

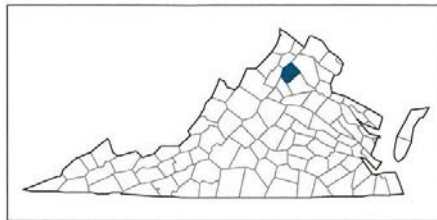


Virginia Cooperative Extension

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Situation Analysis Report



RAPPAHANNOCK

2018

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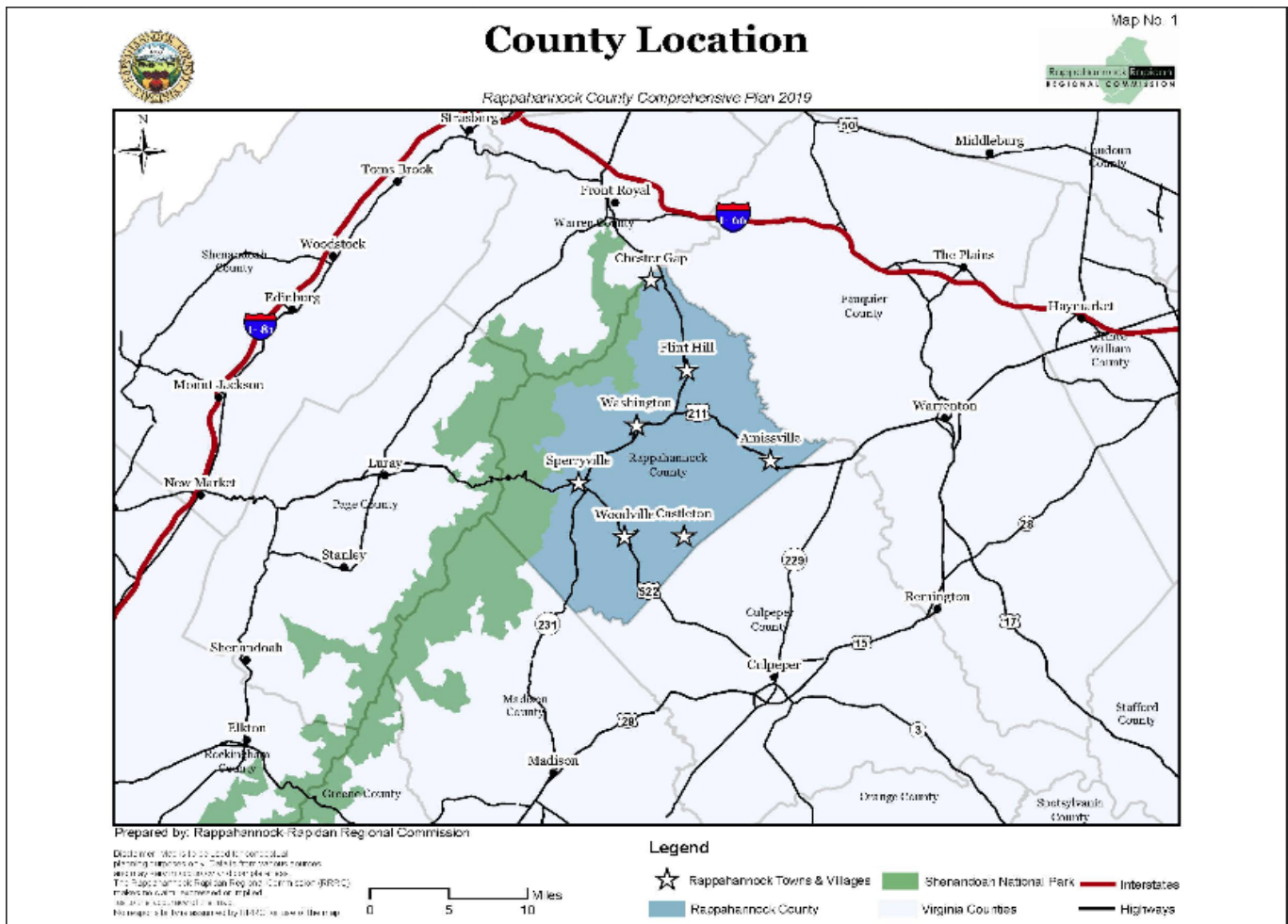
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Introduction

Rappahannock County is in the northern portion of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Washington, the County seat, is about 65 miles southwest of Washington, DC, and 120 miles northwest of Richmond, the State Capitol. The County extends north and south 24 miles and east and west about 21 miles. It has an area of approximately 267 square miles. The northwestern boundary is the peak of the Blue Ridge Mountains and separates the County from Page and Warren Counties. The Rappahannock River forms the northeastern boundary and separates the County from Fauquier County. The County is bounded on the southeast by Culpeper County and on the southwest by Madison County.

A review of the situation analysis revealed that many of the issues previously identified remain relevant. The unit profile was developed based on census data and preliminary findings of the Rappahannock County 2019 Comprehensive Plan. The issues that surfaced during this process were field verified by Foothills Forum survey conducted by the UVA Weldon Cooper Center and key stakeholders.



Source: 2019 Rappahannock County www.rappahannockcounty.gov/images/maps

Unit Profile

The County's residents have strong economic and social ties with jurisdictions on all sides, although the western boundary of the Blue Ridge historically has acted to lessen contacts with Page County as opposed to the more direct accessibility of Warrenton in Fauquier County, Culpeper in the County of the same name, and Front Royal in Warren County which, while over the Blue Ridge, is nevertheless served by a primary road providing relatively easy access. This in turn has led to a regionalization of many trading activities by County residents, people in the northern portion of the County (Flint Hill, Chester Gap) are more apt to shop, bank and attend events in Front Royal, while persons in the south and west (Sperryville, Woodville) often patronize Culpeper establishments, and persons in the east (Amisville, Washington) tend to favor Warrenton businesses.

Source: <http://www.rappahannockcountyva.gov/documents>

Rappahannock County has one of the highest rates of income inequality in the United States, ranking an astonishing 64th among the entire 3,084 jurisdictions in the United States. Rappahannock households in the top 1 percent income bracket earn 33 times that of households in the bottom 1 percent — a persistent problem cited by lower-income residents across the country, as it drives up local costs.

For comparison, neighboring Fauquier County is ranked 857th and Culpeper is 2,750th in income inequality.

Rappahannock also has the highest poverty rate — 10 percent — in Virginia's northern Piedmont region, with an even higher poverty rate for children at more than 16 percent, which is above the state average of 15 percent.

And an above average number of Rappahannock citizens have a disability — 12 percent of the population — the majority being women. People, Inc., a Virginia-based organization that seeks to provide opportunities to enhance lives, families and communities from here in the northern Piedmont to southwest Virginia's coal country. Statistics in the report are culled from the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The median household income of Rappahannock County is \$59,753 — well below the state median of \$65,015, but skewed given the extremely lopsided wealthy sector of the county's population.

Rappahannock's poverty figures reveal that the average amount of public assistance benefits received by county residents is \$4,170 — the state average of \$2,918, and the national average of \$3,490.

According to the report food insecurity is only 9 percent for the total population, however it is over 19 percent for children in the county; 1 of 5 children in Rappahannock are food insecure, according to the report.

The rate of children who are food insecure and ineligible for assistance is 37 percent compared to a national average of 31 percent. SNAP, a primary means of supporting “food insecure families”, is provided to 6 percent (about 192) of Rappahannock households. Only one store in the county that is authorized to accept SNAP benefits. This means that low-income families must travel the long distance to neighboring counties for groceries, which can be difficult when you may not have a car or money for gas.”

U.S. Department of Education reports that 35.5 percent of fourth graders in the county — more than 1 in 3 students — scored “not proficient or worse” on standardized reading tests in 2014-15, well above the state average of 23 percent.

The median age in the county is just under 50 years old (49.1), more than a decade older than the state’s average age of 37.6. The largest portion of the population is over 65 (almost 23 percent), while only 18 percent of the county is under the age of 18. 18 to 24 account for only 5.8 percent of the population, and those 25 to 34 is only slightly larger at 7.9 percent. The number of young adults aged 20 to 24 in Rappahannock is expected to decline due to a lack of jobs and housing opportunities.

Obese adults: 27 percent.

Cost-burdened home renters: 337

Population in poverty: 733 (9.9 percent).

Source: People, Inc and Rappahannock News 2018

Housing		
i Housing units, July 1, 2017, (V2017)	3,975	137,403,460
i Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2013-2017	75.2%	63.8%
i Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2013-2017	\$358,600	\$193,500
i Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2013-2017	\$1,874	\$1,515
i Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2013-2017	\$476	\$474
i Median gross rent, 2013-2017	\$1,056	\$982
i Building permits, 2017	21	1,281,977

Source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/rappahannockcountyvirginia,US/HSG495217>

Community and Resident Perspectives:

- Transportation – Clients/youth don't participate in programs offered by respective agencies because they don't have transportation:
 - After school programs are available - sports/clubs/activities - but not well attended
 - Public Health Clinics
 - Overall public transportation provided was underutilized by the public but do need after school transportation for kids
 - Community involvement (churches etc.) take care of critical health related appointments
- Affordable housing
- Few job opportunities within the county
- Parental Involvement (10-13 yr. old) is minimal
- Parenting programs are available, but packaging/presentation/advertising of parenting programs need modification
- Nutrition – Youth and Adult Obesity

1. What is the top health-related issues facing our community (your clientele)?

- Childhood Obesity
- Healthy eating habits/nutrition
- Parent and Family Issues: Parents still need guidance in parenting their own children
- Aging population health issues

2. Where are some of the gaps in services for families, nutrition, and finance?

- Inability to reach families in need
- VCE only providers for family, nutrition, and finance programs
- Getting the word out to those in need
- Obesity
 - Ignorance – buying cheap/fast/ inexpensive/soda/ kool aid/ cookies
 - Adequate food storage is an issue

Don't know nutrition and opt for quick fix in terms of feeding the family

Diabetes and obesity: How Rappahannock ranks

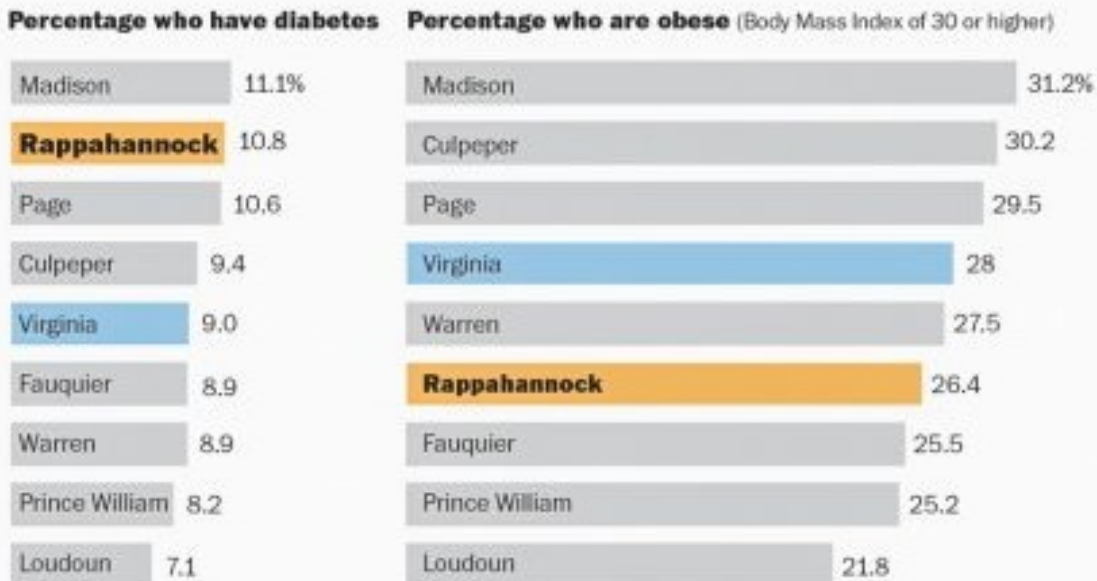
Diabetes and obesity rates tend to run higher in rural communities, and that's true for Rappahannock County. According to data compiled by the National Diabetes Surveillance System, it has a higher percentage of residents with diabetes than any of its neighboring counties, with the exception of only Madison County. Its rate of obesity — defined as a Body Mass Index of 30 or higher — is, by contrast, somewhat lower than most of its neighbors.



1 in 10 Rappahannock residents have **diabetes**



1 in 4 Rappahannock residents are **obese**



Source: Rappahannock News - Foothills Forum Survey: Life in the Jewel of Virginia- April 13, 2016

Part 1: Survey reveals what matters most to Rapp residents: Privacy, beauty, family farms – and internet and cell service

A survey mailed to every household in Rappahannock County found that respondents treasure the beauty that surrounds them, the privacy they enjoy in one of Virginia's least populated and unspoiled places, and the spirit of volunteerism that has neighbor helping neighbor.

But most who responded to the survey are open to some changes. They see a crying need for better cellphone and internet service, no longer frills but essentials that affect safety, children's education and, increasingly, people's livelihoods. As one resident put it, "We need to catch up to Third World countries".

Part 2: A rural life challenged: Unspoiled Rappahannock confronts spotty cellphones, aging population, fire and rescue services, taxes

Something went terribly awry on that autumn Saturday morning as two maintenance men cleared brush on Juba Mountain Road. The sharp blade on Richard Allen Brown's trimmer hit something and slashed the back of his leg, severing an artery. His co-worker tried to fashion a tourniquet and then, because his cellphone had no reception, frantically ran a half-mile uphill to the nearest house to call for an ambulance from a land line.

The Sperryville Volunteer Rescue Squad arrived eight minutes after the call. Two other companies responded as well and a medevac helicopter was called, all too late for the 67-year-old Sperryville man, an avid hunter and fisherman whose family said he "just loved to make people laugh."

Part 3: Frozen in time? Rappahannock looks to preserve its vistas and way of life

Folks who've never stepped foot in Rappahannock may have seen it. In nighttime photos taken from space, the county is one of those few, conspicuous dark spots amid a blaze of yellow lights illuminating the East Coast from Miami to Maine. Just about everyone wants to keep it that way.

Foothills Forum | Every Voice at the Table

Foothills Forum is tackling the need for more fact-based, in-depth coverage of the issues we care about in Rappahannock County. We're a nonprofit, independent group promoting community engagement, research and solutions. We invite every voice to the table.

Why? Because a more informed, engaged community makes better choices and decisions for the long term.

We've surveyed the county, asking people what they think about our future. In the coming months we'll continue to host forums and gather further research, publishing the results via an agreement with Rappahannock Media (*Rappahannock News*, *Culpeper Times*, the *Piedmont Lifestyle* magazines and the *Piedmont Virginian* and their online sites). More at foothills-forum.org

Rappahannock's Digital Dilemma

(excerpt from Rappahannock News)

Part 1: How topography, density and chance combined to limit local connection choices

It wasn't supposed to work out this way.

Five years ago, when Rappahannock County's Board of Supervisors approved a plan from AT&T to build three new cellphone towers and add antennas to two other ones owned by Sprint, it seemed as if the county was about to take a step forward in shrinking its dead zone — the sections with little or no cell phone or internet broadband service. But those towers never happened.

Part 2: More smoke, less signal. In lieu of cell and broadband connectivity, students, visitors, responders and workers plug into some creative solutions

In Rappahannock County, there's always a workaround.

It's the sheriff's deputies knowing where they need to drive if they must make a cell phone call while on duty. Or it's the kids without a broadband connection at home heading over to the parking lot outside the county library so they can use its Wi-Fi to do their homework. Or it's B&B owners telling their guests to confirm any reservations, directions or last-minute details of their visits here before they enter the county.

Part 3: Embrace change? No. Adapt to it? Possibly. A look at possible next steps — and some already being taken, here and elsewhere — toward improving rural connectivity

A little more than a year ago, close to 100 people showed up at Rappahannock County High School, hoping to get a glimpse of the county's future.

They were there for an event billed as a "Broadband Forum," and onstage was an impressive lineup of federal, state and county officials. One speaker after another expounded on how important a broadband connection to the internet had become, how it's now integrated into farming and health care, business and education.

Todd Haymore, Virginia's secretary of agriculture and forestry, went so far as to suggest that broadband access could be the key to the county being able to maintain its rustic quality of life.

It was a clear message — and yet more than one member of the audience left that night with the feeling that they'd been to a play missing its second act.

“They were telling us what we already knew,” remembers Monica Worth, who runs her own communications firm, Voice, from her home in Sperryville. “People came there looking for solutions.”

But the path to solutions in the rural broadband universe is seldom straight or well-marked. In communities where providing broadband access is complicated by hilly, wooded terrain, the onus is now largely on local governments — with limited funds and expertise — to make it happen. Private companies are no longer willing to invest heavily in infrastructure for so few potential customers.

This creates a particularly thorny dilemma for a place like Rappahannock. In a countywide survey commissioned by the Foothills Forum and conducted by the University of Virginia’s Center for Survey Research, broadband and cellphone coverage were identified as the top two areas of concern for the respondents. But any new infrastructure would likely require at least some public funding. And, there remains a wariness here about anything that could be associated with change.

“You have several factors of demographics in the county,” noted county supervisor Chris Parrish of Stonewall-Hawthorne district. “The ones who are very eager to get broadband are the ones who can use it for their work. And there, by and large, recent arrivals to the county. On the other hand, you have a bunch of people who have been here their whole lives and their families have been here for a long time and they don’t use the internet. And they’re having a pretty hard time paying their real estate taxes as it is. They are certainly not interested in sacrificing their lifestyle for people who need something they don’t need.”

Sometime in the next few months, Rappahannock’s Planning Commission, then its Board of Supervisors, will sign off on the latest revisions to the county’s Comprehensive Plan. The revisions are expected to be relatively minor, just as they have been for most of the updates since the document was written almost 40 years ago.

That would seem to suggest that the plan and its vision are as sound as ever, that not all that much has changed in Rappahannock since the 1980s. That’s partly true. There’s still no franchise store or fast food place on Route 211, still no sprawling subdivisions fouling the Piedmont, still no stop light.

But no change? Hardly.

“I can see that it’s changed a lot. We aren’t in some bubble,” said Van Carney, who with brothers Lain and Jennings, opened the Pen Druid Brewery in Sperryville in 2015. They grew up in Woodville, left to tour the world as the band Pontiak, and came back to a place that didn’t really look the same. “When I was a kid growing up here, all these big houses you see were just hills. That’s the development we have now.”

If anything, the winds of change are picking up speed. Suburbia has crept right up to the county line with Culpeper. Within Rappahannock, houses like the ones Carney now sees on those hillsides are the biggest source of new revenue. Since 2006, 326 more homes have been added to the mix. Meanwhile, the population keeps getting older, as do the members of the fire and rescue squads serving it. More and more authority is shifting from local governments to the state — such as the regulation of wineries — making it harder for the county to control elements that have made it unique. And, the community is wrestling with the impact of social trends that not long ago would have felt very much at odds with country living — sharing-economy businesses such as Airbnb, and the growing necessity in daily life of a broadband internet connection and decent cellphone service.

All this comes at a time of major transition within the county's small administrative staff. Gone are county administrator John McCarthy, county attorney Peter Luke, revenue commissioner Beverly Atkins, treasurer Frances Foster, and with them, decades of institutional knowledge that brings perspective to how Rappahannock navigates change.

McCarthy played a pivotal role in updating the comprehensive plan over the years since it was first approved in 1980. He did the heavy lifting on the rewrites, although, in truth, the edits weren't very heavy. There has been neither the need nor the desire to stray from the original mission of preserving the county's "unspoiled natural setting" and "promoting and protecting agriculture" as the primary use of land outside Rappahannock's villages. In short, keep it rural and keep it real.

It's a guiding principle that still resonates with just about everyone who owns property in the county, whether they've been here six months or generations. But it's just that, a guiding principle with no legal bearing. Ultimately, the impact of the comprehensive plan comes down to how local ordinances, funding choices and zoning decisions support and sustain it.

That's the tricky part, one that requires maintaining an ever-more-delicate balance.

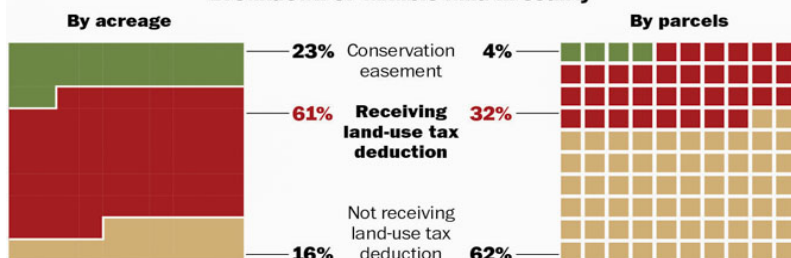
Land and Taxes

The state law providing tax deferments for different types of land use was designed to help preserve the natural state of Virginia's rural communities. It has allowed Rappahannock landowners to keep large parcels of land intact. But it also has reduced the county's tax revenue.

Breakdown of total acreage in county



Breakdown of taxable land in county



Out of **5,840** taxable county parcels, **1,850** receive a land-use tax deferment.

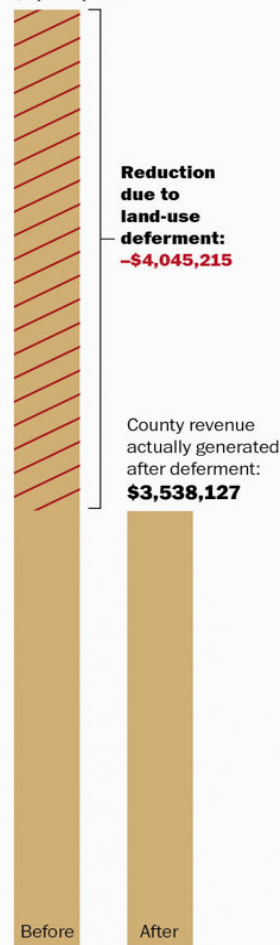
That's nearly 1 in 3 parcels (32%)

The impact of deferment on comparable properties

An example of the difference in the tax bill for two 65-acre parcels of identical value, with dwellings of identical value, taxed at a rate of .70/100:



Potential county revenue before land-use deferment:
\$7,583,342



Source: Rappahannock News-July 21, 2016

Not only has it kept most of Rappahannock undeveloped, but the land-use deferment also has made it possible for the county to keep a lid on its operating expenses. As the saying goes, “Cows don’t ride school buses,” an allusion to the fact that agricultural land requires the fewest public services.

“Open land doesn’t really cost anybody anything,” said Chris Bird, a member of the county’s Planning Commission and a Rappahannock resident since the 1970s. “Even with the land-use deduction, it generates more revenue than it costs. That land doesn’t put kids in schools, it doesn’t need fire and rescue, it doesn’t need the sheriff’s department.”

All true, but the tax deductions have a downside, namely that they take a substantial bite out of the county’s potential revenue. According to the commissioner of revenue’s office, taxable land in the county that had a land-use deduction generated about \$3.54 million last year. Without the deductions, the same land would have brought in more than \$7.58 million in revenue, or an additional \$4 million.

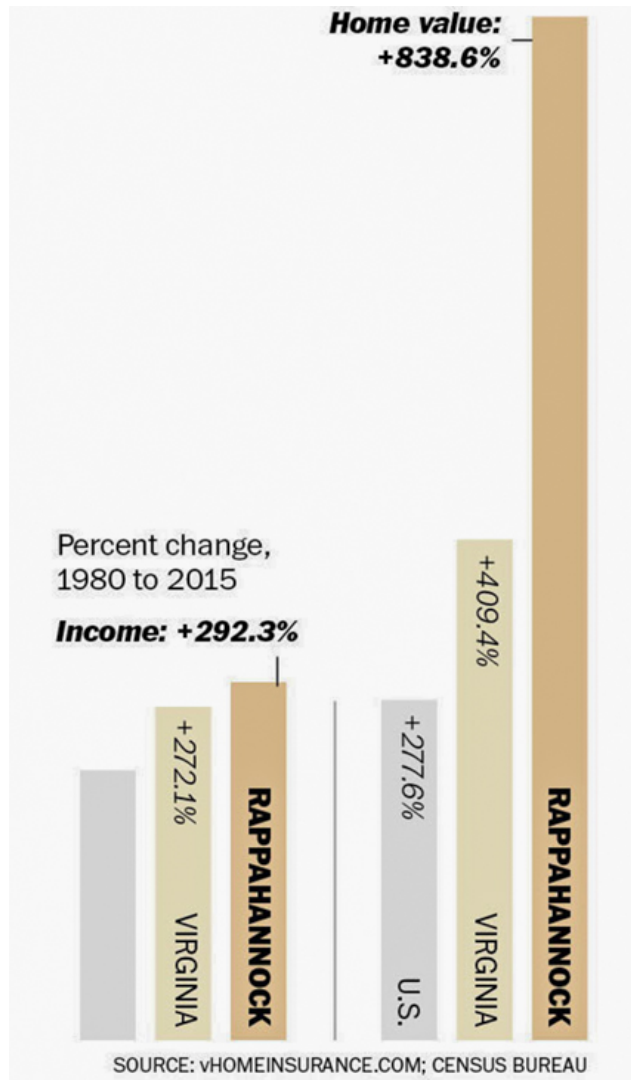
Here’s what the land-use deduction would mean for a 65-acre parcel of land with a dwelling: Without the deduction, the tax bill would be \$6,603. With it, the bill would be less than half that — \$3,207. Just under 50 percent of the county’s total acreage now receives a land-use tax deferment, although it’s less than a third of the parcels of taxable land — 1,850 out of 5,840.

Property owners must meet several conditions to qualify, including a minimum size of five acres for both the agricultural and horticultural tax deductions and 20 acres for the forestry deferment. About half of the land-use deductions in the county are agricultural, with almost another half for forestry. Less than 1 percent are horticultural.

It’s not unusual for that tax deferment to be used by relative newcomers or weekenders who qualify by renting their land for grazing or by having the grass mowed to produce hay. And that has sparked some ill will. “There is a certain amount of indignation against land-use taxation,” Bird acknowledged. “It’s particularly from small landowners or people who don’t own land and they say, ‘Look at those rich people sitting on all that value and not paying taxes on it.’”

According to the Washington-based Tax Foundation, which studied data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the actual value of \$100 in Rappahannock is \$83.96.

Rappahannock County home values grew 561 percent above national values from 1980 to 2015, while the county’s average household income rose 72 percent above the nation’s rate. The data, compiled from the U.S. Census Bureau. *Source: “Rappahannock News” July 21, 2016*



How Rappahannock County taxes compare

Rappahannock's supervisors have long made a point of keeping property taxes low. Here's how they stack up against those in neighboring counties. Some, including Rappahannock, charge a fire and rescue tax in addition to a base real estate property tax. The tax rate is based on \$100 of assessed value. The last column reflects the estimated annual taxes on a home assessed at \$250,000.

County	Basic Tax Rate	Fire Tax Rate	Total tax rate	Annual Real Estate Taxes
Prince William	1.122	.07	1.192	\$2,980
Fauquier	.975	.058	1.033	\$2,582
Culpeper	.66	.07	.73	\$1,825
Rappahannock	.65	.05	.70	\$1,750
Madison	.68	—	.68	\$1,700
Page	.66	—	.66	\$1,650
Warren	.62	—	.62	\$1,555

Source: Rappahannock News July 21, 2016

1. What are the challenges facing the agricultural community?

Challenges to Rappahannock Farmers

The following challenges were identified:

- Global trade and increasing agricultural imports at low commodity prices are making it impossible for farmers to make a profit.
- Rappahannock County is not the best farmland.
- The average farmer in Rappahannock Co makes \$18,122 per year selling commodities.
- Many farmers must take an outside job to stay in farming.
- Opportunities for local and regional markets are needed
- Aging population of farmers and lack of family interest to continue farming
- Invasive species monitoring and control

What other programs or actions would be helpful in keeping agriculture viable in Rappahannock County?

- Soil Health and water quality programs that offer increased flexibility to implement BMPs on the farm.
- Increase the amount of money paid to farmers for installing and maintaining agricultural BMPs.
- Alternatives to traditional commodity production for Rappahannock farmers; niche products such as vegetables, horticultural products (vineyards), forestry products and markets for beef.
- Developing regional food systems.
- Address the needs of new and beginning farmers.
- Provide the latest researched based information from land grant universities to the farming community.
- Lack of land grant support for developing alternative crops and markets

One major mechanism available to help Rappahannock County farmers maintain their land is the land use taxation program. Not only does this program make it feasible for farmers to keep their land, but it also enables some farmers to obtain free use of additional farm land owned by absentee owners and weekender farmers. Several issues were discussed concerning land use taxation:

- It limits county revenue. Combined with the commonwealth's composite index, the result is constraints on school funding from both local and state sources.
- Easements result in land use taxation to the land owner but are better for county revenue due to the way in which the commonwealth computes the composite index.
- The need for public education concerning the merits and benefits of land use taxation for all citizens of the county. According to one estimate, fifty percent of the public does not favor land use taxation. Many taxpayers do not understand that full market value is paid on the house and surround, even when the overall farm is in land use taxation program. Efforts to foster better public understanding of land use taxation could be a useful step in retaining farmland and therefore in watershed protection.
- The importance and implications of enforcing the rules of eligibility for land use taxation. Some participants felt that strict enforcement is politically essential; others felt the penalties are too severe and thus takes too much risk with farmland preservation.
- Ways the program could be strengthened to further assist farmers in keeping their land. For example, barns could be taxed based on their use rather than market value.
- Possible alternatives to, or augmentation of, land use taxation such as purchase of development rights.

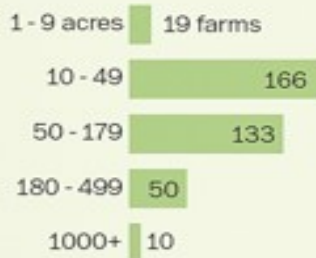


Getting Smaller

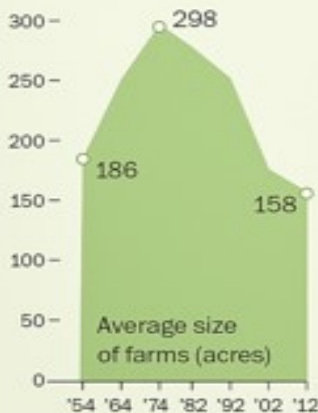
One trend in Rappahannock agriculture is pretty clear: Farms are getting smaller. According to the most recent data—the 2012 Census of Agriculture—the greatest number of farms in the county are between 10 and 49 acres.

Most farms are small . . .

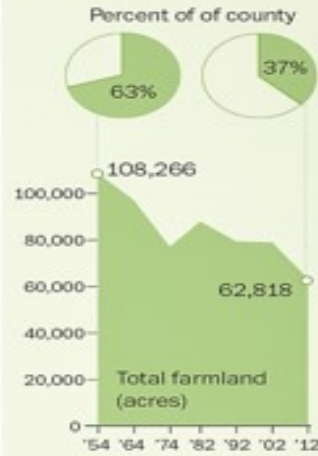
Number of farms in each size category 2012, in acres.



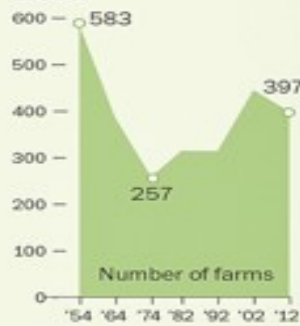
. . . and have been getting smaller:



Farms now cover only a third of Rappahannock, down from almost two-thirds in the middle of last century.

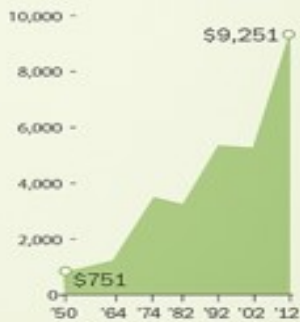


While farms are smaller, there are more of them than there were in the 1970s.



Values have risen

Average values of Rappahannock farmland per acre have skyrocketed. (Based on 2018 dollars)



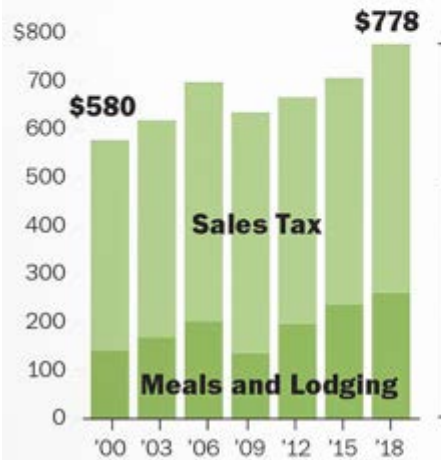
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Census of Agriculture Historical Archive, 2012 Census of Agriculture

Source: Rappahannock News- July 26, 2018

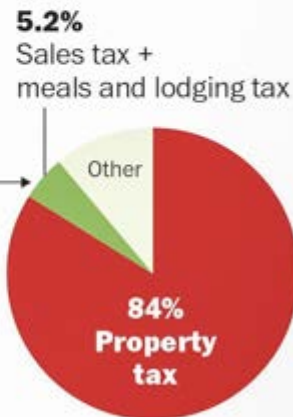
It's All About Property Taxes

While it has edged up in recent years, the amount of revenue the county receives through its 1 percent share of the state sales tax and its meals and lodging taxes remains a small percentage of its income. In the FY 2018 budget, the combination of those business-related taxes is estimated to contribute slightly more than 5 percent of the revenue from local sources. By far, property taxes bring in the most.

Combined tax revenue from sales tax and meals and lodging,
in thousands of 2018 dollars



Breakdown of local tax revenue, 2018



Source: Rappahannock County government

Source: Rappahannock News- July 26, 2018

4-H Youth Development

Rappahannock 4-H reaches more than 500 Rappahannock County youth through in-school programming, 4-H clubs, camping programs, and special activities. In 2018 Rappahannock County 4-H offered new programs to the community; 16 4-H workshops and four summer travel day camps. Each of these programs was designed to offer parents additional day care options, and for youth to be exposed to people and places in the community that they may not have known about, in hopes of peaking their interests and expanding their learning opportunities. In addition, the 4-H travel camps provided Rappahannock County teenagers with a local employment opportunity.

The biggest challenge in offering these programs was reaching the Rappahannock community with information about the 4-H workshops and the travel camps. Despite weekly information being put in the Rappahannock County Elementary School's (RCES) Tuesday folder (a way to notify parents of programs and activities for children at the RCES) and the Rappahannock News, parents were often surprised to learn of 4-H workshops that they had not known about, and many did not know about the 4-H travel camping programs.

With one year of successful programming behind us, word will spread throughout the Rappahannock community about these 4-H opportunities. And with hundreds of pictures from the 2018 programs, advertising will be enhanced. As a result, we expect to have a much greater enrollment for both the 4-H workshops and the 4-H travel camps in 2019.

To establish these programs in the community, the Rappahannock County 4-H program intends to offer 4-H workshops during the second half of the school year, and two travel day camps in the summer of 2019. These programs will:

- Provide parents with a day care alternative;
- Provide entertaining, hands-on, subject-specific programming from various local businesses, organizations and citizens in and nearby Rappahannock County.
- Provide an employment opportunity for teenagers.

4-H workshops will be available to all Rappahannock youth from 5 – 18 years of age, and will cover a wide range of topics. Each workshop will be free of charge, will be designed to last 1.5 - 3 hours, and will take place only once, unless there is an interest in offering additional programming on a specific topic. Workshop instructors who would like to offer additional programming will be encouraged to start a 4-H club for long term programming, or to work with Headwaters' After School program to lead a six-week workshop.

4-H workshops will provide youth with the opportunity to learn a skill, create something, and participate in an activity that is of interest to them. 4-H instructors will primarily be members of the Rappahannock community who have knowledge that they would like to share. Local businesses/organizations will be encouraged to lead 4-H workshops to educate Rappahannock youth about what they do and offer within the county, and in turn, have youth in the county be more knowledgeable and involved with these businesses/organizations.

The Extension office will handle all advertising, registrations, and will secure instructors, workshop locations, and program supplies.

4-H Workshops will be primarily offered right after school at the Rappahannock County Elementary School (RCES), with those workshops designed for teens being mainly offered at the RCHS. Some workshops may be offered at other locations, such as Hearthstone, Belle Meade, or at a specific business, so that they may promote their business/program/establishment.

1. Expand 4-H program opportunities to Rappahannock youth.
 - Currently 4-H curriculum is expanding in Rappahannock schools.
 - Incorporate 4-H curriculum in public and private elementary and high school classrooms.
 - Home-school families do not use 4-H curriculum as part of their schooling
 - Introduce 4-H curriculum to home-school families and encourage development of 4-H clubs.
 - There are limited after school programs
 - Create new 4-H after school clubs at local schools.
2. Create 4-H programs and activities for youth to interact with seniors
 - The number of seniors in Rappahannock County has increased over the years. More interaction between youth and seniors is desired.
 - Create 4-H programs and activities whereby seniors and 4-H youth interact.
3. Make community aware of volunteer opportunities within 4-H.
 - The overall community of Rappahannock County is unaware of the many volunteer opportunities that 4-H offers. Many in the community think of 4-H as being strictly animal related and are not aware of the other nine curriculum areas or of the variety of programming opportunities that are available through 4-H.
 - Advertise 4-H volunteer opportunities through the local newspaper.
 - Educate community about 4-H and the many volunteer opportunities that exist by speaking at local community organizational meetings, PTOs and to local businesses.
 - To make volunteering to lead a 4-H club or activity more appealing to local teachers, discuss the possibility of teachers receiving recertification points towards their mandatory license renewal credit hours.

ANR Programs

Rappahannock's agricultural, forestry and tourism industries are critically dependent upon the careful nurturing of the county's unspoiled natural resources. Based on the unit profile, county comprehensive plan, and community perspectives, the following priority issues were identified.

Surrounding communities are losing the natural resources base necessary to continue farming as a viable enterprise. The goal of Rappahannock County is to preserve agricultural land and promote agricultural enterprises associated with tourism and economic development. To achieve these goals the following issues were identified.

- Encourage renewal and diversification of horticultural crops including, tree fruit, vegetable production and viticultural activities. It is generally recognized that perennial horticultural crops require a higher degree of production management than do most agronomic crops and livestock farms, and extension has few agents serving this sector of agriculture.
- Apple, peach, grape, vegetables, and wine production within the county are established enterprises that complement agricultural tourism, local food systems, economic development centered on agriculture and programs related to these enterprises are top priority.
- Further development of local and regional food systems is necessary to sustain the economic viability of the community.

Inability to stop growth, and encroachment from surrounding counties.

- To encourage and maintain a viable rural agricultural and tourism-based economy compatible with the county's size and character.
- Promote and protect agriculture as the primary use of land in rural areas and inform the public of the benefits of this policy.

Protection of natural resource from uncontrolled development and detrimental agricultural activities; including soil, water, air, view-sheds, scenery, food sheds, and fragile ecosystems.

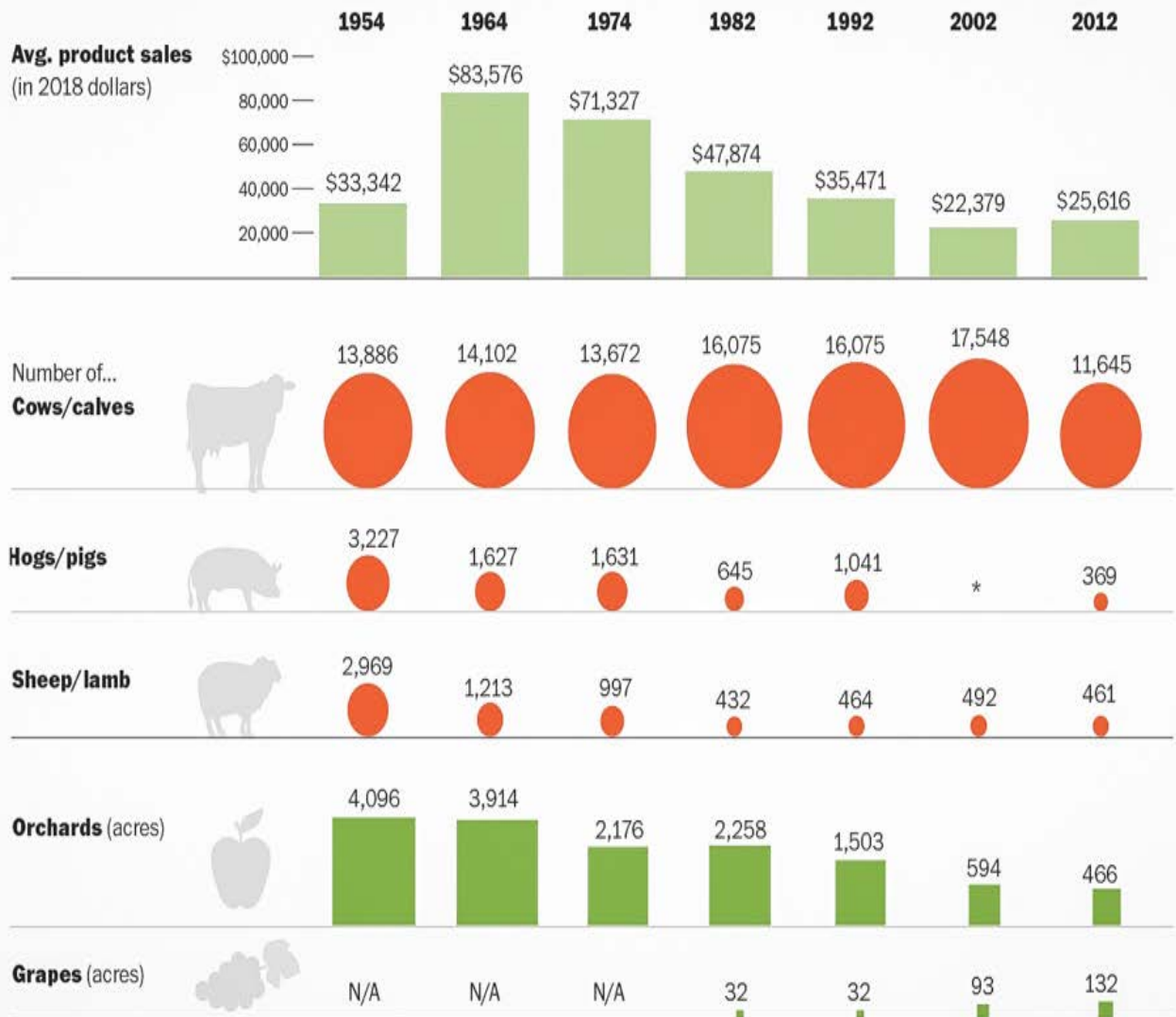
- Encourage traditional and innovative soil health and water conservation practices among the county's farmers in order to preserve productive soils, to control erosion and siltation and to protect water resources.
- Ensure that timber harvesting and road construction is conducted such that sedimentation of streams and other environment impacts are minimized.
- Encourage and facilitate the donations of open-space easements on land that is identified as having important scenic, historic, open-space, conservation, agricultural, woodland and wildlife-habitat qualities.
- Promote the best management and prevention measures for potential groundwater pollution sources, including septic tanks, and wells.
- Actively engage with landowners to foster and support the use of Best Management Practices in agricultural and forest activities.
- Support use-value taxation and other fiscal programs that help to alleviate economic burdens on owners of agricultural, horticultural and forested land and continue land use planning to protect agricultural land from escalating assessments.
- Investigate and initiate ways of promoting tourism as a suitable and appropriate form of economic development and ensure that tourism-oriented development is compatible with the rural and agricultural character of the county and economic development centered on agriculture activities of the county.

- Support the development of markets for Rappahannock County agricultural products, and cooperate with individual agricultural interests within the county, and establish liaisons with counties in the area that have similar development programs.
- Support the conduct of an inventory to identify environmentally significant lands, and the establishment of a countywide groundwater-monitoring network.

Priority Issues

A Farming Evolution

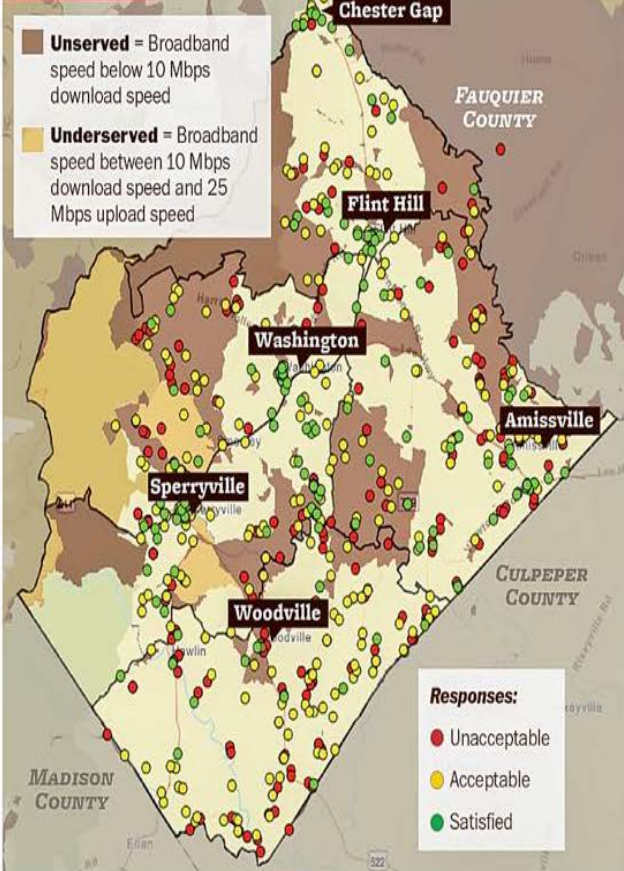
The core of Rappahannock remains agriculture, but it's a different one from when the county was dotted with orchards, and families relied on livestock for their meals. While statistics for the Census of Agriculture can sometimes be underreported, the data below reflects some of the key changes since the middle of the 20th century.



*Data withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms. (NA): No data listed in this category
 Source: Census of Agriculture (The 2017 census is still being compiled.).

Source: Rappahannock News- July 25, 2018

RESIDENTIAL



Survey Says

Key findings from the Center for Innovative Technology's 2017 broadband survey, commissioned by the Broadband Committee. The survey received responses from 716 Rappahannock residents and 177 county businesses.

86%
report **Internet at home**

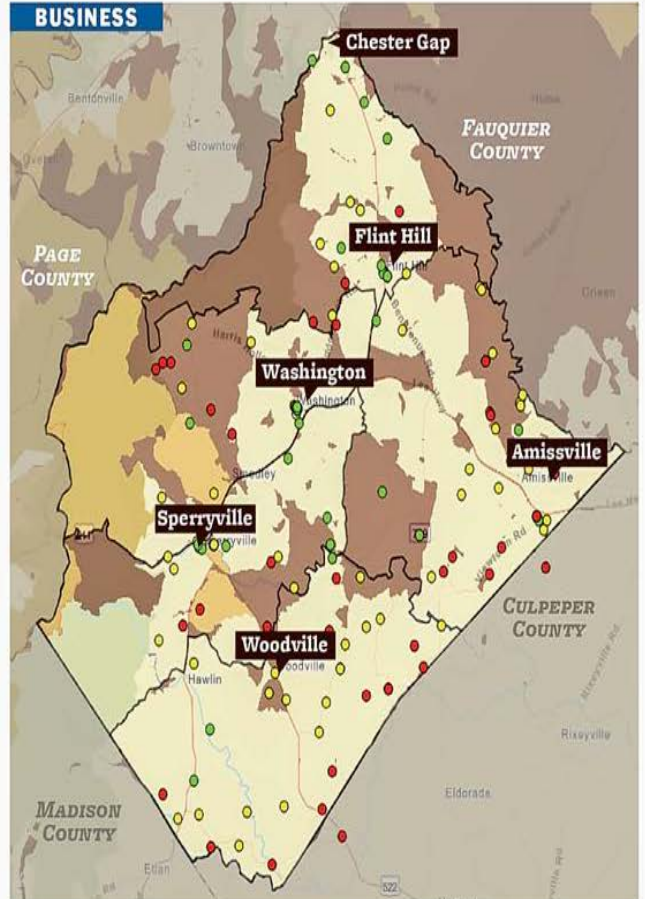
14%
report **no service**

12%
would subscribe if it were available.

29%
of business connections are rated **unacceptable**

57%
of business respondents depend on **inadequate, expensive and/or unreliable connections**

BUSINESS



SOURCE: Rappahannock County Broadband Survey, Nov. 2017

Source: Rappahannock News- January 4, 2019

According to the U.S. Census from that year.

THE PEOPLE



It was the year Rappahannock had its highest population—**9,782 people lived here**, although almost 40 percent were slaves, according to the the 1850 farm census:



296 "free colored"

THE LAND



More than 92% of the county was farmland. 96,068 of those acres were "improved"—the ninth highest total in the state.

171,000 acres in county
157,000 acres of farmland



The cash value of the county's farms was **\$2.039 million**, seventh highest in Virginia.

LIVESTOCK



The value of livestock here was \$343,910, ranking ninth in the state. The livestock included:

- 15,180 swine
- 9,130 sheep
- 6,884 head of cattle
- 2,500 horses
- 2,270 milking cows
- 620 oxen

CROPS AND PRODUCTS



The value of products from the county's orchards was \$2,420, 14th highest in the state.

That year, Rappahannock's farms produced:

- 281,216 bushels of "Indian corn"
- 157,699 bushels of wheat
- 55,726 bushels of oats
- 15,249 bushels of "Irish potatoes"
- 2,745 bushels of sweet potatoes
- 3,273 tons of hay
- 94,104 pounds of butter
- 24,948 pounds of wool
- 2,785 pounds of tobacco
- 213 pounds of hops
- 15 gallons of wine

CHURCHES

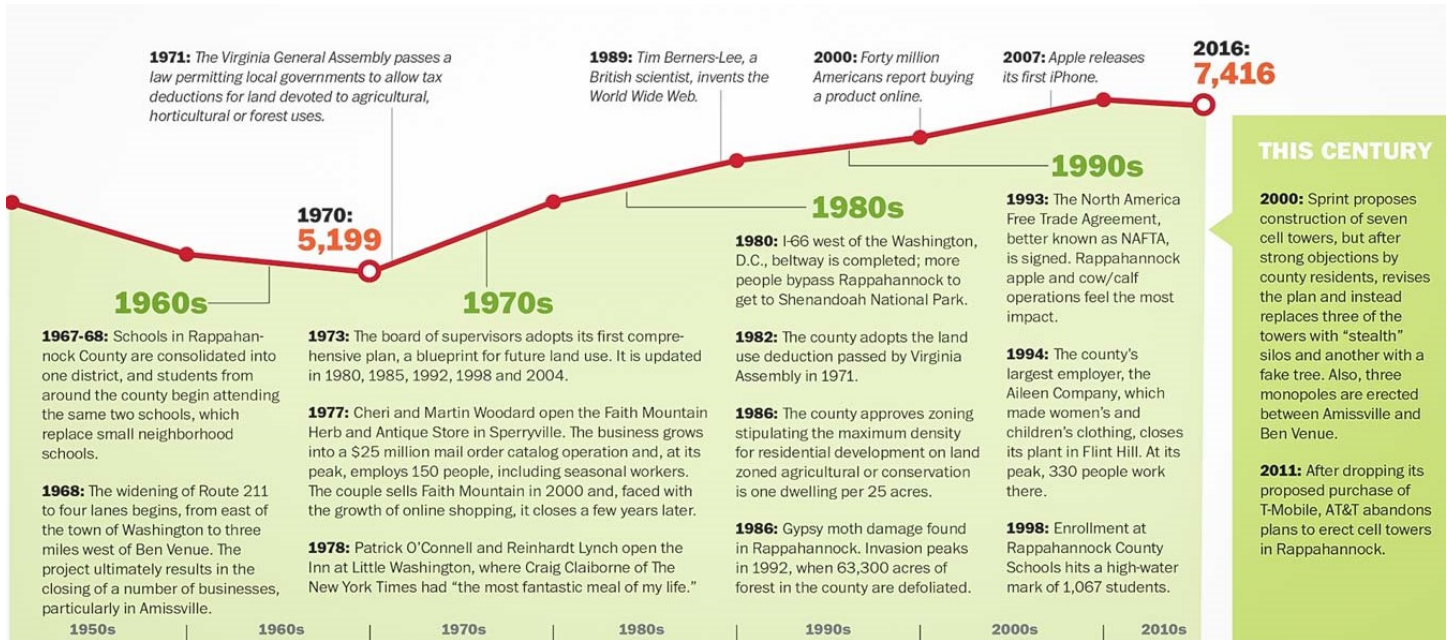


Rappahannock had **11 churches:**



Note: Values are estimates
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Source: Rappahannock News-July 25, 2018



Source: Rappahannock News July 25, 2018

Foothills Forum: Rappahannock County Survey

Weldon Cooper- Center for Survey Research, University of Virginia (March 2016)

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Victoria A. Turner Research Assistant

<http://foothills-forum.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Foothills-Forum-Final-Report-with-Appendicies.v2.pdf>