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Demographics



Introduction

This chapter briefly reviews recent trends and projections in the demographic and growth factors that characterize Warren County. This summary and analysis of trends and existing conditions is intended to provide background information and rationale for other Plan chapters. In order to effectively develop a plan or vision for Warren County's future, it is important to understand where the County has been, where it is now, and where it is headed. Important trends that have implications for future County growth and development are highlighted in this chapter.



Demographics and Growth Trends

Regional Development Trends

Demographic data is gathered from a range of Federal, State, and local agencies. These agencies include the U.S. Census, the Weldon-Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia and the Virginia Employment Commission. The Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission (NSVRC), Warren County Planning Department, and the Warren County Economic Development Authority also keep valuable demographic information and changes.

Warren County, which includes the Town of Front Royal, represents the third largest locality in the Northern Shenandoah Valley region, with a combined population of 37,439 (2010 Census). It is the fifth smallest county in Virginia, but is the 14th most densely populated county. According to the Virginia Employment Commission, the County's population is projected to increase to 45,722 people by the year 2020 resulting in an increase in population of 9,635 (26.7%) for the decade. By 2030, the population is projected to reach 53,092; this represents a 47.1% increase from 2010.

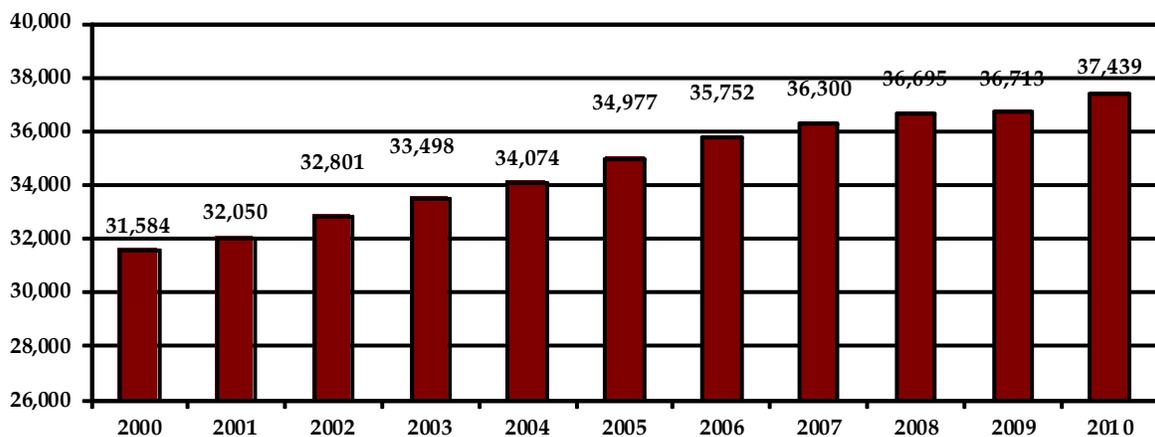
Job growth in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area which includes Northern Virginia is the largest employment source in the State of Virginia. The majority of Warren County residents commute into the Washington D.C.-Northern Virginia metropolitan area daily for employment (more detailed information on employment is revealed in Chapter 6—Economic Development). In summary, it is evident that Warren County is, and will continue to be, directly influenced by the Washington D.C. region's recent and projected growth.

Population

Over the past three decades, Warren County has experienced strong population growth. Between 1980 and 2010, the County saw a population increase of 76.6%, which equaled over 541 new people each year. During this time period, the State population increased 44.7% and the population in the Northern Shenandoah Valley region increased 61.5%.

From 2000-2010, the County's population increased 18.5%. The graph below shows the population increase over the past decade.

Graph 2.1 Warren County Population



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From 1970 to 1980, the County experienced an average annual population growth rate of 4.2%. From 1980 to 1990, the County's average annual growth rate held steady at 4.1%. From 1990 to 2000 the County recorded a drop in growth to 2.6% and for the most recent decade, 2000 to 2010, the average annual growth rate was 2.7%. According to the 2010 Census, 7.1% of the population stated that they had resided in a different county one year earlier and 2.3% resided in a different state.

From 1990 to 2010, the County's population increased significantly more than the Town of Front Royal's population. In comparison, the County's percentage of increase was 61.3% during this time period and the Town experienced a 21.5% increase during this period.

Graph 2.2 Population Town and County

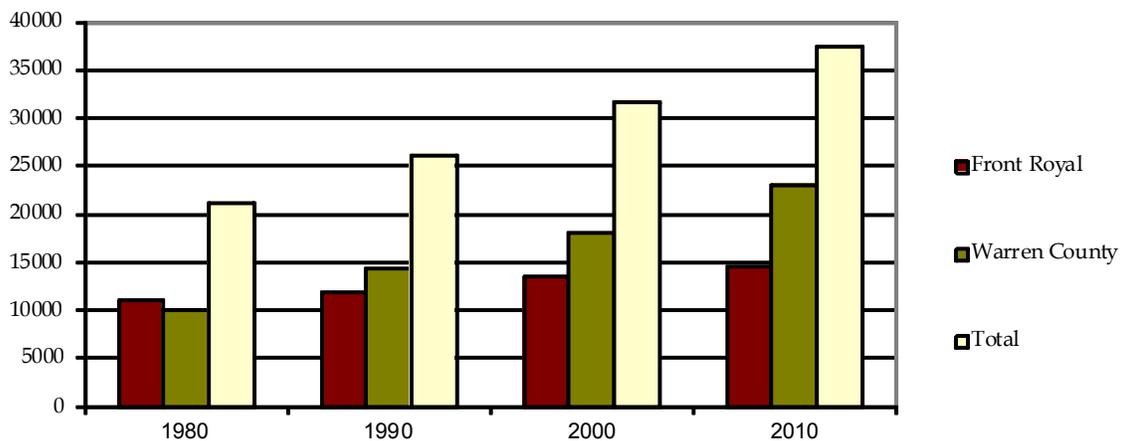
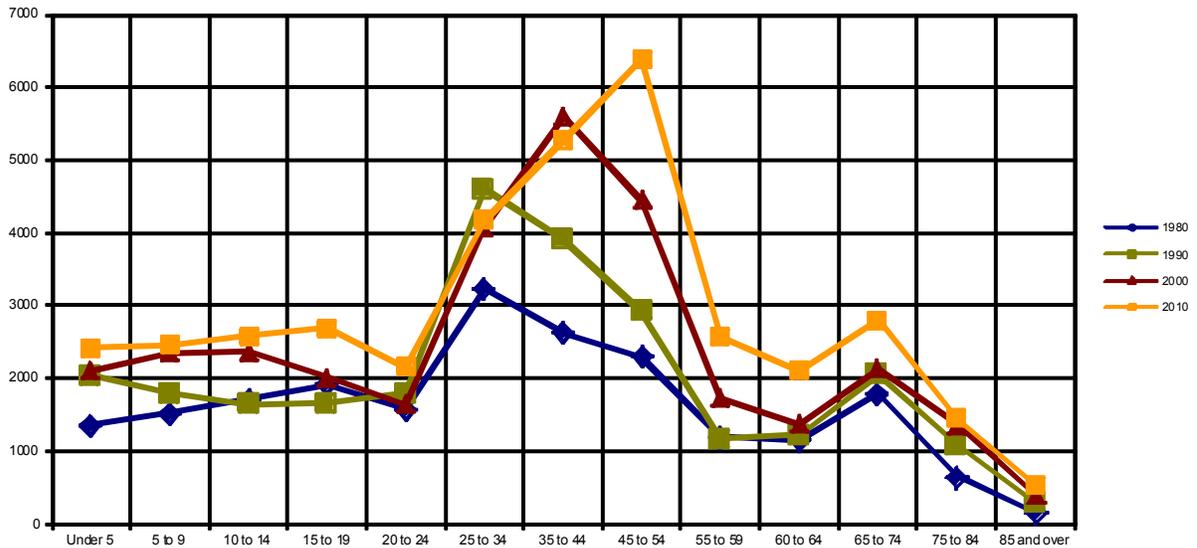


Table 2.1 Population Town and County

Location	1980	1990	2000	2010	Percent Change 1980 to 2010
Front Royal	11,126	11,880	13,589	14,440	29.8%
Warren	10,074	14,262	17,995	22,999	128.3%
Total County	21,200	26,142	31,584	37,439	76.6%
% of County Total residing in Town	52.5%	45.4%	43.0%	38.6%	

The County's median population age in 2010 was 38.2. This is slightly higher than the state's median age of 37.5. The population age groups of 35 to 54 years of age have increased significantly since 1980. In 1980, this age group had a total population of 4,913. By 2010, the population of this age group had increased to 11,653; now 31.1% of the total population.

Graph 2.3 Population Change by Age Groups (1980-2010)



An examination of the birth rate reveals that fewer children have been born in Warren County during the past decade. In 2000, the County's birth rate was 13.5 per 1000 people, while the state's birth rate was 14 per 1000 people. In 2010, the birth rate for Warren County was 12.4 per 1000 people, while the state's birth rate was 13.3 per 1000 people. The population of the County is shifting from the child bearing age to the 35-54 year old age group. This is perhaps due to a large migration of individuals in the later stages of their careers from Northern Virginia to Warren County.

Another impact of population growth is that the number of households will increase at an even greater rate due to the national trend of decreasing average household size. A household is usually defined as "all persons, related or not, occupying a housing unit." The average household size in Warren County has declined from 3.0 in 1970 to 2.60 in 2010.

Between 1990 and 2010, the area grew from 26,142 to 37,439 which represents a growth rate of 38.0%. The Shenandoah District experienced a 23.5% increase in population between 2000 and 2010. Currently, it is the most populated district in the County (reference Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Population Changes by Election District

Election District	2000	2010	2011 Population After Redistricting	Population Increase 2000 to 2010	Percent Change 2000 to 2010
Fork	6,258	7,193	7,363	1,105	17.6%
Happy Creek	6,371	8,318	7,334	963	15.6%
North River	6,293	7,114	7,301	1,008	16.0%
Shenandoah	6,322	8,163	7,806	1,484	23.5%
South River	6,340	6,651	7,635	1,295	20.4%

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Whether Warren County's population continues to grow at the rates projected in this Plan depends upon several factors, including the following:

- The national, regional and local economy's health.
- Provisions for growth provided by other jurisdictions within the region.
- The willingness of local residents and organizations to provide the funds for public and private programs needed to accommodate growth.

Population projections are inherently subject to many external and unforeseeable forces. The projections presented in this Plan should be updated periodically to reflect changing trends and circumstances.

Given the potential influence that growth in other regional jurisdictions might have on the actual population increases over the next 20 years, the projections should be considered only as a general guide to prepare the County for the potential population increase it could realize.

Although these projections are adequate for this Plan, more detailed projections have been developed by the Warren County Planning Department to support the design and construction of specific Capital Improvements which the County undertakes through the direction of the Comprehensive Plan. Such projects should be carefully evaluated in the context of the specific location in which they are proposed, the specific needs they are intended to meet, and their respective short and long term costs.

Table 2.3 Housing Types in Warren County & Front Royal

Occupied Housing Types	2000 Number of Units	2010 Number of Units	Change in Units	2000 - 2010 Percent Increase or Decrease
Single-family Detached	10,724	12,085	+1,361	12.7%
Single-family Attached	650	1,196	+546	84.0%
2 to 4 Units	951	691	-260	-27.34%
5 to 9 Units	224	524	+300	133.9%
10 to 19 Units	450	735	+285	63.3%
20 or more Units	85	231	+146	171.8%
Mobile Homes	487	504	+17	3.5%
Boat, RV, Van etc.	17	0	-17	-100.0%
Total - Housing Units	13,299	15,966	+2,667	20.1%
Vacant Units	1,212	1,551	+339	28.0%

Housing

In the year 2010, there were 16,034 households in Warren County and Front Royal combined. Between 2000 and 2010, housing units in Warren County increased by 2,456, from 13,299 in 2000 to 15,755 in 2010. Of this increase, 13,453 units (85.4%) were single-family dwellings; 461 units (2.9%) were mobile homes. Duplex units and multi-family units increased from 1,421 to 1,841.

Single-family dwellings presently comprise 85.4% of Warren County’s housing. Mobile homes represent 2.9% and multi-family units represent 11.8%. Clearly, the County’s predominant form of housing is the single-family home. In 2010, the average assessed value for single family dwellings in the County was \$156,200.

Housing occupancy for the County and Town for 2010 is shown in the table below and reflects the higher percentage of rental units and renters in the Town versus higher percentage of home ownership in the County. The table shows that 7% of the total housing units in the County and Town are vacant. Vacant housing units include houses that are: for rent; rented, but not occupied; for sale only; sold, but not occupied; homes for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use; and all other vacant housing units.

Table 2.4 Housing Occupancy and Tenure Status (2010)

Housing Occupancy By Units & Population	Warren County	Percentage	Front Royal	Percentage	Total for Town and County
Owner Occupied	7,306	69.1%	3,273	30.9%	10,579
Renter Occupied	1,218	34.7%	2,288	65.3%	3,506
Occupied	8,524	60.5%	5,561	39.5%	14,085
Vacant	1,326	68.0%	623	32.0%	1,949
Total	9,850	61.4%	6,184	38.6%	16,034
Population of Owner Units	19,530	70.1%	8,314	30.9%	27,844
Population of Renter Units	3,230	35.9%	5,776	64.1%	9,006

Income

Warren County’s median household income, according to the 2010 Census, was \$59,946, while the median income in the NSVRC was \$53,139. The state's median income was \$59,372. From 2000 to 2010, the average annual median household income *growth* was 7.4%, as compared to 4.3% and 7.9% for the NSVRC and the state respectively. The majority of household incomes range from \$35,000 to \$150,000, with the largest group in the \$75,000 to \$100,000 income range.

The 2007 median adjusted gross income (AGI) for the County’s married couples was \$67,839. The NSVRC was slightly lower at \$63,582, and the state level was somewhat higher at \$72,637. As compared to 2000, Warren County's AGI for married couples has risen 45.7%. The increase in married couples’ AGI for the NSVRC was 41%. Additionally, the increase in the state’s AGI represented 35.2%.

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As the County's growth continues and more of an economic base develops income levels are projected to rise accordingly.

Employment

Warren County's civilian labor force is approximately 19,622. Historically, the County has had a high commuting rate due to ease of access to both the State and Interstate highway systems and its proximity to Northern Virginia and the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area. Approximately 63.9% of the County's workers commute to other areas for employment. The major employers within Warren County are located in Route 340/522 North corridor which is primarily zoned Commercial and Industrial and are located within the two shopping centers and two industrial parks in that corridor. In the Town of Front Royal, which is approximately in the center of the County, many businesses are located in the historic downtown business district, the Technology Park, and two commercial shopping centers, Gateway and Royal Plaza.

Warren County's economy has been built upon the service sector since the closing of the Avtex Plant in the late 1980s. Warren County's largest private sector employers are: Valley Health System, Family Dollar Services, Warren Memorial Hospital, E I DuPont De Nemours Company, Baugh Northeast Cooperative, Wal-Mart, Interbake Foods, LLC, Ferguson Enterprises, Toray Plastics (America), United Parcel Service (UPS), and Martin's Grocery Store. The largest public sector employer is the Warren County School System followed by Warren County Government and then the Town of Front Royal. The two largest private educational institutions are Randolph Macon Academy and Christendom College. As Warren County's residential and industrial development increases, it is projected that retail development will also grow.

A more detailed analysis of the economy is located in the Economic Development Chapter of this Plan. A break down of the County's employment is shown in Table 6.3 of that chapter.

Existing Land Use & Development Patterns

Warren County's development pattern is characteristic of a rural County on the fringe of an expanding metropolitan area. Generally, the majority of the County is characterized by crop land, forests, and a scattering of farms, single-family residences, or neighborhoods. Crossroads communities, various size villages and development mixes, are located throughout the County. These areas include: Bentonville, Bethel, Boyd's Mill, Browntown, Buckton, Cedarville, Glen Echo, Howellsville, Karo, Limeton, Linden, Milldale, Nineveh, Reliance, Rivermont, Riverton, Rockland, and Waterlick. County development is also concentrated within and around the Town of Front Royal. Outside of these concentrations, development has occurred along the County's highways.

There are several large-lot subdivisions in the County's rural areas as



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well as mountain recreational subdivisions which have been converted to full time residences in the County's northeastern corner and in and around the Howellsville and Linden areas. Many of the residents of these areas commute to the Metropolitan Washington D.C. area for their jobs. The majority of the County's commercial development is concentrated along the Route 340/522 North corridor and some commercial development is located and planned on the Route 55 East corridor near the Linden interchange.

Industrial uses are generally confined to two County areas: the Route 340/522 North corridor and the Happy Creek Industrial Park located in the Happy Creek area of the Town of Front Royal and Warren County.

Public facilities are located throughout the County. The most significant ones are: Shenandoah National Park, George Washington National Forest, Raymond "Andy" Guest Shenandoah River State Park, Northern Virginia 4-H Center, U.S. Customs' Dog Training Center, ATF's National Canine Training and Operations Center, the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, Linden Park, Rockland Park, Eastham Trail and William E. Carson Trail. There also are the following golf courses: Blue Ridge Shadows, Shenandoah Valley Golf Club, Bowling Green Country Club, Jackson's Chase at Pine Hills Golf Club, and County owned Front Royal Golf Club. The following public facilities are located within the Town of Front Royal: all public schools, except for Skyline High School, which is located adjacent to the Town limits; Samuels Public Library; Randolph Macon Military Academy (RMA); Bing Crosby Stadium; Municipal Park; Bowman Park; Florence Smith Playground; Village Commons; Lions Park; Happy Creek Park; Ed Stump Park; Chimney Fields Park; Fantasyland and Free-Wheeling Way playground; Skyline Soccerplex/Skatepark; Royal Shenandoah Greenway; and Warren County Community Center. Currently the Royal Shenandoah Greenway and walking trails are under development and when complete will connect the downtown area of Front Royal to the Luray Boat Landing, Eastham Park, and Skyline High School in the County. There are numerous semi-public facilities such as churches, cemeteries, and private subdivision recreation areas, throughout the County.

Table 2.5 Warren County's Zoning Designations by Acreage Amounts

Zoning District	Acreage
Agricultural (A)	88,331
Residential One (R-1)	11,032
Residential Two (R-2)	30
Rural Residential (RR)	489
Industrial (I)	1,753
Federal Gov't	23,523
Total Warren County	141,215
Town of Front Royal	5,900

Development Trends

Residential development in the County has been predominant over the years and this is expected to continue to be the major form of development. As of June 2011, there were approximately 29,573 recorded lots in the County. Nearly all of these lots are zoned for single-family dwellings. The majority of recent and projected residential development is expected to occur in the County's northeastern quadrant and within the town limits of Front Royal. This is due to a large number of existing platted lots in the northeastern corner of the County and designated Urban Development Areas (UDAs) to be located within the Town of Front Royal limits for future higher density growth. These areas were chosen due to their proximity to services and infrastructure of both transportation and public sewer and water that can support higher density areas. These growth areas will be located in the recently approved Urban Development Area (UDA). The majority of the recorded lots exist in these areas, as does much of the open developable land which is in proximity to Front Royal and the existing public infrastructure.

The County has made significant strides in addressing the former deficit in commercial/industrial development needed to serve local needs (see Economic Development Chapter). Historically, Warren County has not had the population mass necessary to support sizable commercial development. However, within the past five years, two new large scale shopping centers have opened in the County limits and additional commercial land has been zoned for this type of retail development. The County does not have its own water/sewer system and depends on the Town to provide such services to the areas close to the Town's borders; therefore, the commercial and industrial areas have grown significantly where the Town provides water and sewer on the Route 340/522 North corridor.

As residential development continues and the Economic Development Authority (EDA) works to bring industry into the County, it is expected that additional commercial (retail and office) development will follow. Future commercial and industrial development will be strongest in the County's northern section in response to the availability of infrastructure and public facilities (roads, rail, water & sewer) in that area. The Route 340/522 North corridor is presently zoned and planned for such development. The tables contained in this chapter show population characteristics, housing, and income data. This demographic data illustrates the growth pressures that have existed and continue to exist for Warren County and the Town of Front Royal.

Chapter Summary

In order to manage population growth and change, the County must plan and be prepared to address these changes in a proactive manner. The economic, social, and land use changes, necessitated by growth make planning for the future a difficult, yet important, challenge. The goals, objectives, and policies contained in this Plan - which is based on statistics, trends, and projections presented in this chapter - are an attempt to meet that challenge.