



Situation Analysis Report

FREDERICK COUNTY

2013

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Introduction

In the fall of 2013, the Situation Analysis was updated with the assistance of the Frederick County ELC. Compiled base information from the 2008 Situation Analysis for Frederick and Shenandoah Counties was used as Extension in the Northern Shenandoah Valley serves a five county area in ANR and FCS program areas. Input was also obtained from other community members and stakeholders through key informant interviews and through local Extension volunteer associations.

Unit Profile

Frederick County is located at the Northern end of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and is bordered by the state of West Virginia to the North and West, Clarke County to the east, and Shenandoah and Warren Counties to the south. The County contains a range of landscapes, exhibiting everything from suburban development in the East, around the City of Winchester and the Interstate 81 corridor, to rolling hills, farms, orchards, and wooded mountains to the West. The county seat is situated in the historic City of Winchester, the oldest city west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Numerous cultural and historic attractions make Frederick County a popular destination for tourists, while Frederick County's location along the Interstate 81 corridor, just 75 miles from the Nation's capital, has helped to create an attractive location for business and industry. The county is comprised of 416 square miles (266,240 acres) of land, and the population density is 185.8 people per square mile (2011 data).

The 2011 data shows the population at 77,277 persons. This is a 9.2% growth over 2007 population statistics of 70,766. Frederick County Department of Planning and Development released in its 2013 annual report that 2012 estimates had Frederick County's population at 80,118. That is a 13.2% growth in five years, of which the timespan overlaps "The Great Housing Recession" of 2007-2009. Again, with the proximity to the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia, and the I-81 corridor, Frederick County's population is expected to continue at this same pace or greater.

Frederick County Department of Planning and Development released in its 2013 annual report that 286 building permits were issued in 2012 compared to a peak of 1,236 permits issued in 2005.

The population of Frederick County has become slightly more diverse in the last five years. The population was 92.21% white in 2007, and 91.24% white in 2011. The most notable change in ethnicity was a reduction of 1,235 Hispanic/Latino residents in the same timeframe. Most Latino population reduction is attributable to the slowdown in the construction and home building industries and will likely return as these industries return, but in the meantime, it may pose an amplified effect to the labor shortage in the agriculture industry.

Frederick County is experiencing an aging population; seeing growth in age brackets over 45 years of age. Population growth also continues for youth 0-14 and remains above both state and national percentages of population in these age brackets. Figures for 20-34 year olds actually decreased by 1,159 persons from 2007 to 2011.

The median household income rose from \$61,114 in 2007 to \$66,440 in 2011 with the greatest increases occurring in the number of households making over \$100,000. The Labor Market Information Community Profile on Frederick County reports 1.95% of the population speaks English less than well. This same report also shows 7,545 people live and work in Frederick County, 13,358 non-residents commute into the county to work, and 28,631 residents commute out of the county for work. The Bureau of Labor Statistics computes Frederick County unemployment at 4.8% in July 2013, recovering from 8.9% in February 2009. Yet, there is still poverty and great need in the county. Virginia Department of Social Services 2006 records state that the self-sufficiency standards for a three person household (two adults, one infant) living in Winchester at \$34,876. In 2011, 7,030 households or 24.53% fall below \$34,999. 2013 statistics state that 12% of Frederick County children are in poverty and that 25% of children are in single-parent households.

In 2013, 87% of Frederick County's residents (over 25) were reported to have graduated from high school; however, only 58% have attended some college, falling far short of the state statistic of 67% and the national 70%.

Premature death dropped by 12.5% from 2010 to 2013; however, adult obesity is 29%, well above the national average of 25%; physical inactivity is 26%, also over the national average of 21%; and excessive drinking is 14% compared to the national average of 7%. 16% of Frederick County residents in 2013 find themselves uninsured for health care compared to 11% of the rest of the nation. The county only has one primary care physician for every 2,804 residents; a very staggering number knowing the national statistic is one physician for every 1,067 persons. STD infections, as well as teen births, are far above the national averages.

The latest agriculture statistics come from the 2007 Census of Agriculture. From 2002 to 2007, Frederick County lost 44 farms (6.1% loss) and 14,397 acres of farmland (12.78% loss). During this same period, the county realized a reduction in total cropland by 21,412 acres (36.1% loss); a reduction of harvested cropland by 5,246 (14.05% loss); as well as a loss of 221 acres of irrigated land (42.5% loss). Only small farms ranging from 1-9 acres increased in quantity. Average farm expenses per farm increased by 48% from \$29,401 in 2002 to \$43,535 in 2007 while net operating income per farm decreased by 69% from \$1,706 in 2002 to \$525 in 2007. Landowners saw property values skyrocket with the average farm value increasing 74% from 2002 to 2007. Per acre values increased by 59% from 3,676 in 2002 to \$5,846 in 2007. This holds well above the 2007 Virginia average price per acre of \$4,213 and far exceeds the nation value of \$1,892 per acre in 2007. Frederick County cattle inventory was down almost 25%, corn and oats for grain had decreased significantly, while wheat had increased 55%. Unfortunately 2012 Census of Agriculture statistics are not due out until Spring 2014. The 2007 information is now six years old and was prior to "The Great Housing Recession" of 2007-2009; therefore, rendering much of this data inaccurate and obsolete.

The Northern Shenandoah Valley leads the Commonwealth in production of tree fruit (largely apples and peaches). According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, in 2007, 41% of the state's acres in apple production were in Frederick County, VA. These crops are

intensely managed, high value crops (approximately \$2,500-\$7,500 per acre depending on processing and fresh market prices).

Priority Issues

Farm Business Management: Increased Regulation, Increased Property Value Decreased Profitability, Future Land Use, Farm/Business Transition

Agriculture is still very significant to the Frederick County economy; however, smaller farms seem to be the trend. In addition, the price of land prohibits people from going into farming on a large scale, and they are forced to farm intensively on smaller acreage. These factors force the farmer to become savvier in marketing (BFBL/agritourism/direct marketing) and more informed about diverse farming opportunities (vegetables/ornamentals/small fruit). In an attempt to improve food safety, upcoming regulations from the FDA and the Food Safety Modernization Act will impact fresh produce growers significantly.

If the farmer can produce a product and make a reasonable profit, like any business, farming can be a successful enterprise. If not, the land will likely be sold for development. Many farms are family businesses and have been in operation for generations. The producers are in the business because they like what they do and enjoy being self-employed. Farmers love the land and often hope their children could join them in farming and follow in their footsteps. Many times this doesn't happen because the farm isn't profitable enough to support multiple families or younger generations are not interested and/or don't see farming as a viable career.

VCE addresses these issues by assisting with marketing strategies and supporting the "Buy Fresh Buy Local" (BFBL) concept. We provide educational programs for farmers that are interested in alternative and value added products that may be produced in our region. VCE will also offer classes to assist with retirement and estate planning, including transitioning the family farm to the next generation. VCE continues to work with farmers and their children to become more profitable by offering instruction in various cost efficient production practices, energy alternatives, financial management, and marketing options.

Water Quality/Conservation/Environmental Issues

Ensuring that the quality of Frederick County's natural resources (land, air, water, and wildlife) is protected is very important to county citizens. Specific aspects of this issue include:

- Finding a solution to animal waste problems
- Ensuring there are adequate public utilities for waste treatment
- Ensuring there is an adequate water supply (public and private) and utilities for population growth
- Ensuring protection and/or improvement of surface and ground water quality
- Educating and helping commercial landscape maintenance companies deal with new regulations concerning urban nutrient management

In 2013, 78 private well water samples were provided by Frederick County residents for testing during the VA Household Water Quality Program. The following are the percentage of samples showing levels exceeding the EPA recommendation for various quality parameters:

- Iron – 10.3%
- Manganese – 21.8%
- Hardness – 23.1%
- Total Dissolved Solids – 35.9%
- Sodium – 62.8%
- Lead (first draw) – 17.9%
- Total Coliforms – 55.1%
- E. coli – 24.4%

While citizens want to ensure adequate protection of county resources, there is an overall expressed concern that environmental regulations should not significantly impede livelihoods and operations. VCE-Frederick County and Planning District 7 play a major role in education, dissemination of information, and hands-on help related to this issue, but a review of programming in light of its alignment with these concerns is warranted. This issue is being addressed to some extent by VCE resources (for example: VA Household Water Quality Programs). Additional efforts need to be explored to better address this issue.

Production Agriculture

Concerns tie to those in Issue 1 but also include agriculture education, training, creating and expanding new agriculture markets, alternative agriculture, pesticide education, hay storage and quality, and nutrient management. Related to these were concerns to continue supporting and protecting agriculture and farming as an occupation, farm profitability, government programs, and the adequate supply of farm labor.

VCE-Frederick County and Planning District 7 have many programs related to this area including: area fruit production schools, commercial greenhouse production meetings, beef production meetings, private and commercial pesticide applicator recertification training, marketing educational efforts for many agriculture products, crop production schools, education on agribusiness management, and many related areas. Continuation of the always present assessment of programs versus needs and adjustments as needed is warranted. This issue is currently being addressed with VCE resources.

Overweight, Obesity and Increased Risk for Chronic Diseases

A lack of physical activity and poor nutrition are contributing factors to high weights and obesity and to a wide range of health problems and chronic diseases among all age groups, including high cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, some cancers, and more. Nationally, the increase in both the prevalence of overweight and obese persons and

associated chronic diseases is well documented and has negative consequences for individuals and society. Frederick County's overweight and obesity statistics mirror national averages.

FCS agents offer evidence-based programs to help encourage youth and adults to adopt healthy eating and physical activity practices that follow recommendations from the 2010 U.S. Dietary Guidelines and the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. This is accomplished by direct teaching, partnering with agencies to reach diverse audiences, training teachers and day-care providers, in-school nutrition education, and parent education.

Increased Education in Financial Management, Especially with Regard to Family Budgets, Housing, and Nutrition for All Populations

As housing, food, and health expenses soar, and debts accumulate, families need to know how to manage money and make wise choices. They need to be proficient at budgeting and encouraged to save. They need ideas as to how to cut motor fuel and heating costs and how to live more efficiently.

FCS provides families with information to reduce costs and live more efficiently. We currently educate them as to wise spending choices and ways to save money without losing quality of life.

Promote Healthy Homes and Families

Healthy home environments that support healthy family units are an important issue for Frederick County. Many families struggle with caregiving issues for children and aging parents. Single parenting and other economic issues can lead to additional stress within families dealing with caregiving concerns.

FCS Agents partner with other social agencies in Frederick County to provide education that supports parenting, particularly in the areas of health and financial management. FCS Agents work directly with parents, as well as day-care providers and senior centers, to ensure that healthy family programming is across the life-span.

Reinforcing Positive Youth Development through Effective Volunteer Development

Taking into consideration our volunteers' busy schedule and unpaid status, it is often difficult to reach all volunteers with the training that they need in order to deliver a quality youth development program.

Traditionally, Frederick County VCE has trained its volunteers based on an annual session offered at the beginning of the enrollment year, along with encouragement to attend District

and State training conferences. It is evident that additional development opportunities are needed, specifically at the local level.

VCE can develop and deliver quarterly programs in the future, giving volunteers options and flexibility, and increasing the number of volunteers that will be able to attend at least one program. This would not only increase the number of volunteers reached, but also the different types of training received, as more subjects would be covered in a given year. Incentives and scholarships can also be offered to encourage increased attendance at District and State training conferences.

Preparing Youth for the Workforce and Understanding Money Management

Many students do not know what they want to do in the workforce until after graduation. If college is an option, some still do not declare a major until their junior year. This does not leave much time to prepare for what may be their career. While guidance counselors are available, they are usually occupied with emotional and behavioral problems. Youth today are lacking in the skills needed to help them face the professional world.

VCE can offer in-school programs and bring in job recruiters to assist youth in professional skills, such as creating a resume, getting through an interview, and organizational and time management. After-school activities could range from mock interviews to attending career fairs, or even visiting businesses.

After reflecting on recent times and the country's economic status, it is apparent that young people do not understand financial management, whether it is on a personal level or on a bigger scale. This is currently introduced as younger 4-H club members become Treasurers of their clubs, but it also needs to be addressed on a larger scale. In order to prepare for the "real world", older youth need to be able to understand everything from the basics, such as balancing a checkbook, to the advanced, i.e. how the stock market operates and saving opportunities.

VCE can help address this issue by working face-to-face with older youth. This can be implemented by partnering with teachers during the school day, offering an after-school clinic series, and/or working with youth in 4-H clubs. If resources and volunteers are abundant, both could be implemented in order to reach as many youth as possible.

Fostering a Healthy Social Environment through Anti-Bullying Programs

The subject of Bullying has been a hot topic over the last couple of years. From physical harassment to Cyber-Bullying, the number of youth being abused by their peers has increased at an alarming rate. As a few volunteer leaders pointed out, the problem seems to be worsening the more the issue is discussed.

Awareness is important; however, it is becoming evident that the language or approach to anti-bullying itself can trigger an undesirable reaction.

Frederick County VCE plans to address the issue with its 4-H youth through well-directed workshops, trainings, and presentations at club meetings. These programs can be developed using the Character Counts! program along with information shared by the State 4-H Office and National 4-H Council. Care would be taken in regard to the approach and the language used. The programs can be presented cooperatively by the local Extension Office, volunteer leaders, and local guidance counselors and educators.