



Shenandoah County Public Transit Feasibility Study

Briefing to County Supervisors

December 12, 2018



Background

- Area non-profit agencies identified that the lack of transportation is a barrier for people to access services, jobs, medical appointments, and educational opportunities.
- Major employers have indicated that hiring and retaining entry level employees is a challenge due to limited transportation resources.
- Shenandoah County Chamber reached out to the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission (NSVRC) for technical assistance.

Background

- NSVRC applied for and was awarded a grant from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) to study the feasibility of initiating a public transportation service.
- Through an RFP process, KFH Group was hired to lead the study.
- The study was initiated in September, 2018.

Study Tasks

- ✓ Outreach to Stakeholder Groups and the Public
- ✓ Review of Socioeconomic Data and Local Planning Documents
- System and Service Development
- Budget and Performance Development
- System Governance and Management
- Draft and Final Reports

Stakeholder Input: Sept.– Nov. 2018

Human Service Agencies

- Public transit is needed to help residents access jobs, medical appointments, school, training, shopping, and other life activities.
- Primary focus should be for job access and for seniors and people with disabilities to access daily life activities.
- Highest priority is the U.S. Route 11 Corridor, M-F.
- A mobility management component should be included.
- Public transit seen as an important economic development resource.
- There are implementation concerns with regard to garnering public support, the institutional structure, and effective marketing.

Stakeholder Input: Sept.– Nov. 2018

Employers

- Employer survey – 26 employers responded, representing 3,305 employees.
- Nine reported that their employees have said transportation to work is a problem for them.
- Nine reported that transportation to work is an issue in hiring and retaining employees.
- Employees' transportation problems are typically a result of carpool arrangements that fall through, affecting more than one employee (20% mode share for carpooling).
- Seven employers offered specific suggestions, with three suggesting service along U.S. Route 11.

Stakeholder Input: Sept.– Nov. 2018

Public Survey

- 1,100 responses
- Majority drive themselves (91%) and do not face transportation barriers.
- **65%** of the total indicated that there is a need to start a public transit program, with a focus on work trips and local service geared to appointments and daily life activities.
- 342 people said they would use it.
- Favored Service:
 - U.S. Route 11 Corridor
 - M-F, between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.
 - Fixed route
 - Between \$1.00 and \$2.00 fare

Stakeholder Input: Sept.– Nov. 2018

Public Survey – Comments (Sample)

“I have a disability and this would make a world of difference in my quality of life”

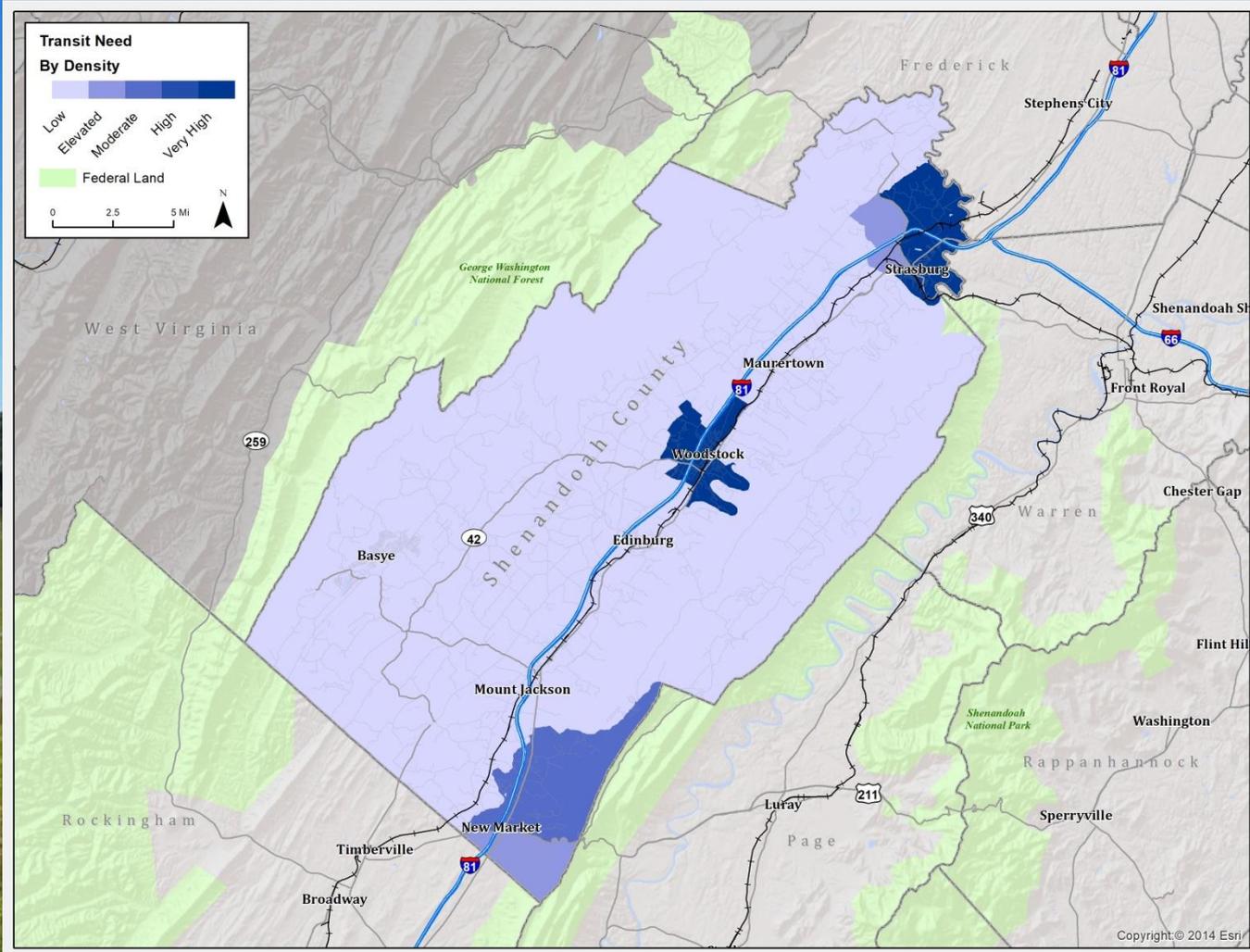
“I would definitely use this form of transportation to get back and forth to work. Yes this town does have a local taxi service, which is a great and friendly business, but for five days a week to go to and from work the taxi costs me \$80 a week and I live just over 2 miles from my work. That gets extremely expensive... Please help bring public transportation to Woodstock. This would help my family put food on the table and save to get a car of my own.”

“I think this would be a fantastic resource – to alleviate the stressors of the working poor, to meet the needs of the elderly, and to provide young people with a safe alternative to driving. I would be very willing for my tax dollars to go to such a program.”

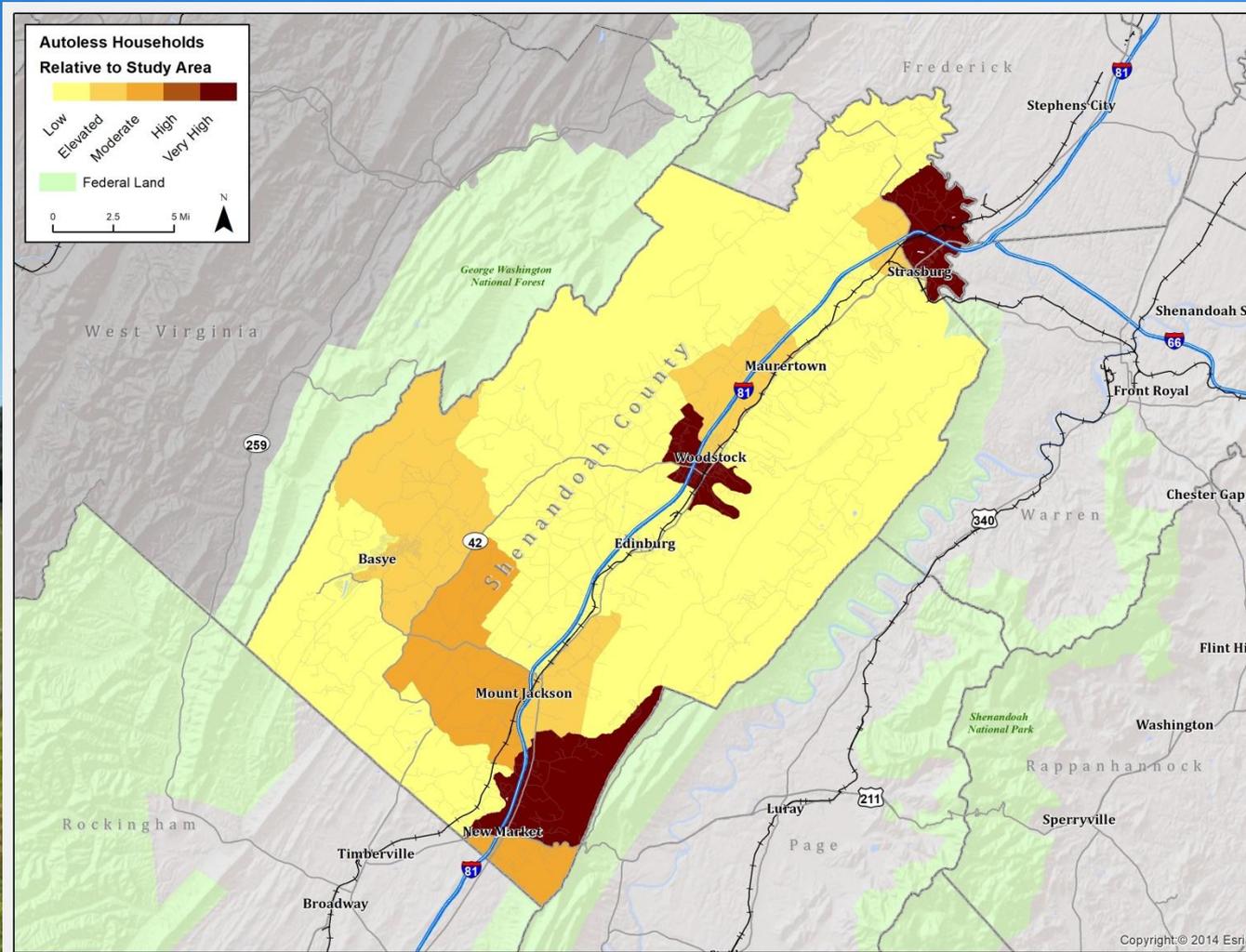
“There is no need for public transportation in Shenandoah County. A waste of money.”

“Shenandoah County is too spread out for public transportation. The tax payer dollars that this would require are better used in other areas.”

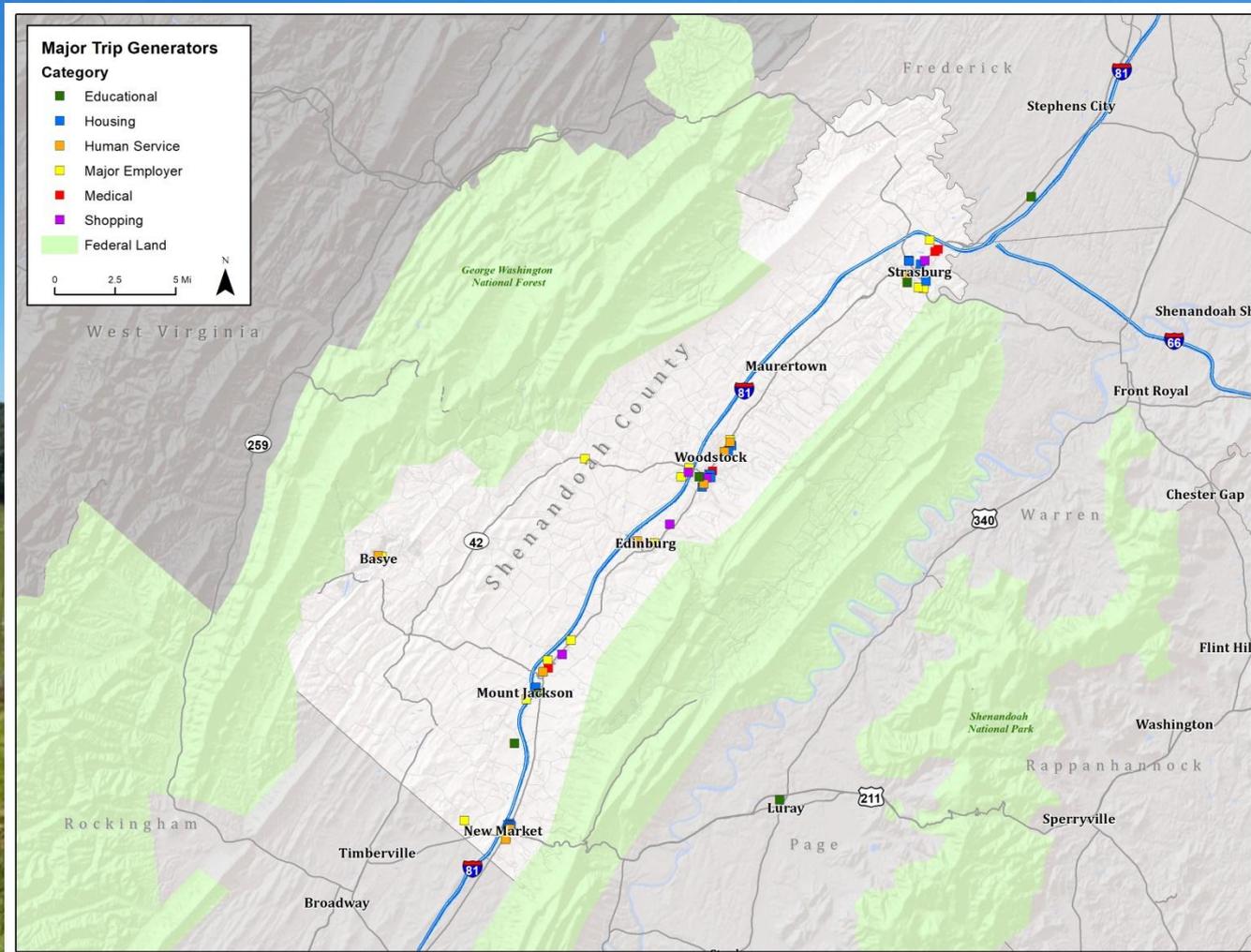
Demographics and Land Use Analysis



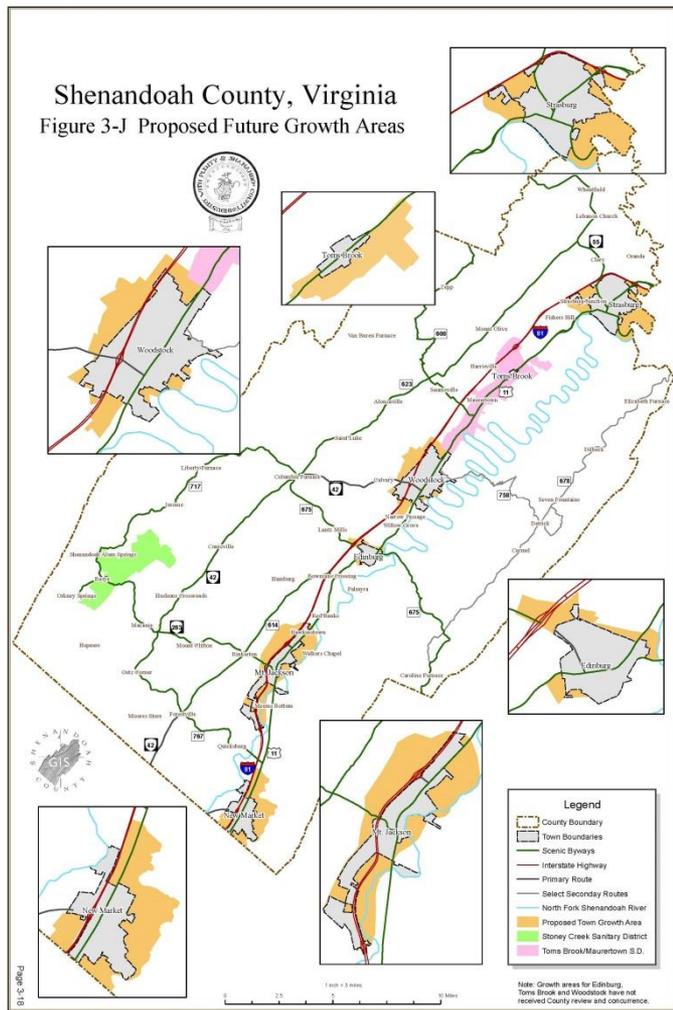
Demographics and Land Use Analysis



Demographics and Land Use Analysis



Demographics and Land Use Analysis



- High need areas, as well as population and major origins and destinations are generally clustered along U.S. Route 11 Corridor.
- Local planning documents support the investigation of initiating a public transportation program, as a collaborative effort among county, town, and regional partner.

Next Steps: What is Feasible?

System and Service Development

- Research Rural Systems in Virginia with Corridor Services
 - Virginia Regional Transit
 - Front Royal Trolley and Corridor Connector (Warren County)
 - Culpeper – Orange Connector
 - BRITE (Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro)
 - STAR Transit (Eastern Shore)
 - Farmville Area Bus
 - Blackstone Area Bus
- Research Local Private Non-Profits with Transportation Programs



Next Steps: What is Feasible?

Focus of Research

- Organizational Structure
 - County
 - Regional Body
 - Town
 - Private Non-Profit
- Contracted vs In-house
- Operating and Capital Costs and Funding Partners
- Operating Characteristics

Next Steps: What is Feasible?

Develop Service Plan

- Tentative Service Design for Budget Development
- Capital Needs

Budget and Performance Estimates

- Cost estimates
- Ridership estimates
- Estimate fare revenue, grant options, local match requirements and potential partners
 - There is the possibility of applying for a demonstration grant from DRPT to initiate service.

Next Steps: What is Feasible?

- **Recommendation for System Governance and Management**

- County?
- NSVRC?
- Local private non-profit?
- Contractor or in-house?

****Transit programs need a local champion****

Questions and Contact Information

Project Deliverables

<http://www.kfhgroup.com/nsvrcfeasibilitystudy/>

NSVRC

Karen Taylor

ktaylor@nsvregion.org

(540) 636-8800

KFH Group

Elisabeth (Lib) Rood, AICP
Senior Transportation Planner

erood@kfhgroup.com

301-951-8660