

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

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population

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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.

