

## 6.0 The People and the Place

This section of the Plan provides the existing characteristics of the community regarding the built environment, population, economy, types of services provided, and the natural environment. Section 15.2-2223 of the State Code states that in preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth. The elements included in this chapter are listed below.

- Land Use
- Population
- Housing
- Economy
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Mineral Resources
- Community Facilities
- Parks and Recreation
- Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Natural Resources

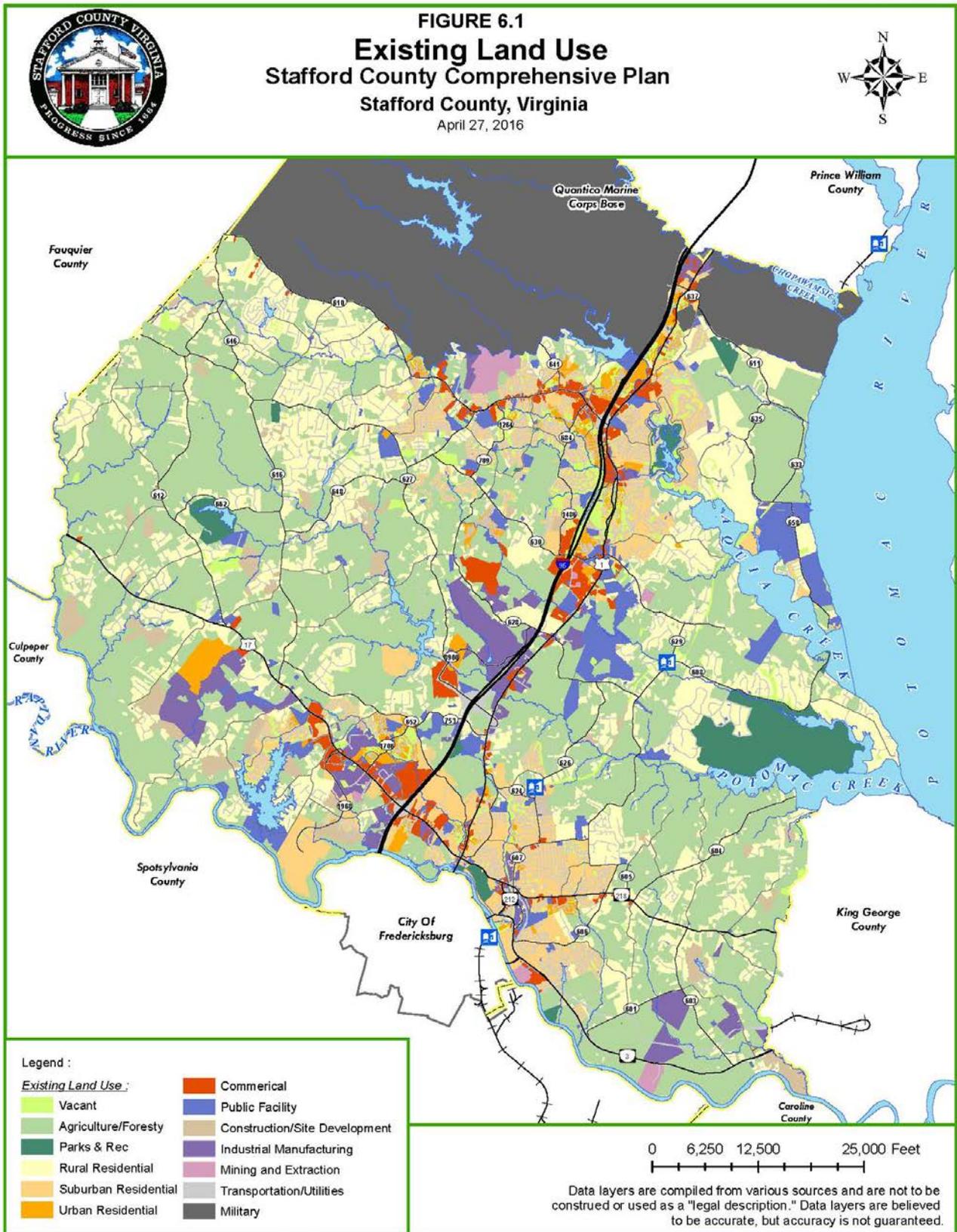
Please note that some of the data tables provided are based on data from the 2010 census.

### 6.1 Land Use

The existing, observable land use of each parcel in Stafford County is important because it reveals the pattern of past growth, the location of areas that should be preserved and the potential locations for future development. The analysis of existing conditions forms the basis of the future land use plan for the County.

#### Land Use

- Current Land Use
- Zoning Districts
- Future Zoning Buildout



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### 6.1.1 Current Land Use

An inventory of land uses by parcel reveals how the land in Stafford County is currently being used and is helpful in identifying areas that should be preserved and potential locations for future development. Parcel mapping data was obtained from a data layer in the County's GIS with a large number of very specific land uses. These were simplified into broad categories for ease of discussion.

Table 6.1 Existing Land Use – 2015 (Stafford County)

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agriculture/Forestry	61,026.22	33.74%
Commercial	3,747.05	2.07%
Construction/Site Development	3,540.29	1.96%
Industrial Manufacturing	4,728.32	2.61%
Military	32,996.96	18.24%
Mining and Extraction	800.98	0.44%
Parks and Recreation	4,119.46	2.28%
Public Facility	6,367.47	3.52%
Rural Residential	30,611.25	16.92%
Suburban Residential	12,310.71	6.81%
Transportation and Utilities	7,086.55	3.92%
Urban Residential	2,435.04	1.35%
Vacant	4,752.22	2.63%
Water Features	6,338.00	3.50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>180,860.42</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: Stafford County GIS

Stafford County consists of 180,860 acres that have been classified into 14 general land use categories and a brief description of each category is provided:

#### Agricultural and Forestry

Approximately 33.74% (61,026 acres) of the land area in Stafford County is classified as agricultural and forestry uses. These uses are dispersed throughout the County but larger farming operations are located along King's Highway and Poplar Road and Hartwood Road areas.

#### Commercial

Commercial uses include retail sales and services, auto sales and service, hotels, food and beverage establishments, financial institutions and offices. Land devoted to commercial use account for 2.07% (3,747 acres) of the County's land area. This land use is primarily located on Garrisonville and Warrenton Roads in the vicinity of I-95 and along Jefferson Davis Highway.

### Construction/Site Development

This land use category identifies land that is undergoing development, in the process of being transformed, typically from a vacant use to a more intense use. These areas cover 1.96% (3,540 acres) of the County.

### Industrial and Manufacturing

Industrial land uses includes manufacturing and warehousing facilities, truck terminals, salvage yards and wholesale trade. These account for 2.61% (4,728 acres) of the County's land area and are primarily located along Warrenton Road and Jefferson Davis Highway.

### Military

The military category represents the land occupied by Marine Corps Base Quantico in the northern section of the County. Marine Corps Base Quantico occupies 18.24% (32,997 acres) of the County's land area.

### Mining and Extraction

This land use category includes the location of surface mining operations, which covers 0.44% (801 acres) of the County. These areas are located on the north side of Garrisonville Road and along King's Highway.

### Parks and Recreation

Recreation uses account for 2.28% (4,119 acres) of Stafford County's total acreage. The recreation category includes all public and private parks, marinas, golf courses and community centers in the County. Recreation sites vary in size and are located throughout the County.

### Public Facilities

This category refers to those uses that provide services to residents such as health, education, religion and public safety. Approximately 3.52% (6,367 acres) of Stafford's land area is devoted to this use.

### Rural Residential

Rural residential is the second largest land use category in Stafford County beyond military, accounting for 16.92% (30,611 acres) of the County's land area. The rural residential category includes single-family detached dwellings on lots at least 1 acre in size. This land use is dispersed throughout the rural areas of the County outside of the Urban Service Area. The largest concentration of this type of land use is in the northwest part of the County, south of the Marine Corps Base Quantico.

### Suburban Residential

The Suburban Residential land use category includes single-family detached residential dwellings located within the Urban Services Area and is typically on ¼ to ½-acre sized lots. This land use accounts for 6.81% (12,311 acres) of the County and is located primarily in North Stafford, south of the Marine Corps Base Quantico, and in the area north of the City of Fredericksburg.

### Transportation and Utilities

This land use category includes utilities and public works facilities that provide infrastructure support to residents. These uses include power lines, railroad lines, cellular communication tower lots, commuter parking lots, airports, and right-of-ways. This land use accounts for 3.92% (7,087 acres) of the County's total acreage.

### Urban Residential

The urban residential category includes apartment complexes, townhouses, condominiums and the common areas that surround them. This land use accounts for less than 1.35% (2,435 acres) of the County's land area. This land use can be found near the I-95 corridor.

### Vacant Land

Vacant land is the largest land use category in Stafford County, accounting for approximately 2.63% (4,752 acres) of the County's land area. Vacant land is any land that is currently not being used. Some parcels in the eastern central portion of the County are designated wetlands and should be protected from development.

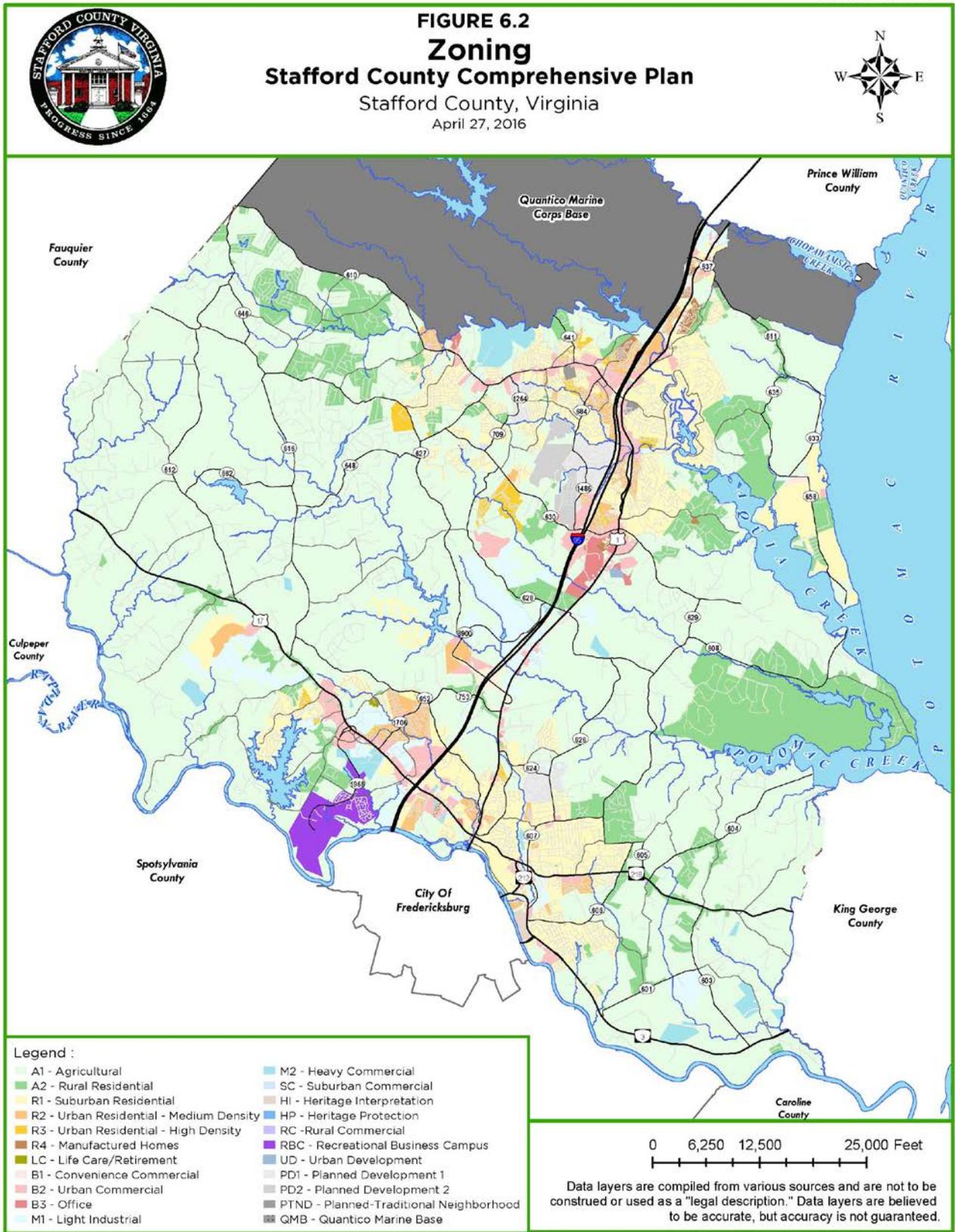
### Water Features

Water features include open water bodies such as creeks and rivers. They encompass 3.5% or 6,338 acres of the County's land area.

## *6.1.2 Zoning Regulations*

Stafford County last recodified its Zoning Ordinance in 1994, and it routinely updates the Ordinance on a quarterly basis. The Zoning Ordinance establishes, among other things, permitted uses, minimum lot sizes, minimum front, side and rear setbacks for principal and accessory buildings, maximum building heights, maximum building and lot coverage, and maximum floor areas. The Zoning Ordinance is a critical tool for controlling the type, density, and design of development within the County. The Zoning Ordinance for Stafford County establishes 21 districts. The Ordinance contains provisions for the establishment of five types of planned development districts. In addition to these districts, there are seven overlay districts, which were created to protect resources and mitigate conflicts around certain facilities. In 2015, the County enacted Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). TDR allows for enhanced density in specified zoning districts where the County plans for additional development while enabling the preservation of selected areas. TDR operates similar to overlay districts as they provide for additional regulations beyond what is proscribed for the underlying zoning district.

Produced: 5/3/2016



The following table presents a breakdown of the zoning districts by area. The table was generated using the County's geographic information system (GIS), which summarized the parcel areas based on assessment data. This accounted for the area in which "No Data" was available. The Marine Corps Base Quantico is not a zoning district, but an area over which the County has no land use control.

**Table 6.2 Existing Zoning Districts (Stafford County, VA)**

	<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
<b>Rural</b>	A1 - Agricultural	88,196.85	48.77%
	A2 - Rural Residential	14,663.04	8.11%
<b>Residential</b>	R1 - Suburban Residential	14,235.73	7.87%
	R2 - Urban Residential - Medium Density	2,257.92	1.25%
	R3 - Urban Residential - High Density	823.82	0.46%
	R4 - Manufactured Homes	321.44	0.18%
	LC - Life Care/Retirement	21.77	0.01%
<b>Commercial</b>	B1 - Convenience Commercial	282.78	0.16%
	B2 - Urban Commercial	3,234.70	1.79%
	B3 - Office	459.39	0.25%
	RC -Rural Commercial	4.90	0.00%
	SC - Suburban Commercial	23.49	0.01%
<b>Industrial</b>	M1 - Light Industrial	3,976.69	2.20%
	M2 - Heavy Commercial	1,482.50	0.82%
<b>Planned Development/Mixed Use</b>	PD1 - Planned Development 1	1,132.79	0.63%
	PD2 - Planned Development 2	715.26	0.40%
	PTND - Planned-Traditional Neighborhood	35.38	0.02%
	RBC - Recreational Business Campus	1,145.38	0.63%
	UD-Urban Development	22.60	0.01%
<b>Other</b>	HI - Heritage Interpretation	103.48	0.06%
<b>Unzoned Land</b>	Waterway	6,338.00	3.50%
	Military/Federal Land	33,056.00	18.28%
	Street Right-Of-Way &	8,326.51	4.60%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>180,860.42</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### Rural Districts

The County has two districts dedicated to rural development. These are the A-1 Agriculture District and A-2 Rural Residential District.

The **A-1** District allows for a greater number of uses, which are associated with agriculture and large lots, such as farming, forestry, mulching facilities, sawmills, nurseries and slaughterhouses. The District occupies almost half (49%) of the County and is dominant in the western half and southeast portion of the County.

The **A-2** District is intended as a transition between agriculture and more intense development. Single-family homes and community facilities are permitted on lots of at least one acre. The largest A-2 area is located around Brooke Road near Marlborough Point. Many of the A-2 areas exist as pockets within the A-1 District.

### Residential Districts

There are five residential districts in Stafford County, which combined, represent roughly 10% of the County. The districts vary in residential use density. Community and public facilities are permitted in all of the districts.

The **R-1** Suburban Residential District is intended for single-family homes with a density of 1.5 units per acre. R-1 Districts are primarily concentrated in the Garrisonville area south of the Marine Corps Base Quantico and north of Fredericksburg.

The **R-2** Urban Residential District allows duplexes and townhouse developments with a density of 3.5 units per acre. Most R-2 Districts are adjacent to R-1 developments.

The **R-3** Urban Residential – High Density District allows the same uses as the R-2 District with a density of 7.0 units per acre. Overall, 0.5% of the county is designated as **R-3** and is primarily located near commercial areas south of Marine Corps Base Quantico.

The **R-4** Manufactured Home District is reserved for manufactured home developments. They are located near the I-95 corridor north of Garrisonville Road.

The **LC** Life Care/Retirement Community District is intended to provide areas for the continuing care of the elderly, providing for transitional housing, progressing from independent units and culminating in nursing home care. Such districts are to be located only where approved water and sewerage are available and where transportation systems are adequate.

### Commercial Districts

Stafford County has six commercial districts. The districts vary in the mix of retail and office development as well as intensity. Overall, 2.2% of the County is designated for commercial use.

The **B-1** Convenience Commercial District is intended for small commercial development that serves the surrounding population. These districts are scattered throughout the County with concentrations found on White Oak Road and Jefferson Davis Highway in both central and northern Stafford County.

The **B-2** Urban Commercial District allows high-density retail sales and service developments with a regional or County-wide market area. These retail centers are located along Garrisonville Road, Courthouse Road and Warrenton Road near interchanges off I-95.

The **B-3** Office District is intended to provide an area for professional offices near retail areas. These areas are spotted throughout the County with the largest concentration just added in the Courthouse area.

The **SC** Suburban Commercial District also provides a location for small retail businesses that serve the immediate neighborhood. The difference between the SC and B-1 districts is that the

SC District need not be located near a major transportation network and it provides for a greater open space ratio. There are three small areas that are designated as SC Districts in Stafford County.

The **RC** district allows commercial uses at major intersections that serve the nearby rural population. Only two parcels are designated as the RC District.

### Industrial Districts

Stafford County has two zoning designations for industrial uses. Together, they constitute 3.0% of the County's area.

The **M-1** Light Industrial District sets aside areas for certain business and industrial uses which are relatively free from offensive activities and are generally compatible with nearby residential uses. Industrial parks are encouraged within the M-1 District. The largest concentration of M-1 development is found in the center of the County around Jefferson Davis Highway. Other developments exist around Warrenton Road west of I-95, Cool Spring Road, Forest Lane Rd, and on Jefferson Davis Highway near the Marine Corps Base Quantico.

The **M-2** Heavy Industrial District provides for the location of industrial uses that may not be compatible with residential uses due to potential nuisances or hazards. These districts are found in the southern section of the County, around Celebrate VA Parkway, and south of the Marine Corps Base Quantico off of Garrisonville Road.

### Planned Developments/Mixed Use

There are two types of Planned Development Districts. They allow for the creation of innovative neo-traditional developments with a mix of commercial and residential use. They differ in the size of the overall development, residential and commercial densities, and open space ratios.

The **PD-1** Planned Development District allows for greater residential density on developments less than 500 acres. The P-1 District has been utilized in the Park Ridge, Austin Ridge, and Leeland Station communities.

The **PD-2** Planned Development District is for developments between 500 and 850 acres. PD-2 developments are allowed a greater commercial density. A PD-2 District has been designated for the proposed Embrey Mill development on Courthouse Road near I-95.

The **P-TND** Planned – Traditional Neighborhood Development provides for areas of the county which are suitable for an approach to land-use planning and urban design that promotes the development or redevelopment of pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods with a mix of uses, housing types and prices, lot sizes and density, architectural variety, a central civic building and use, a network of streets and alleys that may include on-street parallel parking, and defined development edges.

The **RBC** Recreational Business Campus District provides an area for professional offices, executive housing, and senior housing as well as other developments that will benefit from a natural campus-like setting with open space. One RBC development is located at the end of Celebrate VA Parkway.

The **UD** Urban Development District was created for town center areas within the targeted growth area. They generally allow for more intense development than seen in other areas of the County. This type of zone can apply to a large area or a block by block basis. The Abberly at Courthouse Apartment Complex is an example of development in the zone.

#### Other Zoning Districts

Areas of the County include unique characteristics and uses that may not conform with typical development design standards that apply across the County.

The **HI** Heritage Interpretation District was established for the purpose of reserving areas in all regions of the county for interpretation of heritage sites, retaining the setting and feeling of the cultural landscape, permitting restoration, preservation, conservation, education, research and business activities related to the operation of a museum and other historic sites, providing heritage tourism opportunities, and promoting the preservation and enhancement of unique Stafford County cultural resources.

#### Overlay Districts

In addition to the base zoning districts, the Stafford County Zoning Ordinance contains eight overlay districts. The purposes of the districts vary from protecting historical and environmental resources, reducing conflicts between established facilities, and mitigating potential hazards.

Overlay districts add a variety of standards to the underlying districts. These standards could include use restrictions, preservation requirements, or stricter density regulations. The following is a list of the overlay districts used in Stafford County:

- **AD Airport Impact** - Provides an overlay zone in areas subject to intense and/or frequent emissions of noise and vibration from airports and prevents obstructions of airport zones which may result in an air navigation hazard
- **FH Flood Hazard** - Provides an overlay zone with limitations on development in areas likely to be inundated by the 100-year flood event, as defined by current flood insurance rate maps for Stafford County to protect life and property and to prevent or minimize flood damage
- **HC Highway Corridor** - Provides an overlay zone along developed and rapidly developing high traffic road facilities where appropriate special standards would address access and design needs
- **HG Historic Gateway Corridor** - Is intended to implement the goals of the Comprehensive Plan by protecting cultural resources by guiding new development along major entrance routes along arterial streets to the designated areas
- **HR Historic Resources** - Is intended to provide for the protection of historic resources in the County through architectural design control of new construction
- **MZ Military Facility Impact** - Is intended to provide an overlay zone to address the interaction between military facilities and surrounding land uses
- **RP Reservoir Protection** - Is intended to provide an overlay zone that requires best management practices and other protective measures in areas critical to the integrity of public water supplies, rivers, streams and other sensitive features

### Conditional Zoning

The Zoning Ordinance for Stafford County allows a developer to request a change in the zoning designation on a piece of property. In most zoning cases, voluntary proffers made by the applicant are included with the request. Proffers are intended to mitigate negative impacts of the land use proposal on the surrounding community. A proffer could be the construction of roads, provision of infrastructure, dedication of open space, or a cash contribution in lieu of the actual provision of an improvement. Generally, in order for a conditional zoning change to be approved, the proffer must be reasonably related to the requested zoning change and the zoning change must not adversely affect the character of the area in which it is located. Any monetary contributions must be attributable to the impacts of the proposed development to schools, roads, parks and fire and rescue stations that provide a direct and material benefit to that new development. The County Board of Supervisors is responsible for deciding zoning change requests following a public hearing and a recommendation of the Planning Commission on the request.

#### *6.1.3 Future Build-out Under Existing Zoning*

To assess the impact the current zoning regulations would have on future land development in the County, a build-out analysis was conducted. This assumes that all available land builds out to its maximum potential based on the maximum allowable densities.

**Table 6.3 Zoning Buildout - Inside the Urban Services Area**

Zoning Districts	Existing Dwelling Units	Future Dwelling Units			Total Buildout (Existing Plus Future)	Potential Buildout Commercial Square Footage
		In approved Subdivisions	Based on Zoning Potential	Total		
<b>A1 - Agricultural</b>	1,101	358	2,901	3,259	4,360	0
<b>A2 - Rural Residential</b>	659	34	460	494	1,153	0
<b>B1 - Convenience Commercial</b>	15	0	0	0	15	4,395,201
<b>B2 - Urban Commercial</b>	51	0	0	0	51	55,887,298
<b>B3 - Office</b>	4	0	0	0	4	9,004,955
<b>HI - Heritage Interpretation</b>	3	0	0	0	3	0
<b>LC - Life Care/Retirement</b>	2	0	0	0	2	0
<b>M1 - Light Industrial</b>	8	0	0	0	8	52,935,145
<b>M2 - Heavy Commercial</b>	1	0	0	0	1	7,242,335
<b>PD1 - Planned Development 1</b>	2,118	48	1,373	1,421	3,539	0
<b>PD2 - Planned Development 2</b>	131	1,159	0	1,159	1,290	0
<b>PTND - Planned-Traditional Neighborhood</b>	0	287	17	304	304	0
<b>R1 - Suburban Residential</b>	18,529	1,891	16,506	18,397	36,926	0
<b>R2 - Urban Residential - Medium Density</b>	8,058	673	6,247	6,920	14,978	0
<b>R3 - Urban Residential - High Density</b>	3,482	508	4,191	4,699	8,181	0
<b>R4 - Manufactured Homes</b>	1,447	0	2,001	2,001	3,448	0
<b>RBC - Recreational Business Campus</b>	493	782	5,132	5,914	6,407	49,871,046
<b>RC -Rural Commercial</b>	0	0	0	0	0	21,404
<b>SC - Suburban Commercial</b>	2	0	0	0	2	358,090
<b>UD - Urban Development</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 6.4 Zoning Buildout - Outside the Urban Services Area

Zoning Districts	Existing Dwelling Units	Future Dwelling Units			Total Buildout (Existing Plus Future)	Potential Buildout Commercial Square Footage
		In approved Subdivisions	Based on Zoning Potential	Total		
A1 - Agricultural	6,890	1,552	13,741	15,293	22,183	0
A2 - Rural Residential	3,698	115	3,732	3,847	7,545	0
B1 - Convenience Commercial	1			0	1	1,763,680
B2 - Urban Commercial	0			0	0	474,064
B3 - Office	0			0	0	0
HI - Heritage Interpretation	0			0	0	0
LC - Life Care/Retirement	0			0	0	0
M1 - Light Industrial	1			0	1	7,693,503
M2 - Heavy Commercial	1			0	1	15,348,940
PD1 - Planned Development 1	0		0	0	0	0
PD2 - Planned Development 2	0		0	0	0	0
PTND - Planned-Traditional Neighborhood	0		0	0	0	0
R1 - Suburban Residential	13		2,082	2,082	2,095	0
R2 - Urban Residential - Medium Density	5		12	12	17	0
R3 - Urban Residential - High Density	0		0	0	0	0
R4 - Manufactured Homes	11		94	94	105	0
RBC - Recreational Business Campus	0		0	0	0	21,563
RC -Rural Commercial	0			0	0	74,584
SC - Suburban Commercial	0			0	0	0
UD - Urban Development	0			0	0	0

6.1.4 Findings

- Stafford County consists of 180,860 acres
- The land use categories that accounts for the largest land areas in Stafford County are agricultural/forestry (33.74%), military (18.24%), and rural residential (16.92%).
- Stafford County’s Zoning Ordinance includes: 21 zoning districts, including 5 planned development/mixed use districts and eight overlay districts

## 6.2 Population

An understanding of current and expected future population allows the locality to adequately prepare for its potential impacts on land use and community resources. This section examines several characteristics of the population of Stafford County. Using data obtained from the US Census Bureau, Stafford County is compared to surrounding counties, the City of Fredericksburg, and the State as a whole, to get an understanding of its current characteristics and future role within the State.

Over the last five decades, as the population in Stafford County has grown, the character of the landscape has also changed. The once primarily rural County is being transformed through the development of suburban and urban centers. The challenge for the County is to accommodate growth while maintaining the quality of life residents have come to expect; a component of which is the availability of an adequate amount of open space.

### 6.2.1 Historical Trends

In 2000, the population in Stafford County was 51% higher (92,446) than it was in 1990 (61,236). During that same time period, all comparison areas experienced population increases, but only Spotsylvania County had a greater population increase (58%) than Stafford County. The population of Stafford County increased at a significantly faster rate than the State as a whole (14%).

**Table 6.5 Population Change 1950-2010 (Stafford County, VA and Comparison Areas)**

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Percent Change 2000-2010
<b>Stafford County</b>	11,902	16,876	24,587	40,470	61,236	92,446	128,961	39.5%
<b>Fauquier County</b>	21,248	24,066	26,375	35,889	48,741	55,139	65,203	18.25%
<b>King George County</b>	6,710	7,243	8,039	10,543	13,527	16,803	23,584	40.35%
<b>Prince William County</b>	22,612	50,164	111,102	144,703	215,686	280,813	402,002	43.2%
<b>Spotsylvania County</b>	11,920	13,819	16,424	34,435	57,403	90,395	122,397	35.4%
<b>City of Fredericksburg</b>	12,158	13,639	14,450	15,322	19,027	19,279	24,286	26.0%
<b>State of Virginia</b>	3,318,680	3,966,949	4,648,494	5,346,818	6,187,358	7,078,515	8,001,024	13.0%

Source: US Census Bureau.

As indicated in the table above, Stafford's population has steadily increased since 1950. However, the rate of increase has slowed somewhat since 1980. Between 1970 and 1980, Stafford's population increased by 65%. The rate of change in the population decreased to 51% between 1980 and 1990 and remained the same for the 1990 to 2000 period but declined to

39.5 % from 2000 to 2010. Overall, the County has experienced a doubling of its population for every 20 year period since 1950.

**Table 6.6 Population Estimates and Projections (Stafford County, VA and Comparison Areas)**

	2010 Census	July 1st 2015 Census Estimate	2020 VEC Projection	2030 VEC Projection	2040 VEC Projection	Percent Change 2020 to 2040
Stafford County	128,961	140,176	178,152	244,410	333,654	87%
Fauquier County	65,203	67,898	74,118	83,312	93,028	25%
King George County	23,584	24,600	27,109	29,997	32,734	21%
Prince William County	402,002	443,463	487,768	573,535	659,301	35%
Spotsylvania County	122,397	128,998	166,236	223,917	299,632	80%
City of Fredericksburg	24,286	26,969	26,647	28,383	29,917	12%
State of Virginia	8,001,024	8,382,948	8,811,512	9,645,281	10,530,228	20%

Source: US Census Bureau, Virginia Employment Commission and the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

According to population projection figures prepared by the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) and the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Policy, continued growth is expected for Stafford County's population between 2020 and 2040, but at a slower rate as a percentage than was experienced during the previous two decades. Stafford's population was expected to grow by 38% between 2010 and 2020, by 37% between 2020 and 2030, and by 36.5 percent between 2030 and 2040. A similar pattern of continued growth was also projected at the state level, but at a slower rate than the County. The State's population was projected to grow by approximately 10.1% between 2010 and 2020, 9.5% between 2020 and 2030 and 9.2% between 2030 and 2040.

Although population continues to grow, the County has experienced a decline in the rate of increase in recent years. Based on the July 1, 2015 estimate, the County population grew by 8.7% during the first five years of this decade. The local and national economies went through an economic recession during that period. However, the Planning Commission believes that the rate of growth projected by the VEC is likely too high. Based on the difference between the 2015 population estimate and the 2020 population projection, there would be an increase of 37,976 new residents in the latter half of this decade. It is believed that this projection is over-ambitious. There would be the need to construct over 13,000 new homes in the later-half of this decade in order to meet that demand. That amount of growth spread over a five year period would far exceed the amount of new homes constructed in any given year in the County's history to date.

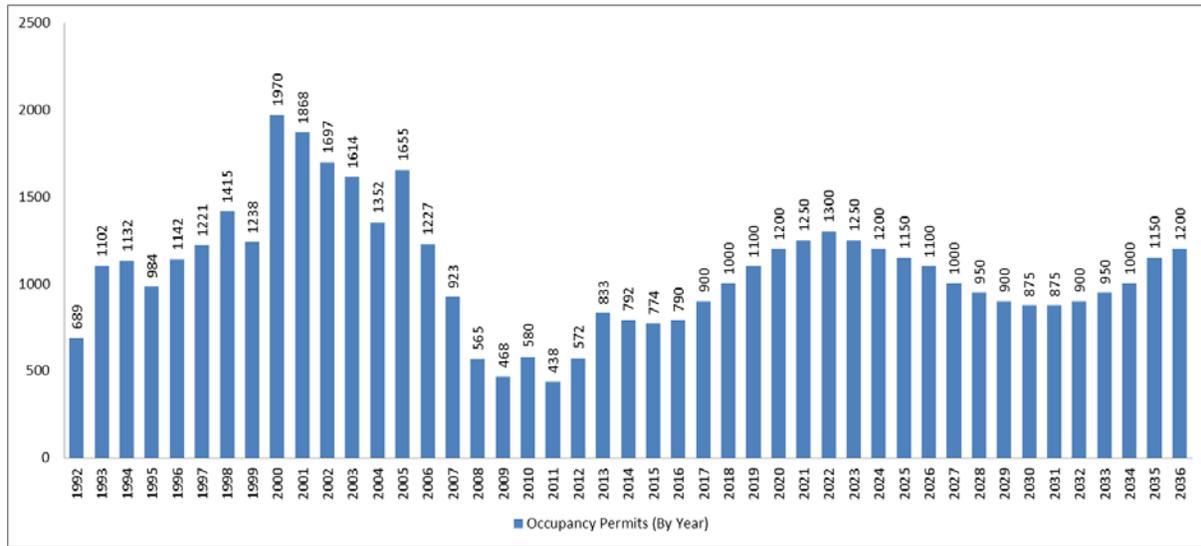
The Planning Commission created a population projection based on past building permit trends. That projection shows a substantially slower population growth than the VEC projection. The anticipated population by 2020 would be 154,098, an increase of 13,992 persons. The projected population for 2030 would be 184,481 and 200,524 in 2036 which is at the end of the current planning horizon for this Comprehensive Plan.

Table 6.8a shows the County population projections. Those projections were developed by extrapolating occupancy permit data from 1992 -2015 and projecting them forward to 2036 as shown on Table 6.8b. Occupancy permit data from 1992 to 2015 generally follow a shape of a bell-curve. Following that same trend leads to a projected additional 20,840 dwelling units from 2016 to 2036. The number of dwelling units is multiplied by a factor of 2.79 persons per household to estimate the population.

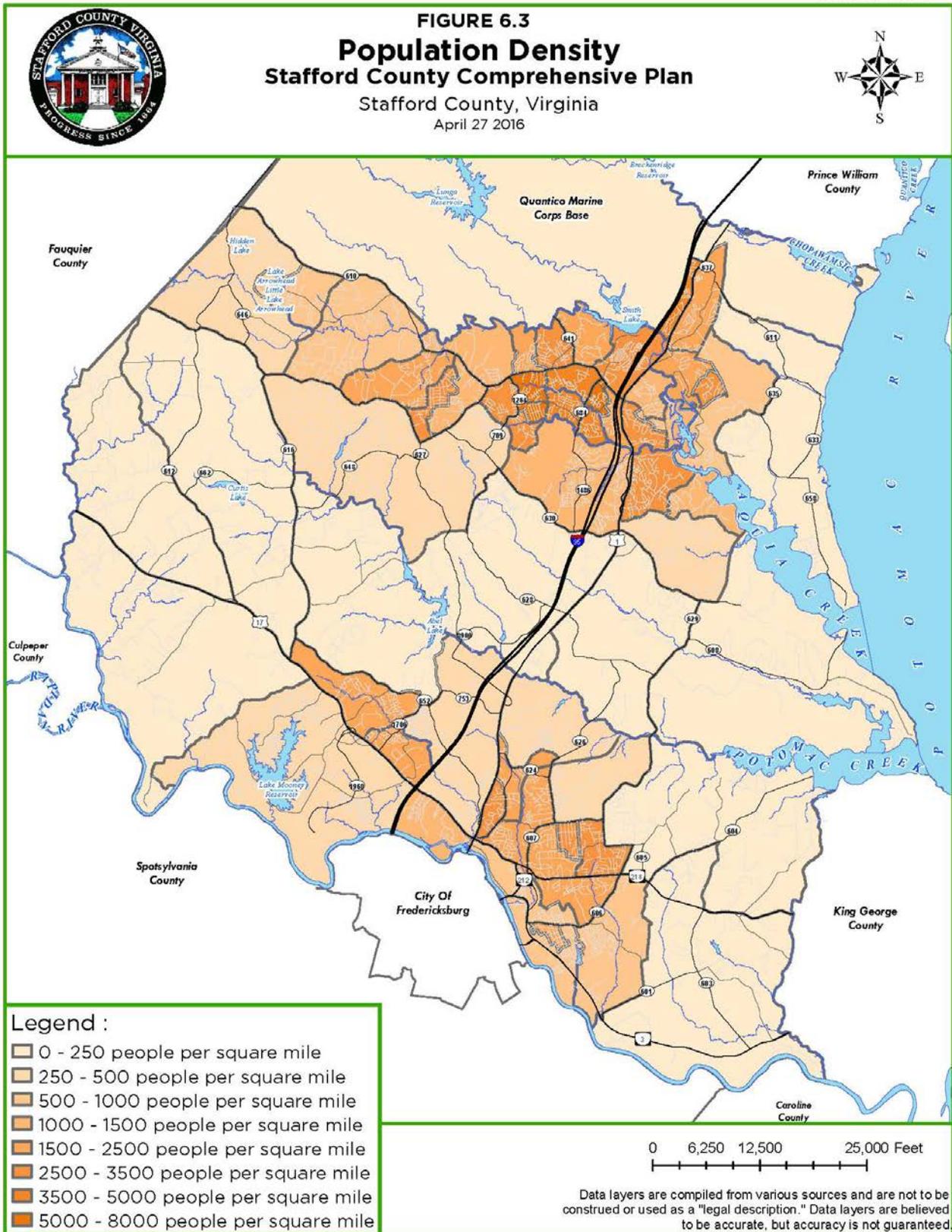
**Table 6.7 County-Based Population Projections**

Year	US Census Bureau	Weldon Cooper Center	Stafford County Planning and Zoning	
	(Decennial Census)	(July 1 Population Estimates)	(July 1 Population Projections) - As of March 2016	New Residential Units
2010	128,961			
2011		131,067		
2012		132,719		
2013		135,141		
2014		138,230		
2015		140,176		
2016			142,380	790
2017			144,584	900
2018			147,095	1,000
2019			149,885	1,100
2020			152,954	1,200
2021			156,302	1,250
2022			159,790	1,300
2023			163,417	1,250
2024			166,904	1,200
2025			170,252	1,150
2026			173,461	1,100
2027			176,530	1,000
2028			179,320	950
2029			181,970	900
2030			184,481	875
2031			186,922	875
2032			189,364	900
2033			191,875	950
2034			194,525	1,000
2035			197,315	1,150
2036			200,524	
			Total	<b>20,840</b>

Table 6.8 County Residential Occupancy Permit Projection



Produced: 5/3/2016



NAD 1983 HARN StatePlane Virginia North FIPS 4501 Feet

## 6.2.2 Composition

In 2010, Stafford County's population was primarily white (74.6%, not including individuals of Hispanic origin) and there was an almost equal proportion of males and females. Among comparison areas, Fauquier County and Spotsylvania had less racially diverse populations (87% and 80% white, respectively), while Prince William County had the most racially diverse population (65% white). Although Stafford County was predominantly white in 2010, the percentage of non-whites increased between 2000 (20%) and 2010 (25%). Most comparison areas experienced a similar pattern of increased diversity. The table that follows summarizes major population characteristics in 2010.

Table 6.9 Population Characteristics 2010 (Stafford County VA, and Comparison Areas)

	Stafford County	Fauquier County	King George County	Prince William County	Spotsylvania County	City of Fredericksburg	State of Virginia
White*	74.6	87.4	77.5	64.9	77.9	68.2	70.8
Black*	17.8	8.2	17.3	21.4	15.9	24.1	19.7
Hispanic	10.5	6.9	4.2	21.5	8.3	11.1	8.6
Male:	50.3	49.4	50.5	49.8	49.1	45.7	49.2
Female:	49.7	50.6	49.5	50.2	50.9	54.3	50.8
Under 18 years	27.1	24.2	26.6	28.3	26	20.3	22.6
18 to 34 years	23.5	11.1	20.1	22.7	20.4	37.8	23.1
35 to 50 years	24.9	28.3	23.6	24.5	23.5	17.9	21.6
50 to 64 years	17.3	22	18.4	16.6	18.5	14.3	19.3
Over 65 years	7.2	14.4	11.3	7.9	11.6	9.7	13.4
Median Age	34.6	41.3	36.6	33.5	36.4	28.8	37.5
High School Diploma	24.8	27.6	28.9	21.2	32	25.6	25.2
Associate Degree	8	7.9	7.4	7.3	7	5.7	7.5
Bachelor's Degree	22.1	20.5	18.4	22.8	17.3	19.5	20.5
Post Graduate Degree	14.1	12.8	12.7	15.3	10.8	15.6	14.7

In 2010, 27% of the population in Stafford County was under the age of 18. This was a higher percentage than all comparison areas except for Prince William County. At the other end of the spectrum, Stafford County had a lower percentage (7.2%) of residents over 65 years of age than all comparison areas. The median age of residents in Stafford was 34.6 years, which was lower than Fauquier, King George, and Spotsylvania Counties and the state as a whole. The percentage of the population in Stafford County that was 50 years of age or older increased from 19% in 2000 to 25.5% in 2010.

Stafford County residents, 25 years and older, had a higher level of educational attainment than most comparison areas in 2010. Forty-four percent of residents had earned an associate degree

or higher and 36% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Among comparison areas, only Prince William County had a higher percentage of residents with an associate degree or higher (45%).

### 6.2.3 Findings

- Stafford County's population has more than doubled over every 20 year period between 1950 and 2010, and by more than 39% between 2000 and 2010.
- The Virginia Employment Commission projects that Stafford County's population will grow at more than four times the rate of the State as a whole between 2010 and 2040.
- The County believes that the Virginia Employment Commission population growth projections are too high based on past housing growth trends.
- In 2010, the median age of residents in Stafford County was 34.6 years, which was lower than the State as a whole.
- Stafford County residents had a higher level of educational attainment than most comparison areas in 2010.

## 6.3 Housing

Housing conditions in Stafford County are evaluated to ensure that there is adequate housing for current and future residents of the County. This is accomplished through a review of the total number of housing units, total units in each structure, median age of the housing stock, housing occupancy and vacancy, number of building permits issued, value of housing and median contract rent.

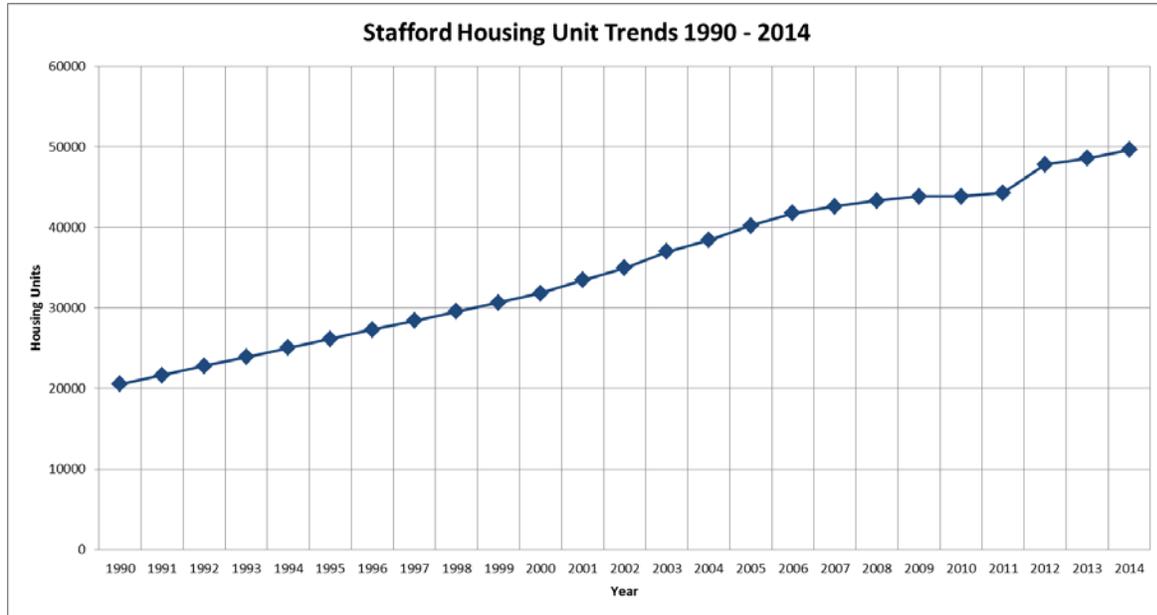
### 6.3.1 *Housing Availability*

The US Census Bureau estimated that the County had 45,107 housing units in 2014. More than half of the housing stock was constructed since 1990. 94.8 % were occupied while 5.2% were vacant. Vacancy rates were higher for rental properties at 6.2% compared to owner occupied dwelling which were 1.9%. 84% of the dwellings had three or more bedrooms. Owner occupied households had significantly more people in them 3.09 compared to renter occupied homes 2.98. 87.5% of renters paid a gross rent of \$1,000 or more. Rents in the County are considered to be relatively high compared to incomes where 52.6% of renters pay 30% or more of their income on gross rent costs. This 2014 estimate is higher than the 2010 census results showing 51.7% percent of renters paying more than 30% of incomes on rent.

Over the last twenty five years, housing units in the County increased from 20,529 in 1990 to 45,107 in 2014. Over the ten year period from 1990 to 2000, the County experienced an annual increase of 1,129 housing units. During the last decade from 2000 to 2010, an annual increase of 1,205 housing units occurred. While the unit increase has been consistent from decade to decade, the rate has slowed from 2006 to 2009, when the County experienced an annual increase of 684 housing units. In recent years, from 2010 to 2015, the pace of residential growth has increased to an average 711 units per year. The annual housing unit data is provided in Table 6.9 and the accompanying chart.

Table 6.10 Annual Housing Trends - Stafford County VA (1990-2015)

Year	Housing Units	Year	Housing Units
1990	20529	2003	36982
1991	21658	2004	38427
1992	22787	2005	40220
1993	23916	2006	41787
1994	25045	2007	42595
1995	26175	2008	43322
1996	27304	2009	43838
1997	28433	2010	43873
1998	29562	2011	44302
1999	30691	2012	47814
2000	31820	2013	48580
2001	33479	2014	49650
2002	34973	2015	50,424



Source: Stafford County GIS

A variety of housing is available in Stafford County, but the predominant housing type is the single-family detached dwelling. Single-family detached units accounted for 74% of all dwellings, followed by single-family attached at 13%. Among comparison areas, Fauquier County, Spotsylvania County, and King George County all had higher percentages of single-family units. The City of Fredericksburg had the lowest percentage of single-family units (41%), which was consistent with its urbanized, higher density setting.

The housing stock in Stafford County is relatively new. Over 50% of the homes in Stafford County were constructed after 2004 (the median year of homes constructed in the County). Among comparison areas, Spotsylvania, King George, and Prince William all have experienced the same housing growth trend.

**Table 6.11 Units in Structure – 2010 (Stafford County and Comparison Areas)**

	Stafford County	Fauquier County	King George County	Prince William County	Spotsylvania County	City of Fredericksburg	State of Virginia
1 unit - Detached	74.8	83.4	77.10	56	78.4	41.2	62.1
1 unit - Attached	13.6	7.1	4.80	26.7	8.7	10.9	10.8
2 Units	0.3	1.5	1.70	0.5	0.2	2.9	1.7
3 or 4 Units	0.8	1.2	1.50	1.1	0.5	3.5	2.7
5 to 9 Units	2.2	0.7	2.50	2.4	1	6.6	4.7
10 to 19 Units	3.5	2.3	2.90	9.1	2	18.6	5.7
20 or more	2.4	1.6	0.50	3.3	3.4	16	6.9
Mobile Home	2.5	2.2	9.00	0.9	5.6	0.4	5.4
Boat, RV, Van, etc.	0	0	0.00	0	0.1	0	0
Median Year Home Built	2004	1986	2005	2008	1998	1972	1983

Source: US Census

Residential and commercial development is continuing in Stafford County. The table that follows indicates the number of new construction permits that were issued between 2000 and 2007. Residential construction permits have been issued for single-family, mobile home/agriculture, townhouse, duplex, multi-family and condominium dwellings. New residential development remained strong through 2005, but has since experienced a decline, consistent with the national economic slowdown.

The level of new home construction remained flat during 2008 – 2012. The year 2013 saw a spike in new home starts but was at a lower level than seen in the early part of the previous decade. Home construction for 2014 and 2015 were level but, at a rate higher than earlier in this decade. Commercial construction activity dropped off significantly in 2009 and remained relatively slow and steady during the first half of this decade.

**Table 6.12 Permit Activity 2000-2015 (In Millions of Dollars)**

<b>New Construction</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Residential	1,970	1,581	2,096	1,398	1,981	1,641	860	758	413	516
Residential Construction Value	\$205	\$227	\$293	\$243	\$315	\$375	\$239	\$188	\$87	\$114
Commercial	24	27	44	151	68	86	81	60	47	38
Commercial Construction Value	\$15	\$51	\$15	\$55	\$45	\$552	\$96	\$110	\$51	\$33
<b>New Construction</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>				
Residential	546	466	640	1,004	825	785				
Residential Construction Value	\$111	\$98	\$143	\$219	\$197	\$177				
Commercial	11	14	11	14	13	13				
Commercial Construction Value	\$12	\$66	\$20	\$50	\$36	\$14				

Source: Department of Public Works

### 6.3.2 Value and Rent

In 2010, the median value of a home in Stafford County was \$299,300, which was higher than Spotsylvania and King George Counties. The median monthly contract rent was \$1,428, which was higher than all comparison areas except Prince William County (\$1,477). Median rents roughly doubled during the last decade from \$707 to \$1,428. Renters spent more of their income on housing than homeowners in 2010. This was true in all comparison areas.

**Table 6.13 Housing Value and Median Rent - 2010 (Stafford County, VA and Comparison Areas)**

	Stafford County	Fauquier County	King George County	Prince William County	Spotsylvania County	City of Fredericksburg	State of Virginia
Less than \$50,000	3.1	2.8	6.4	2	3.5	0.8	5.8
\$50,000 to \$99,999	1.3	1.6	2.2	1.5	3.5	4.4	7.6
\$100,000 to \$149,999	3.6	3.1	4.4	5.1	7.4	5.5	10.8
\$150,000 to \$199,999	10.6	7.9	10.3	9.5	19.3	9	14.5
\$200,000 to \$299,999	31.6	22.1	33.4	26.8	31.3	25.9	22.7
\$300,000 to \$499,999	39.3	39.2	32.6	41	27.1	43.6	22.6
\$500,000 to \$999,999	9.6	18.6	9.8	13.4	7.2	8.7	13.7
\$1,000,000 or more	0.8	4.7	0.8	0.6	0.7	2.1	2.2
Median (dollars)	299300	350600	278900	321400	249100	314300	244600
SELECTED MONTHLY OWNER COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME (SMOCAPI) greater than 30 Percent	33.3	34.2	28.7	31.6	31.7	14.6	12.2
Median Contract Rent	1428	1138	1109	1477	1285	1045	1087
GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME (GRAPI) greater than 30 percent	51.7	43.9	40.1	51.1	51.1	54.7	50.1

Source: US Census

According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, housing is generally considered affordable if costs do not exceed 30% of household annual income. In 2010, Stafford County had a higher median home value and median contract rent than most comparison areas. In 2010, 51% of renters and 33% of home owners in Stafford County spent 30% or more of their income on housing; this is a significant increase from 2000 which had 32% and 21% respectively.

#### Recent Real Estate Trends

To assess real estate trends in recent years, home sales data from Metropolitan Regional Information Systems, Inc. was reviewed. Home sales data was derived from public records provided by County offices.

As indicated in the table that follows, average sale price and home sales volume peaked between 2005 and 2006, after which a severe drop occurred. From 2005 to 2007, home sales volume was cut in half, decreasing from 2,962 units to 1,473 units. Average sale prices declined throughout what was referred to as the “Great Recession”. Home prices have seen a gradual upward trend from 2012 to 2015. The median price of a home in the spring of 2015 was \$295,000 with 761 homes listed for sale.

### 6.3.3 Findings

- Over 96% of housing units in Stafford County were occupied in 2010 and 80.6% were owner-occupied. 2014 Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau show a continued reduction to 76.6% which is still considerably higher than regional estimates of 63%.
- In 2010, most dwellings in Stafford County were single-family detached units.
- The amount of new residential development declined from 2005 to 2012.
- In 2010, 51.7% of renters in Stafford spent more than 30% of their income on rent.

## 6.4 Economy

The economy of Stafford County is evaluated through an examination of characteristics such as labor force, industries of employment, occupations of residents and their income levels. Employment characteristics reveal which industries are important to the economic viability of the locality. The income characteristics of residents are an indicator of the County's financial stability and its ability to pay for governmental services. Multiple income characteristics are usually examined because no one statistic accurately demonstrates the economic character of an area.

### 6.4.1 Labor Force

In 2010, Stafford County had a higher percentage (71%) of its residents 16 years of age or older in the labor force than all comparison areas except Prince William County. The size of the labor force provides an indication of the availability of workers in the community for businesses seeking to relocate into the area.

**Table 6.14 Labor Force Characteristics (Stafford County, VA and Comparison Areas)**

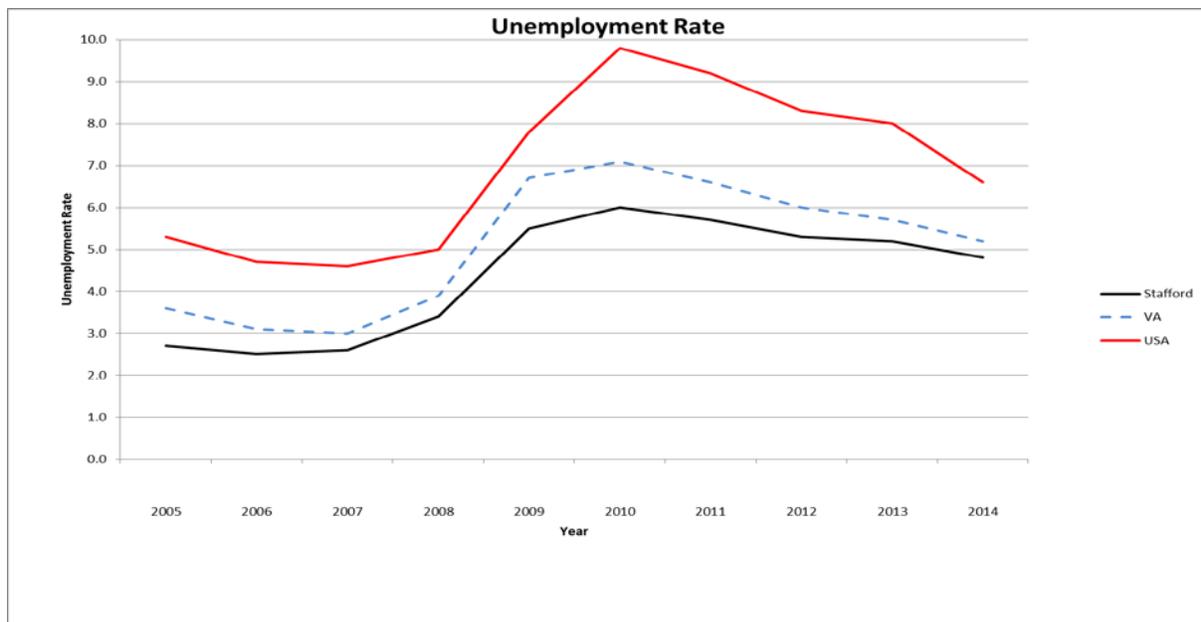
	Stafford County	Fauquier County	King George County	Prince William County	Spotsylvania County	City of Fredericksburg	State of Virginia
In labor force	70544	35768	12770	233726	65097	13777	4303611
Unemployed	4365	2264	880	14444	4477	1501	4365
Percent in Labor Force	71.10%	69%	69.80%	75.40%	68.50%	65.50%	66.70%
Percent in Labor Force Unemployed	4.40%	4.40%	4.80%	4.70%	4.70%	7.10%	4.70%
total	74909	38032	13650	248170	69574	15278	4307976

Source: US Census 2013 American Communities Survey

The unemployment rate is an indicator of the level of employment in the area. The graph that follows shows that between 1990 and 2005, Stafford County has consistently had a lower unemployment rate than both the State and Nation as a whole.

**Table 6.15 Unemployment Rate 2005 - 2014**

Unemployment rates	Stafford	VA	USA	
2005	2.7	3.6	5.3	
2006	2.5	3.1	4.7	
2007	2.6	3	4.6	
2008	3.4	3.9	5	
2009	5.5	6.7	7.8	
2010	6	7.1	9.8	
2011	5.7	6.6	9.2	
2012	5.3	6	8.3	
2013	5.2	5.7	8	
2014	4.8	5.2	6.6	
US Department of Labor - Local Area Unemployment Statistics				
Virginia Employment Commission				



### 6.4.2 At-Place Employment

In 2010, the primary employment sector in Stafford County was public administration (20.4%). Stafford County had a higher percentage of jobs in this employment sector than all comparison communities except King George County (24.2%). Other important employment sectors for Stafford County were educational services (18.4%), professional services (15.4%), and retail trade (10.4%).

**Table 6.16 Industries of Employment 2010 (Stafford County, VA and Comparison Areas)**

	Stafford County	Fauquier County	King George County	Prince William County	Spotsylvania County	City of Fredericksburg	State of Virginia
<b>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining</b>	0.4%	3%	1.0%	0.3%	0.8%	0.2%	1.10%
<b>Construction</b>	7.2%	10%	5.8%	9.0%	8.0%	4.9%	6.50%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	3.5%	5%	4.8%	3.6%	3.8%	4.8%	7.50%
<b>Wholesale trade</b>	1.5%	2%	1.6%	1.3%	2.4%	2.2%	2.00%
<b>Retail trade</b>	10.4%	11%	10.3%	10.7%	12.0%	11.6%	10.80%
<b>Transportation and warehousing, and utilities</b>	4.3%	4%	2.6%	4.5%	4.6%	3.1%	4.10%
<b>Information</b>	1.6%	3%	0.8%	2.3%	2.0%	1.9%	2.20%
<b>Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing</b>	4.6%	6%	4.4%	5.7%	6.3%	7.8%	6.40%
<b>Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services</b>	15.4%	16%	17.0%	18.9%	12.4%	12.0%	14.70%
<b>Educational services, and health care and social assistance</b>	18.4%	20%	15.1%	17.3%	21.6%	22.8%	21.50%
<b>Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services</b>	7.4%	5%	7.7%	7.6%	9.0%	14.0%	8.60%
<b>Other services, except public administration</b>	4.9%	6%	4.5%	5.0%	4.8%	4.1%	5.30%
<b>Public administration</b>	20.4%	10%	24.2%	13.7%	12.4%	10.7%	9.30%

Source: US Census

The highest paying employment sectors in 2004 were management of companies and enterprises (\$82,539), utilities (\$73,040), and finance and insurance (\$73,010), based on national average salaries generated by the US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. The lowest paying industries of employment were accommodation and food services (\$19,934), agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (\$26,371) and retail trade (\$28,216). Employment sectors important to Stafford County had the following average salaries: public administration \$46,941; retail trade \$28,216; construction \$41,945; and health care and social assistance \$40,328.

#### Occupations of Stafford County Residents

In 2010, the predominant occupation types for Stafford County residents, regardless of their work location, were professional and management related occupations (46%), management,

sales and office occupations (22%), and service occupations (17%). Stafford County had the highest percentage of professional and management related occupations noted among comparison areas.

**Table 6.17 Occupations – 2010 (Stafford County, VA and Comparison Areas)**

OCCUPATION	Stafford County	Fauquier County	King George County	Prince William County	Spotsylvania County	City of Fredericksburg	State of Virginia
<b>Management, professional, and related occupations</b>	45.8	43.9	44.9	43.6	39	40	42.3
<b>Service occupations</b>	16.7	13.9	16.2	17	18.2	21	16.6
<b>Sales and office occupations</b>	22.4	23.3	22	23.1	24.6	26.1	23
<b>Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations</b>	9.0	11.4	10.2	9.8	9.2	5.8	8.6
<b>Production, transportation, and material moving occupations</b>	6.1	7.6	6.7	6.6	8.9	7.1	9.4

### 6.4.3 Resident Income

Per capita and median household incomes are two measures of a community's wealth. Per capita income better reflects the wealth of the community while median household income better reflects the distribution of income within the community. Per capita income is determined by dividing the total income of residents by the population. The median household income is the level at which the number of households with higher incomes is equal to those with less.

In 2010, Stafford County had a median household income of \$97,110 and a per capita income of \$36,574. Among comparison areas, Stafford County had the highest median income except for Prince William County and the highest per capita income except for Fauquier County. Stafford County had the lowest poverty rate (5.1%) among all comparison areas and the City of Fredericksburg had the highest (18.6%).

**Table 6.18 Income Characteristics – 2010 (Stafford County, VA and Comparison Areas)**

	Stafford County	Fauquier County	King George County	Prince William County	Spotsylvania County	City of Fredericksburg	State of Virginia
Less than \$10,000	2.30	3.0%	240.0%	2.2%	300.0%	9.6	5.7
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1.60	1.6%	2.8%	1.4%	2.3%	6.3	4.1
\$15,000 to \$24,999	3.10	5.5%	5.5%	3.9%	6.8%	9.2	8.5
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5.10	6.4%	7.7%	4.8%	6.3%	10.6	8.7
\$35,000 to \$49,999	9.00	10.2%	8.4%	8.6%	11.0%	16.4	12.4
\$50,000 to \$74,999	16.00	15.3%	17.0%	15.7%	18.6%	17.4	17.6
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.90	14.0%	15.8%	14.4%	14.9%	10.0	12.9
\$100,000 to \$149,999	22.90	22.4%	21.4%	22.4%	21.4%	11.1	15.4
\$150,000 to \$199,999	13.90	10.9%	11.0%	13.8%	10.3%	5.3	7.1
\$200,000 or more	11.30	10.8%	8.0%	12.9%	5.5%	4.2	7.6
Median Household Income (2010)	97110.00	88409	81753	98071	91480	47040.0	76754
Per Capita Income (2010)	36574.00	39600	34234	37401	31360	27222.0	33.493
Percent below Poverty	5.10	6%	7.1%	6.3%	7.6%	18.6	11.3

Source: US Census

According to the US Census Bureau, Stafford County's median household income in 2010 was \$97,110 compared to \$76,754 within the State as a whole. Census Bureau estimates from 2014 show the median household income increasing to \$98,721.

#### *6.4.4 Business Activity*

The number of businesses in Stafford County grew by 38% between 2000 and 2005, from 1,394 to 1,928, according to statistics provided by the Stafford County Department of Economic Development. Between March 2000 and March 2005, 6,336 new jobs were created, a 27% increase. During the same time period, the State's rate of new job creation was 2% annually compared to the County's rate of 5%. At-place employment continues to rise in the County. Stafford County led the state in job growth from 2009 to 2014. In 2015, the County surpassed 40,000 jobs.

**Table 6.19 Major Private Sector Employers – 2010 (Stafford County, VA)**

<b>Firm</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Number of Employment</b>
GEICO	Insurance	1000+
Stafford County Schools	Education	1000+
Stafford County Government	Government	1000+
U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation	Government	1000+
U.S. Department of Defense	Government	1000+
Walmart	Retail	500-999
McLane Mid-Atlantic	Trucking	500-999
Stafford Hospital	Hospital	500-999
Intuit	Merchant Wholesaler	250-499
Greencore formerly Market Fare Foods)	Food Production	250-499
Giant	Groceries	250-499
Hilldrup Moving and Storage	Trucking/Headquarters	250-499
YMCA	Recreation	250-499
Food Lion/Bloom/Bottom Dollar	Groceries	250-499
Manheim Remarketing Inc	Merchant Wholesaler	100-249
Qinetiq North America	Consulting	100-249
Mantech Systems Engineering	Prof, Scientific and Techn. Services	100-249
One on One Care	Nursing Care	100-249
Princeton Data Source	Prof, Scientific and Techn. Services	100-249
VDOT	Government	100-249
Patricio Enterprises, Inc.	Prof, Scientific and Techn. Services	100-249
Booz Allen Hamilton	Prof, Scientific and Techn. Services	100-249

Source: Stafford County Economic Development

### *6.4.5 Marine Corps Base Quantico*

Marine Corps Base Quantico is home to the Marine Corps Combat Development Command and the Presidential Helicopter Squadron. Quantico occupies 32,753 acres in Stafford County. Over 6,000 Marines are stationed at the base and most live with their families in the surrounding area. The Base also employs approximately 7,500 civilians. Quantico has an annual military payroll of \$348 million and an annual civilian payroll of \$471 million. The FBI Academy and the FBI National Crime Lab are also located on the Quantico Marine Corps Base. The FBI National Crime Lab relocated to Stafford in 2003 and has over 900 employees. The US Drug Enforcement Agency has a facility on-site. The Military Investigative Services for the various branches of the military have nearly 4,000 employees at the Russell-Knox Complex. The Marine Corps University and several advanced training schools are also located at Quantico. The Marine Corps Systems Command is a tenant on the base that has both civilian and military employees.

### 6.4.6 *Agriculture*

Although agriculture's economic role has been diminished in the County, it is still a defining characteristic of the area. According to the 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture, the most recent year for which information was available, Stafford County had 215 farms in operation that occupied 15,260 acres of land. The average farm size was 71 acres and the market value of production was \$2,739,000. Each of these statistics showed an increase between 1997 and 2002, and began to decrease in 2007. In comparison with the last census in 2007, the number of farms in operation decreased from 233, the number of acres being farmed decreased from 19,816, the average farm size decreased from 85 acres and the market value of production saw a slight decrease from \$2,798,000.

### 6.4.7 *Comprehensive Economic Strategic Plan*

The Economic Development Strategic Action Plan was most recently readopted in 2015. This plan built on the previous 2006 version and the Economic Development 10-Point Plan from 2011. The economic climate for the County was reevaluated and growth trends were identified. This 2015 plan identified 10 Goals for the future:

**Goal 1:** Continue to expand business growth and employment becoming a more progressive center of employment within the greater Washington DC Metropolitan Area.

**Goal 2:** Accelerate infrastructure upgrades serving critical commercial and industrial sites.

**Goal 3:** Continue to seek new and upscale retail and restaurants within the County both to attract new development and to enhance the quality of life of County residents.

**Goal 4:** Continue to build and support technology and entrepreneurship growth and fully support the STRC Initiative to retain and grow high-tech jobs and businesses.

**Goal 5:** Continue Redevelopment Area programs focusing on creating a sense of place.

**Goal 6:** Leverage and grow the medical/allied health care base.

**Goal 7:** Focus the County's objectives and continue to be more proactive in building an enviable community.

**Goal 8:** Promote economic development and business expansion while living the Comprehensive Plan's vision of preserving rural land outside of the growth area.

**Goal 9:** Consider available and appropriate riverfront areas in the County for compatible commercial development.

**Goal 10:** Continue progress improving the overall development review and permitting processes, keeping taxes low, in an effort to further our "business friendly community" goals.

Progress towards these goals are measured monthly and quarterly and tracked by the Economic Development Department.

#### 6.4.8 Findings

- Stafford County has had a significantly lower unemployment rate than the State and the Nation for over a decade and a half
- In 2010, the primary employment sector for residents of Stafford County was education, health and social services
- The most common occupation type for County residents in 2010 was professional and management related occupations at 46% of the workforce
- Stafford County had one of the highest median income and lowest poverty rate among comparison areas in 2010
- Job creation occurred at a faster rate in Stafford County than the State as a whole from 2000 to 2015
- The County's Economic Development Strategic Action Plan identified a series of 10 goals to be monitored and measured aimed at increasing the County's economic competitiveness, increasing employment opportunities and diversifying the local economy