

A light green map of the Rappahannock-Rapidan region is centered on the page. The map shows the outlines of several counties or municipalities. The background of the top half of the page features a faint, light gray pattern of stylized tree branches or veins. The bottom half of the page is a solid dark green color.

Rappahannock-Rapidan
REGIONAL COMMISSION

Annual Report 2021

MISSION

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission exists to serve our members by providing professional planning and technical resources, a concerted approach to regional cooperation, planning assistance with program delivery, and a forum for the interaction of appointed and elected local government officials and citizen members.

PURPOSE

“...to encourage and facilitate local government cooperation and state-local cooperation in addressing on a regional basis problems of greater than local significance. The cooperation resulting from this chapter is intended to facilitate the recognition and analysis of regional opportunities and take account of regional influences in planning and implementing public policies and services. The Regional Commission shall also promote the orderly and efficient development of the physical, social and economic elements of the district by planning, and encouraging and assisting localities to plan for the future.” (Code of Virginia § 15.2-4207)



Did you know?

**The commission turns
50 years old in 2021!**

See the history of our localities' membership below.

December 1971:

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission was chartered following enactment of the organization's original charter by the Town of Warrenton, Fauquier County, and Orange County.

January 1973:

Rappahannock County joins and the first meeting was held on January 16th, 1973 at the Culpeper Town Hall with Mr. Richard E. McNear, representing Fauquier County, elected as the first Chairman of the Regional Commission.

July 1974:

Culpeper County and Madison County join the Regional Commission.

January 1978:

Town of Culpeper joins the Regional Commission.

October 1982:

Town of Gordonsville and Town of Orange join the Regional Commission.

March 1987:

Town of Remington joins the Regional Commission.

January 1997:

Town of Madison joins the Regional Commission.

October 2007:

Town of Washington joins the Regional Commission.

December 2009:

Town of The Plains joins the Regional Commission.

Commission Officers

As of June 1, 2021

Chair
Meaghan Taylor

Vice-Chair
Paul McCulla

Treasurer
Greg Woods

Executive Committee
At-Large
Frederic Catlin

Executive Committee
At-Large
Robert Coiner

Executive Committee
At-Large
Jack Hobbs

ABOUT

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC) serves the counties of Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, and Rappahannock, and the towns of Culpeper, Gordonsville, Madison, Orange, Remington, The Plains, Warrenton, and Washington.

One of 21 regional commissions chartered by the Commonwealth of Virginia, we provide professional planning and technical resources, a concerted approach to regional cooperation, planning assistance with program delivery, and a forum for the interaction of appointed and elected local government officials and citizen members.

COMMISSIONERS

CULPEPER COUNTY

Gary Deal*

John Egertson

FAUQUIER COUNTY

Christopher T. Butler*

Paul S. McCulla

MADISON COUNTY

Jack Hobbs

Charlotte Hoffman*

ORANGE COUNTY

James P. Crozier*

Theodore Voorhees

RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY

Garrey W. Curry, Jr.

Debbie Donehey*

TOWN OF CULPEPER

Chris Hively

Meaghan Taylor*

TOWN OF GORDONSVILLE

Robert Coiner*

TOWN OF MADISON

William L. Lamar*

TOWN OF ORANGE

Martha B. Roby*

Gregory S. Woods

TOWN OF REMINGTON

Evan H. 'Skeet' Ashby, III*

TOWN OF THE PLAINS

Lori B. Sisson*

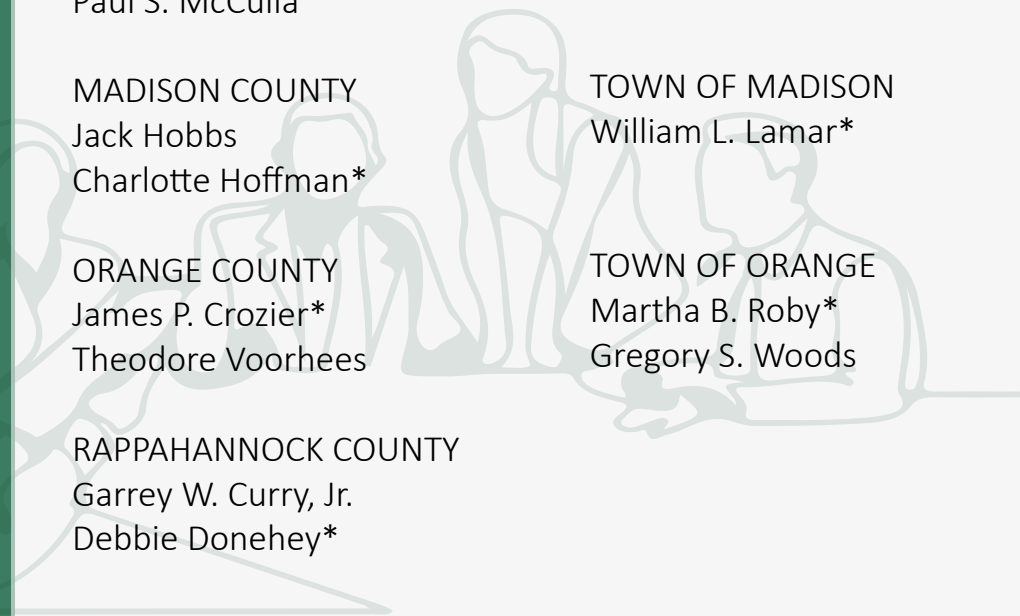
TOWN OF WARRENTON

Brandie Schaeffer

Heather Sutphin*

TOWN OF WASHINGTON

Frederic Catlin*



STAFF

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Regional Planner

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Regional Planner

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Planning Assistant

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(Foothills Housing Network)

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FHN Coordinated Entry Specialist

Colleen Vesperman
cvesperman@rrregion.org

TDM & Mobility Coordinator

Kristin Lam Peraza
klamperaza@rrregion.org

Did you know?

The commission regularly utilizes Americorp Vista volunteers to support the Foothills Housing Network with one-year goals and projects.



In early 2021, Jennifer Little supported the RRRC FHN with renewing partnerships between the Department of Social Services, Housing and Service Providers, and the Central Entry Program.

In September 2021, Olivia Samimy, osamimy@rrregion.org, joined RRRC as the new VISTA for the next one-year period. Her focus will be on enhancing data tracking and analysis, developing and refining FHN outreach materials and activities, and supporting FHN equity reviews and training opportunities.



Did you know?

The commission staff manage ten different websites affiliated with various programs.

Additionally, staff support smaller programs with basic web design, digital content creation, and media design.

FIND THE RIDE THAT MEETS YOUR NEEDS

- Virginia Regional Transit Fixed In-Town Route
- Virginia Regional Transit On-Demand County Service
- Virginia Regional Transit Cross-Locality Route
- MONYDCARE Medicaid Transportation
- Volunteer Transportation Program

Need route information, have questions, or want to schedule a ride?
540.829.5300
WWW.FAMS.ORG

MORE CHOICES. MORE MOBILITY. RAPPAHANNOCK-RAPIDAN REGION

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COLLABORATIVE

A COMPLEX PARTNERSHIP OF COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS DEDICATED TO IMPROVING MOBILITY PROGRAMS & TRANSPORTATION ACCESS IN THE RAPPAHANNOCK-RAPIDAN REGION

WHAT IS THE POINT OF RTC?

TOGETHER OUR PROGRAMS ARE STRONGER - MORE STREAMLINED, COMPREHENSIVE, & EXPANSIVE

WHAT ABOUT MY PROGRAM?

PROGRAMS OPERATE AS THEY ALWAYS HAVE AND MAKE DECISIONS WITHIN THEIR OWN ORGANIZATIONS

WHAT IF I HAVE AN IDEA OR SUGGESTION?

RTC IS ALWAYS OPEN TO NEW PROJECTS, FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS TO SUPPORT MOBILITY - FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US THROUGH OUR WEBSITE

RTC PARTNERS

A NEW MOBILITY MODEL. MORE OPTIONS. MORE MOBILITY.



www.rrregion.org
Regional Commission



www.purely piedmont.com
Local Food Promotion



TWEEN RIVERS TRAIL
crafted in the foothills
www.tweenriverstrail.com
Agri-Tourism



www.thevirginiapiedmont.org
Tourism



www.rrcommute.org
Commuter Transportation



www.foothillshousing.org
Foothills Housing Network



www.fams.org
Foothills Area Mobility System



www.regionalcollaborative.com
Regional Transportation Collaborative

CHESAPEAKE BAY WIP IMPLEMENTATION

Over the past year, the Regional Commission has provided coordination and technical assistance to local governments and other stakeholders in the region on water quality efforts related to implementation of the Phase 3 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP). In addition to improving the Bay, the activities were also intended to improve the region's local streams. To that end, RRRRC staff assisted the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality with development of the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plan for Mountain Run, Muddy Run and the Lower Hazel River in Culpeper County through a stakeholder-input process. Once approved by the US Environmental Protection Agency, the Implementation Plan will guide future cost-share funding for local water quality improvements.

The Commission continued to work with its Land Use and Environment Committee to finish compiling data for Phase 1 of the Upper Rappahannock Watershed Plan, a GIS-based plan which covers the entire region. The purpose of the plan is to fill data gaps and assist in spatially prioritizing locations for implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs). This spring, RRRRC began Phase 2 of the Plan via a Small Watershed Grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation by contracting the Chesapeake Conservancy to develop a BMP prioritization tool that localities and other conservation partners can use to guide BMP implementation decisions on the regional, locality or site scale.

Additionally, the two-year grant project will install three municipal stormwater BMP projects in Warrenton that will be used to conduct outreach and education in the school district. All will use native vegetation to filter stormwater runoff. It will also seek to improve participation in the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program in Fauquier County by providing program outreach and cost-share matching funds for a minimum of five residential stormwater BMP projects. Project partners include Friends of the Rappahannock, John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District, Fauquier County and the Town of Warrenton.

Finally, as a member of the Federal Chesapeake Bay Program's Local Leadership Workgroup, RRRRC staff assisted with development of electronic outreach materials for local elected officials, including training modules on such topics as Watershed 101, tree planting, infrastructure protection through stormwater resiliency, and the economic benefits of clean water. Much of the information can also be used in developing outreach materials for the general public.

Further information can be found at www.chesapeakebay.net/who/group/local_leadership_workgroup.





FARM TO SCHOOL

With funding from the PATH Foundation and No Kid Hungry, the Commission hired Elizabeth Beling as the Regional Farm to School Liaison in August to provide technical assistance to public schools in the region. Currently, most schools in the region serve little local food outside Farm to School Week. While budgets are always a consideration, the biggest obstacle stated by school food service directors is lack of staff time. This new position will assist in overcoming that obstacle. The Liaison will focus on increasing local food procurement and participation in school reimbursable meals, including breakfast and summer meal programs, to promote healthy eating.

In 2020, RRRRC convened quarterly meetings with public school staff, state agencies, nonprofits and related stakeholders to explore opportunities for regional partnerships in farm to school programs. These partners identified a need for coordinated technical assistance with outreach and education, menu development, data tracking and procurement.

For the first year, the workplan will use the framework of Virginia's Harvest of the Month program, highlighting the seasonal local food that is designated each month. The Liaison will conduct one tasting in each school district each month, and collect and analyze data to show whether tastings result in increased meal purchases. Ms. Beling will also conduct an initial survey of teachers to determine potential areas she can contribute to the existing curriculum through outreach, train-the-trainer and SOL-based modules, and then provide curriculum support accordingly. Beyond these core tasks, district-specific tasks will be carried out as time allows.

FOOTHILLS HOUSING NETWORK

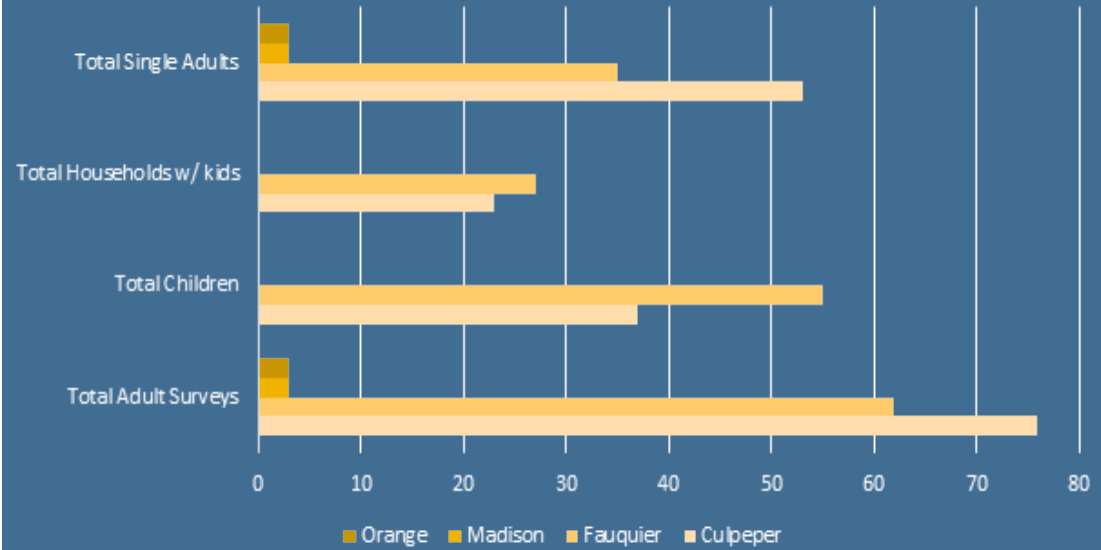
Over the past year, the Regional Commission and Foothills Housing Network service provider partners responded to direction from Federal and State government partners to implement non-congregate shelter options in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Leveraging funding resources greater than \$2 million from Federal and State resources with locally-provided resources, Foothills Housing Network ensured safe and physically distanced shelter for more than 90 households in the region at the height of the pandemic's spread, and continued to provide assistance to housing vulnerable populations throughout 2021.

Throughout the fiscal year, Foothills Housing Network Coordinated Entry received 5,653 calls seeking assistance or housing information, and more than 1,100 individuals received service through emergency shelter, transitional housing, and rapid re-housing programs in the region.

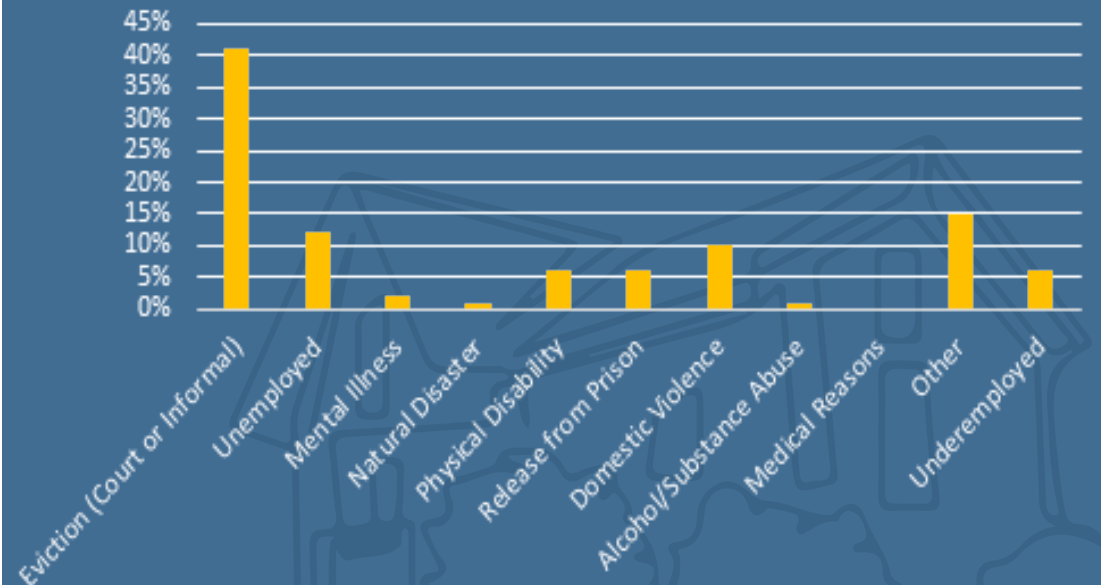
The 2021 Point in Time Count was conducted in January. Due to COVID-19, the PIT count included surveys with those individuals and households in non-congregate or emergency shelter, as well as observational counts of unsheltered individuals. The 2021 survey found 236 homeless individuals in the region, an increase from previous years.

Those surveyed indicated that evictions (formal or informal) were their most prevalent reason for homelessness, with domestic violence, unemployment and underemployment cited by greater than 10% of those surveyed.

Results by County



Self-Identified Reasons for Homelessness



FHN: COVID-19 FUNDING RESPONSE

	Emergency Shelter Operations	Targeted Prevention	Rapid Rehousing	Admin	Total
COVID Emergency Funding Support				\$21,525	\$21,525
VHSP COVID Funding	\$214,953				\$214,953
State COVID Relief	\$362,900			\$19,100	\$382,000
CHERP	\$897,344	\$100,000	\$125,000	\$66,167	\$1,188,511
State HTF	\$334,650			\$10,350	\$345,000
Covid-CDBG	\$218,750			\$6,750	\$225,500
Total	\$2,028,597	\$100,000	\$125,000	\$123,892	\$2,377,489

Funding Descriptions:

COVID-19 Emergency Funding Support (Virginia Housing): \$21,525

Performance Period: March 1, 2020 – August 30, 2020

State funding which provided general operations dollars to community agencies to support continued operations for provide housing services. Funds were used to support local housing agencies expenses on staffing/fringe, insurance, and building costs. Funds were not used for direct assistance to support clients. Funding was allocated to Community Touch, Inc.-\$12,500, Services to Abused Families, Inc.-\$5,500, and Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission-\$3,525.

VHSP COVID-19 Funding for Emergency Shelter Operations (DHCD): \$241,953

Performance Period: April 2, 2020 – December 31, 2020

State COVID-19 funding was used to provide temporary, emergency shelter for those experiencing homelessness during the pandemic. Funds were allocated to be expended on hotel rooms, and case management for those that would otherwise be unsheltered, to ensure some of the Commonwealth's most vulnerable citizens had safe shelter during the pandemic. Funding was allocated to Culpeper Housing and Shelter Services, as they were the only LPG partner eligible at the time through VHSP Emergency Shelter Operations funding.

State COVID Relief (DHCD): \$362,900 + \$19,100 in Admin

Performance Period: Through December 31, 2020

State funding which was provided to continue support for non-congregate sheltering through the end of 2020 to ensure that individuals were not forced to exit emergency hotel shelter due to lack of funding. It was awarded to Culpeper Housing and Shelter Services (\$332,000), and Community Touch Inc. (\$50,000). Note, this funding did not last through the end of 2020, and federal CHERP funds started being used in early October.

FHN: COVID-19 FUNDING RESPONSE CONTINUED:

Virginia COVID Homeless Emergency Response Program (CHERP)

** Federal passthrough from DHCD**

CHERP Allocation 1 for Rapid Rehousing: \$125,000 (\$118,750 + \$6,250 in Admin)

Performance Period: April 2, 2020 – September 30, 2022

Federal (HUD) ESG-CV1 funding passed through Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to the region for Rapid Rehousing activities. Rapid Rehousing funds are used to support those experiencing homelessness to return to permanent housing as quickly as possible with case management and short-term housing subsidies. Rapid Rehousing funds under the CHERP allocation allow for intensive case management, staffing capacity, landlord incentives, and longer-term housing subsidies. Funding was allocated to People, Inc., and is sub-contracted to Culpeper Housing and Shelter Services, and Community Touch Inc., while also partially funding a full-time Homeless Diversion & Housing Case Manager employed by People, Inc. to serve PD9.

CHERP Allocation 2: \$1,066,011 (\$999,844 + \$66,167 in admin)

Performance Period: April 2, 2020 – September 30, 2022

Federal ESG-CV2 funding passed through Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to the region for Emergency Shelter Operations (\$799,844), Rapid Rehousing (\$100,000), Targeted Prevention (\$100,000) and Administration (\$66,167). Funding was allocated to Culpeper Housing and Shelter Services (ESO + sub-contract for RRH/TP), Community Touch Inc. (ESO + sub-contract for RRH/TP), and People, Inc. (contract for RRH/TP).

DHCD State Housing Trust Fund Allocation: \$345,000 (\$334,650 + \$10,350 in admin)

Performance Period: April 2, 2020 – September 30, 2022

Funding from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) State Housing Trust Fund to the region for continued Emergency Shelter Operations (\$345,000).

DHCD Covid-CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) Allocation: \$225,500 (\$218,750 + \$6,750 in admin)

Performance Period: January 2021 – March 31, 2022

DHCD's Homeless and Special Needs Housing Unit allocated an additional round of CHERP funding to continue supporting non-congregate sheltering through CDBG funds. These funds were sourced from various funding streams outside of ESG-CV.

LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & ENGAGEMENT

Regional Commission staff engage with member jurisdictions and other stakeholders on various local priorities and technical assistance opportunities focused on emerging topics of mutual interest or in providing capacity where possible each year. Such tasks have included providing data collection and compilation for local planning, GIS mapping and analysis, as well as stand-alone plan updates for Comprehensive Plans and other state and federally-mandated planning requirements.

During FY 2021, Commission staff assisted in numerous local and regional efforts:

- Smart Scale Application Assistance for Fauquier County, Madison County, Orange County & Town of Gordonsville
- Broadband mapping assistance for Madison and Rappahannock counties
- Comprehensive Plan and Emergency Operations Plan mapping for Rappahannock County
- Zoning Ordinance Review Stakeholder Participation with Town of Culpeper
- Census Complete Count Committee participation with Culpeper County
- Public Transportation Board participation with Town of Culpeper & Culpeper County
- Interview committee for Town of Culpeper Community Development Department
- Upper Rappahannock Water Trail Planning with Fauquier County and partner agencies
- Growth & Accessibility Program (GAP) application assistance for Culpeper County
- Regional Cigarette Tax program proposal and coordination with regional/statewide agencies
- Participation with Fauquier County Transportation Committee
- Coordination with Virginia Department of Health for COVID-19 response
- Provision of COVID-19 resource lists for Chief Administrative Officers
- Served as fiscal agent for Rappahannock County CARES Act Business Assistance program
- Coordinated Virginia Outdoors Plan review with all regional jurisdictions



REGIONAL HOUSING STUDY

In February 2021, the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission adopted the RRRRC Regional Housing Study. RRRRC worked with local and regional stakeholders and the Camoin 310 consultant team to develop the plan in 2020, utilizing a Community Impact Grant received from Virginia Housing. The study sought to provide qualitative and quantitative data regarding the region's housing needs, examine land use practices that encourage and hinder housing activity in the region, and to provide high-level strategy recommendations at the local and regional level to work towards addressing the identified needs.

The study process involved engagement with local government staff, non-profit housing organizations, realtors, developers, and other housing stakeholders. In addition, the study resulted in several component documents:

- Baseline Data Analysis
- Housing Demand Analysis
- Local Ordinance Best Practices Review
- Strategy & Recommendations Summary
- Locality Summary Profiles (for the five Counties and three largest Towns)

Key findings from the Regional Housing Study centered on current and projected housing demand throughout the region, housing availability disparities based on geography, income, and housing type, as well as opportunities for policy change considerations at local, regional and state levels that may provide additional resources for diversifying the region's housing profile.

The study found that housing is needed across all income levels. Additional research and analysis by RRRRC staff revealed notable household demographics that support justifying the development of attainable and diverse housing types.

- Single person households make up a significant portion of the population, up to 36%, and consist of all age groups above 18. Nearly half of those single person households are seniors living alone.
- Those ages 18 to 34 makeup 29% of the population, 10% of whom is living with friends or family and considered underhoused (Camoin*).
- Nonfamily households made up to 40% of households across the region, may also consist of underhoused members.

What is Attainable Housing?

The Regional Housing Study uses the term Attainable Housing to reflect the need for a healthy mix of housing options—including market-rate and affordable, owner-occupied and rental, single-family and multifamily—targeted to households across the age and income spectrums, and to ensure opportunities for all individuals to improve their economic situation and contribute in meaningful ways to their communities.

What are the benefits of attainable housing?

- Better enable businesses to attract and retain workers.
- Ensure there are residents to support school enrollment, local volunteer organizations, and community group membership.
- Establish a larger customer base of year-round residents for local businesses.
- Create a stronger sense of place that is attractive to both current and potential residents.

REGIONAL HOUSING STUDY

RRRC staff also utilized the data from the Regional Housing Study to support data comparison and compilation with Foothills Housing Network data, additional Census Bureau data, and field work in and around the Towns of Culpeper, Gordonsville, Orange, Remington and Warrenton. These follow-up activities included:

- Extracting geographically relevant data and strategically probable recommendations from the consultant reports and resulting outcomes.
- Researching applicable housing model examples including missing middle and diverse housing
- Conducting windshield/observational surveys in five largest towns that included identification of example of potential sites for various housing models.
- Developing educational materials to address public opposition and engagement.
- Developing informational/ presentation materials on based on best practices and diverse housing models.
- Connecting housing development with economic development, and beginning to develop materials demonstrating connection.
- Beginning to develop a framework for housing development tracking program/model for data analysis and comparative outcome to goals and objectives.
- Analyzing local Comprehensive Plans for common themes, goals, objectives, and strategies.

12% to 22% of the population are Seniors

29% of the population are ages 18-34

40% of the household population are Non-Family

12% to 16% of households are Seniors living alone/

Up to 10% of 18-34 ages are considered underhoused

20% to 36% of households are 1-person households

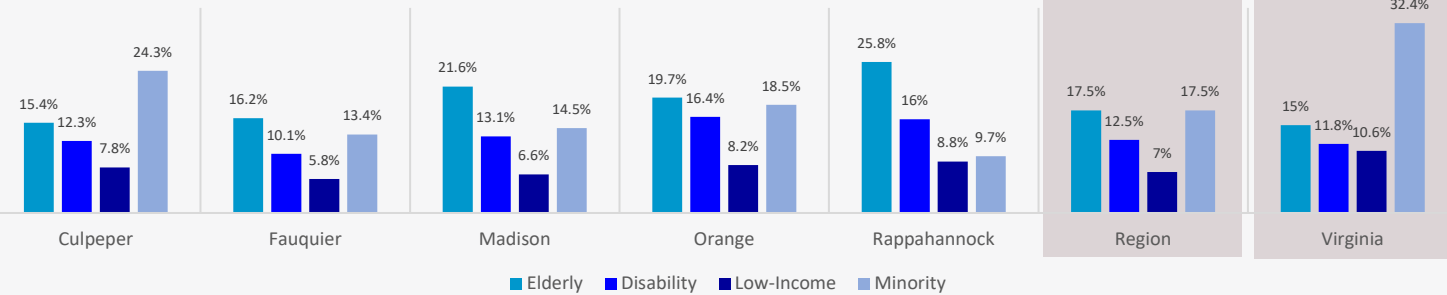
RURAL TRANSPORTATION

RLRP Update:

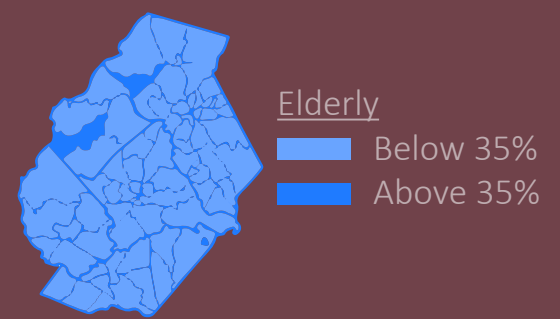
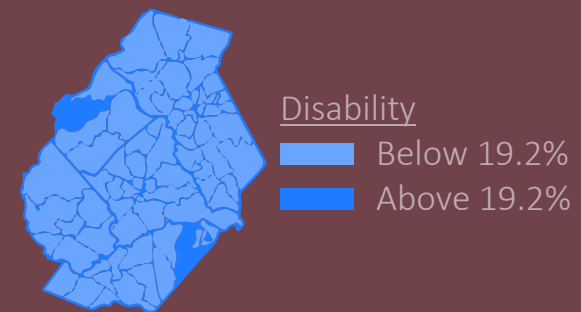
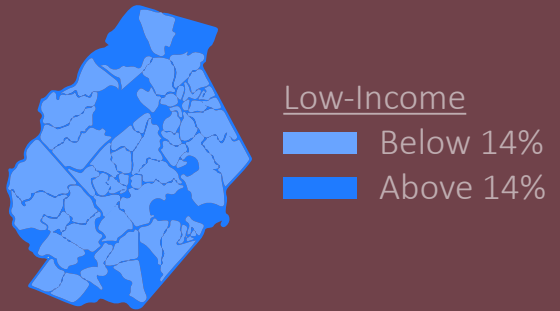
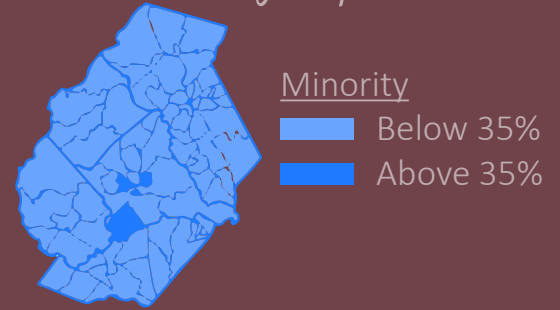
In the Summer of 2020, the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission began work updating the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan to a new horizon year of 2045. The plan is being developed as a vision for the future, identifying and recommending transportation improvements (roadway, rail, transit, air, bicycle, and pedestrian) that can best satisfy existing and future needs. This plan also addresses the anticipated impacts of population and employment growth upon the transportation system, with great emphasis being placed on the various different disadvantaged population groups.

Disadvantaged population groups were studied in order to determine if there are any gaps or deficiencies in the transportation network that could negatively affect these groups. Disadvantaged groups studied include low-income, minority, elderly, and people with disabilities, as defined by the US Census. It is important to identify and address any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of programs, policies and activities on these disadvantaged population groups. Identifying these populations has the goal of bringing them into the project development process.

It is critical that the projects do not have disproportionately high or adverse effects on these protected groups and that these groups are benefiting from these projects. In order to determine where these populations are located in the localities of the Rappahannock-Rapidan region, the overall average percentage was found for each population group living in the region. Once the average was found, that number was doubled so that the threshold value would be twice the regional average. Individual block groups that have a higher percentage of the regional threshold are demonstrated in the aside maps.



Population Demographics



RURAL TRANSPORTATION

SMART Scale

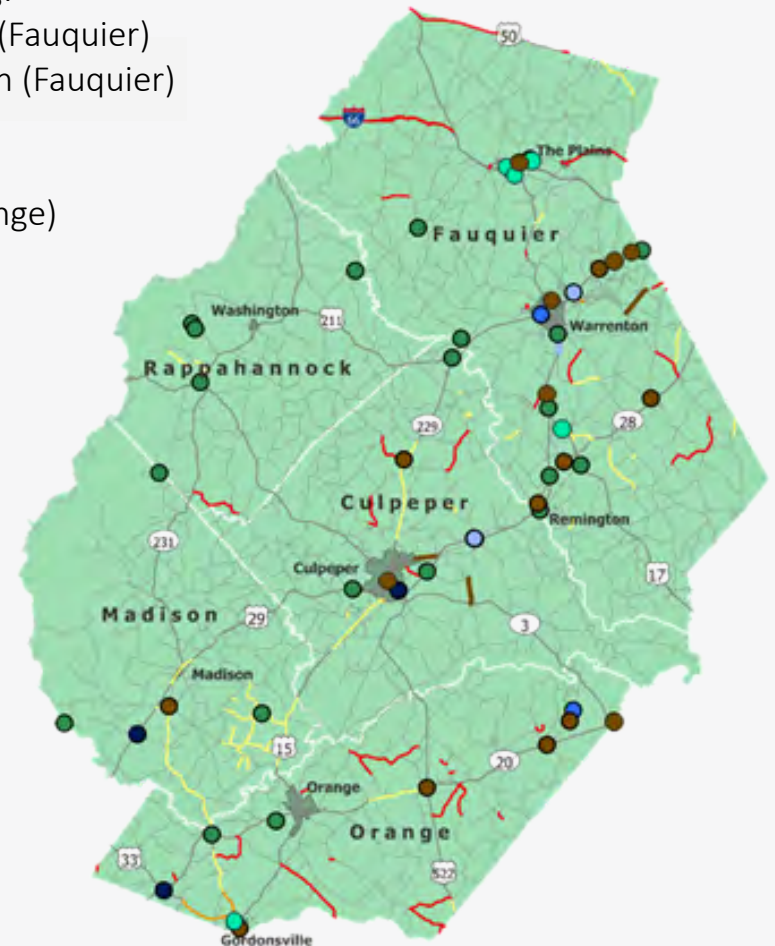
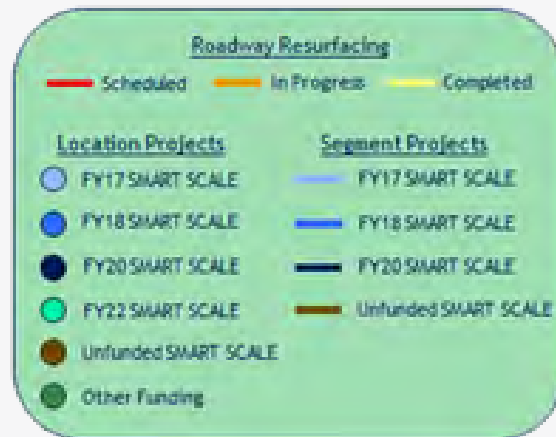
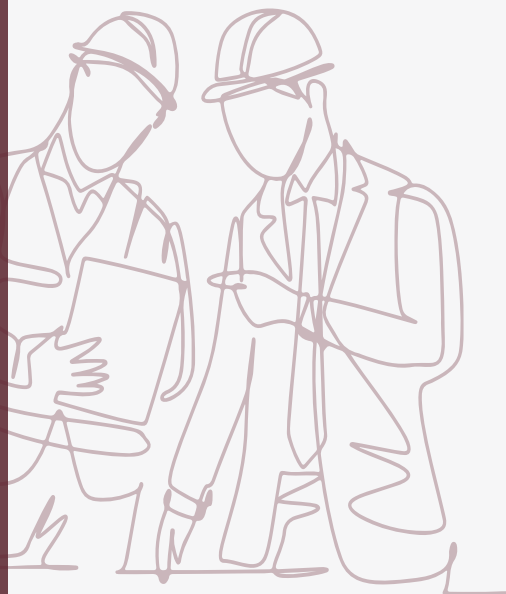
Smart Scale:

Smart Scale is a method of selecting and funding the right transportation projects in Virginia. Included in SMART SCALE is a scoring system for selecting and prioritizing transportation projects based on key factors including safety, congestion reduction, accessibility, land use and economic development. During FY21, the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission assisted Fauquier County, Madison County and Orange County with Smart Scale applications for FY22 using the Smart Portal Application tool. Such assistance includes submitting cost estimates, economic development sites, supporting documents, and more. Of the 15 projects applied for funding through Smart Scale in the Rappahannock-Rapidan Region, 5 were selected.

Projects that were successfully funded for construction include the following:

- I66 West Bound, Exit 28 Ramps & Route 17 Intersection, Roundabout (Fauquier)
- I66 East Bound, Exit 28 Ramps & Route 17 Intersection, RCUT Redesign (Fauquier)
- Roundabout at Route 55 and Route 709 (Fauquier)
- Route 17 and Covington's Corner Road R-CUT (Fauquier)
- Gordonsville Route 231 at High Street Roundabout (Gordonsville, Orange)

Current and Proposed Projects in the Region:



RURAL TRANSPORTATION

Local Projects:

Beginning in the Spring of 2021, the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission began working with the Town of Washington to identify and accurately map existing sidewalk infrastructure, maintenance needs and longer-term projects that enhance safety, economic development potential and quality of life for both residents and tourists. In the following months fieldwork was conducted and a sidewalk inventory & pedestrian infrastructure report was developed. This report includes current sidewalks and their current condition, proposed sidewalk connections, proposed crosswalk & pedestrian signage areas, along with other long-term sidewalk and/or trail connectors. Each of these factors within the report follow the Town's aspirations of maintaining the unique character of the town while also increasing its walkability and accommodations for pedestrians. This, along with the goal of integrating outlying areas with the main part of town are all addressed within this sidewalk inventory & pedestrian infrastructure report for the Town of Washington.





TOURISM

Tween Rivers Trail Promotes Safe Agri-Tourism Activities in 2021

The Tween Rivers Trail was formed to help promote farm-to-fork restaurants, bed-and-breakfast inns, farms and handcrafted goods, along with regional events highlighting these assets as well as the rich history, scenic drives, Virginia Main Streets, and award-winning craft spirits across the region. Collectively marketing these agritourism destinations has strengthened consumer awareness and increased financial resources.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the Tween Rivers Trail agritourism initiative pivoted their on-site activities in a variety of innovative and creative ways. Many of the Trails' wineries and breweries made use of their outdoor spaces to provide physically-distanced opportunities for social engagement and numerous trail sites moved to reservation-based visitation policies to ensure adequate outdoor and indoor space for visitors.

While the impacts of COVID-19 continue to be felt by the region's agri-tourism and artisans, each of the five counties and many of the region's towns provided COVID-19 business assistance funding for those businesses through their CARES Act and other local funding streams.

The Regional Commission looks forward to supporting local efforts to assist Tween Rivers Trail members and other partners throughout the region over the next year!

COMMUTER SERVICES

The RRRC Commuter Services program provides the region's residents and employers with transportation choices, including ride matching to support carpooling and vanpooling, Guaranteed Ride Home, and other options to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips. While the predominant focus for the Rappahannock-Rapidan region has been vehicle trips on the region's primary roadways, other modal choices including bicycling and transit options are also key to the program's overall goals.

Bike Month / Bike to Work Week

In May, Regional Commission staff conducted outreach and surveys in support of Bike Month and Bike to Work week. The focus of the targeted outreach was in and around the towns of Warrenton and Culpeper, where infrastructure, jobs and population density allow for more bike to work opportunities. Commission staff utilized social media and on the ground engagement to solicit input and survey responses. Social media posts concentrated on bicycle safety, safe bike commuting, information on the best type of bicycle for commuting, Virginia cycling laws, and biking with children. The program survey sought input on obstacles to bicycle-based commuting, potential incentives that would encourage additional bike to work opportunities, and overall interest in cycling within the targeted communities.

Pandemic Impacts

Commuter Services has seen a shift in how information is provided and the type of engagement with the public since the beginning of the pandemic period. Interactions and engagements are more information based about commuting in general, specific road conditions, road construction projects, and info about public transportation changes. This has been helpful in building more engagement with our commuters, raising awareness, and supporting our services as a trusted source of travel information both current and long-term.

Bike Survey Results

17% of survey respondents from the region indicated they use a bicycle as a primary commuting method, although 46% indicated they have commuted via bicycle at some point in the past. 45% responded that a lack of safe conditions with marked or separated bike lanes from vehicular traffic was the main reason for not riding their bicycle to work. Respondents also noted the following infrastructure as important or very important for safe cycling opportunities

- 63% indicated that multi-use paths are very important
- 45% striped bicycle lanes are very important
- 56% indicated that adding safe and/or wider shoulders are very important
- 63% indicated that having a place to secure their bicycle is important to very important
- 71% indicated that Safety Education and Awareness are important to very important

The 54% of respondents who indicated they have never ridden a bicycle to work indicated that the following would encourage bicycling to work:

- Safe, marked or separate bike lanes
- Proximity to jobs,
- Connectivity between home and jobs or shopping,
- Bicycle racks/places to secure bicycles
- Increased bicycle awareness for drivers

Did you know?

The RTC Collaborative secured nearly half a million dollars in funding for mobility supports, staff, and programming for FY22.

There are four core volunteer driver programs that partner with the RTC across the region to provide transportation primarily to aging adults accessing medical care.

Over the last year the volunteers provided more than 4,000 transportation services, and drove over 85,000 miles, donating more than 8,000 hours of their time - totalling more than \$300k dollars in charitable equivalent donation.

More than 4,500 calls were processed through the One-Call, One-Click center by the two full-time staff.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COLLABORATIVE

RTC (Regional Transportation Collaborative) is an overarching mobility management program to support community programs, stakeholders, local partners, and non-traditional entities in a collaborative cooperative effort to support transportation needs via provision of infrastructure support, stability, longevity, financial support, grant writing, strategic planning, long term comprehensive planning support, outreach, advertisement, recruitment of volunteers, mitigation, integration, evolution, data collection, data analysis, priority determination, leveraging of resources, and more.

Funding is structured around three goals aimed at supporting the needs of the aging population and their access to transportation: Goal #1 – Increase the Number of Volunteer Drivers; Goal #2 – Pilot Innovative/New Concepts that Increase Mobility Options Available in the Community; Goal #3 – Adequately Address Transportation Needs of Seniors

FAMS Call Center

The call center is one of only two in the state, and was the first established in Virginia. The program is primarily funded through the Department of Rail and Public Transportation in accordance with goals outlined in the Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan for the State of Virginia. Additional funding and supports come from the PATH Foundation and a variety of local, state, and federal grants. Open Monday through Friday from 830am to 430pm, two full-time Mobility Coordinator staff. Information and services can be accessed via the interactive website and its Transportation Matrix and chat option or by calling directly. Services are targeted to support older adults and persons with disabilities; however support is provided to anyone who is need.

Mobility Coordinators help with trip planning, provide free information and referral, schedule rides with volunteer programs, and support requests for gas or transit vouchers. Individuals in need of transportation information and supports are provided with resources in a 'non-competitive filter model' which refers first to public transportation, second to community channels, and third to paid or financial resources. This helps utilize existing public transit, efficiently resolve needs, and conserve financial/limited resources.

FAMS is the Central Data collection point on transportation needs in region; partners can contact the commission if they need statistics specific to demographic, location, medical issue, age, etc.



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