

Housing Plan

Since the completion of the county’s last Comprehensive Plan, the Code of Virginia has added additional items to the list of elements required to be included in a Comprehensive Plan. §15.2-2223.D states “The comprehensive plan shall include the designation of areas and implementation of measures for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of affordable housing, which is sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated.” This Addendum has been prepared to address this mandate.

Demographics:

The population of Augusta County has grown significantly over the last 22 years, with the largest increase coming between 1990 and 2000 (See Table 1). Growth continued to be strong from 2000 to 2010 with a 12.4% increase. However, the growth appears to be slowing down in the county, based on recent population estimates. On a regional basis, however, the population is continuing to grow, and the statistics for the county may not reflect actual growth in the locality and should continue to be monitored.

Table 1
Population 1990-2012

	Augusta County	Staunton	Waynesboro	Region
1990	54,677	24,461	18,549	97,687
2000	65,615	23,853	19,520	108,988
2010	73,750	23,746	21,006	118,502
2012	73,815	24,512	21,378	119,705

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

Using Census data collected over the last 20 years, Table 2 illustrates the increase in housing stock in the county and the corresponding decrease in average household size for owner occupied, as well as renter occupied, units.

Table 2
Augusta County Housing Stock and Household Statistics
1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010 (ACS)
Total housing units	21,202	26,738	31,010
Occupied housing units	19,781	24,818	28,021
Owner-occupied	15,931	20,628	22,814
% Owner-occupied	80.5%	83.1%	81.4%
Vacant units	1,421	1,920	2,989
Homeowner vacancy	1.20%	1.70%	1.9%
Rental vacancy	3.00%	5.90%	4.6%
Owner household size	2.72	2.59	2.53
Renter household size	2.52	2.41	2.30

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 American Community Survey (ACS)

Since 1990, the county has seen an increase of nearly 75% in the amount of multi-family dwellings built in the county. As Table 3 portrays, over 2100 of the total dwelling units are structures with more than 2 dwelling units in them. Building permits for an additional 336 multi-family housing units were issued in the county between 2010 and 2012. According to the Census, there were over 3500 manufactured/mobile homes in the county in 2010 contributing to the housing stock available to persons with moderate incomes.

Table 3
Units in Structure
1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010	2010 % of total
Total housing units	21,202	26,738	31,010	
1-unit-detached	16,536	21,425	24,971	80.5%
1-unit-attached	143	332	489	1.6%
2 units	226	150	298	1.0%
2 or 4 units	261	301	520	1.7%
5 to 9 units	373	444	646	2.1%
10 to 19 units	331	348	444	1.4%
20 or more units	62	105	122	0.4%
Mobile home	3,028	3,599	3520	11.3%
Boat, RV, van, etc./other in 1990	242	34	0	0

Source: 1990, 2000 U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 American Community Survey (ACS)

The value of the county's owner occupied housing stock rose over 75% between 2000 and 2010 to nearly \$195,000. When looking at housing value data for the region (see Table 4), you can see that the median value of dwellings units in Augusta County is at least 12% higher than the value of units in the cities, however, this gap is closer in recent years as new dwellings have been built in the two cities. It should be noted, both the number of units with a value of less than \$50,000 and the percentage of the housing stock with values less than \$50,000 is significantly higher in the county than the figures for the two cities.

Table 4
Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units in the Region
2010

	Augusta		Staunton		Waynesboro	
Less than \$50,000	2,195	9.6%	211	3.3%	190	3.7%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	1,204	5.3%	590	9.3%	568	11.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	3,693	16.2%	1,573	24.7%	1,173	22.9%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	4,922	21.6%	1,845	28.9%	1,250	24.4%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	5,904	25.9%	1,253	19.7%	1,247	24.3%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	3,390	14.9%	611	9.6%	513	10.0%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	1,202	5.3%	233	3.7%	188	3.7%
\$1,000,000 or more	304	1.3%	58	0.9%	0	0.0%
Total Units	22,814		6,374		5,129	
Median (dollars)	\$194,100		\$167,600		\$172,100	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, FactFinder

While value of the housing stock is important, it is also important to look at the quality of the housing available in the county. One way of doing so is to look at whether the units have complete plumbing and kitchen facilities. As illustrated in Table 5, the number of occupied dwelling units lacking complete plumbing facilities has declined dramatically since 1990, as has the number of units lacking complete kitchen facilities.

Table 5
Quality of Housing Stock
1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010
Occupied Housing Units	19,781	24,818	28,021
Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	713	281	225
Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities	467	173	180

Source: 1990, 2000 U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 American Community Survey (ACS)

Housing Affordability:

State Code §15.2-2201 defines affordable housing as “housing that is affordable to households with incomes at or below the area median income, provided that the occupant pays no more than thirty percent of his gross income for gross housing costs, including utilities”. The median household income in the county is higher than the figures for the cities, but lower than the state median by over \$10,000. (See Table 6)

**Table 6
 Median Household Income
 2010-2011**

Locality	2010	2011
Augusta	\$ 50,534	\$ 51,036
Staunton	\$ 40,855	\$ 41,006
Waynesboro	\$ 40,256	\$ 40,342
Virginia	\$ 60,665	\$ 61,877

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates

Housing Virginia is a statewide partnership of public and private organizations and individuals that works to promote a positive image of affordable housing and demonstrate the need for affordable housing throughout the state. As part of their efforts, they produce a Sourcebook of housing statistics and affordability measures for localities in the state. According to the Housing Virginia Sourcebook, a household with the median household income of \$50,534 (2010 values) could afford a rent of \$1130. Table 7 presents the gross rent data from 2010, the latest year for which data is available. The median gross rent based on the 2010 Census data was \$638, \$386 dollars less than the state average of \$1024. If a household earning the median household income of \$50,534 can afford a rent of \$1130, more than 85% of the units in the county where rent was being paid were affordable to that household.

Table 7
Gross Rent 2010

Rental Category	Number Paid	% of Total
Occupied units paying rent	4521	
Less than \$200	148	3.3
\$200 to \$299	210	4.6
\$300 to \$499	711	15.7
\$500 to \$749	1602	35.4
\$750 to \$999	1163	25.7
\$1000 to \$1499	549	12.1
\$1500 or more	138	3.1
Median Rent	\$683	
No rent paid	686	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey (ACS)

According to the Housing Virginia Sourcebook, the median household income for Augusta County for the second quarter of 2013 was \$49,021. Based on their methodology, a household with that income could afford a mortgage for a \$221,385 house. (Assumes borrowing 95% of the purchase price, with 5% down payment and an interest rate of 3.9 %.) Table 8 on page 6 presents the data on the number of dwellings in each assessed value range. According to Wingate Appraisal, the professional assessment company hired by the county to complete the reassessment, as of January 1, 2014, 15,364 units or 67% of detached houses, duplexes, and townhouses situated on lots less than 20 acres have a value less than \$220,000 and, therefore, are considered to be affordable to those making the median household income.

There are numerous ways to look at housing affordability in a community. The Housing Affordability Index looks at the ability for the typical household to afford to rent or buy the typical housing unit rented or sold in the county (see Table 9). When looking at the statistics at this level, the figures would indicate that the average or typical household in the county is spending less than 30% of their income to meet their housing needs and in every category is doing better than the state average.

Table 8
Value of Housing in Augusta County
2013

Value of Housing	No. of Dwellings	%
Under \$50,000	111	0.49%
\$50,000 to \$69,999	394	1.73%
\$70,000 to \$89,999	935	4.10%
\$90,000 to \$109,999	1574	6.90%
\$110,000 to \$129,999	2003	8.79%
\$130,000 to \$149,999	2368	10.39%
\$150,000 to \$169,999	2543	11.15%
\$170,000 to 179,999	1237	5.43%
\$180,000 to \$199,999	2289	10.04%
\$200,000 to \$219,999	1910	8.38%
\$220,000 to \$239,999	1527	6.70%
\$240,000 to \$259,999	1249	5.48%
\$260,000 to \$279,999	994	4.36%
\$280,000 to \$299,999	807	3.54%
\$300,000 to \$399,999	1979	8.68%
\$400,000 to \$499,999	521	2.29%
\$500,000 to \$599,999	194	0.85%
\$600,000 to \$699,999	71	0.31%
\$700,000 to \$799,999	42	0.18%
\$800,000 to \$899,999	18	0.08%
\$900,000 to \$999,999	9	0.04%
\$1,000,000 to \$1,999,999	18	0.08%
\$2,000,000 to \$2,999,999	3	0.01%
\$3,000,000 +	1	0.00%
TOTAL	22797	100.00%

Source: Commissioner of Revenue's Office, December 2013. Figures do not include manufactured homes

Table 9
Housing Affordability Index (HAI)*
First Quarter, 2013

	Overall HAI	Ownership HAI	Rental HAI
Augusta Median- \$48,757	21.1%	21.8%	17.6%
State Median- \$63,753	22.7%	23.6%	20.9%
80% of Augusta Median- \$39,005	26.3%	27.3%	21.9%
80% of State Median- \$51,002	28.4%	29.5%	26.1%
60% of Augusta Median- \$29,254	35.1%	36.4%	29.3%
60% of State Median- \$38,252	37.8%	39.3%	34.8%

*Percent of income required for housing costs, median monthly mortgage of \$887, gross rent (including utilities) of \$713, and a median sales price of houses of \$174,000 for Augusta County and median monthly mortgage of \$1,253, gross rent (including utilities) of \$1,111, and a median sales price of houses of \$232,600 for Virginia.

Sources: www.housingvirginia.org; Virginia Tech Center for Housing Research; U.S. Census; and American Community Survey

Housing affordability can also be impacted by commuting costs. With a county as large as Augusta, where the housing is located versus where the jobs are located impacts the households' ability to afford the housing. Table 10 presents housing affordability with the cost of commuting factored in. The average commuting cost was determined to be \$310 a month for Augusta and varies by locality, with the average monthly commuting cost for the state calculated at \$281. Housing plus commuting costs totaling less than 34% of the household income are considered to be affordable. While still affordable to the median household in the county, the percentages are increasing and when compared to the state figures, the average household in the county is paying a larger percentage of their income than the state average in most categories.

Table 10
Housing + Commuting Affordability Index*
First Quarter, 2013

	Overall HAI	Ownership HAI	Rental HAI
Augusta Median- \$48,757	28.7%	29.5%	25.2%
State Median- \$63,753	28.0%	28.9%	26.2%
80% of Augusta Median- \$39,005	35.9%	36.8%	31.5%
80% of State Median- \$51,002	35.0%	36.1%	32.7%
60% of Augusta Median- \$29,254	47.8%	49.1%	42.0%
60% of State Median- \$38,252	46.7%	48.1%	43.7%

*Percent of income required for housing costs + average commuting costs which have been calculated at \$310 a month for Augusta County and \$281 for the State.

Sources: www.housingvirginia.org; Virginia Tech Center for Housing Research; U.S. Census; and American Community Survey

While the housing affordability index looks at the housing burden on the basis of the typical household, housing cost burden is a way to look at housing from the individual's perspective. According to Housing Virginia, a household is considered cost burdened if it is paying over 30% of its household income for housing. Table 11 shows the number and percentage of households in the county by income bracket that are paying more than 30% of their income for the home or rental unit. (Housing Virginia Sourcebook (website: www.housingvirginia.org) As can be seen by the table, households with incomes less than \$20,000 per year, regardless of owner or renter status, are likely to be cost burdened when it comes to their housing. However, in both cases, households in Augusta County are better off than households statewide. While renters would appear to be more challenged in some income brackets in Augusta County, the percentage of homeownership in the county (80.75%) far exceeds that of the state (67.25%) and Central Shenandoah Region (67.67%). Therefore, while the percentage of renters being cost burdened is high, the actual number of renters is relatively low, indicating that households in all income brackets are buying homes rather than renting in the county at a greater rate than the state.

Table 11
Housing Cost Burdened by Income
Owners and Renters
2011

Household Income	Cost Burdened Owners			Cost Burdened Renters		
	Augusta Number	Augusta %	State %	Augusta Number	Augusta %	State %
< \$20,000	1,804	61.3%	69.8	678	55.1%	88.5
\$20,000- \$34,999	984	27.7%	48.9	1,047	87.4%	76.0
\$35,000 - \$49,999	964	24.3%	41.9	332	38.7%	52.1
\$50,000 - \$74,999	1,021	19.1%	30.7	209	33.8%	28.1
\$75,000 or more	719	9.8%	11.4	00	0.0%	6.4
All Incomes	5,492	23.8%	27.5	2,266	52.0%	50.3

Note: Numbers are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability.

Sources: www.housingvirginia.org; Virginia Tech Center for Housing Research; U.S. Census; and American Community Survey

The state has quantified the amount of rental assisted housing available in the county. According to the state, the county has 574 units available to lower-income renter households (see Table 12). This figure was last calculated in 2010. There are currently 1375 lower-income renter households who are paying more than 30% of their income for rent (cost burdened). Housing Virginia classifies these households as having an assisted rental housing need. It should be noted that since the state last updated their figures, the county has added three tax credit housing projects totaling 276 units which would increase the available supply of units in the county accordingly.

Table 12
Assisted Rental Housing Needs

	Augusta County	Staunton	Waynesboro	Staunton Augusta W'boro Region	PDC	State
Number of Lower-income assisted rental units	574	1078	978	2630	5,205	171,855
Number of lower income renter households who are cost burdened	1375	1598	1610	4583	11,704	339,214
Lower-income renter households (households with incomes 60% or less of median)	2575	2192	2064	6831	16,622	474,240
% of lower-income renter households with a need (cost-burdened)	53.4%	72.9%	78.0%	67.1%	70.4%	71.5%

Sources: www.housingvirginia.org; 10/2/2013

Affordable Housing Initiatives

There are several programs offered in the county to assist persons with their housing needs. Staunton Augusta Waynesboro Habitat for Humanity offers both new home construction and a critical home repair program to low income households in the area. The new home program partners with eligible households to build new homes with interest-free mortgages. The critical home repair program offers interior and exterior repair and/or rehab improvements to improve the condition of homes by focusing on repairs to make the home decent and livable. Rebuilding Together Greater Augusta performs critical home repairs for low income, elderly, disabled or disadvantaged homeowners in the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro region. The group is a volunteer organization which makes home repairs for low income residents of the area so they can continue to live in their own homes in a safe, warm, dry and accessible environment. Typical jobs include roof replacement, wheelchair ramps, accessibility modifications and general repairs.

In addition to the private initiatives available in the county, there are public initiatives as well. Rural Development, the Waynesboro and Staunton Redevelopment and Housing Authorities, and the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission all offer housing assistance programs ranging from first-time home buying assistance to housing rehabilitation programs to Augusta County households.

Land Use Measures

The State Code requires the county to designate areas for residential development which are sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality. Augusta County has chosen to divide the county into four planning policy areas, each one with different recommendations for future residential development. The primary growth areas in the county are Urban Service Areas, those areas with public water and sewer services, either currently or in the immediate or long-term future. Urban Service Areas are planned to accommodate at least 80% of the county's future residential growth and are priority locations for significant amounts of residential development at urban densities and employment growth, including larger scale mixed use developments. Specifically, land in the Urban Service Areas has future land use designations ranging from medium density residential development (3-4 dwelling units per acre) to Multi-Family Residential (9-16 units per acre), as well as Neighborhood and Community Mixed Use designations which allow residential development (4-12 units per acre) to occur along with business and industrial land uses.

The county's Urban Service Areas are the primary areas expected to meet the future affordable housing demand in the county. These areas have the public utility services available to support residential developments. These areas are also expected to develop at densities that would support the employment opportunities and transportation needs of the residents in the county. Currently, over 19,000 acres are designated for residential development in the county's USA, far exceeding the amount of land necessary to meet the housing needs of residents of the county, as well as the Planning District, in all income brackets during the planning period.

Efforts to increase the amount of affordable housing in the county would be expected to be concentrated in the Urban Service Areas. However, the county recognizes that additional residential development will occur in the Community Development, Rural Conservation, and Agriculture Conservation Planning Policy Areas. Even so, other than the placement of manufactured homes on individual lots and the construction of attached and detached accessory dwelling units (granny flats) on existing residential properties, that development is not likely to meet the affordable housing needs in the county.

Manufactured homes are an important component of the affordable housing stock in the county and are expected to remain so. Manufactured homes are allowed to be placed on lots zoned General Agriculture throughout the county. At this time, more than 94% of the county is zoned to accommodate the placement of manufactured homes on individual lots.

Zoning Measures

The county has made changes to the Zoning Ordinance to address the issues of affordable housing and the changing housing needs of county residents. Those changes include:

- Decreased the amount of lot width required for residential developments in subdivisions thereby decreasing the infrastructure costs associated with new lots created in the county.
- Created an attached residential district which allows duplexes and townhouses to be built on private, as well as public, streets
- Increased the number of districts where attached and detached accessory dwelling units (granny flats) are allowed
- Created more residential options in business districts
- Created a Village Mixed Use district which allows new business and residential land uses in older, developed communities in the county.

The county's Planned Unit Development District continues to allow developers maximum flexibility to design communities taking advantage of the site conditions, minimizing infrastructure costs, and facilitating the construction of a variety of residential dwelling types in the same neighborhood.

Implementation of measures for the rehabilitation and maintenance of affordable housing

The county has utilized Community Development Block Grant funds to improve housing conditions as part of a neighborhood improvement project and supports the efforts of the Waynesboro Redevelopment and Housing Authority to address the indoor plumbing needs of homeowners in the county. The county, working cooperatively with the Augusta County Service Authority, is using Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Conservation and Recreation funds to extend public sewer service to the Village of Greenville where residents were experiencing problems with failing septic systems and had limited resources available to correct them. This project will allow lower income families to remain in their homes and will allow infill housing construction to occur. The county also recognizes the important contribution of local non-profit and volunteer groups that assist with the rehabilitation and maintenance of dwellings in the county and works with these groups as funding allows.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Ensure the provision of a variety of housing types and values that will meet the needs of county residents.

Objective A: Help to ensure that the local housing market offers a range of housing densities, types and prices.

Policy 1: Mixed Use Development. In urban areas, encourage mixed use and mixed income developments which provide compact communities that can offer more convenient access to employment and shopping and more efficient and economical dwelling units at a somewhat higher than average density.

Policy 2: Adaptive Reuse and Rehabilitation. Encourage the adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of existing structures, including historic structures, in order to increase the opportunities for variety and economy in the housing stock. Analyze the county's stock of older multi-family housing complexes and seek alternative ways to use these existing buildings or funding sources to encourage the rehabilitation of the structures.

Policy 3: "High value" Housing. Encourage builders and developers to provide "high value" housing rather than simply "affordable" housing. To have maximum affordability, moderately-priced housing should be located and designed to be efficient, durable, close to work and shopping, and easily maintained so that it will appreciate in value over the course of time.

Policy 4: Retiree and Elderly Housing. Promote the development of housing to accommodate the growing retiree and elderly population. Encourage senior housing in locations that will provide the retirees and elderly with easy access to medical offices and facilities and shopping areas.

Policy 5: Equal Access to Housing. Continue working to provide equal access to all housing in the county, particularly at the neighborhood level.

Policy 6: Ordinance Changes. When evaluating proposed changes to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, the county should consider the impact such changes might have on the balance of housing densities, types, and prices. Ordinance changes should be analyzed in terms of both initial costs to the developer, as well as the long-term costs to the homebuyer/renter and the county.

Objective B: Ensure the provision of an adequate supply of safe, suitable and affordable housing for all county residents of all income levels.

Policy 1: Coordinate with Neighboring Jurisdictions. The county recognizes that the housing market is regional in nature and therefore the issues of affordable housing should be approached from a regional perspective. The county should, therefore, undertake with Staunton and Waynesboro, a regional housing plan to analyze the housing needs of the region, including the need for affordable housing, as well as the feasibility of implementing new local and regional housing programs. The plan should evaluate methods to encourage the new construction of, as well as the rehabilitation and maintenance of existing, affordable housing units. Efforts to provide affordable housing should be monitored and reported back to the governing bodies.

Policy 3: Community-Based Housing Initiatives. Encourage public and private efforts to provide affordable housing and to rehabilitate substandard housing stock, including housing trust funds, cooperative housing projects, transitional housing, volunteer efforts, self-help groups, and apprentice programs. Efforts should

include programs designed to provide housing for the handicapped and disabled including group homes and homes with universal design.

Policy 4: Community Education. Support the development of programs which offer technical and financial guidance regarding homeownership and home maintenance.

Policy 5: Federal and State Programs. Explore the further use of federal and state programs to help meet local housing needs, including Block Grants for housing rehabilitation and HUD Section 8 rental housing vouchers. Encourage local developers, builders, and financiers to participate in federal and state housing programs which target homeownership for low and moderate income families.

Policy 6: Housing Trust Fund. Explore the feasibility of establishing a local or regional housing trust fund, or other similar program, to assist in financing affordable housing efforts. Funding assistance could come from both public and private sources including the government programs and local businesses and industries. The trust fund could provide various forms of financial assistance including land and interest rate buy downs, second trust financing, and direct assistance for construction of affordable units.

Policy 7: Housing Authority. Explore the feasibility of establishing a local or regional housing authority, potentially in conjunction with either or both of the cities. Such an Authority could administer and coordinate a variety of programs and initiatives to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing for local citizens.

Policy 8: Housing Code. Examine the feasibility of adopting and administering the Property Maintenance Code to ensure the upgrading of existing, substandard and unsafe housing, including manufactured homes.

Objective C: Encourage the construction of good quality housing which provides a sound economic investment for the citizen and a tax base enhancement for the county.

Goal 2: Ensure that housing development occurs in a pattern which is efficient and affordable to the county taxpayers at large in terms of providing public facilities and services.

Objective A: Encourage housing development to locate in areas where adequate water and/or wastewater service is available, roads and schools have adequate capacity, and emergency services have adequate coverage.

Policy 1: Rezoning Decisions Based on Planning Policy Area. The county should ensure that all decisions on residential rezonings are compatible with the Planning Policy Area in which the rezoning request is located at the density envisioned by the Plan, supported by the available infrastructure, and compatible with adjacent development.

Policy 2: Staunton and Waynesboro as Growth Areas. The county should recognize the role of the cities as growth areas and should expect the cities to be centers of future development.

Goal 3: Ensure that new and existing residential areas are protected from conflicts with incompatible land uses and the county's agricultural and environmental resources are protected from conflicts with incompatible residential land uses.

Objective A: Discourage encroachment of residential land uses into areas that have good prospects for long-term farming or forestry activities.

Policy 1: Residential Dwellings. The county should examine the different methods available for restricting the number of new dwellings constructed in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas and if built, minimizing the impact on existing and potential agricultural operations and natural resources.

Objective B: Promote development layouts that protect agricultural operations and natural and scenic resources by design.

Policy 1: Preservation of Agriculture. In the context of development proposals, the county should seek to preserve the viability of agriculture and forestry on the property in question as well as adjacent properties. Where clustering of dwellings is desired, consideration should be given to the use of the preservation tract so that it doesn't become a nuisance to the residential development, the agricultural neighbors, or the county.