFs in locations with appropriate vegetative cover and screening, and encourage co-location of antennas as an alternative to construction of new WCFs.*
3. *To promote alternative stealth structure design.*
4. *To facilitate deployment of WCFs to provide coverage to all residents and businesses of Clarke County in a manner consistent with the County’s character.*

These four objectives are consistent with the original list of Goals and Objectives that were developed by the Subcommittee.

Coordination with the Telecommunications Infrastructure and Broadband Study

As requested by the Board of Supervisors, the proposed text amendment utilizes the recommendations of the Study both in terms of the regulations and in evaluating new proposed WCF applications. Language is included in §3-C-2-u to indicate that the text amendment is intended to be used in conjunction with the Study, and that the proposed locations for new WCFs referenced in the Study are a guide to maximize service and minimize impacts. For all new WCF’s over 80 feet in height (Class 3 and Class 4 WCFs – see description below), the proposed location shall be consistent with the Study’s guidance regarding PCTDAs. Furthermore, WCFs in excess of 120 feet in height also have to demonstrate one or more specific conditions that warrant the taller height (addressed in greater detail below).

Maximum Height Requirements and “Class” System

The current maximum height of 100 feet for all new monopoles would be replaced with a system of WCF “Classes” that establish maximum height requirements, application and review requirements, design requirements, zoning district assignments, and permitted or special use designations based on the WCF height or type. The proposed classes are as follows:

- Class 1 WCFs
 - Maximum height – 50 feet.
 - Review/approval authority – Site development plan application reviewed and approved administratively by Zoning Administrator.
 - Zoning Districts
 - Permitted use in the AOC, FOC, CH, CN, RR, and Historic Access Overlay District.
 - Prohibited in the Historic Overlay District.
 - Design – Monopole or stealth structure with surface-mounted antennas

- Class 2 WCFs
 - Maximum height -- 80 feet
 - Review/approval authority – Site development plan application reviewed and approved by Planning Commission. Public hearing required per §6-E-3.
 - Zoning Districts
 - Permitted use in the AOC, FOC, CH, CN, RR, and Historic Access Overlay District.
 - Prohibited in the Historic Overlay District.
 - Design – Monopole or stealth structure with surface-mounted antennas

- Class 3 WCFs
 - Maximum height -- 120 feet
 - Review/approval authority -- Special use permit and site development plan applications reviewed and approved by Board of Supervisors (following Planning Commission review and required public hearings).
 - Zoning Districts
 - Special use in the AOC, FOC, CH, and Historic Access Overlay Districts.
 - Prohibited in the CN, RR, and Historic Overlay Districts.
 - Design – Monopole

- Class 4 WCFs
 - Maximum height -- 199 feet
 - Review/approval authority -- Special use permit and site development plan applications reviewed and approved by Board of Supervisors (following Planning Commission review and required public hearings).
 - Zoning Districts
 - Special use in the AOC, FOC, CH, and Historic Access Overlay Districts.
 - Prohibited in the CN, RR, and Historic Overlay Districts.
 - Design – Monopole

- Class 5 WCFs. This class is designated for privately-owned amateur radio antennas. Maximum height of these structures is governed by State and Federal law and localities are pre-empted from establishing more stringent height requirements or requiring special use permits for their approval. Class 5 WCFs would be reviewed and approved administratively by the Zoning Administrator and are allowed by-right in all districts.

As referenced earlier in this report, applications for Class 4 WCFs (over 120 feet but no greater than 199 feet) are required to demonstrate that one of three situations exist that create the need for a height in excess of 120 feet. These situations are as follows:

1. *The proposed site would provide a demonstrable coverage improvement over a Class 3 tower height and would be consistent with the guidance regarding the County's coverage goals in the Telecommunications and Broadband Study. An example of this situation would be data generated by an applicant that shows a taller WCF will provide greater coverage to an underserved area without providing redundant coverage or unnecessary overlap with other existing towers.*
2. *Need to ensure proper connectivity for microwave "point to point" systems. A path study and evidence of rejection from fiber optic providers shall be submitted with the application. As discussed in detail in the Telecommunications Infrastructure and Broadband Study, all communication towers need to be served by broadband internet access in order to operate. This can be accomplished either by wired broadband extended to the tower or by a wireless "point to point" connection from the proposed tower to an existing tower with microwave antennas. Wired broadband connectivity is the ideal approach but in some cases, it may be infeasible to bring wired broadband to a tower site. If a WCF has to rely on a "point to point" microwave connection, it may have to be constructed at a taller height to connect with the transmitting tower.*
3. *Proposed WCF is required by the property owner to be located in an area with a lower elevation in relation to the overall elevation of the subject property. Setback calculations with ground elevation profile diagrams and property owner requirements shall be submitted with the application. An example of this situation would be a landowner who agrees to lease a portion of their land for a new WCF site but selects a topographically lower area of the property for the site. This could be to avoid losing land that is in active agricultural production or simply to be as far away from the property owner's residence as possible. A taller height could be approved to accommodate elevation lost if the owner had allowed the WCF to be located on a topographically higher location on the property.*

Setbacks and Perimeter Buffers

Setbacks. The current ordinance requires setbacks of 100% of the monopole's height from property lines, 200% from public rights of way, and 400% from other natural or scenic features such as the Appalachian Trail, open space easements, scenic byways, Blandy Experimental Farm, and the Shenandoah River.

The new proposed setback from property lines and structures would be a distance equal to the engineered “fall zone,” or the fall zone plus the required perimeter buffer area, whichever is greater. The “fall zone” is the maximum distance from the structure base that the WCF is designed to fall in the event of a structural failure and collapse. All WCF applications will be required to include a diagram from a licensed structural engineer certifying the fall zone for the proposed WCF.

For WCFs to be located on parcels adjacent to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail Corridor, a special setback of 400 feet from the footprint of the Appalachian Trail is required.

Perimeter buffers. Under current requirements, monopoles must be located within a wooded area of dense tree cover containing a minimum depth of 120 feet from the area to be cleared for the monopole site. All trees within this area must be preserved.

Under the proposed text amendment, a perimeter buffer would be required for all Class 3 and Class 4 WCFs. An area with a minimum depth of 50 feet from the facility compound fencing must be established and maintained as a buffer area. Within the first 25 feet closest to the compound fence, the buffer must preserve existing trees and include supplementary planting of evergreen trees to effectively screen the compound and WCF structure base from view. The Planning Commission would have the authority to require additional planting within the remaining 25 feet of the perimeter buffer on a case-by-case basis to ensure effective and appropriate screening. All vegetation within the perimeter buffer would be required to be maintained throughout the lifespan of the WCF.

Co-Location of Antennas and Equipment

Current regulations allow the co-location of telecommunications antennas and equipment on existing monopoles, lattice towers, water tanks, and other structures as an amendment to the site development plan for that facility. Aside from language added recently to address the Federal co-location law change, the current ordinance does not outline a specific process to be followed for co-location applications or for the periodic addition, replacement, and maintenance of equipment and other WCF infrastructure.

The proposed text amendment now includes specific review processes, application requirements, and regulations for co-location of antennas and the addition/replacement/maintenance of WCF infrastructure and equipment. Language is included to clarify that co-location is a by-right activity and that the Zoning Administrator has the authority to waive certain site plan requirements if all additions and changes occur within the facility compound and do not produce a material change in appearance, height, or setbacks.

Stealth Design

The County has long encouraged the use of stealth design techniques to reduce the visual impact of new monopoles and has one example of an effective “tree” stealth monopole located off Mt. Carmel Road.

To further encourage the use of stealth design techniques, new design requirements are included in four formats that are compatible with the agricultural character of the County – silos, bell

towers, tree structures, and flag poles. Stealth silo structures are noted as the County’s “highest valued stealth technology” as the design has the greatest potential to blend with the agrarian nature of the County. Class 1 and Class 2 WCFs may employ silo and tree stealth designs, and bell tower and flag pole structures may be used for Class 1 WCFs. Other stealth designs in addition to these four models may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Third-Party Engineering Review

As recommended by the Telecommunications Infrastructure and Broadband Study, the text amendment also includes language to allow the County to use a third-party wireless telecommunications engineer or consultant to review and provide recommendations on new WCF applications. This is similar to the County’s current practice of using engineering consultants to review site plans and subdivision plats for impacts such as erosion and sediment control, transportation, and Karst. Third-party engineering review would be required for all Class 2, 3, and 4 applications and would be required at the discretion of the Zoning Administrator for all Class 1 and Class 5 applications as well as co-location applications and applications to add/replace/or maintain equipment.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Following a duly advertised Public Hearing on May 5, 2017, the Planning Commission voted 9-0-2 (Kruhm, Lee absent) to recommend adoption of the proposed text amendment. Frank Stearns (Verizon Wireless) spoke in favor of the text amendment at the Public Hearing

Staff Recommendation:

Staff has no outstanding concerns with the adoption of the text amendment.

History:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| April 7, 2017. | Commission voted 9-0-2 (Daniel, Turkel absent) to schedule Public Hearing for the May 5, 2017 meeting. |
| May 5, 2017. | Commission voted 9-0-2 (Kruhm, Lee absent) to recommend adoption of the proposed text amendment. |
| May 16, 2017. | Board voted 4-0-1 (Byrd absent) to schedule Public Hearing for the June 20, 2017 meeting. |
| June 20, 2017. | Placed on the Board’s regular meeting agenda and advertised for Public Hearing. |



http://www.winchesterstar.com/news/clarke/berryville-officials-talk-town-growth/article_8a4db2f2-1f33-5cbd-aa13-a9e2da9511e9.html

HOT

Berryville officials talk town growth

By CATHY KUEHNER | The Winchester Star Jun 7, 2017 Updated Jun 8, 2017

BERRYVILLE — The subject of expanding town limits came up in two Berryville government meetings this week.

The Planning Commission discussed potential Annexation Area C sites at its meeting Monday, and during Tuesday’s Town Council work session members discussed how and where Berryville might grow.

Members of both town bodies agreed it may be time to talk with Clarke County about annexing more land for businesses and homes.

The Berryville Planning Commission is in the midst of reviewing and revising the town’s Comprehensive Plan. On Monday, they discussed the plan’s chapter on future land use.

Currently, there is one large parcel of land within town near Page Street — known as Fellowship Square — that has 63 undeveloped lots. The section is part of the Annexation Area A site.

Adjacent to that parcel is another larger parcel that extends to Va. 7. Known as Shenandoah Crossing, the property in Annexation Area B has 75 undeveloped lots.

In addition to Shenandoah Crossing, Annexation Area B also includes Battlefield Estates, Hermitage, Darbybrook, Southgate and Berryville Glen. Collectively, there are more than 170 undeveloped lots in those subdivisions.

Expanding the business park in the southeast corner of Berryville would provide a boost to the town’s tax revenue without adding the burden of infrastructure required for residential buildings.

At the Town Council work session Tuesday, Town Manager Keith Dalton encouraged council to reach out to the county sooner rather than later.

Three areas outside of the town's boundaries have been identified as potential growth areas to be evaluated jointly by the town and county to accommodate future growth as Annexation Area B reaches its residential, commercial and industrial build-out capacity.

One possible annexation area is approximately 150 acres of land located south of the Clarke County Business Park on Jack Enders Boulevard, as well as land recommended for light industrial and research uses located on the west side of the Norfolk Southern Railroad, extending west to U.S. 340 and south to the vicinity of Va. 680.

Another area identified for future growth is about 75 acres south of the Hermitage subdivision that extends to the VFW Post 9760 property.

A third annexation area is west of the Hermitage subdivision to Westwood Road.

The Berryville Area Plan is a joint land-use plan, approved and adopted by Berryville and Clarke County. Annexation areas are undeveloped county land adjacent to town limits designated for addition to the town in accordance with the 1988 Town-County Annexation Agreement.

Prior to 1989, the Town of Berryville was slightly more than 493 acres. Annexation Area A added another 350 acres, including many existing homes. Annexation Area A was recorded by the Town of Berryville in January 1989.

Annexation Area B added about 837 acres to town between 1993 and 2007, and it was recorded in seven parts — annexation areas B-1 through B-7.

Today, Berryville covers about 1,680 acres.

The Berryville Area Plan is posted online at berryvilleva.gov. Use the drop-down menu and go to "Government," then "Planning and Zoning." Though online it is dated 2015, the Berryville Area Plan was revised and approved by both Town Council and the Clarke County Board of Supervisors in May 2016.

— Contact Cathy Kuehner at ckuehner@winchesterstar.com



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QuickFacts

selected: **Clarke County, Virginia; UNITED STATES**

QuickFacts provides statistics for all states and counties, and for cities and towns with a **population of 5,000 or more**.

Table

All Topics	Clarke County, Virginia	UNITED STATES
Persons in poverty, percent	▲ 8.4%	▲ 13.5%
PEOPLE		
Population		
Population estimates, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	14,374	323,127,513
Population estimates, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	14,363	321,418,820
Population estimates base, April 1, 2010, (V2016)	14,029	308,758,105
Population estimates base, April 1, 2010, (V2015)	14,029	308,758,105
Population, percent change - April 1, 2010 (estimates base) to July 1, 2016, (V2016)	2.5%	4.7%
Population, percent change - April 1, 2010 (estimates base) to July 1, 2015, (V2015)	2.4%	4.1%
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	14,034	308,745,538
Age and Sex		
Persons under 5 years, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	5.3%	6.2%
Persons under 5 years, percent, April 1, 2010	5.2%	6.5%
Persons under 18 years, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	21.2%	22.9%
Persons under 18 years, percent, April 1, 2010	23.0%	24.0%
Persons 65 years and over, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	19.0%	14.9%
Persons 65 years and over, percent, April 1, 2010	16.3%	13.0%
Female persons, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	50.2%	50.8%
Female persons, percent, April 1, 2010	50.2%	50.8%
Race and Hispanic Origin		
White alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	90.8%	77.1%
White alone, percent, April 1, 2010 (a)	90.2%	72.4%
Black or African American alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	4.9%	13.3%
Black or African American alone, percent, April 1, 2010 (a)	5.3%	12.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	0.4%	1.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent, April 1, 2010 (a)	0.3%	0.9%
Asian alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	1.4%	5.6%
Asian alone, percent, April 1, 2010 (a)	0.9%	4.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	0.1%	0.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent, April 1, 2010 (a)	Z	0.2%
Two or More Races, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	2.5%	2.6%
Two or More Races, percent, April 1, 2010	1.9%	2.9%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (b)	4.8%	17.6%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, April 1, 2010 (b)	3.5%	16.3%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	86.8%	61.6%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent, April 1, 2010	88.3%	63.7%
Population Characteristics		
Veterans, 2011-2015	1,430	20,108,332
Foreign born persons, percent, 2011-2015	4.1%	13.2%
Housing		
Housing units, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	6,333	135,697,926
Housing units, April 1, 2010	6,235	131,704,730
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2011-2015	75.9%	63.9%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2011-2015	\$329,500	\$178,600
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2011-2015	\$1,840	\$1,492
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2011-2015	\$454	\$458
Median gross rent, 2011-2015	\$1,032	\$928
Building permits, 2016	60	1,206,642
Families & Living Arrangements		
Households, 2011-2015	5,526	116,926,305
Persons per household, 2011-2015	2.55	2.64
Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2011-2015	93.2%	85.1%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2011-2015	5.4%	21.0%

Education

High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2011-2015	87.7%	86.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2011-2015	31.0%	29.8%

Health

With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2011-2015	7.5%	8.6%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	▲ 11.1%	▲ 10.5%

Economy


In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2011-2015	62.7%	63.3%
In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2011-2015	58.4%	58.5%
Total accommodation and food services sales, 2012 (\$1,000) (c)	D	708,138,598
Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2012 (\$1,000) (c)	D	2,040,441,203
Total manufacturers shipments, 2012 (\$1,000) (c)	89,778	5,696,729,632
Total merchant wholesaler sales, 2012 (\$1,000) (c)	D	5,208,023,478
Total retail sales, 2012 (\$1,000) (c)	81,456	4,219,821,871
Total retail sales per capita, 2012 (c)	\$5,687	\$13,443

Transportation

Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2011-2015	34.3	25.9
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Income & Poverty

Median household income (in 2015 dollars), 2011-2015	\$71,295	\$53,889
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2015 dollars), 2011-2015	\$37,558	\$28,930
Persons in poverty, percent	▲ 8.4%	▲ 13.5%


 BUSINESSES**Businesses**


Total employer establishments, 2015	356	7,663,938
Total employment, 2015	2,901	124,085,947
Total annual payroll, 2015 (\$1,000)	130,036	6,253,488,252
Total employment, percent change, 2014-2015	1.0%	2.5%
Total nonemployer establishments, 2015	1,291	24,331,403
All firms, 2012	1,596	27,626,360
Men-owned firms, 2012	841	14,844,597
Women-owned firms, 2012	579	9,878,397
Minority-owned firms, 2012	120	7,952,386
Nonminority-owned firms, 2012	1,441	18,987,918
Veteran-owned firms, 2012	236	2,521,682
Nonveteran-owned firms, 2012	1,304	24,070,685

 GEOGRAPHY**Geography**

Population per square mile, 2010	79.7	87.4
Land area in square miles, 2010	176.18	3,531,905.43
FIPS Code	51043	00

Value Notes

 This geographic level of poverty and health estimates are not comparable to other geographic levels of these estimates

Some estimates presented here come from sample data, and thus have sampling errors that may render some apparent differences between geographies statistically indistinguishable. Click the Quick Info  icon to the left of each row in TABLE view to learn about sampling error.

The vintage year (e.g., V2016) refers to the final year of the series (2010 thru 2016). *Different vintage years of estimates are not comparable.*

Fact Notes

- (a) Includes persons reporting only one race
- (b) Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories
- (c) Economic Census - Puerto Rico data are not comparable to U.S. Economic Census data

Value Flags

- D** Suppressed to avoid disclosure of confidential information
- F** Fewer than 25 firms
- FN** Footnote on this item in place of data
- NA** Not available
- S** Suppressed; does not meet publication standards
- X** Not applicable
- Z** Value greater than zero but less than half unit of measure shown
- Either no or too few sample observations were available to compute an estimate, or a ratio of medians cannot be calculated because one or both of the median estimates falls in the lowest or upper interval of an open ended distribution.

QuickFacts data are derived from: Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, Current Population Survey, Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Nonemployer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits.

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June 15, 2017
NSVRC Staff Report

Program and Project Updates

This report is provided in order to highlight the status of projects and update the Commissioners on "The State of the Commission".

Housing and Community Development

Continuum of Care for Homelessness (CoC):

The Continuum of Care (CoC) continues to finalize the strategic plan to address homelessness in the Shenandoah Valley and all participants, especially those outside of service provision, are encouraged to inform the process during two upcoming group discussions. As part of the plan, CoC-partner Harrisonburg Redevelopment Housing Authority released a Request for Proposals soliciting agencies to evaluate the efficiency of the CoC and strengthen fiscal competitiveness. Proposals are due no later than June 16th. For more details, contact Suzi Armstrong at (540) 434-7386 or sarmstrong@harrisonburgrha.com.

In May, the CoC requested a renewal of \$992,620 in Virginia Dept. of Housing and Community Development funds. This represents level-funding from year one of the two year grant and would support shelter operations, motel vouchers, rental assistance, and planning activities in the region. Potential grantees span from Winchester to Harrisonburg.

Regional Housing Market Analysis:

NSVRC staff executed a Memorandum of Agreement for the Regional Housing Market Analysis, and the project has begun as a collaborative arrangement among NSVRC, VCU, Housing Virginia, and VHDA. NSVRC staff and VCU staff have already met to delineate what each party will be responsible for contributing to the project. Much of the demographic information, background, and context will be generated by NSVRC staff, while VCU will be responsible for the synthesis, analysis, projections, and policy take-away points. Once this study is completed, VCU will visit our region and deliver presentations of this study's findings. Right now, the tentative completion date is January 31st, 2018.

Toms Brook Staffing:

NSVRC continues to provide contracted staff support for the Town of Toms Brook. Recent work has focused on reviewing the existing zoning code to ensure compliance with state requirements. This work is expected to continue throughout the fiscal year 2018.

HOME Program:

Staff is evaluating potential projects for the 2017 Annual Action Plan, to be delivered to HUD by mid-August. We have not received our 2017 funding allocation from HUD as of yet, as the formula is dependent on the federal budget process. Staff is working with the City of Winchester, the lead agency for the HOME program, on a plan to advertise to the public as transparently as possible the course of action for projects should the budget not be approved before this Action Plan is due. Several partner agencies have submitted proposals for the use of HOME funds. Staff will work closely with the Housing and Community Services Policy board to determine the proposed course of action for the region's HOME funds before the projects are recommended by the full Commission board to the Winchester City Council for final approval.

Soon staff will advertise for public comment amendments to several years' Annual Action Plans to reallocate several years' allocations of development funds to Tenant Based Rental Assistance. This process was approved to begin by this board at the May NSVRC meeting.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program

Community Housing Partners and NSVRC staff are working together to close out the NSP program. Originally funded through ARRA, this program was tasked with mitigating the housing foreclosure crisis. Since 2009, the program has funded the acquisition, rehabilitation, and resale of 22 homes to homeowners in the Northern Shenandoah Valley.

Worlds of Work (WoW) 2017:

Staff continues to serve on the planning committee for WoW. This includes attending meetings, promoting and attending the event, and requesting grant funds through Wells Fargo for a financial donation.

Economic Development

Page County Broadband Authority:

The Page County Broadband Authority's (PCBA) network is a fiber optic network. What this means to customers is that they receive 100% of the full purchased speed in both directions, both uploading and downloading, whereas DSL and Cable often offer significantly diminished upload speeds in comparison to download speeds. Also with Cable and DSL, bandwidth is often shared by multiple users, especially at peak usage times. So for a business which requires dedicated access to the full speed and bandwidth that is purchased, a fiber optic connection is the only tool in our community's toolbox that can meet the need.

Page County Broadband Authority is a middle-mile provider, which means that it exists to help extend broadband into an area where the free-market business case wouldn't likely allow for expansion. However, it requires a last-mile partner to actually provide end-users with access. That partner, since the PCBA's inception, has been Shentel. Although the fiber optic access provided by the PCBA and its partner Shentel is of significant value to those users with the most advanced data needs, I would estimate that the existence of the broadband authority has played an even more significant role in influencing the service provision decisions of private sector internet service providers to offer more competitive options for rural broadband access in Page County. Without the competition provided by the PCBA, and the resulting potential for capturing market share, today Page County could have had access to fewer, and less competitive broadband options.

Broadband access through the PCBA's fiber network will almost always cost more than a competing DSL or Cable connection of similar published speed. However, the actual connection speed, two-way communication, and dedicated bandwidth provided by fiber create a scenario in which two products that appear on the surface to be the same, are often actually very different.

That said, the Broadband Authority has an interest in providing competitive pricing that allows those businesses which could benefit from a high-speed fiber optic connection to feasibly access the technology. Therefore, the (PCBA) has continued its work over the last several months to increase competitiveness in its pricing structure. Project activity has increased since the price structure was adjusted earlier this year, and we are hopeful that new businesses will soon be online.

Building Collaborative Communities (BCC):

Staff has been working to showcase a web tool featuring many strategic and user-friendly interactive maps. The new maps will continue to be expanded even after the BCC Grant comes to a close at the end of the month. The site can be used as both a trip building tool for visitors as well as a tool for local economic development authorities, planners, tourism offices, chambers of commerce, and the small business development authority to illustrate gaps in the region that future business owners can fill. A re-direct was created, www.shenandoahvalleyoutdoors.com, and localities have been sending in update requests to the various web apps. As data is being collected for the Hazard Mitigation Plan update, it is cross referenced for this purpose and is used to expand on the detail of the web apps. So far, the web page has been very well received.

(Stronger Economies Together) SET Seed Grant:

On May 11, NSVRC staff received word that USDA-Rural Development seed grant application had been approved for continued work to implement a strategy identified in our region's first regional economic development plan developed and approved earlier this fiscal year. The \$5,000 grant will fund additional work over the next 45 days to further develop www.shenandoahvalleyoutdoors.com, and to complete a search engine optimization process that will help the site rise to the top of Google searches.

Business District Revitalization:

NSVRC Staff is working with the Towns of Edinburg and Front Royal to wrap up their Business District Revitalization Planning Grant projects. The key deliverables were completed in March, when the Towns submitted competitive applications to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development. The applications request Community Development Block Grant implementation funding to support downtown revitalization projects, including façade improvements, street enhancements, and wayfinding signage. Award announcements are made at the Governor's discretion and typically occur during the summer.

R.I.S.E. (Regional Initiative Supporting Entrepreneurship):

The RISE Competition, sponsored by LFFC Small Business Development Center, took place on April 18, 2017. NSVRC again served as the fiscal agent. The winner of both the Judge's Choice award and the People's Choice award was a young entrepreneur from Clarke County, Ali Haney. She and her husband are organic farmers and their business is called Shenandoah Seasonal. They will use the award money to purchase a custom barn structure and gravel pad site to be used for selling their produce from. A total of \$5,690 was awarded to Mrs. Haney along with a marketing and promotions package worth several thousand dollars.

The goal of the RISE program is to discover regional entrepreneurial assets, to develop business assistance and educational programs in support of those assets.

D.M.O. Support – (Destination Marketing Organizations):

The Commission continues to serve as the fiscal agent and provide limited administrative support for the region's DMOs. The DMO group has recently branded itself as the Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership (SVTP), and is an organization made up primarily of Tourism Directors working to promote the Shenandoah Valley as a tourism destination. SVTP was recently awarded a Virginia Tourism Grant for \$25,000 for web development, regional branding, and marketing work. NSVRC serves as the fiscal agent and grant recipient of these pass-through funds, and will be partnering with SVTP to promote outdoor recreation entrepreneurship and visitation in the valley. More details to come.

GO Virginia:

In collaboration with partner organizations, NSVRC has been named fiscal agent for the Region 8 GO Virginia effort. Capacity building and planning funds will be passed through NSVRC to partner organizations and consultants as directed by the GO Virginia regional council. NSVRC expects to receive compensation for fiscal management activities that will be sufficient to cover the costs of providing the service.

Strasburg Wayfinding:

The NSVRC has entered into a contract with the Town of Strasburg to develop a wayfinding signage plan designed to help the town identify the location, size, content, and character of a directional signage program to be implemented in phases over the coming years.

Transportation

RideSmart - Transportation Demand Management (TDM):

Staff continues to serve on the I-66 Transit/TDM Working Group in regards to working with the VDOT NoVA District on the commuter bus that will originate from the Front Royal/Linden Park and Ride lots and travel into the NoVA/DC areas. Over the next few months staff will be working closely with VDOT to launch the bus service and marketing campaign.

Over the past several months, staff has been working with Warren County, the Regional Jail and businesses along the Route 522 Corridor to gauge interest in expanding a transit route in that area. Several stakeholder meetings were held in which NSVRC staff participated. Several businesses along the corridor made a financial commitment in order for Warren County to submit a grant to DRPT requesting funds to expand transit service on the corridor. On January 17, 2017 staff attended the Warren County BOS meeting in which a Resolution authorizing the Warren County Administrator, Doug Stanley, to work with the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission to execute and file application for funding to the VA Department of Rail and Public Transportation to provide regular trolley service to the corridor. The application was submitted on February 1, 2017. The grant request has been approved and staff will work with Warren County and VRT on start up.

Winchester/Frederick County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO):

During its May 17th meeting the WinFred MPO Policy Board adopted a 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), prepared by staff, following a 20-day public comment period. Adoption of a 20-year MTP at least every five years is a core MPO function required by federal law. Central to the plan

is a list of projects that could reasonably be implemented with funds projected to become available. Staff held its second and final public open house on the plan on May 11 in Winchester. The draft plan is posted on the MPO website; the final plan, incorporating comments received, will be posted by July 1.

Staff attended the annual Virginia Association of Metropolitan Transportation Organizations' (VAMPO) annual training conference June 9th. Attendees learned about the work of the Virginia Transportation Research Center; which hosted the meeting, and engaged in an exercise to think about how emerging technologies might be addressed in long-range transportation plans.

Rural Transportation Planning Program:

The Transportation Planning Technical Committee held a quarterly meeting on April 13. Attendees heard a presentation by Champe Burnley, President, Virginia Bicycle Federation, and John Bolecek, VDOT Central Office, on the status of efforts to designate US Bike Route 11, a proposed touring route from Canada into North Carolina, through the northern Shenandoah Valley. Also on the agenda was a roundtable discussion of a rejected Smart Scale application and strategies the applicant may undertake to secure funding for its project. The roundtable critique, a form of peer-to-peer help for localities to prepare for the next Smart Scale application cycle, may become a regular agenda item. The next meeting is scheduled for July 13.

Staff attended the one-day Virginia Transportation Safety Planning Workshop in Charlottesville on April 27th. As a follow-up, VDOT intends to provide contracted technical assistance to MPOs and PDCs in the development of regional action plans to reduce crashes.

Staff participated in the May 22nd meeting of the Virginia Freight Transportation Technical Committee representing the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions (VAPDC). The committee reviewed and provided input into the freight component of the draft Virginia Multimodal Transportation Plan.

Natural Resources

Regional Tire Operations Program (RTOP):

The new tire grinder has been delivered and set up at the Frederick County Landfill. The old machine was traded in for a value of \$100,000, making the total purchase price of the new equipment \$535,830. This amount was paid in cash and leaves the RTOP program in very good financial condition with \$457,830 in combined cash accounts.

The RTOP program has a Mack truck, four box trailers, a flat-bed trailer, a 1994 Ford truck along with various tools that it no longer needs since the new machine is not a mobile unit. The Solid Waste Management Technical Committee would like to sell these items at a public auction, an action which was authorized at the May Commission meeting.

Solid Wasted Management:

NSVRC Staff is working with the Solid Waste Management Technical Committee (SWMTC) to prepare the five-year update to the Regional Solid Waste Management Plan. This plan addresses the region's waste source reduction and reuse, recycling, and landfilling, and fulfills the comprehensive planning requirements of the Virginia Code, as administered by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

(DEQ). The Plan also outlines how the region will continue to meet the Commonwealth's 25% recycling mandate, which is accomplished each year through a Recycling Rate Report submitted to the DEQ by NSVRC staff on behalf of the Committee. (The region submitted a recycling rate of 48% for 2016!) The Solid Waste Management Plan's update is due in late July 2017.

On-Call Consultant Program:

During December 2016 staff prepared an RFP seeking proposals from qualified firms interested in being included on an on-call list for professional and non-professional consulting services. We received 27 proposals. Staff reviewed and scored proposals to narrow down the list for the interview phase. The interview panel consisted of Doug Stanley, Christy Dunkle and staff from the NSVRC. Interviews were held on Friday, March 3rd. Staff will move forward with securing contracts with a number of selected firms, all of which demonstrated high levels of expertise in their fields. Staff is securing contracts from member localities and is working with VDOT in regards to the pre-award audit process. Firms working on any transportation project that receives federal funds must have a VDOT pre-award audit. The program is anticipated to begin July 1, 2017.

Water Supply Planning:

NSVRC staff is gearing up to prepare the five-year update to the Regional Water Supply Plan. The steering committee reconvened last year and met with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's Senior Water Supply Planner to review the status of statewide planning efforts and to discuss the items that are required for the region's updates due by November 2018. Plan updates will include drought stage triggers and responses, conservation strategies, and changes to local circumstances in demand and use.

Hazard Mitigation

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update:

NSVRC has executed a grant contract for the Hazard Mitigation Plan update. Staff has reviewed the existing hazard mitigation plan, successful plans exhibited by FEMA, completed FEMA online independent study course IS-00318 - "Mitigation Planning for Local and Tribal Communities," began collection and review of GIS data, along with performing an initial assessment of risks and identification of vulnerabilities.

A large portion of the plan is centered on the analysis of FEMA's ArcGIS plugin, HAZUS. HAZUS analysis involves collection of very specific data related to hazard mitigation. Staff has derived a final list of the necessary data and has begun collection from the GIS departments across the region. As the data is collected, it is cleaned and input into the HAZUS software. Staff expects HAZUS analysis to be complete by next quarter.

A conference call was held recently with NSVRC staff and state officials to glean guidance and best practices for moving forward with completion of the planning process. A formal kickoff meeting with many stakeholders is the next step, once background data analysis is complete.