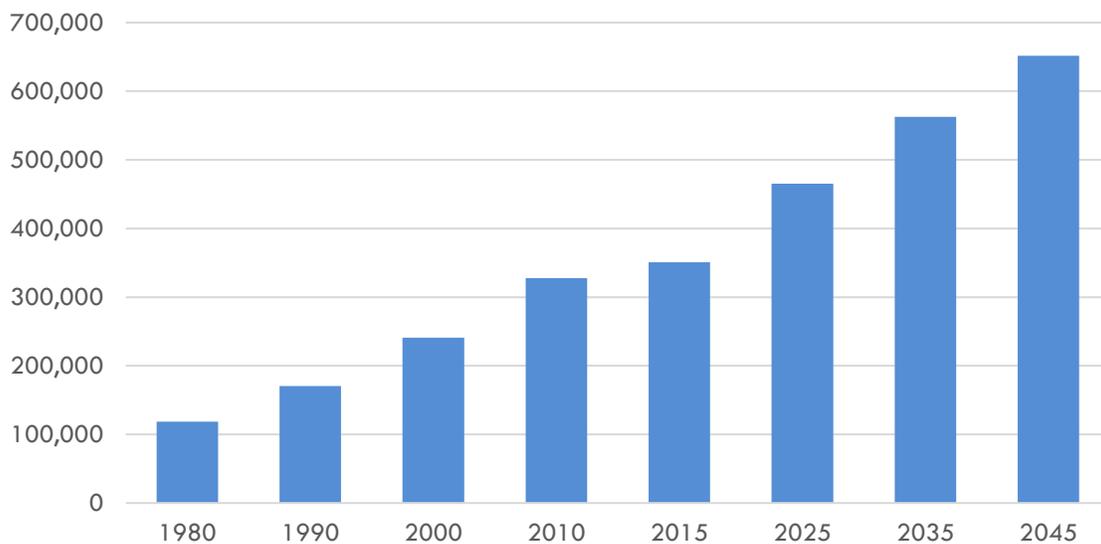


## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND

The George Washington Region (GW Region) continues to be one of the fastest growing regions in the Commonwealth of Virginia. For reference, the GW Region consists of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania and Stafford Counties as well as the City of Fredericksburg. Population increases bring pressure and stress on all forms of infrastructure, none more notably than the transportation system. If the current projections looking out over the next 30 years come to fruition, the situation is only going to get worse. Figure 1, indicates the forecasted population for the Region up to 2045, and Table 1 breaks down the regional population data.

**Figure 1: George Washington Region Population Over Time**



**Table 1: George Washington Region Population Figures and Forecasts (2015-2045)**

	Virginia	GWRC % of State	GW Region	Caroline County	King George County	Spotsylvania County	Stafford County	City of Fredericksburg
<b>2015</b>	8,382,993	4.2%	350,516	29,788	24,602	128,991	140,168	26,967
<b>2025</b>	9,145,616*	5.1%	465,332	37,358	33,649	175,526	189,722	29,077
<b>2035</b>	9,874,244*	5.7%	562,631	43,593	40,506	216,791	229,231	32,510
<b>2045</b>	10,528,817*	6.2 %	651,761	48,590	46,981	253,622	266,811	35,757

\* Weldon Cooper Center for Public Services – University of Virginia, 2017

The population of the Region is slated to increase to a figure well over a half million people. To accommodate this anticipated increase, elected officials as well as state, regional and local government employees must plan for bicycle

and pedestrian facilities and work to integrate bicycle and pedestrian travel with other modes of transportation. Rather than having bicycle and pedestrian facility planning considered an afterthought behind facilities designed for motor vehicle use, they should be given equal attention. The planning of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the Region will serve an integral role in the future transportation network by offering a variety of modal choices; reducing local traffic volumes; providing increased access to transit facilities, employment/commercial centers, historical and cultural areas, recreational and educational facilities and residential areas; and broadly elevating the Region's all-encompassing quality of life.

Under present conditions, the GW Region is not conducive to bicycle and pedestrian travel. Barring the City of Fredericksburg, the lack of facilities, support infrastructure, and continually swelling traffic volumes on local roadways all contribute to the poor cycling and walking conditions in the Region. According to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey, roughly 1.6% of 169,696 individuals sampled in the Region reported walking or cycling to work. This is less than half of the national average during the same period (3.4%).

The *2045 George Washington Region Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* represents a coordinated effort among the George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC), the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (FAMPO), regional localities and local bicycle and pedestrian advocates to facilitate the development of a safe, comprehensive and connected regional network of on- and off-road bicycle and pedestrian corridors and related facilities. To assist with the planning process, FAMPO has re-established the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). The BPAC is composed of local and state government employees, interested community organizations (Spotsylvania Greenways Initiative, Fredericksburg Trails Alliance, etc.) and interested citizens. The committee acts as an advisory panel to help guide the planning process and review recommendations made by GWRC staff.

This Plan will become a component of FAMPO's *2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)* as required by Section 217 of Title 23 of the U.S. Code, which calls for "the integration of bicycling and walking into the transportation mainstream." The 2045 LRTP will build upon the planning done for FAMPO's 2040 LRTP, as well as new planning processes, to tackle an ever-changing transportation landscape.

## STUDY AREA

The Study Area of this plan (Figure 2) is the George Washington Region: Planning District (PD) 16. The Region includes the counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania, and Stafford, as well as the City of Fredericksburg. The Region is located approximately 50 miles south of Washington, D.C. and 50 miles north of Richmond. Interstate 95 bisects the Region from north to south.

The Virginia Planning District Commissions bordering the Region are: the Northern Virginia Planning Commission (PD 8) and the Rappahannock-Rapidan Planning Commission (PD 9) to the north; the Richmond Regional Planning Commission (PD 15) to the south; the Northern Neck Planning Commission (PD 17) to the east; and the Thomas Jefferson Planning Commission (PD 10) to the west. Additionally, the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, connected to the Region via U.S. 301, represents the regional planning and development organization across the Potomac River.

Figure 2: Map of the George Washington Region



## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The *2045 George Washington Region Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* was developed in a public process by means of the BPAC. The BPAC includes representatives from the jurisdictions located within the study area, VDOT, the National Park Service (NPS), advocacy groups and interested citizens.

The existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was adopted on April 15, 2013 as part of the adoption of the *2040 George Washington Region Long-Range Transportation Plan* and serves as a foundation for this iteration of the plan. In addition, comprehensive plans from GWRC member localities were utilized to form a complete document illustrating the current and needed multimodal infrastructure identified in this plan.

The public involvement portion of this plan was incorporated into the overall public outreach for the *2045 George Washington Region Long-Range Transportation Plan*. Community endorsement of a plan is critical to the long-term success of the recommended bicycle and pedestrian network improvements and the ability of regional localities to implement measures to uphold the plan. Agencies, stakeholders and the public were encouraged to provide input throughout the process.

## VISION STATEMENT

The Vision of the George Washington Region Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is to develop a comprehensive, destination-oriented network of safe, interconnected bicycle and pedestrian amenities that enhance quality of life and promote economic development.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL 1:

**Develop a complete network of walking and bicycling facilities throughout the George Washington Region with connections to facilities outside of it.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure the 2045 *George Washington Region Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* and bicycle and pedestrian plans from GWRC member jurisdictions are consistent with one another;
- Provide bicycle and pedestrian access to destination areas (e.g., residential, commercial, educational, recreational, and historical and cultural areas) throughout the Region;
- Provide support infrastructure (defined in Existing Conditions) for the bicycle and pedestrian network;
- Mitigate existing barriers along the identified routes;
- Where appropriate, incorporate provisions for bicycle and pedestrian facilities in roadway construction/improvement and land development projects;
- Provide bicycle and pedestrian access to schools, parks, transit facilities and commuter parking lots within five miles of the facility;
- Determine which type of improvement (shared-use path, bicycle lane, paved shoulder, etc.) is best suited for each route;
- Ensure regional connectivity to surrounding regions, the East Coast Greenway, the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail and U.S. Bicycle Route 1 is addressed accordingly; and
- Encourage developers to include appropriate facilities in the designs of their developments.

### GOAL 2:

**Ensure the network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities is widely accessible and safe for all users.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- Maintain and improve existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities to ensure safety;
- Provide a system that accommodates the skill level of all users;
- Minimize conflicts between cyclists, pedestrians and motor vehicles;
- Implement a network of paved improvements that meets or exceeds VDOT design standards;
- Implement traffic calming techniques where needed;
- Provide proper signage, markings, and signalization to assure safe and easy usage of the network;
- Keep bicycle and pedestrian facilities free of obstructions;

- Encourage localities and local law enforcement to keep detailed records of accident data involving bicycles and pedestrians so problem areas can be accurately addressed;
- Design a bicycle and pedestrian transportation network to address the needs of utilitarian and recreational users alike; and
- Ensure the system is Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) compliant.

**GOAL 3:**

**Develop strategies to increase public awareness of bicycling and walking as viable, safe transportation alternatives, as well as the rights and responsibilities of bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists.**

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Involve the public in the bicycle and pedestrian facility planning process through visioning sessions, public surveys, outreach, etc.;
- Increase public awareness of cyclists and pedestrians through educational outreach, informational brochures, regional transportation and tourism maps, etc.;
- Increase awareness of bicycle and pedestrian facilities through wayfinding, informational signage, etc.;
- Encourage the enforcement of posted speed limits, especially on roads with bicycle and pedestrian facilities;
- Work with local law enforcement to hold educational programs and develop a public awareness campaign for children and adults focusing on traffic laws affecting bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists alike; and
- Work with private organizations to facilitate public outreach and facility maintenance, and to seek funding opportunities from private sector donors.

**GOAL 4:**

**Integrate the implementation, design, finance and construction of recommended facilities into the FAMPO planning process, as appropriate.**

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Identify federal, state and local legislation, programs and policies affecting bicycle and pedestrian traffic;
- Develop a prioritized list of short-, medium- and long-term bicycle and pedestrian projects based on regional consensus;
- Develop cost estimates for each improvement that coincides with the implementation timeline;
- Develop a comprehensive list of funding programs from private and public sector entities;
- Maintain the ability to implement any part of the network should funding for a project or portion of a project become available;
- Devise a maintenance schedule for bicycle and pedestrian facilities that identifies potential responsible organizations/agencies; and
- Continuously amend FAMPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include bicycle and pedestrian projects.