

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION & DEMOGRAPHICS



# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

The Comprehensive Plan is Culpeper County's official policy guide for current and future growth decisions. This Plan should be considered long-range in nature and provide a picture of how Culpeper County wishes to develop over the next 5 to 20 years. As a policy document, the Comprehensive Plan provides a means for the County's citizens and decision makers to determine the best methods and strategies for achieving the goals conceptualized in this Plan.

This version of the Comprehensive Plan was drafted with an emphasis on creating a document that accurately reflects the County's current situation, proactively addresses existing and future concerns, and is reflective of the public's desires. To achieve these aspirations, the Comprehensive Plan was created with the goals that it should be detailed, action-oriented, and citizen-driven.

A detailed Comprehensive Plan provides accurate data to facilitate informed discussion, and has specific policy suggestions that are based on concrete measures and result in meaningful outcomes. A detailed and data-driven Comprehensive Plan creates a usable and reliable policy guide for the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors during deliberations over land use, transportation, and other relevant issues.

An action-oriented Comprehensive Plan goes beyond simply stating facts and general aspirations. It includes an analysis of current and anticipated problems and proposes goals that are both ambitious and achievable. To ensure that the proposed goals are achievable, each goal has associated pathways and action items that identify what needs to be done. This guarantees that there is clarity in what is to be implemented and accountability on how the County is working towards the goals.

A citizen-driven Comprehensive Plan makes the document representative of the County's community, creating a more democratic planning process. This aspiration necessitates public outreach and interaction throughout the entire Comprehensive Plan process to gather input from the community. The Planning & Zoning Department hosted multiple citizen-driven public outreach events throughout the County and over the Internet, advertised through traditional media, social media, and interactive signs, and created an online survey to better capture public opinions. Additionally, as required by law, meetings conducted by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors that involved official consideration of the Comprehensive Plan were publicly advertised and allowed for public comment.

## AUTHORITY

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires that every local governing body in the state adopt a Comprehensive Plan. Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia states in part that the local planning commission must prepare a plan which “shall be general in nature...”, and, “...shall show the commission’s long-range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan”. The Comprehensive Plan may include, but is not limited to, the designation of land use, transportation systems, public services and facilities, historic areas, and areas for renewal. In addition, the Plan must include methods of implementation such as a zoning ordinance and a Capital Improvements Plan.

State law requires that each locality’s Comprehensive Plan be reviewed by the local Planning Commission at least once every 5 years in order to determine how closely the Plan is being adhered to and whether or not it should be amended.

The screenshot displays the Virginia Law website interface. At the top left is the LIS logo, and at the top right are navigation links: VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY / LIVE HELP / LIS HOME. Below the logo is a green header with 'VIRGINIA LAW' and a search bar. The main content area features seven categories, each with an icon, title, description, and a link:

- Code of Virginia**: The Code of Virginia contains the laws passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Updated July 1 to reflect the legislation passed during the previous session. [Code of Virginia »](#)
- Virginia Administrative Code**: The Virginia Administrative Code contains the regulations adopted by state agencies in the Commonwealth of Virginia. There are 24 titles, each representing a subject category with agencies assigned to the appropriate title. Updated daily. [Virginia Administrative Code »](#)
- Constitution of Virginia**: The Constitution of Virginia defines and limits the powers of state government and the basic rights of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Like all other state constitutions, it is supreme over Virginia’s laws and acts of government, though it may be superseded by the United States Constitution and U.S. federal law. Updated annually after legislative session. [Constitution of Virginia »](#)
- Charters**: Charters are governing documents for counties, cities, and towns in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and may be codified (included in the Code of Virginia) or uncoded. Updated annually. [Charters »](#)
- Authorities**: Authorities are entities created by the General Assembly to exercise power concerning a limited topic, such as health care or transportation, frequently in a specified region of Virginia. The governing documents for Authorities may be codified (included in the Code of Virginia) or uncoded. Updated annually. [Authorities »](#)
- Compacts**: A compact is an interstate agreement between two or more signatory states that is approved by Congress. Updated annually. [Compacts »](#)
- Uncodified Acts**: Uncodified acts are Acts of Assembly that are not part of the Code of Virginia and that are limited in duration of time and effect. These acts have special application relating to particular persons, things, or places. Updated annually. [Uncodified Acts of Assembly »](#)

Source: Virginia’s Legislative Information System Virginia Law

## PROCESS

As required by state law, the Planning Commission reviewed the 2015 Comprehensive Plan as amended, and determined that the Comprehensive Plan should be updated to reflect changes in current and projected data. Additionally, it was determined that additional actions were needed regarding the inclusion of citizen input, the implementation of goals, and the identification of transportation projects.

The drafting of this Comprehensive Plan began in late 2019. However, the Covid-19 Pandemic temporarily delayed the process. Work on the Comprehensive Plan began again in the Summer of 2021, opening with multiple online and in-person community engagement events. Over the next year, the Planning & Zoning Department conducted engagement events with the community and held work sessions with the Planning Commission during the drafting process. On October 19th, 2022, the Planning Commission officially recommended approval of the 2022 Comprehensive Plan. The Department then held multiple work sessions with the Board of Supervisors. On March 7th, 2023, the Board of Supervisors voted to approve the plan. Figure 1-1 lists the public events and hearings that occurred during the process.

- Virtual Kick Off Event (November 4th at 6pm): [LINK](#)
- Virtual Public Driven Policy Engagement Meeting #1 (November 18th at 6pm): [LINK](#)
- In-Person Public Driven Policy Engagement Meeting #2 (December 2nd 6pm at 302 N. Main St, Culpeper, VA): [LINK](#)
- In-Person Public Driven Policy Engagement Meeting #3 (January 20th 6:00PM at the Community Building in Lenn Park 19206 Edwin Way, Culpeper, VA 22701): [LINK](#)
- In-Person Public Driven Policy Engagement Meeting #4 (February 17th 6:00PM at the Jeffersonton Community Center 5073 Jeffersonton Rd, Jeffersonton, VA 22724): [LINK](#)
- In-Person Public Driven Policy Engagement Meeting #5 (February 24th 6:00PM at the Reva Volunteer Fire & Rescue 18230 Birmingham Rd, Culpeper, VA 22701): [LINK](#)
- In-Person Public Driven Policy Engagement Meeting #6 (June 23rd 6:00PM at 302 N. Main St, Culpeper, VA): [LINK](#)
- FINAL In-Person Public Driven Policy Engagement Meeting #7 (September 8th 6PM at the Community Building in Lenn Park 19206 Edwin Way, Culpeper, VA 22701. ): [LINK](#)
- Planning Commission- Public Hearing (September 22, 7PM. Board of Supervisors meeting room- 302 North Main Street): [LINK](#)
- Planning Commission- Public Hearing (October 19, 7PM. Board of Supervisors meeting room- 302 North Main Street): [LINK](#)
- Board of Supervisors Work Session (November 28, 1030AM. Board of Supervisors meeting room- 302 North Main Street):[LINK](#)
- Board of Supervisors Work Session (**POSTPONED** from December 12; **RESCHEDULED** for December 19th @ 10:00 am): [LINK](#)
- Board of Supervisors Work Session (January 10, 1030AM. Board of Supervisors meeting room- 302 North Main Street):[LINK](#)
- Board of Supervisors Public Hearing (TBD)

## **USING THIS PLAN**

This Plan is divided into chapters that address Culpeper County's existing demographics, land use & development conditions and policies, transportation statistics, environmental and historic resources, County economic data, and public facilities and utilities. The background information at the beginning of each of these chapters lays the groundwork for later sections in each chapter that cover existing and future planning concerns and the goals, pathways, and action items to address those concerns. At the end of the Land Use & Development, and the Transportation Chapters, there are additional plans and policies that further detail how the County plans to address topics discussed in the goals, pathways, and action items.

### **CITATIONS**

This Plan utilizes data and images from a variety of different sources. There are citations at the end of each chapter that have the title of the source and the URL, and in-text citations which are attached to images and certain quotes. For in-text citations that have similar titles, such as images from the Culpeper Star-Exponent, the entire title will be provided in the in-text citation up until the first unique word of that title to provide clarity on which URL is linked to it.

### **DATA & THE BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENT**

Data in this plan regarding topics such as size and acreage were calculated before the 2022 boundary line adjustment between the County and the Town of Culpeper.

## SELECTED SURVEY RESULTS

At the start of the drafting process, the Department launched an online survey as an ancillary method for community engagement alongside the Community Engagement Events, public hearings, direct communication with the Department. In total, there were 205 responses to this survey.

As shown in Figure 1-2, about 47% of all respondents want to see a lower population growth rate. Regarding more specific land use topics, a majority of respondents stated their preference for addressing residential sprawl in rural areas, concentrating development within the Urban Service Boundary, implementing a more nodal focused growth model, and prioritizing the preservation of agricultural and rural land by restricting sprawl in the country.

Regarding transportation, respondents stated the importance of improving traffic safety and reducing traffic congestion. Specifically, there was high support for the installation of additional safety infrastructure, the redesigning and/or realignment of roads and intersections, and expanding multimodal and public transportation options.

Regarding other topics, respondents stated strong support for expanding Internet access throughout the County, and for doing more to protect the County's environmental & historic features.

### 4. Overall, the County should...

[More Details](#)

● slow the current rate of growth.	93
● maintain its current policies a...	38
● encourage growth.	39
● Other	26



Legend (Top To Bottom) the current rate of growth.

- Maintain its current policies and not make any major changes.
- Encourage growth.
- Other.

Figure 1-2

# COUNTY OVERVIEW & DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

## ABOUT CULPEPER COUNTY

Culpeper County is located in the foothills of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains and lies entirely within the Piedmont Plateau. The County varies in landscape from open fields to forested hills, with numerous rivers and streams, all of which flow to the Rappahannock River, a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. Culpeper County is bounded by the Rappahannock River to the northeast; the Rapidan River to the southeast; and the Hughes River, Crooked Run, and the Robinson River to the west.

Culpeper County is located centrally between four major localities as shown in Figure 1-3. Washington, D.C. / Northern Virginia, located 75 miles northeast of the Town of Culpeper, is the largest of these. The second largest nearby locality is the City of Richmond, located 90 miles southeast of Culpeper. The two other areas that are somewhat smaller but closer to Culpeper County are Charlottesville, located 45 miles to the southwest, and Fredericksburg, located 30 miles to the east. These localities are linked to Culpeper County by several major primary roads including Routes 29, 15, 3, 522, and 211. Additionally, Interstate Routes 66, 64, 81, and 95 are all within a forty-mile radius of Culpeper County.

As one of 95 counties in the Commonwealth of Virginia, Culpeper County encompasses 246,566 acres, which is 385.26 square miles. The Town of Culpeper is the county seat, located in the approximate geographic center of the County. As the only incorporated town in the County, it is the business, service, and cultural center for the County.



Figure 1-3  
Source: Culpeper County Economic Development

An elected seven-member Board of Supervisors governs Culpeper County. One member represents each magisterial district, as shown in Map 1-1, and each serves a four-year term of office. An appointed county administrator oversees the daily operation of the County government.

Since its establishment in 1749, Culpeper County has primarily been a sparsely populated rural area where the primary source of livelihood was agricultural operations. While agriculture is still a major part of the County's identity, the County has grown into a more complex community, with a sizable population and a diverse economic base that includes agricultural operations, destination/tourism/service businesses, industrial production, and technological enterprises.



Source: Culpeper County Board of Supervisors



# 1-1: MAGISTERIAL DISTRICTS CULPEPER COUNTY, VIRGINIA

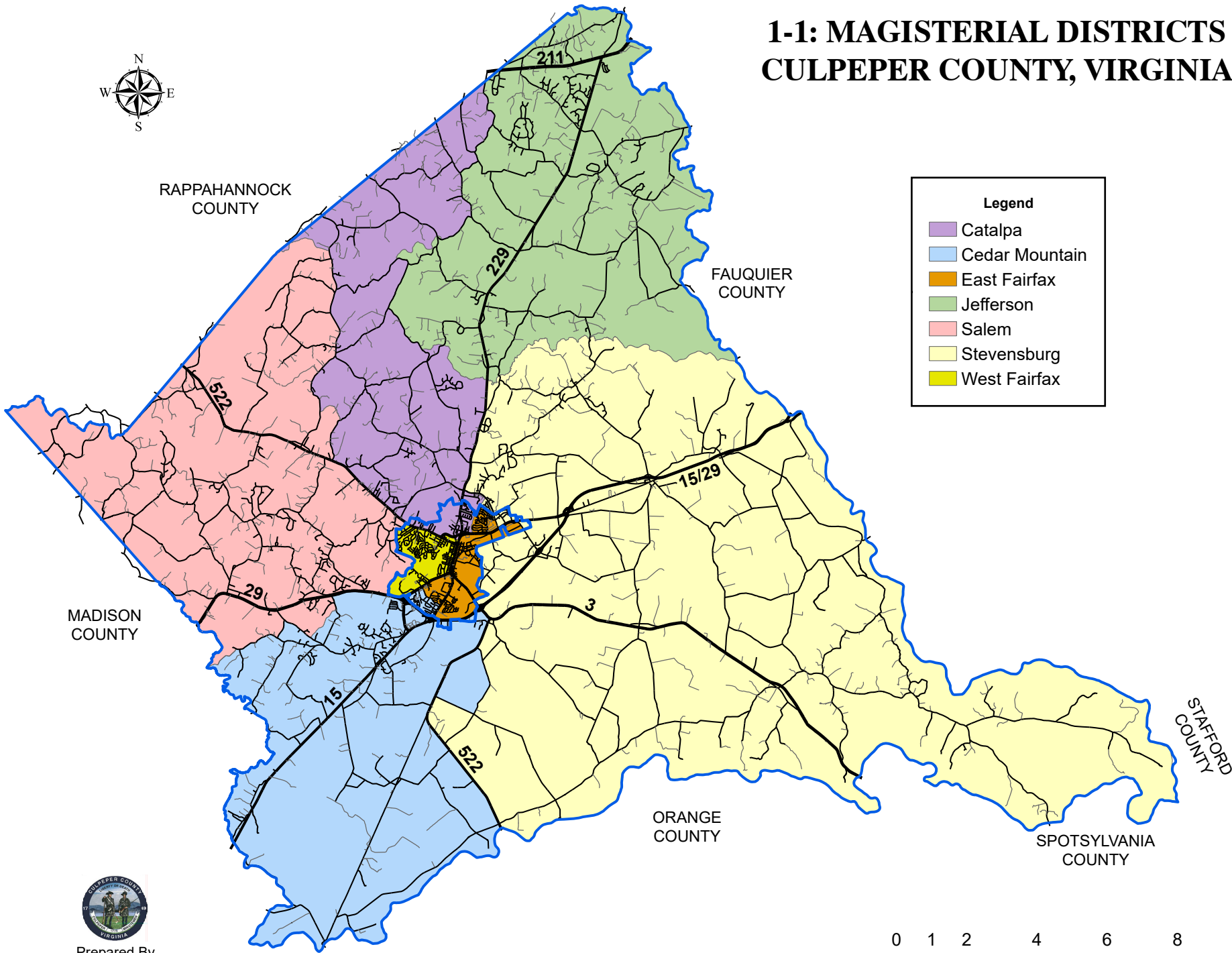


RAPPAHANNOCK  
COUNTY

FAUQUIER  
COUNTY

**Legend**

- Catalpa
- Cedar Mountain
- East Fairfax
- Jefferson
- Salem
- Stevensburg
- West Fairfax



MADISON  
COUNTY

STAFFORD  
COUNTY

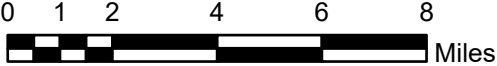
ORANGE  
COUNTY

SPOTSYLVANIA  
COUNTY



Prepared By  
Culpeper County Planning Department

DATE: 07-2022



## BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Demographics is the statistical study of population trends based upon data such as housing age and size, household size and age distribution of occupants, school enrollment, density, and income. The demographic characteristics of Culpeper County are important because these statistics reveal much about the direction that the County should take with respect to the need for county services, such as recreation, education, health care, law enforcement, fire protection, emergency services, solid waste, and utilities.

### POPULATION AND POPULATION CHANGE

Since 1960, Culpeper County has seen considerable and constant population growth, with population increasing from 15,088 persons in 1960 to 52,552 persons in 2020. Figure 1-4 illustrates the population change in the County starting in 1960. For reference, the 2020 population of Fauquier County was 72,972 persons, with Stafford County at 156,927 persons, Spotsylvania County at 140,032 persons, Orange at 36,254 persons, Madison at 13,837 persons, and Rappahannock at 7,348 persons.

Based on population projections from the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, current trends have Culpeper County with a population of 57,578 persons by 2030, 65,739 persons by 2040, and 74,884 persons by 2050. It is important to note that the projection for 2020 was only 1,640 persons lower than the 2020 Decennial Census population of 52,552 persons, indicating that the future population projections are reliable.

### AGE & SEX

The population of the Culpeper County has a median age of 39.8 years and is estimated to be 50.5% female and 49.5% male. The three largest age ranges, in order of size, are 35 to 44 years, 45 to 54 years, and 25 to 34 years.

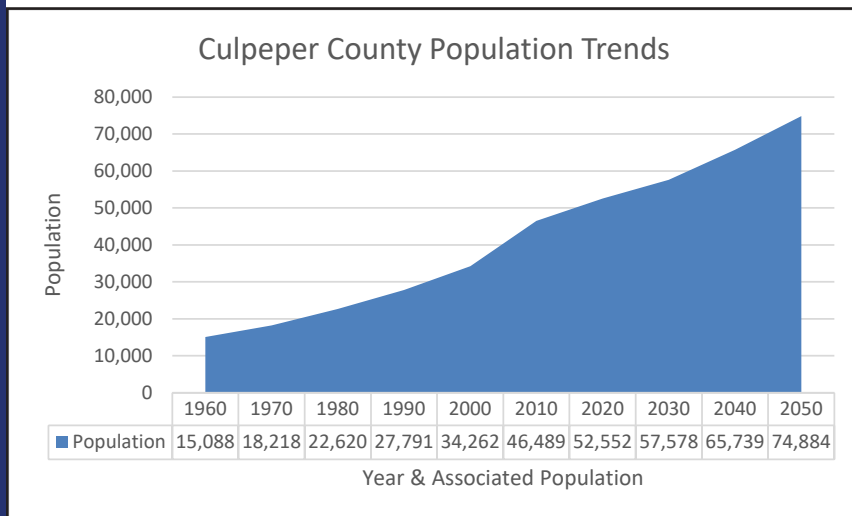
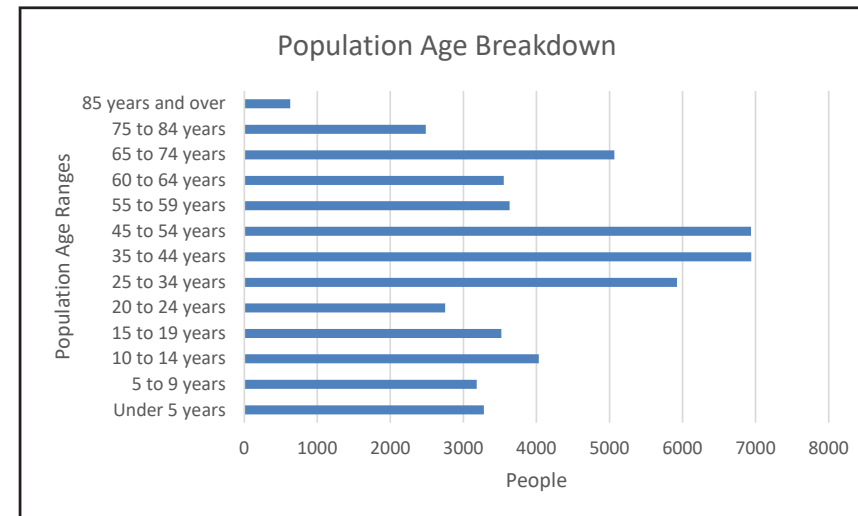


Figure 1-4  
Source: 2020 ACS  
Demographics



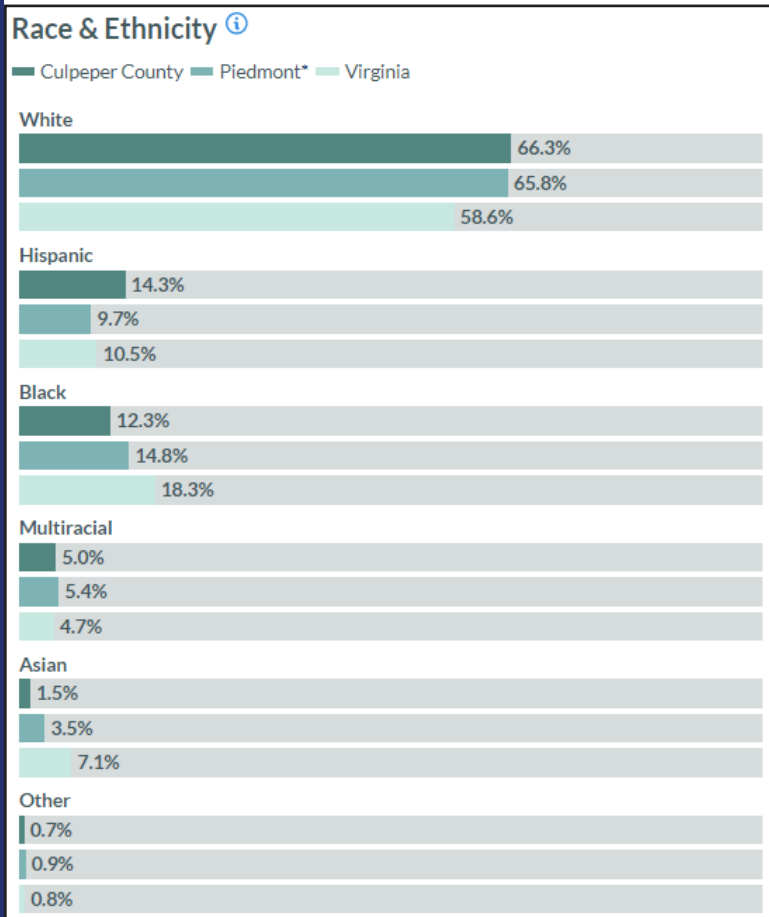
**RACE & ETHNICITY**

Based on the 2020 Decennial Census, 66.3% of the population identified as White alone, 14.3% as Hispanic or Latino of any race, 12.3% as Black or African-American alone, 5% as two or more races, 1.5% as Asian, and 0.7% as other.

**EDUCATION**

Out of the 2020 estimated 25 years and over population of 35,168 persons, 31.1% had only a high school degree or an equivalent, and 25.2% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Figure 1-5 breaks down the educational attainment in greater detail.

According to the Virginia Department of Education, there were 8,257 students in the County's public school system for the 2020-2021 academic year.



Source: Virginia Pubic Access Project

**Educational Attainment**

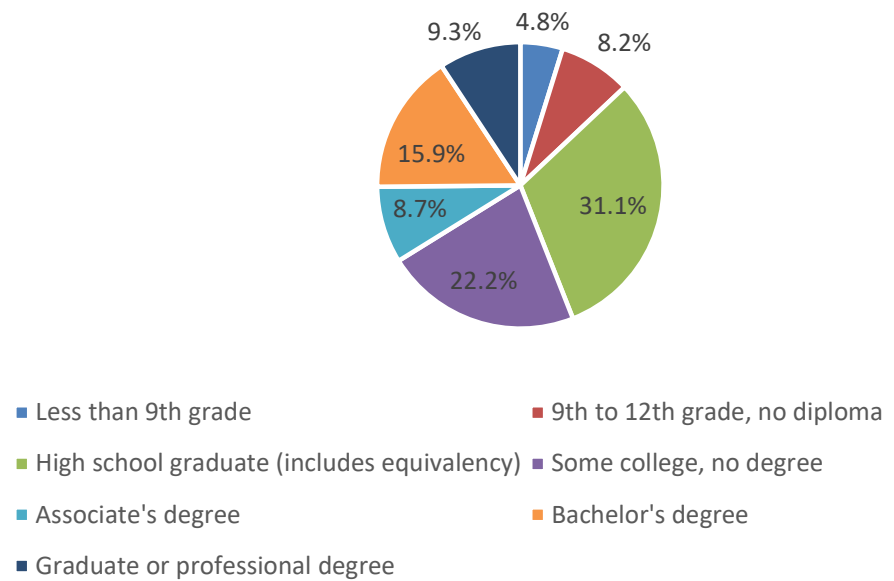


Figure 1-5  
Source: 2020 ACS Social

# Chapter Source Appendix & Resources

- 2020: American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates Data Profiles Demographic And Housing Estimates <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?t=Populations%20and%20People&g=0500000US51047&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Data%20Profiles&tid=ACSDP5Y2020.DP05&moe=false>
- 2020: American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates Data Profiles Selected Social Characteristics <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?t=Populations%20and%20People&g=0500000US51047&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Data%20Profiles&tid=ACSDP5Y2020.DP02>
- 2020: American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates Data Profiles Selected Social Characteristics <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?t=Populations%20and%20People&g=0500000US51047&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Data%20Profiles&tid=ACSDP5Y2020.DP02>
- Culpeper County Board of Supervisors <https://web.culpepercounty.gov/bos>
- Culpeper County Economic Development Location <https://www.culpeperva.org/explore/location/>
- Culpeper County Home Page <https://web.culpepercounty.gov/>
- Quick Facts Culpeper County <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/culpepercountyvirginia/AGE295220>
- Virginia Community Profile Culpeper County [https://virginiaworks.com/\\_docs/Local-Area-Profiles/5104000047.pdf](https://virginiaworks.com/_docs/Local-Area-Profiles/5104000047.pdf)
- Virginia's Legislative Information System Virginia Law <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/>
- Virginia Pubic Access Project Demographics <https://www.vpap.org/demographics/culpeper-county-va/>
- Weldon Cooper Center Virginia Population Estimates <https://demographics.coopercenter.org/virginia-population-estimates>
- Weldon Cooper Center Virginia Population Projections <https://demographics.coopercenter.org/virginia-population-projections>