

2024 West Piedmont Planning District Commission

HOUSING STUDY

Housing Study Sections



Introduction

WPPDC Regional Analysis

Pittsylvania County & City of Danville

Franklin County

Henry County & City of Martinsville

Patrick County

Prepared by the Virginia Center
for Housing Research at Virginia Tech,
HousingForward Virginia, and the West
Piedmont Planning District Commission
for West Piedmont Planning District
Commission Member Localities:
Franklin County, Henry County, Patrick
County, Pittsylvania County, City of
Danville, City of Martinsville and the
Town of Rocky Mount

Introduction

About the Study

West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) undertook this housing study in partnership with the Virginia Center for Housing Research at Virginia Tech (VCHR) and HousingForward Virginia (HFV). PDCs serve member local governments within their region and build regional approaches to issues like economic development, transportation, and legislative priorities. The West Piedmont Planning District's member localities are: Franklin, Henry, Patrick, and Pittsylvania Counties; the Cities of Danville and Martinsville; and the Town of Rocky Mount. Each member locality identified housing as a concern in their jurisdiction and with the opportunities offered through Virginia Housing, elected to conduct a regional housing study.

This summary version offers high-level information and conclusions. Details regarding data, analysis, conclusions and proposed solutions can be found in the full, technical study report.

Study Scope

Phase 1: Needs Assessment, Market Analysis, Training

VCHR assessed county, city and town trends in the context of the region to identify jurisdiction-specific challenges and opportunities. As a part of the study, VCHR trained WPPDC staff to compile publicly available housing data, assess its reliability, and interpret the data in the context of the region and individual localities.

Phase 2: Analysis of Barriers & Community Outreach

WPPDC staff coordinated listening sessions for VCHR and HFV to learn about housing market conditions and challenges from local staff and stakeholders. VCHR and HFV met with staff from each county and city as well as a number of Town representatives. Staff and stakeholders described each jurisdiction, its housing stock, housing challenges and potential opportunities.

Local representatives identified specific issues affecting their communities, which helped to guide the analysis. These issues included workforce housing; housing equity, aging and substandard housing stock and opportunities for rehabilitation; options for aging in place; the availability of housing affordable to residents at diverse income levels, and; gaps in the availability of housing. VCHR conducted interviews to fill gaps from the initial listening sessions. These conversations focused on building and development, vulnerable populations, and the key geographies not addressed in the listening sessions.

Phase 3: Strategy Development

HFV reviewed the information developed by VCHR's Needs Assessment and Market Analysis work to compile a tailored menu of housing policies and strategies associated with the needs highlighted in preliminary data analysis drafts and goals discussed by staff and stakeholders.

WPPDC, HFV and VCHR convened meetings with each jurisdiction to review housing needs and understand the best practice policies that would address those needs. With jurisdiction input, HFV created tailored solutions for each jurisdiction and provided additional detail for the policies selected by the jurisdictions. Brief descriptions of solutions are included in this summary version of the study. Solutions in the full, technical report have greater details, including responsible actors and their roles, implementation steps, funding requirements, possible funding sources, and relevant best practices.

WPPDC Regional Analysis

Population

The West Piedmont PDC Region includes the counties of Franklin, Henry, Patrick, and Pittsylvania, the Cities of Danville, and Martinsville. The region's population is 240,482 and comprises 99,190 households. Most of the region's households (76%) live within the four counties.

240,482

Region's
population

99,190

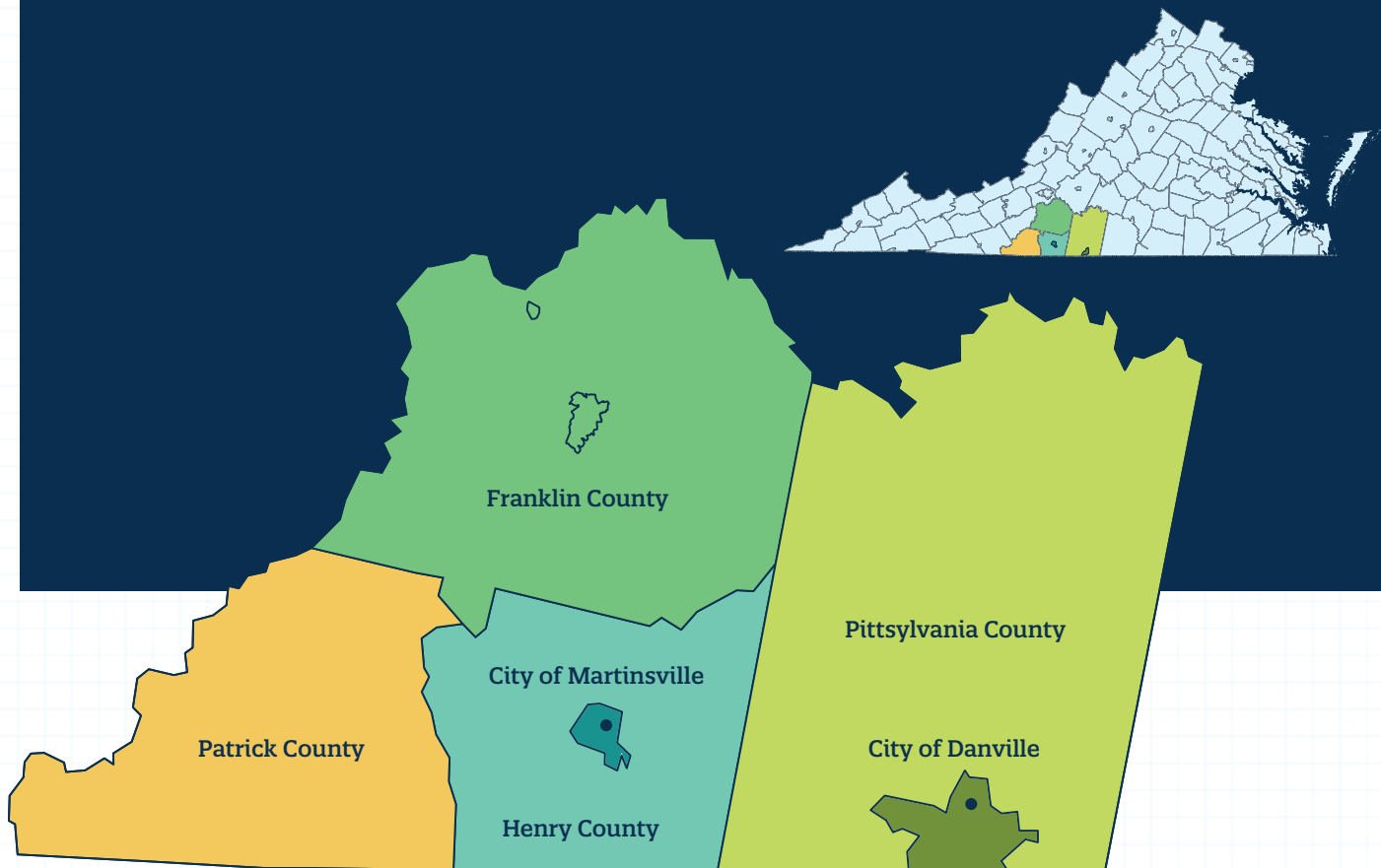
households

76%

lives within
the four
counties.

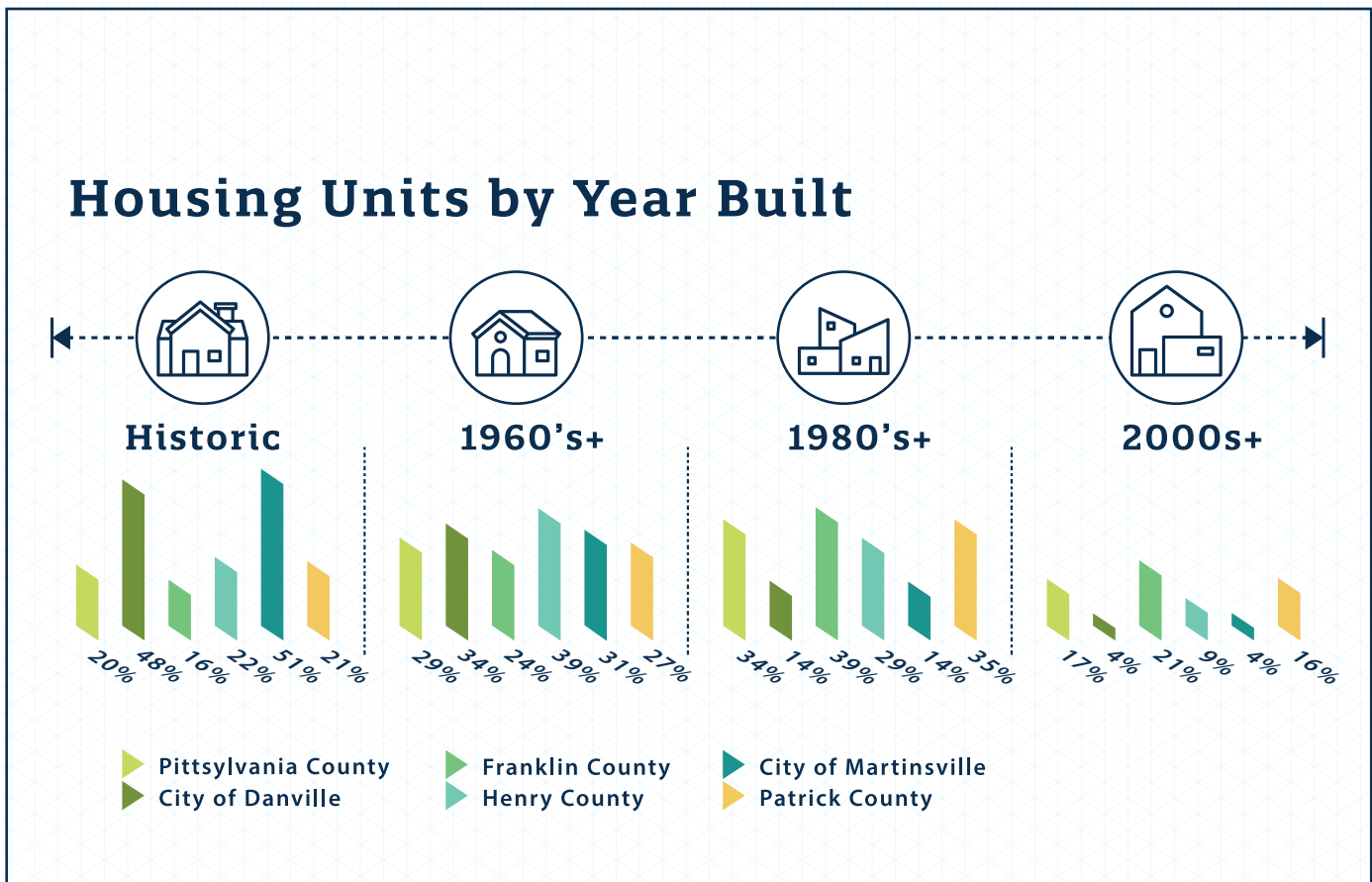
Regionwide Housing Challenges

The submarkets throughout the region have many commonalities and similar housing challenges that lend themselves to regional initiatives and approaches to housing solutions.



Housing Conditions

Local government staff and stakeholders throughout the region identified the conditions of housing as a challenge for both existing and prospective residents. The energy performance, maintenance costs, and upgrade costs of a housing unit depend greatly on the age of the unit. Older units usually cost more to heat and cool and require more maintenance and upgrades to retain their full market value. Homes built in the 40s and 50s benefit from solid construction of that era, and typically have had up to two “upgrades” in their history. Housing built in the 1960s is often less well located and has higher transportation costs. Many homes built between 1960s and 1980s have not had any major upgrades since their original construction and may need upgrades soon to remain competitive in their housing markets.



Source: VCHR tabulation of 2021 ACS 5-year Estimates

Danville and Martinsville have the oldest stock in the region, with almost half of the cities' housing built prior to 1960. The region's counties have housing that is more evenly distributed across decades prior to 2000. Franklin County, which has the highest demand market in the region, has seen the most housing development since 2000.

Shifting Needs and Preferences

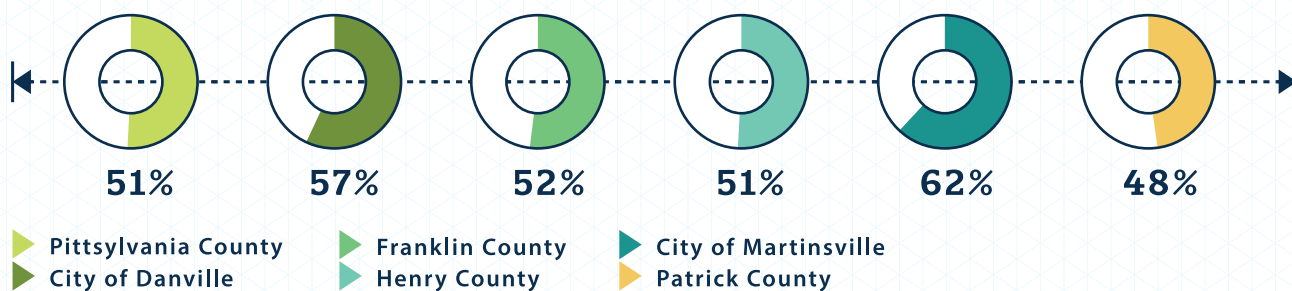
Households in the WPPDC are smaller today. Young families struggle to find affordable starter homes and 60 and older people are seeking conveniences that support aging.

Buyers are looking for homes that do not require major renovations. Renters prefer larger floorplans with higher-end amenities. Younger buyers and renters are looking for smaller single-family homes.

Despite preferences, many households encounter financial obstacles. Local governments can incentivize development of smaller-scale housing. Adding smaller multifamily or attached units may increase the number of affordable, high-quality units in the market without subsidy. Well-designed multifamily developments can offer conveniences to help move renters and buyers away from single family units.

Older homebuyers, 60 and over, gravitate toward suburban and small town living as well as resort living. Almost half of households in the WPPDC region are led by individuals that are 60 and over.

Householder Over 60 by Locality



Source: 2021 ACS 5-year Estimates

Workforce Housing

Low wage workers in common occupations throughout the region face housing challenges. Households with only one worker can have difficulty finding affordable housing. Most of the region's working households are single earner.

In Danville, except for registered nurses, no workers in the top ten occupations can afford the median rent as a single earner. Some experienced workers in the top ten occupations can afford median rent. However, homeownership is still out of reach.

Affordable housing throughout the region is not available for food service workers and cashiers, even ones with a higher experience level and sharing housing costs with another worker. Some occupations like personal care aids in Danville and Pittsylvania County and security workers in Patrick County will find it difficult to find affordable housing at any experience level. These occupations may not be able to afford purchasing a home if they are sharing costs with another worker in the same occupation.

Many of the workers that are unable to find affordable housing fill important roles in the community. Housing insecurity forces them to make decisions that adversely affect their and their family's health and future.



Registered nurses can afford housing, even as single earner



Affordable housing is not available for food service workers & cashiers



Even experienced security workers find it difficult to find affordable housing

Housing Insecurities



In the WPPDC region around 24% of households spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Of those households 21,300 have incomes of less than 80 percent of the Area Median Income. These households will often have to make choices between housing and other necessities like food, clothing, transportation, and medical care. Quite often they live with the fear of losing their housing and may experience homelessness.

Renters are more likely to be affected by increasing housing costs than homeowners. Homeowners generally have a fixed mortgage payment; renters typically are subject to annual rent increases and more likely to experience housing cost-burden at a higher rate than homeowners. **Homeowners can become cost burdened due to economic hardships** such as job loss, maintenance costs, death of a family member or fixed incomes that do not keep up rising costs of taxes, utilities, and insurance.

Cost-burdened Households by Tenure

11,446 Renter Households

8,932 Households Owning with a Mortgage

3,683 Households Owning Free and Clear

Source: 2021 ACS 5-year Estimates

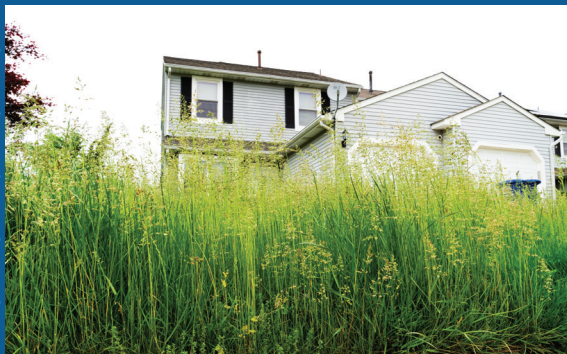
Homelessness



It is estimated that over 10,000 households in the WPPDC region are at risk of homelessness, which is roughly 10% of total households in the region, 5,750 renter households, and 4,400 owner households.

10% At Risk of Homelessness

Literal homelessness is difficult to accurately count in suburban, exurban, and rural contexts. The WPPDC region has limited services for households that experience homelessness. Often unsheltered people will move between the homes of friends and family or squat in unused buildings or camp. The 2023 Point-in-time count in the WPPDC region identified **more than 100 people experiencing literal homelessness**. The number of school-aged children experiencing homelessness are often a better indicator of homelessness challenges in these contexts. In the 2020-2021 school year **at least 221 students** in the WPPDC Region were identified as experiencing homelessness.



Designate West Piedmont Planning District Commission as the region's land bank.

Property vacancies and blight are consistent issues among nearly all localities in the region. Population decline and disinvestment were early factors that contributed to property abandonment

and neglect. Real estate speculation now plays a major role in current property conditions.

As a land bank, WPPDC would be able to acquire, manage and develop, and redevelop abandoned properties. These properties could then be returned to productive use. Land banks can be used to acquire neighboring lots or hold land responsibly until market conditions improve, more often land banks attempt to quickly acquire and dispose of property to meet community goals.

Land banks are able to receive properties directly from localities, avoiding a competitive bidding process. They can also acquire properties on the private market. In addition, land banks in Virginia are exempt from real estate taxes, which better allows them to focus resources on improving and maintaining properties.



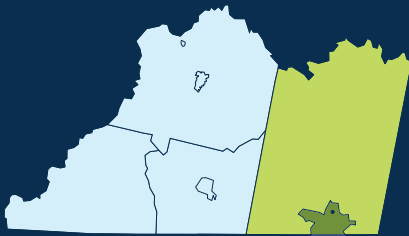
Coordinate home repair and rehabilitation programs at the regional level to maximize reach and impact.

This strategy involves partnering with local

and regional offices, banks, and service providers to create accessible pathways for property owners to tap into home improvement resources, such as those offered by DHCD, SERCAP, and USDA Rural Development. By strategically aligning program waitlists and the eligible uses for funds, resources can be distributed more efficiently and effectively.

Further enhancing this strategy, recruiting community ambassadors will be key to expanding awareness and building trust within local communities. These ambassadors can play a crucial role in informing residents about available programs and resources. Additionally, developing a robust applicant pipeline will enable a more targeted approach to addressing housing needs.

By implementing a system to "triage" applications, priority can be given to those with the highest needs, ensuring that the most critical cases receive timely attention and resources. This comprehensive approach aims to streamline efforts, avoiding duplication and ensuring that home repair and rehabilitation programs reach those most in need.



Pittsylvania County & City of Danville

60,883

Residents

24,663

Households

76.6%

Homeowners

In 2021, Pittsylvania County was home to 60,883 residents, residing in 24,663 households. Of the county residents, 1,813 residents lived in its three towns. The home ownership rate is high at over 76 percent. Around 40 percent of households have at least one member that is over 65 years old.

In the same year, 42,556 people (18,590 households) called the City of Danville home. The home ownership rate in Danville is considerably lower than the county at only 51 percent. The number of households with at least one person over 65 is only slightly lower than Pittsylvania County.

These localities are connected in both housing and employment. The City of Danville being the traditional employment center and the county offering suburban and rural housing opportunities. The majority of residents in both localities commute to work within their own locality or to the other.

42,556

Residents

18,590

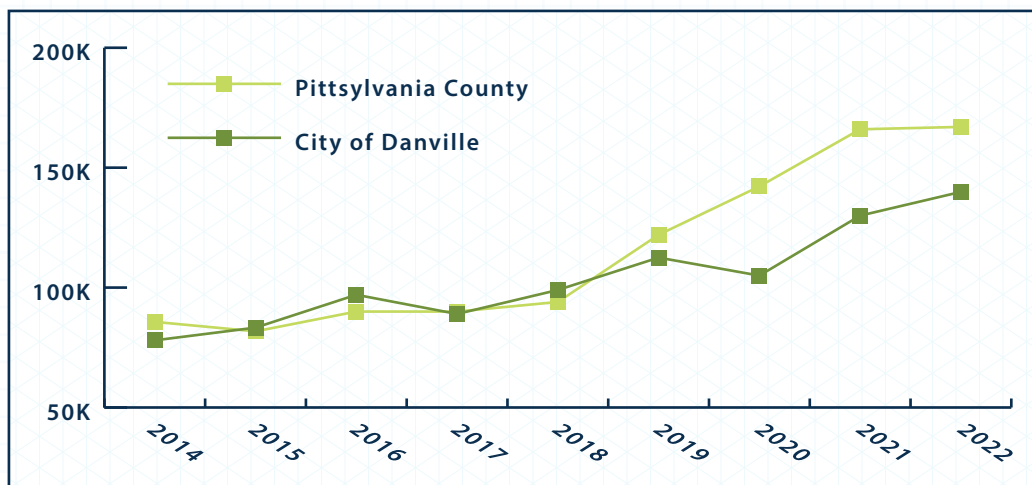
Households

51%

Homeowners

The median sale price in 2022 for Pittsylvania County was \$167,000. The City of Danville was slightly lower at \$139,900. Both communities have seen a drastic increase in sale prices since 2019. Homes stay on the market for about 2 months in both localities. Steadily increasing median price and decreasing days on the market show an increase in housing demand.

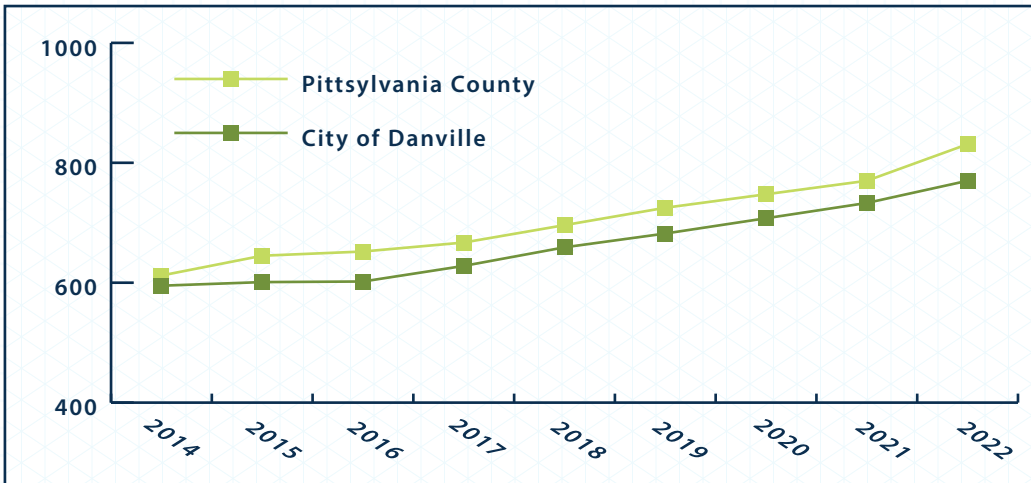
Median Sold Price



Source: VCHR
Tabulation
of 2014-2022
MLS Data

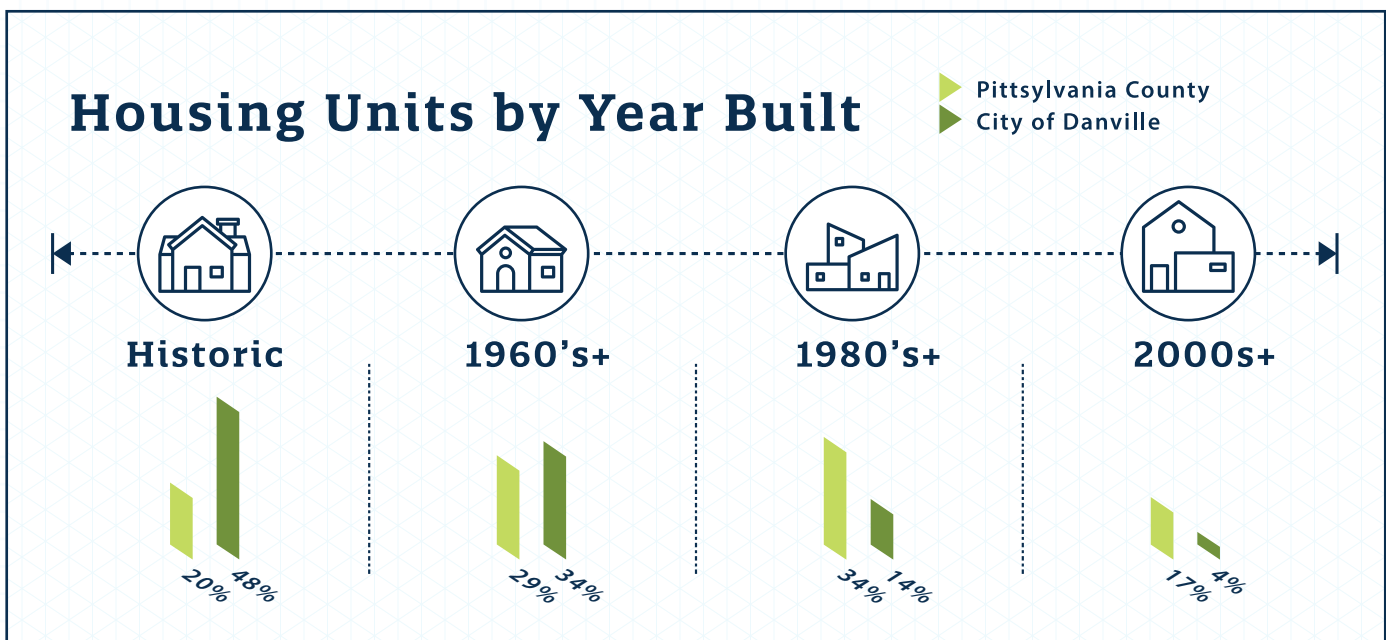
Median rent is similar in both localities, with the county being \$831 and the city \$770. Increases in rent are also evidence of increasing demand, however increasing rent can be challenging for some residents. A household is considered housing cost-burdened when they need to spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. In Pittsylvania County, 38.3% of renters are cost-burdened and in the City of Danville 42.6% of renters are cost-burdened.

Median Gross Rent



Source: VCHR tabulation of 2015-2022 ACS 5-year, not adjusted

Stakeholders at both the City of Danville and Pittsylvania County discussed concerns about the age of the homes in their localities. In the city, 48 percent of the housing inventory was built prior to 1959. The county's inventory for the same period is considerably smaller at 20 percent. Fewer than 1,000 new housing units have been built in the city since 2000. In the county, 5,003 units were constructed after 2000.



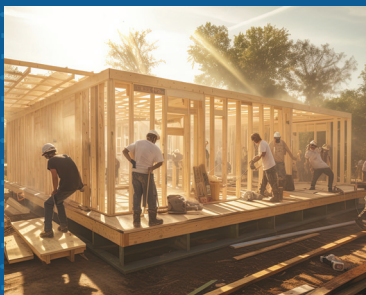
Source: VCHR tabulation of 2021 ACS 5-year Estimates



Improve housing conditions—especially in manufactured home parks—with new initiatives.

Pittsylvania County has an interest in improving housing conditions to increase the quality of living for residents in manufactured home parks. Manufactured home parks with deteriorated living units are

common place in the county. This housing has its challenges but plays an important role in affordable housing for the county's lower-income residents. The county government can seek out funding for home repairs through local foundations and state and local grants. Proactive code enforcement can identify homes in need of repair and make residents aware of resources. Partnerships with local non-profits and housing agencies that are experienced in housing rehabilitation would play a critical role in this effort.



Pair zoning ordinance update with new material and resources to educate developers, property owners, and public about changes.

The county plans to adopt a new zoning ordinance in 2024. A comprehensive outreach plan that provides information regarding

changes and opportunities created by the new zoning ordinances will help to increase awareness. It is critical to keep builders, property owners, and other stakeholders up to date on new ordinances and regulations for housing development. Public engagement will play a critical role in the implementation of this initiative. Along with these changes it is important to streamline the permitting process and train county staff on new ordinance and policies.

Explore adopting best practices from across the state to fully leverage the IDA's powers to incentivize new housing affordable to workers.

There is a growing connection between industrial, economic, and housing development. As employment opportunities increase so does the need for housing. Pittsylvania County's Industrial Development Authority (IDA) can play a valuable role in housing development. This effort may include:

- Forecast housing demand from expected job growth. Calculate affordable rent and purchase prices for the most common occupations using their respective wage and salary data.
- Investigate housing programs and financial incentives offered by other IDAs.
- Explore combining housing incentive efforts into regional initiatives with Danville.



Expand current housing collaboration meetings to include additional partners and strengthen relationships.

A collaboration between the City of Danville staff, Danville Redevelopment and Housing Authority

(DRHA), and the Danville Neighborhood Development Corporation (DNDC) has already increased productivity on specific housing items. The expansion of the current group could lead to increased collaboration with other stakeholders. Quarterly meetings with the IDA, council members, developers, builders, and other stakeholders would not only help to keep all parties up to date on housing programs and market trends, but also keep the entire group focused on the same goals.

Support the creation of a new Community Development Authority to spur investments in housing and other assets in the Schoolfield District.

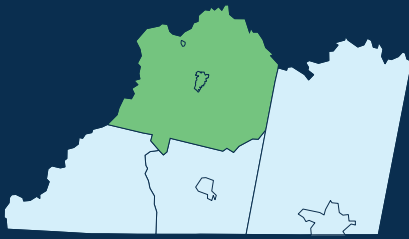
The New Schoolfield District plan establishes a common vision for the Dan River Mills site, the Schoolfield Village neighborhood, and the Main Street Corridor. While also addressing economic development, community character, and other important elements, the plan emphasizes the importance of preventing residential displacement and securing equitable housing opportunities for both current and future residents.

The plan recommends a new Community Development Authority (CDA) as an “implementation vehicle” to help achieve this goal. State law (§15.2-5152 et seq.) CDAs to serve as special taxing districts for supporting targeted improvements and services in a particular area. CDAs also have the ability to finance their investments by issuing bonds, which are repaid via special assessments or tax-increment financing collected by the locality. These bonds would not be a part of the City’s existing debt obligations.

The CDA could support housing efforts in the Schoolfield District by purchasing and preparing sites for residential development, and funding upgrades or expansions of water and sewer lines to lower development costs. However, other important services that would help stabilize current residents — such as home repair and weatherization programs — are not explicitly mentioned in the CDA enabling legislation. The City may want to explore asking the General Assembly to expand the powers of CDAs to include broader housing efforts.

Encourage use of community land trusts, cooperative ownership, and other alternatives within current housing programs and initiatives.

Household demographics, living preferences, and home prices are all changing in Danville. This has caused a shortage in the availability of housing to meet the needs of certain groups, especially current residents. The city can look to alternative housing models to help with that need. Researching innovative alternative models, best practices, use of the Virginia Statewide Community Land Trust, community engagement, can help determine which models would be most beneficial in Danville.



Franklin County

As of 2021, Franklin County was home to 54,829 people making up 22,033 households. Compared to other localities in the region, Franklin County's rate of households that own their home is the highest in the region at 80 percent. The county has a substantial senior population with 41.5 percent of households having one or more individuals who are 65 or over.

A household is considered housing cost-burdened when they need to spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. In Franklin County 4,366 households fall in that category. Of those, 40 percent spend over 50 percent of their income on housing. With fixed or limited incomes, 41 percent of cost burdened households include at least one senior member.

54,829

Residents

22,033

Households

80%

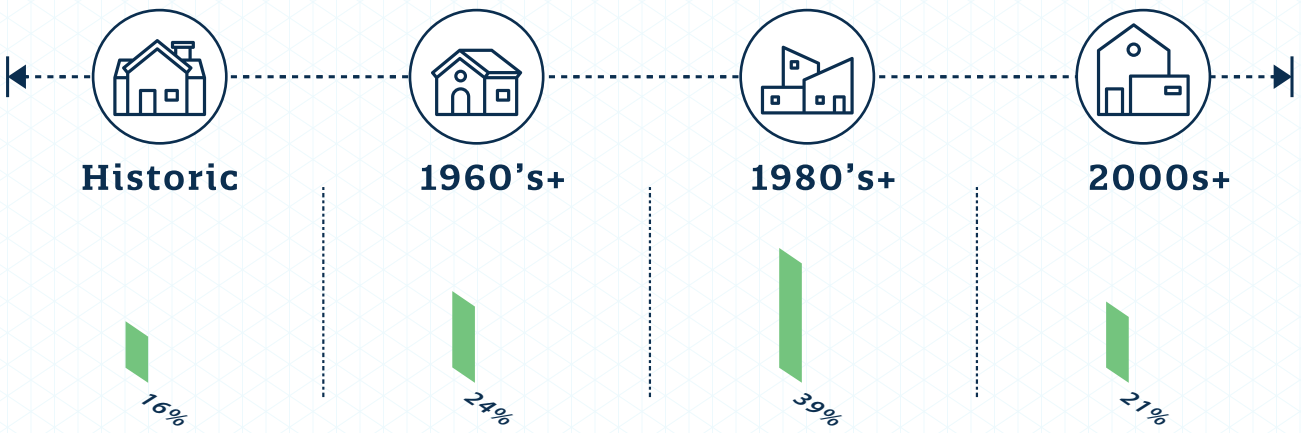
Homeowners

4,366 Franklin County Households are Considered Housing Cost-burdened.

Of the working residents in Franklin County 39 percent are employed within the county and 19.2 percent work in the City of Roanoke. The largest number of workers commuting into the County reside in Henry County and Martinsville.

Housing Units by Year Built

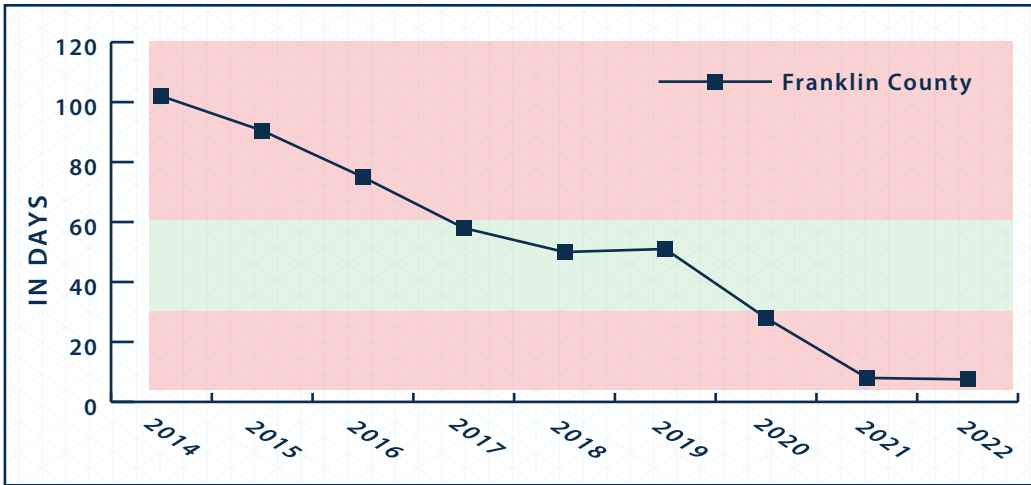
Franklin County



Source: VCHR tabulation of 2021 ACS 5-year Estimates

Franklin County is currently experiencing a housing shortage. In 2022, the median number of days a house was on the market was 7.5. This is substantially below the 30-60 days that would reflect a balanced market. This tight market can be the result of a strong demand for housing and limited inventory. A highly competitive market can make it extremely difficult for first time homebuyers to purchase homes.

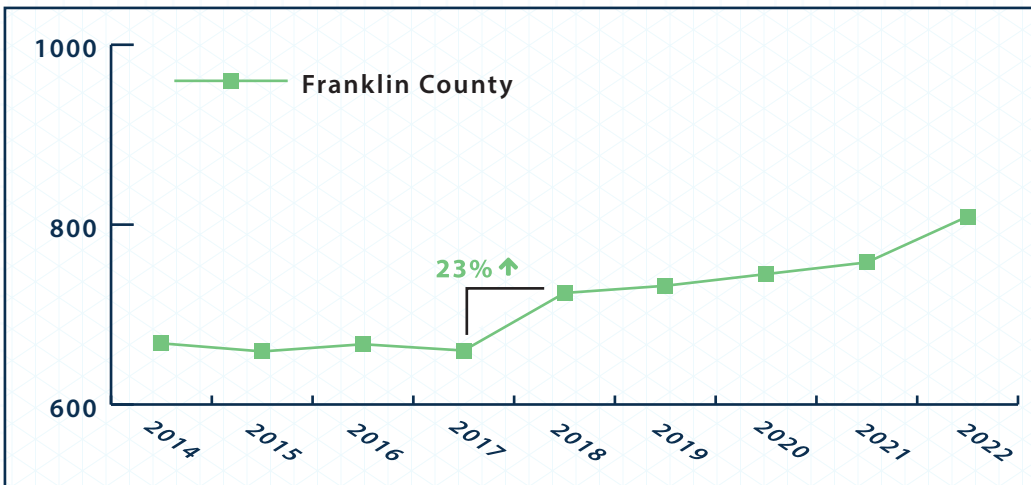
Median Days on the Market (DOM)



Source: VCHR
Tabulation
of 2014-2022
Roanoke
Valley
Association
of REALTORS®

From 2017 to 2022 the monthly median gross rent¹ in Franklin County increased from \$660 to \$809². Less than 2.1% of all housing units in the county are for rent or for sale. The increase in rent and the low vacancy rates indicate a possible rental unit shortage and a demand for more units. County staff described extremely long wait lists for Housing Choice Vouchers, indicating that affordable rental units are in high demand.

Median Gross Rent



Source: VCHR
tabulation
of 2014-2022
ACS 5-year,
not adjusted

¹ Gross rent includes
basic utilities.

² Nominal increase,
not adjusted for
inflation.



Set the comprehensive plan update for success by assessing zoning best practices from peer localities.

Franklin County is currently updating its comprehensive plan. This update is the perfect opportunity for the County to support the need for housing and remove barriers to development. Through zoning reform and

ordinance updates, the county can better address its housing needs. By identifying best practices in other Virginia localities, Franklin County can successfully create an environment that helps support housing development.



Create a suite of development incentives to spur lower-cost housing development.

The majority of builders in Franklin County are currently developing higher-end housing. While housing development of any kind will benefit the county, focusing on one level of housing does not address the overall housing needs of the county. Many counties have utilized incentives to encourage the development of lower and mid-level housing. By researching incentives offered by other Virginia local governments and

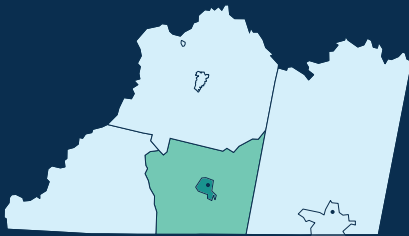
collaborating with local stakeholders, the County can create a plan that reduces the cost of development and boosts the development of housing that addresses all the county's needs.

Examine and update short-term rental regulations to effectively balance tourism and housing needs.

While short-term rentals (STR) help support tourism, they can also contribute to a shortage of housing for the people that work in the community. Community involvement is a critical part of developing regulatory changes that will help preserve residential areas. The approach to these changes should address the rights of the STR owner but also the overall welfare of the community. Working with the community, the County can identify areas where STRs are encouraged or allowed.

Aging manufactured home communities face major housing quality challenges and redevelopment pressures.

Manufactured home communities are a major source of affordable housing in Franklin County. Very often these communities are deteriorated and create an unhealthy and unsafe living environment. Unfortunately, these communities are often the only option available to lower income renters. Revitalization of these communities can improve standards of living and prevent residents from being displaced. Working with non-profit organizations can often be the solution.



Henry County & City of Martinsville

51,077

Residents

20,516

Households

72.4%

Homeowners

As of 2021, Henry County is home to 51,077 residents that make up 20,516 households. The homeownership rate in the county is 72.4 percent, which is slightly lower but consistent with the other counties in the WPPDC region. The City of Martinsville has a smaller population with 13,476 residents (5,656 households). The homeownership rate in Martinsville is considerably less at 57.7 percent.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development the 2023 median income for the Henry County-Martinsville area is \$60,100. Despite and increase in the median income, 18.7 percent of the county households spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing and approximately half of those spend more than 50 percent. Martinsville has higher rates with 25.5 percent spending more than 30 percent and more that three quarters of those spending more than 50 percent. Households experiencing these housing cost burdens may have to choose between housing and other necessities such as food, clothing, and medical care.

13,476

Residents

5,656

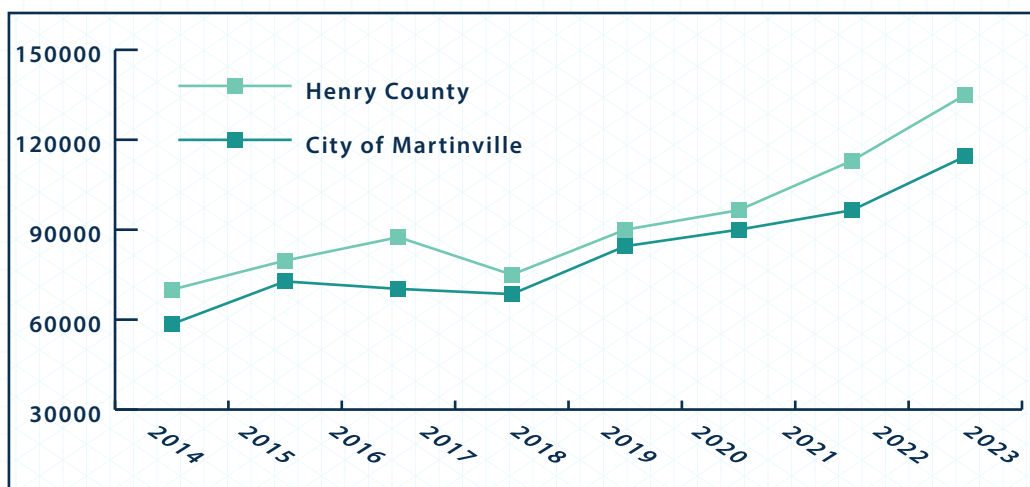
Households

57.7%

Homeowners

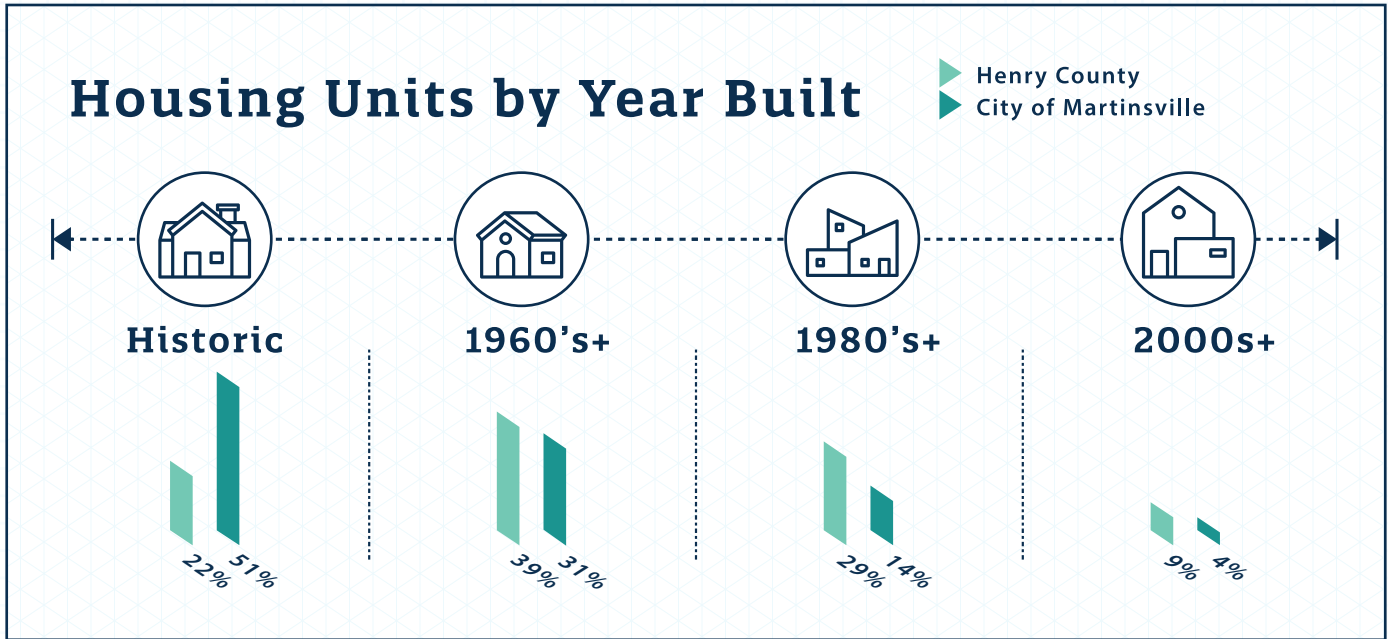
Median Sold Price

The median sale price in Henry County has increased at a steady rate since 2015. In 2021, the median sale price had almost doubled compared to 2014. During the same period, the median number of days a house was on the market decreased from 146.5 to 65, indicating an increasing demand for housing. Like the county, Martinsville's median sale price has steadily increased since 2015. In 2021, the median sale price had almost doubled the 2014 price. Simultaneously, the median number of days a house was on the market decreased from 158 to 69.5, showing an increasing demand for housing.



Source: VCHR
Tabulation
of 2014-2021
MLS Data

The age of housing in Henry County is distributed relatively consistently between units built prior to 1959 and 2000 with a drop after 2000. The age of housing in the City of Martinsville is distributed differently than the county. Housing unit built prior to 1959 account for 51 percent of housing. Approximately 30 percent was built between 1960 and 1979. Older units usually cost more to heat and cool and require more maintenance and upgrades to retain their full market value. There has been very little development since 1980.



Source: VCHR tabulation of 2021 ACS 5-year Estimates

The majority of workers in both localities work in either Martinsville or Henry County. A small percentage commute to Franklin County, Pittsylvania County, City of Danville, and the City of Roanoke.





Align comprehensive plan update with findings from housing needs assessment.

Comprehensive plans are a critical tool to guide the development of communities. The recent housing study identifies current and future housing needs and shows gaps in housing supply and affordability. Utilizing the housing study's findings, the county can

create housing goals and objectives. Once the goals and objectives are established, monitoring of the plan will help keep the plan on-track.



Implement a housing awareness campaign to seed more productive housing conversations across the county.

Public campaigns are excellent for educating residents, allowing them to better understand the need and benefits of housing development at all levels. Wage data can show the typical occupations that cannot

afford market rate housing. Understanding that often respected occupations are unable to afford housing in their communities can deepen conversations about housing.

This effort may include:

- Assess staff capacity to undertake this work in-house, or consider seeking support from outside consultants.
- Connect with potential funders.
- Assemble a housing coalition to act as campaign ambassadors.
- Launch campaign.



Outline specific objectives and leverage best practices to ensure a new comprehensive plan effectively promotes new housing opportunities.

The city's outdated comprehensive plan has created barriers for development. Outdated and contradictory regulation along with lack of uniformity in zoning ordinances, lead to delays and increased costs for developers. A review of the latest comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances can identify outdated elements and inconsistencies. Working with residents, developers and other stakeholders will allow the City to assess how the current practices affect them.



Develop strategic process for redeveloping scattered site properties through public-private partnerships.

The City of Martinsville currently has 40 buildable lots that are scattered throughout the city. These properties are an opportunity to add new homes to unused lots.

The city should publish a Request for Proposal for private developers requesting innovative housing projects, offer incentives to reduce the cost of construction and make the project more appealing, and establish a review committee to ensure that projects align with the city's housing and community objectives.



Develop educational materials and strategies for increasing understanding of housing affordability.

Most of the community in Martinsville is unaware of the city's housing needs and the potential solutions

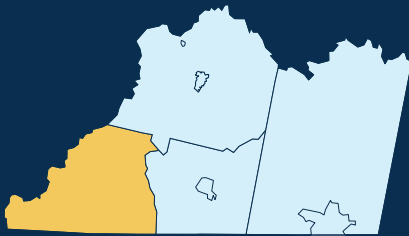
to those needs. This creates barriers and slows the efforts to address the issues. Reaching out the public by using educational materials that clearly and concisely explain the housing situation, meetings with community advocates, and creating broad and easy access to the information will create a better understanding in the community. This can help promote progress and increase the pace of development.

Develop strategic plan for effectively deploying City entities to leverage unique powers, simplify processes, and reduce duplicative efforts.

The recreation of the City's Industrial Development Authority (IDA) and creation of a land bank offers opportunities that could support housing development in Martinsville by utilizing powers granted to these types of entities by state law. A dedicated City staff along with other stakeholders can examine and coordinate activities.

This effort may include:

- Developing a plan that outlines a collaborative approach for property acquisitions, financial incentives, and other activities.
- Identifying and prioritizing potential sites for residential development.
- Establish regular communication to prevent duplicative efforts.
- Explore capacity building grants from state and local funders.



Patrick County

As of 2021, 17,661 people (7,732 households) lived in Patrick County. The County has a high homeownership rate of 78 percent. Although Patrick County has the second smallest population in the WPPDC region, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development it has the second highest median income at \$73,500 in 2023. In 2021, the county also had the lowest poverty level of the other five localities in the study.

17,661

Residents

7,732

Households

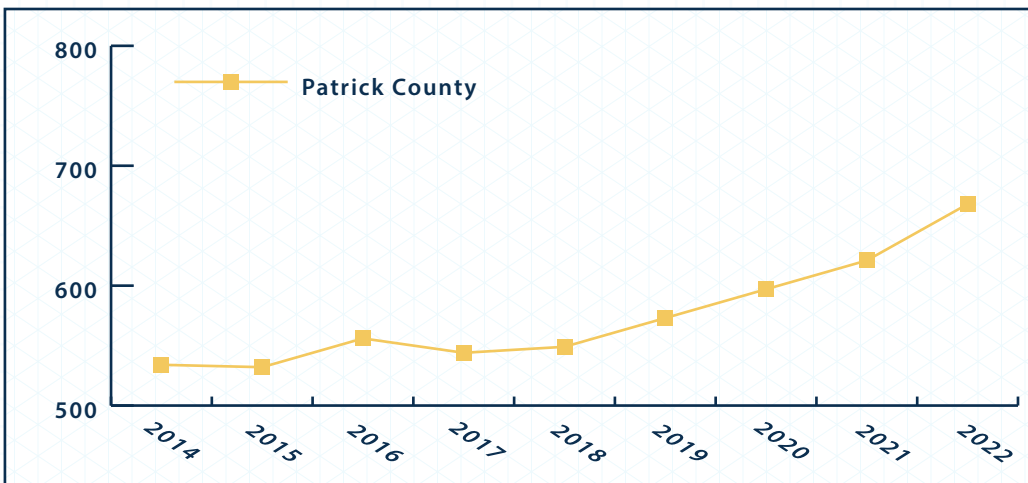
78%

Homeowners



Even with the low poverty level, 1,235 households have difficulty making monthly housing payments. Of those, 1,115 households spend more than 50% of their income on housing costs. This may cause them to choose between housing and other necessities. The median gross rent in the county was \$668 per month in 2022. The increase in rent between 2018 and 2022 indicates a need for rental housing. County stakeholders discussed limited availability of housing, especially rental housing, that is attractive to prospective residents and workers.

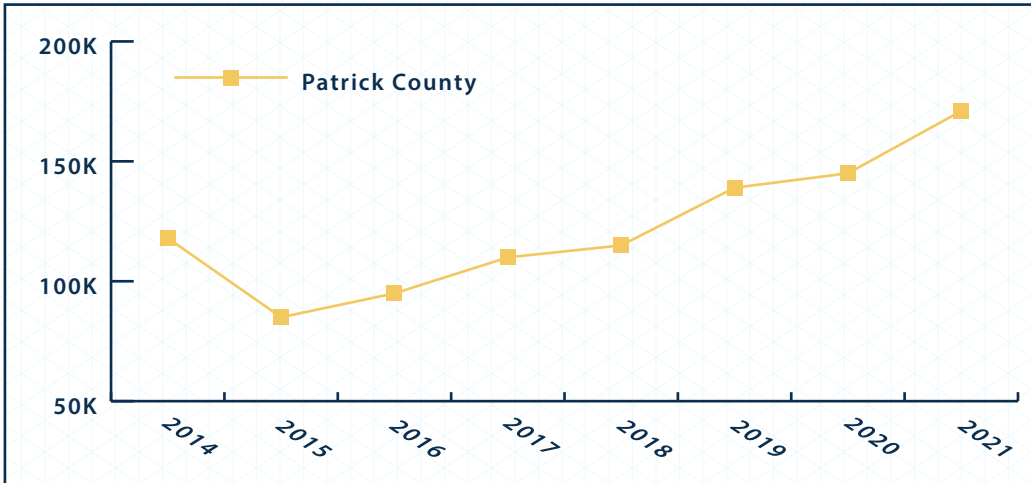
Median Gross Rent



Source: VCHR tabulation of 2015-2022 ACS 5-year, not adjusted

The median sale price of homes in Patrick County has increased at a steady rate since 2015. In 2021 the median sale price has almost doubled the 2014 price. In the same time period, the number of days that a house was on the market decreased from 188.5 to 78. This shows an increasing demand for homeownership.

Median Sold Price

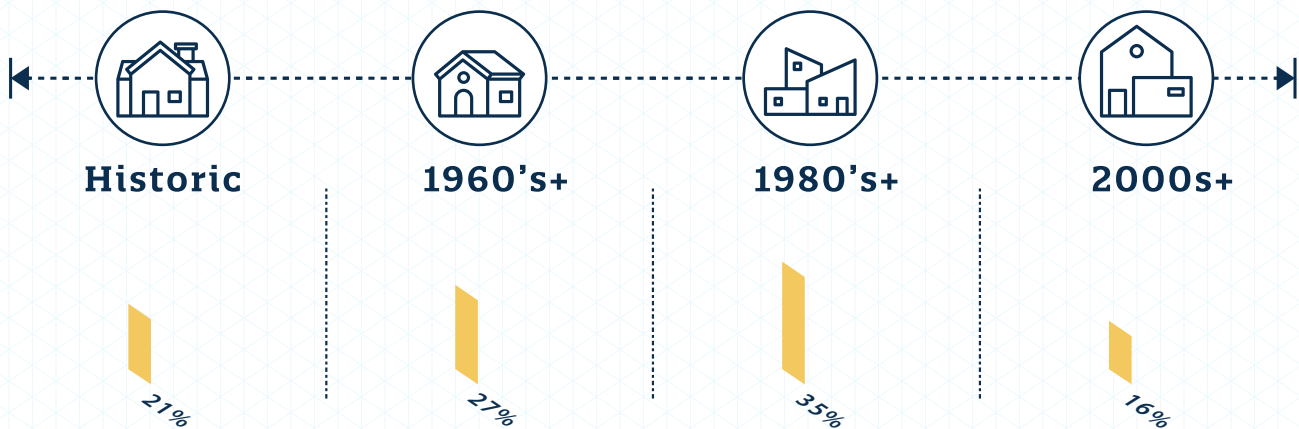


Source: VCHR
Tabulation
of 2014-2021
MLS Data

Many of Patrick County homes were built over 40 years ago. These homes likely need significant maintenance and energy efficiency improvements. Improvements to older housing can help alleviate cost burden among residents and lower energy cost. An estimated 1,627 households in Patrick County have high energy costs. There are 691 households that have low incomes and high energy costs which result in an energy burden.

Housing Units by Year Built

Patrick County



Source: VCHR tabulation of 2021 ACS 5-year Estimates



Improve existing housing conditions

Local governments can play a pivotal role in accelerating the repair and rehabilitation of deteriorating homes. This involves establishing partnerships with local nonprofits and housing agencies that have expertise in home rehabilitation. The local government can also serve as a vital link between homeowners and funding sources, including state and federal grants earmarked for home repairs.

Moreover, the local government can initiate proactive code enforcement to identify homes most in need of repair, particularly in manufactured home communities. By working closely with community leaders, the local government can ensure that residents are fully informed about the resources and assistance programs available to them.

Leverage water/sewer service expansion

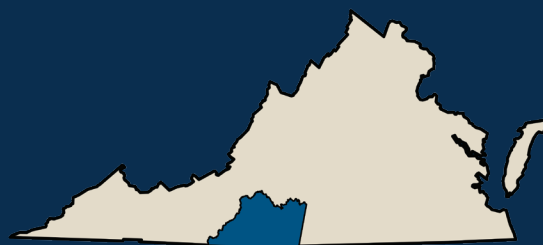
An upcoming expansion of public water and sewer utilities will inherently make residential development easier and more attractive to builders. The County can take advantage of this opportunity to encourage developers to focus their efforts on smaller “starter” homes that are easier for existing residents to purchase. In lieu of any new zoning ordinance or formal growth management regulations, the County can proactively design utility service policies to serve this goal.

The primary tool for the County will be its power to issue hookup permits for new homes. For areas included in the service expansion, the County can design permit fees and the application review process to incentivize preferred housing types. The County can also find ways to align its subdivision regulations to supplement these measures. For example, current regulations require new lots served by water and sewer to be at least one-half acre. This lot size minimum could be reduced (to one third or one quarter) to coincide with applicable criteria created for favorable permits. Offering lower or waived application fees, or expedited approvals, could also be offered to proposals that would increase the supply of lower-cost homes within the service area.

Increase Piedmont Community Services capacity to develop housing

Persons with physical or intellectual disabilities, or who have mental health or substance use challenges, have few appropriate housing options. Patrick County is not immune to this nationwide problem. In Virginia, Community Service Boards (CSBs) are often the primary provider of services for this population. Piedmont Community Services (PCS), the CSB serving Patrick County and nearby localities, successfully operates several properties that provide supportive housing. However, none are located in Patrick County.

Patrick County can help PCS expand its offerings in the county with a range of technical and financial assistance. Patrick County can help PCS identify and assess potential locations for new housing, to include both vacant parcels and existing residential properties that are on the market. If PCS moves forward with a specific property, Patrick County can offer incentives to help lower costs and streamline the process. These might include reducing or waiving fees for permits and utility hookups, proactively addressing any permit barriers, and reducing property taxes in accordance with applicable state enabling authority. The EDA could also offer grants to support for property acquisition, site planning, and other pre-development costs.



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