

Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Food System Planning Project



*Michelle Edwards, RRRC
February 2015*





Demand for Local Foods

Local Food Systems: Concepts, Impacts, and Issues (USDA, 2010)

- Local food markets account for a small but growing share of total U.S. agricultural sales.
- Production of locally marketed food is more likely to occur on small farms located in or near metropolitan counties.
- Consumers who value high-quality foods produced with low environmental impact are willing to pay more for locally produced food.
- Federal, State, and local government programs increasingly support local food systems.

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Opportunity for the Rappahannock-Rapidan Region

Local Food Markets

Direct-to-consumer: Transactions are conducted directly between farmers and consumers



Madison
EATS
Local Food Club



Local Food Markets

Direct-to-retail/foodservice: Direct sales by farmers to restaurants, retail stores, and institutions





What Is a Food System?

- A collaborative network that includes everyone involved in putting food on our tables
- Integrates:
 - Food production
 - Processing
 - Distribution
 - Consumption
 - Waste management
- A sustainable food system enhances the environmental, economic and social health of the region



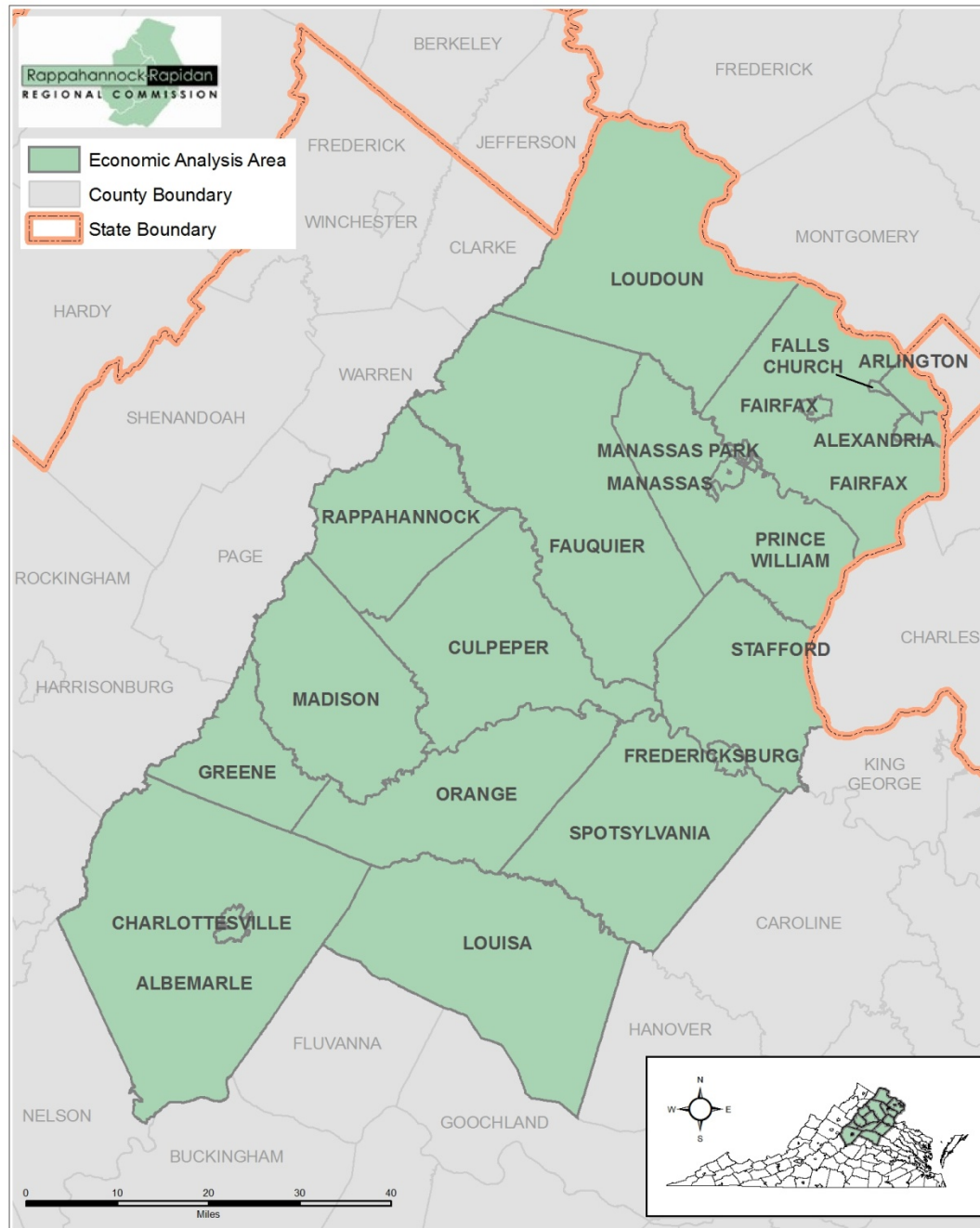
Project Goals

- To develop a regional food system plan based on existing economic data and public input.
- By strengthening the local food economy:
 - More local dollars can be retained within the region
 - Promote citizens' health
 - Encourage preservation of local farmland
 - Enhance farmers' quality of life

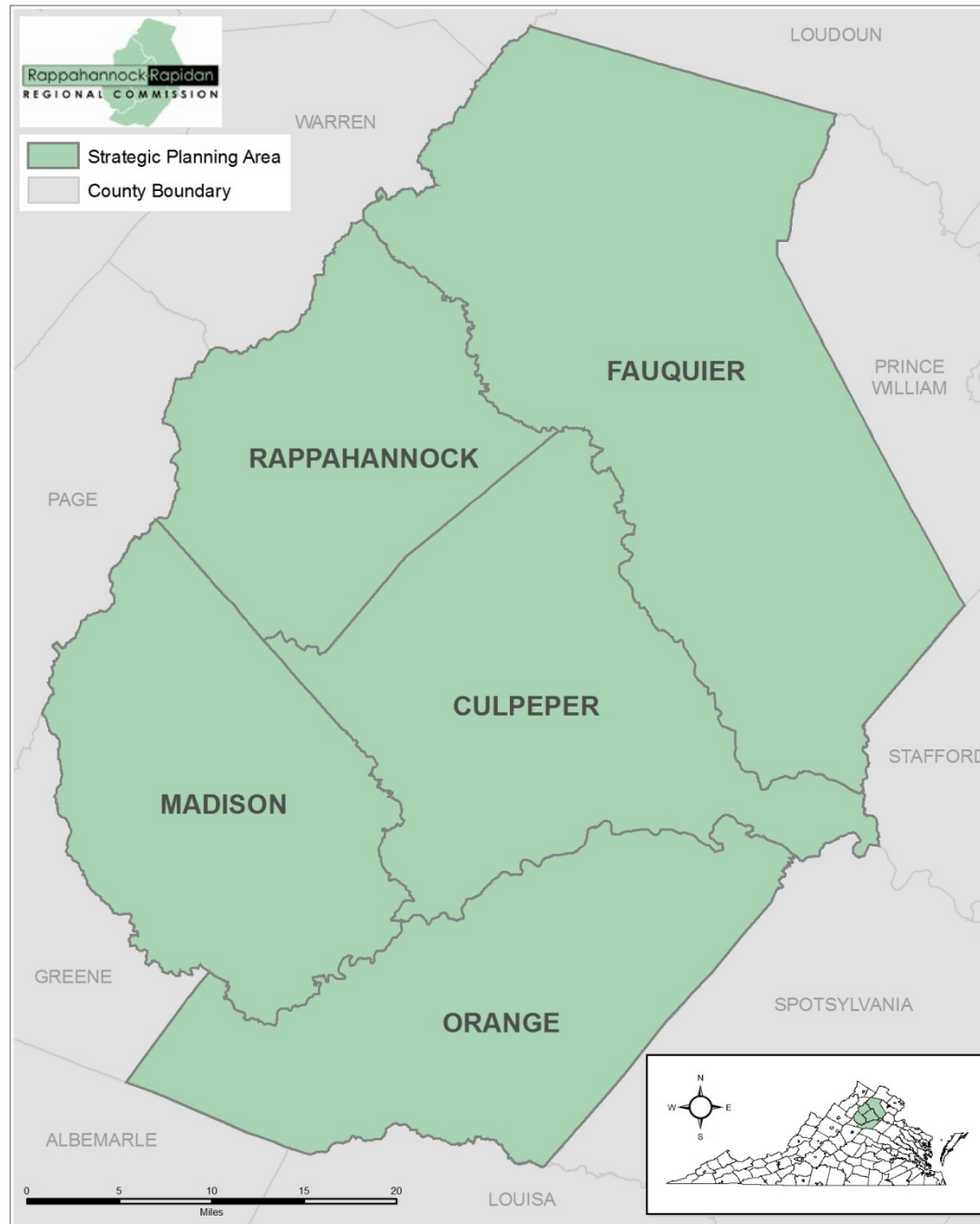


Food System Analysis

- Asset Assessment
- Economic Analysis
 - Gap analysis: consumption vs. production
 - Utilize existing data available from federal and state sources
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Goals:
 - Provide a better understanding of existing conditions
 - Quantitatively pinpoint issues and opportunities
 - Establish a baseline to measure progress



Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Food System Plan -- Economic Analysis Areas



Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Food System Plan -- Project Area



Agricultural Community Surveys

- Local surveys sent via mail and email
 - Supplement data gathered from national sources via the economic analysis
 - Gauge local producers' needs and constraints
 - Focus on value-added products, direct farm sales and other items of critical regional importance not adequately captured in available data sets



Regional Food System Plan

- A strategic plan, which creates a list of goals and priority projects for improving the region's agricultural economy
- Based on food system analysis and survey results
- Developed through a series of stakeholder meetings and focus groups



Regional Food System Plan

- Recommended projects may include:
 - Publicly funded facilities
 - New or expanded education and marketing programs
 - Policy and regulatory changes
 - Opportunities for private investment



Why Participate?

- Ensure your needs and priorities for the region's food system, are incorporated into the regional plan
- Show decision makers local foods and a sustainable agricultural economy are top priorities for your community
- Encourage funders and government officials to support plan implementation
- Provides an avenue for multiple groups and individuals to work together to:
 - Find common goals
 - Form partnerships
 - Focus efforts / Avoid duplication
 - Pool resources



Next Steps

- Final Economic Analysis Report: Early-March
- Producers surveys: Next week
- Focus group meetings: February – March
- Strategic Planning Meetings: March – May
- Final Plan: December 2015

Be sure to sign in to receive notices!

Related RRRC Projects

- Regional Agri-artisan Trail

Jenny Biche

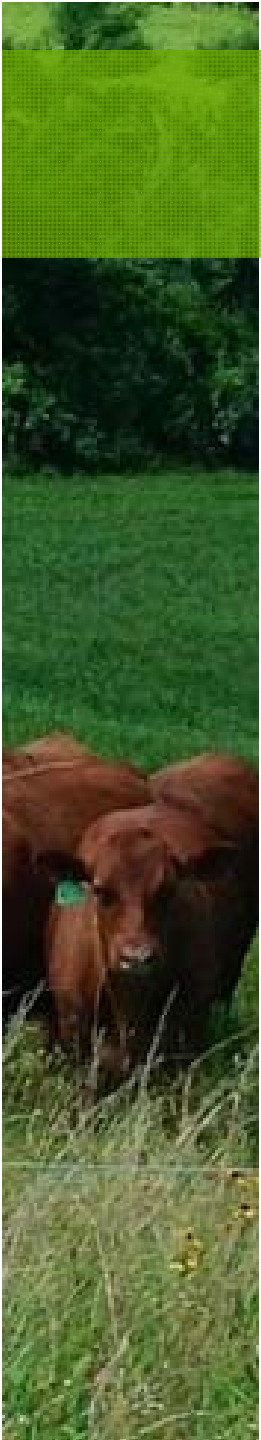
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- Carver-Piedmont Agricultural Institute Feasibility Study
 - Community Kitchen/Processing Facility
 - Ag Education

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Contact information

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<http://www.rrregion.org/foodsystem.html>

Next Agricultural Working Group Meeting:

February 26, 1:30pm – 3:30pm at RRRC office

Project Sponsors:



Rappahannock-Rapidan
REGIONAL COMMISSION

