

1. INTRODUCTION

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OVERVIEW

Culpeper County's first Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Culpeper County Board of Supervisors on September 1, 1964 and was entitled Future Land Use Plan for the Town and County of Culpeper. The Comprehensive Plan has been amended numerous times since 1964, with the 2010 plan serving as the most recent official policy guide for the County. Since the adoption of the 1984 Comprehensive Plan, the rural nature of Culpeper County has experienced increasing pressures from population growth due to the County's central location within the Northern Virginia region and the improved highway network that serves the area. The population growth which occurred between 2000 and 2010 was unprecedented. The projections for 2015 to 2020 and beyond will be more modest, but growth will continue at rates which will place further demands on developable land in the County. Culpeper wishes to maintain its rural character and avoid becoming a bedroom community to the nearby metropolitan area around Washington, D.C. To achieve this, the County recognizes the need not only to maintain, but also to expand its economic base to support and address the needs of the citizens of the County. This Comprehensive Plan is built on concepts which originated in the 1984 Plan, and includes numerous updates since the 2005 and 2010 plans. This plan is intended to address the new challenges that will face Culpeper County over the next five to twenty years and it provides the framework that will help guide the County's decision makers to meet the goals and objectives of the citizens of Culpeper County.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is Culpeper County's official policy guide for current and future land-use decisions. This Plan should be considered long-range in nature and should 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 or strategies for achieving the goals conceptualized in this Plan.

AUTHORITY FOR THE PLAN

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 five years in order to determine how closely the Plan is being adhered to and whether or not it should be amended.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Culpeper County Comprehensive Plan is the result of a series of events and actions that have blended technical data and theories with community ideas. The process used in developing this plan is summarized below:

- As required by state law, the Planning Commission reviewed the 2010 Comprehensive Plan as amended and determined that the Comprehensive Plan should be updated to reflect current and projected demographic and other data, including land use.
- Information pertaining to the County's population, environment, economy, housing, transportation and land-use was collected and analyzed. The data was compiled from a variety of sources with references provided within each chapter.
- The viewpoint of the County's citizens on the issues facing Culpeper County was obtained through a series of community meetings and the standard public hearing process.
- A set of goals was developed utilizing all available data. These goals provide the current philosophy directing the official policy towards future development in Culpeper County.
- As required by State law, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on July 8th, 2015 and recommended to the Board of Supervisors that the proposed 2015 Comprehensive Plan be adopted to replace the 2010 Comprehensive Plan as amended in its entirety.
- Between 2010 and 2015, amendments to the 2010 Plan were adopted, insuring ongoing compliance with the Code of Virginia.
- The Board of Supervisors held a public hearing as required by law on September 1st, 2015. The 2015 Culpeper County Comprehensive Plan became effective on September 1st, 2015.
- The planning process does not end with the adoption of the comprehensive plan. The recommendations contained in this plan must be implemented through the methods outlined in Chapter 15 and through amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, Capital Improvements Plan and other companion documents. Ongoing review and update of this plan should also be undertaken.

“Growth is inevitable and desirable, but destruction of community character is not. The question is not whether your part of the world is going to change. The question is how.” – Edward T. McMahon, Senior Resident Fellow, Urban Land Institute and author of *Secrets of Successful Communities*

USING THIS PLAN

This plan is divided into chapters that address Culpeper County's existing demographics, economic development, the environment, agriculture, public services and facilities, housing, transportation, historic areas and existing land use and zoning. Each of these chapters contains the background information on which the Future Land Use Plan and Public Facilities and Capital Improvements chapters are based. The final chapter provides the mechanisms for the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan, as well as potential strategies and a framework for future actions.

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 Rivers to the west.

Culpeper County, situated in north-central Virginia, is a rural community with a population of 48,506 (U.S. Census Bureau 2013). Culpeper possesses a strong agricultural base and a diversity of service and production industries. As one of 95 counties in the Commonwealth of Virginia, Culpeper County encompasses 381 square miles and contains 243,840 acres. 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.

Culpeper County is located centrally between four major localities (see Map 1.1). Washington, D.C. / Northern Virginia, located 75 miles northeast of the Town of Culpeper, is the largest of these and is responsible for most of the development pressures that face Culpeper County. The second largest nearby locality is the City of Richmond that is 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 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.

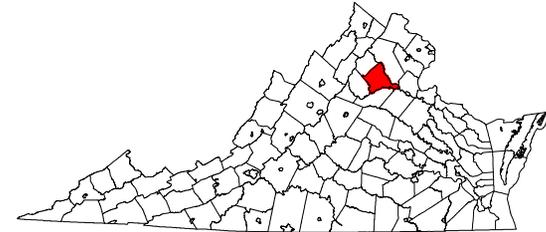
An elected seven member Board of Supervisors governs Culpeper County. One member represents each magisterial district (see Map 1.2) and each serves a four-year term of office. An appointed county administrator oversees the daily operation of the County government.

ONLINE GIS

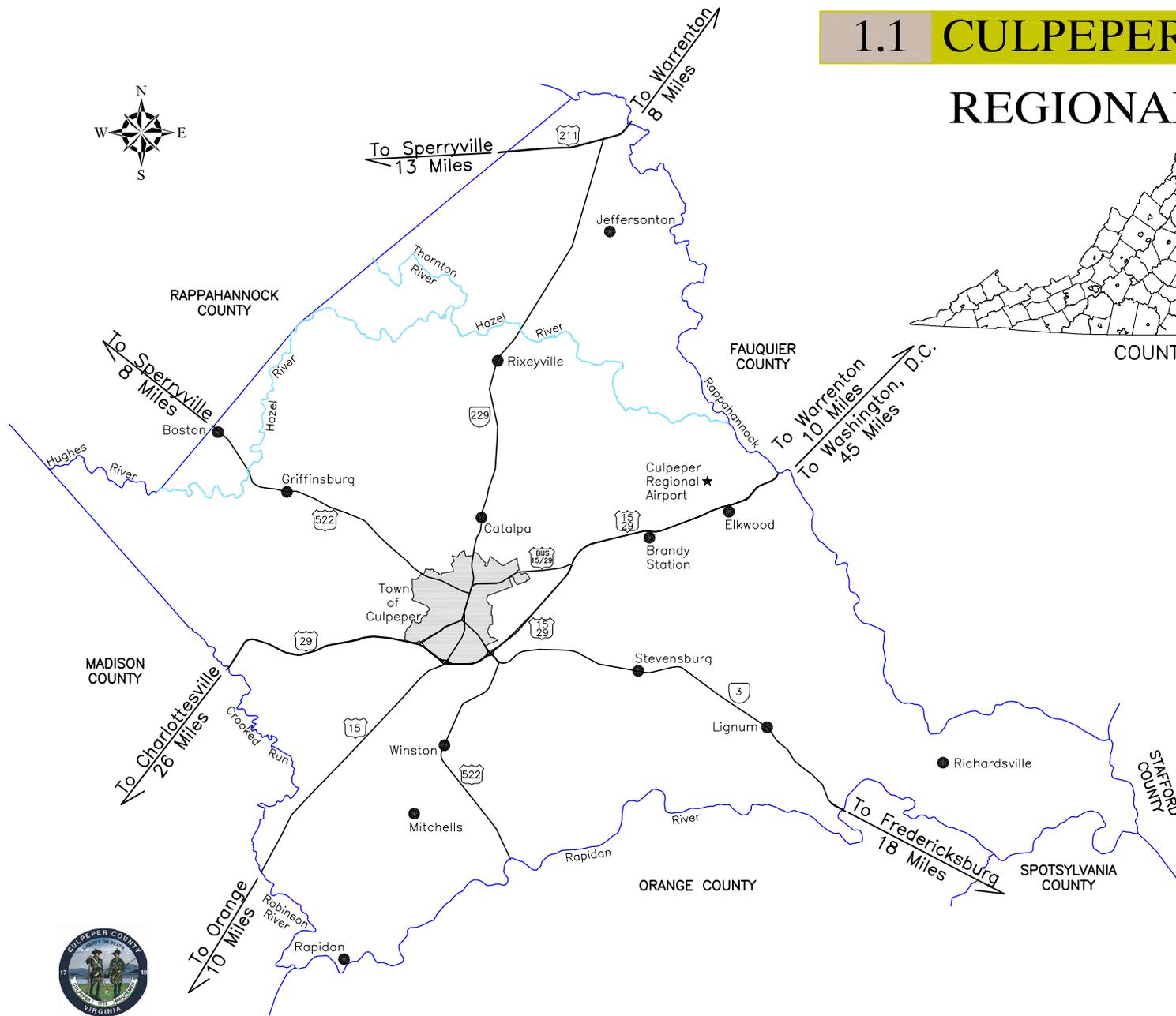
The Culpeper County Planning Department maintains extensive information for each parcel located within the County. Layers of data used for many of the maps in this plan are available for public use on the County GIS website. [Quick Link: Culpeper County Online GIS](#)

1.1 CULPEPER COUNTY

REGIONAL MAP



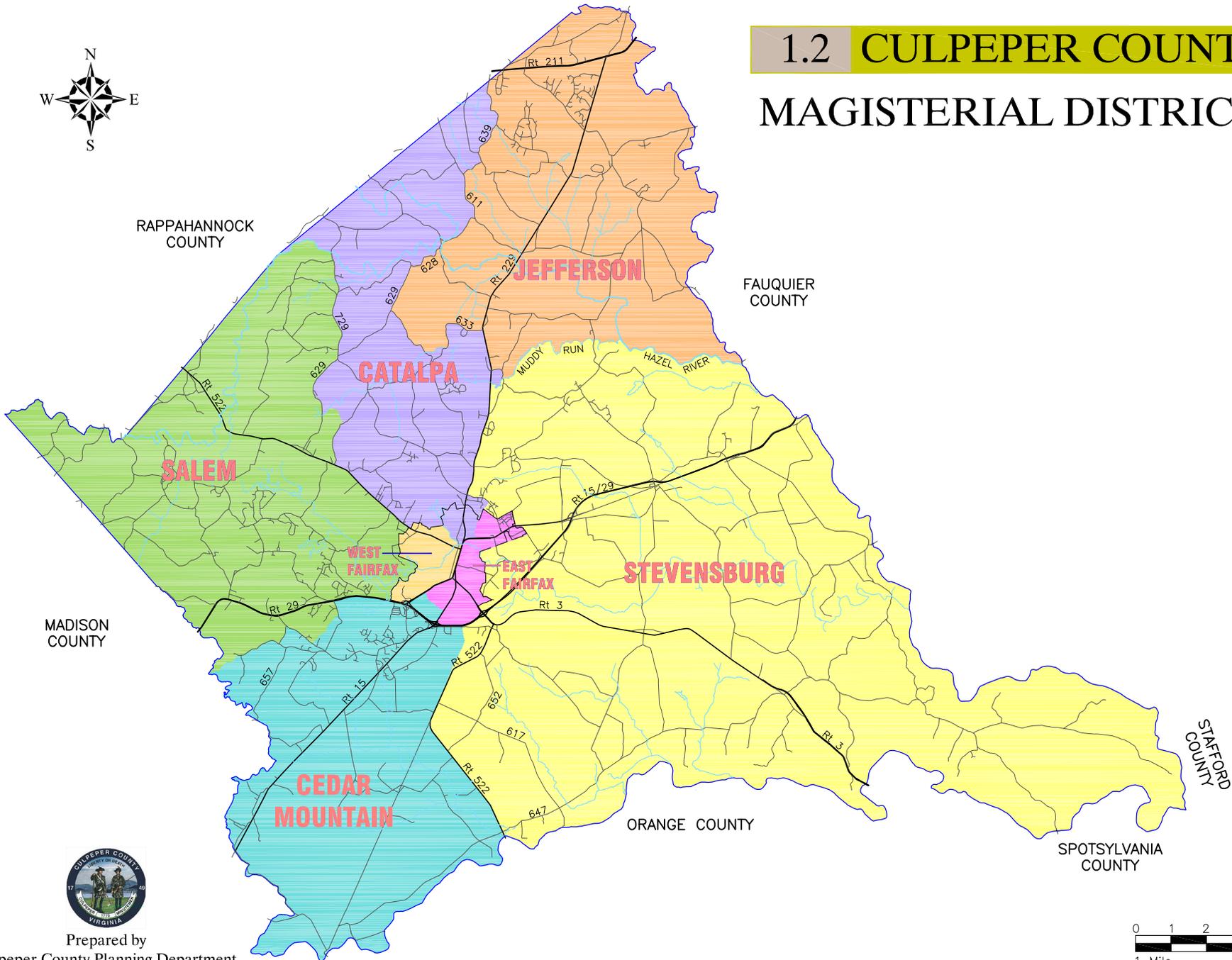
COUNTY LOCATION



Prepared by
Culpeper County Planning Department



1.2 CULPEPER COUNTY MAGISTERIAL DISTRICTS



Prepared by
Culpeper County Planning Department

