

West Piedmont Planning Dispatch

Winter 2011/2012



West Piedmont

WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

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SERVING THE COUNTIES OF FRANKLIN, HENRY, PATRICK, AND PITTSYLVANIA, THE CITIES OF DANVILLE AND MARTINSVILLE, AND THE TOWN OF ROCKY MOUNT

Rural Road Project Inventories

Beginning in late September, staff of the WPPDC began conducting road project inventories in several jurisdictions throughout the region. The purpose of this initiative is to discuss problems and potential solutions with respect to roadway deficiencies which will help to build stronger working relationships with local officials, while obtaining local project priority-input. Staff members have been collaborating with local officials and planning staff to determine which road segments or intersections should be included in this initiative, based on input derived from the WPPDC 2035 Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan as well as input from local officials and staff. The goal of this effort is to compile

a package of priority road projects for each municipality and present them to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) with the hope of obtaining VDOT funding in order to bring these projects to fruition.

Examples of roadway deficiencies that are being addressed include road segments which are narrow and are recommended to be widened; intersections that lack turn lanes, are characterized by poor vehicular sight distance due to trees and vegetation, and where sight distance is limited due to roadway geometric configurations; and railroad bridges that provide inadequate vehicle clearances. Jurisdictions for which these road project inventories have been completed include the Town of Rocky

Mount, Franklin County, the City of Martinsville, and Patrick County. Jurisdictions which are planned to be visited during the spring of 2012 include Pittsylvania and Henry Counties.



Above: A section of U.S. Route 58 in Patrick County which is recommended to be widened to four lanes.

Sidewalk Inventories

WPPDC staff recently completed a series of sidewalk inventories which began in the spring of 2011. The impetus for this initiative was the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) request for the PDC to develop sidewalk inventories. This effort can potentially result in these inventories being included in local comprehensive plans; long-range transportation plans, as well as the WPPDC Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan updates; and can be utilized for future construction projects.

walks included measuring the width of the sidewalk segment; noting the absence of pedestrian curb cuts; noting obstructions in sidewalk segments, including utility poles, shrubs, etc.; and taking note of pedestrian circulation issues such as lack of crosswalks at busy intersections, or wide streets which may pose safety hazards to pedestrians. In addition to measuring the width of sidewalk segments and noting conditions, staff has taken photographs to illustrate sidewalk deficiencies as well as commendable components which enhance pedestrian circulation and usage.

To date, jurisdictions for which sidewalk inventories have been completed include the Towns of Hurt, Gretna, and Chatham in Pittsylvania County; the Town of Rocky Mount in Franklin County; the Town of Stuart in Patrick County; and the Town of Ridgeway in Henry County.

Below: A reconstructed sidewalk in Rocky Mount containing streetscape trees and shrubs, lamp-posts, and benches.



Conducting inventories of side-

Inside this issue:

Rural Road Project Inventories.....	1
Sidewalk inventories.....	1
Commonwealth Transportation Board Public Meetings.....	2
Water Supply Plan.....	2
West Piedmont Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update	2
State Data Center.....	3
Completion of Patrick County Street Map.....	3
Census 2010 Updates.....	3

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The WPPDC administers the Danville-Pittsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which is responsible for continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning.



Commonwealth Transportation Board Public Meetings

On October 3rd and October 26th, the WPPDC Executive Director, Aaron Burdick, attended public meetings in Lynchburg and Christiansburg, respectively, to articulate to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) Board Members a variety of regional transportation projects which the PDC believes should be included in the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) for Financial Year (FY) 2013 – 2018. Projects which are included in the Six-Year Improvement Program, updated annually, are recommended to be funded through the Governor's office. Some prominent projects which Mr. Burdick appealed to the CTB to include in this Pro-

gram included, but were not limited to:

- Completion of construction of the Route 58 Corridor Program of projects, emphasizing those segments within Patrick and Carroll Counties;
- Construction of unfunded components of the Route 174/Liberty Street corridor improvement program in Martinsville;
- Improvements to Route 220 north and south of Rocky Mount, with emphasis on the segment from Boones Mill to Roanoke County;
- Widening Mount Cross Road from Lowes Drive to Danville West Corporate

Limits.

- Develop a Route 58 connector to the Patriot Centre Industrial Park in Henry County.
- Enhancement grant projects to continue development of the Dan River Trail System.
- Mr. Burdick appealed to the CTB to proceed expeditiously on design, securing of right-of-way, and construction on Interstate 73, noting that there is significant support for the development of the Henry and Franklin County portions of this project.

Water Supply Plan

The WPPDC recently completed the Regional Water Supply Plan, which is required by the State to be reviewed every five years and resubmitted to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) every ten years. Major elements contained in the Plan include information relating to water sources, water use, and regional natural resources; population and water demand projections, water conservation techniques, and drought response and contingency planning.

Ten jurisdictions in the region and two service authorities have been involved in the development

of this Plan. The jurisdictions include Patrick, Henry, and Pittsylvania Counties; the Cities of Danville and Martinsville; and the Towns of Gretna, Chatham, Hurt, Stuart, and Ridgeway. The two service authorities include the Henry County Public Service Authority and the Pittsylvania County Public Service Authority.

The Plan was submitted to the VDEQ prior to the established deadline, November 2, 2011, and each of the ten jurisdictions in the region held a public hearing relating to the Plan's update, and subsequently passed resolu-

tions adopting the Plan. The goals of this planning process include:

- Ensure that adequate and safe drinking water is available to all citizens within the region;
- Encourage, promote, and protect all other beneficial uses of the region's water resources;
- Encourage, promote, and develop incentives for alternative water sources; and
- Promote conservation.

"[THE] WEST PIEDMONT HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN WILL BE A USEFUL TOOL FOR ALL COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS BY INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT LOCAL HAZARDS AND RISKS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME PROVIDING INFORMATION ABOUT OPTIONS AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO REDUCE THOSE RISKS"

West Piedmont Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

The updated 2011 West Piedmont Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan was conditionally approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in October pending local adoption of resolutions; the previous Plan was adopted in 2006. Local governments must review and update hazard mitigation plans every five years in order to be

eligible for FEMA funding. Hazard mitigation planning is the series of steps and actions taken before a natural disaster – a flood, drought, tornado, etc. – occurs, thereby minimizing their impacts on communities to the greatest extent possible, through preparation and minimizing vulnerability to such hazards. According to the updated Plan, hazards which have

the greatest potential to occur in the region include winter storms, flooding, wind (from hurricanes and thunderstorms), tornadoes, and droughts.

Enhancements incorporated in the updated Plan include:

- An updated hazard identifi-

cation and risk assessment that makes use of the new Flood Insurance Rate Maps;

- An update on the status of mitigation actions since 2006; and
- Actions that the communities commit to undertake between 2011 and 2016.

State Data Center

The WPPDC is a State Data Center Affiliate, and provides a wealth of information covering a wide variety of topics for use by localities, organizations, and the public. Some of the sources for which the WPPDC obtains these data include the U.S. Census Bureau, the Virginia Employment Com-

mission (VEC), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the USDA Census of Agriculture, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, among many others. A snapshot of the information provided by the WPPDC in its capacity as

the State Data Center includes:

- Agricultural data
- Community profiles
- Economic data
- Educational attainment
- Employment/labor force statistics
- Housing statistics
- Mapping resources
- Health/public safety

Completion of Patrick County Street Map Update

As a component of the WPPDC's FY 2012 Rural Transportation Work Program, an updated street map for Patrick County was completed by WPPDC staff in August. This is an update to the 2007 map, as requested by the County. The Rural Transportation Work Program is the annual planning

program blueprint resulting from Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) funds to regional planning agencies throughout the Commonwealth for the purpose of facilitating transportation planning for non-urban areas throughout the state.

The WPPDC staff has developed digital maps showing the

named routes in Patrick County which can be associated with VDOT numbered routes in the County Map Series. The street maps are periodically updated and prepared for reprinting when requested by local government and chambers of commerce.

Census 2010 Updates

Census 2010 data were recently released, providing a snapshot of how America, and our region, has changed demographically since 2000. Virtually all of the information presented in the census is very valuable, but the WPPDC places emphasis on population change; age and gender characteristics;

household type and size; and housing tenure, which breaks down housing occupancy by owner-occupied, renter-occupied, and the number of their associated occupants. The WPPDC focuses on these aspects of census data because they most effectively articulate the greatest needs and characteristics of the population we serve

in our region, now and in the future.

According to the 2010 Census, the West Piedmont Region, which comprises Patrick, Henry, Franklin, and Pittsylvania Counties, and the Cities of Danville and Martinsville, has declined in population from 250,195 in 2000 to 249,182 in 2010. The jurisdictions that exhibited population growth during this period were Franklin and Pittsylvania Counties; all other jurisdictions lost population.

**West Piedmont PDC - 2000 to 2010
Population Change**

Area	2000	2010	% Change 2000-10
<i>Franklin County</i>	47,288	56,159	18.8%
<i>Henry County</i>	57,930	54,151	-8.5%
<i>Patrick County</i>	19,407	18,490	-4.7%
<i>Pittsylvania County</i>	61,745	63,506	2.9%
<i>Danville City</i>	48,411	43,055	-11.1%
<i>Martinsville City</i>	15,416	13,821	-10.3%
West Piedmont	250,195	249,182	-0.4%
Virginia	7,078,515	8,001,024	13.0%

Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census of Population, U.S. Census Bureau.

Prepared by West Piedmont Planning District Commission, November, 2011.

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"IMPROVING THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM REMAINS VITAL TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND CONTINUED ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY IN VIRGINIA"

"OVER THE DECADE....THE REGION'S LOCALITIES HAVE CONTINUED TO INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROGRAMS AIMED AT STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMY AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ITS CITIZENS"

Left: A snapshot of population changes in the West Piedmont Region's communities and the state from 2000 to 2010.

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The purpose of Planning District Commissions, as set out in the Code of Virginia, Section 15.2-4207, is:

"...to encourage and facilitate local government cooperation and state-local cooperation in addressing on a regional basis problems of greater than local significance. The cooperation resulting from this chapter is intended to facilitate the recognition and analysis of regional opportunities and take account of regional influences in planning and implementing public policies and services. The planning district commission shall also promote the orderly and efficient development of the physical, social, and economic elements of the district by planning, and encouraging, and assisting localities to plan, for the future."



Fiscal Year 2012 Elected Officers

- Chairperson—Kathy C. Lawson, City of Martinsville
- Vice Chairperson—Albert K. "Buddy" Rawley, Jr., City of Danville
- Treasurer—James E. Astin, Jr., Pittsylvania County

The WPPDC holds its regularly scheduled meetings on the fourth Thursday of each month.

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