

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, VISION STATEMENT, AND GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

The George Washington Region (Virginia Planning District 16) continues to be one of the fastest growing regions in the Commonwealth of Virginia. For reference, the George Washington 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 in the region, 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 George Washington Region (GW Region) up to 2045. **Table 1**, on the following page, is a breakdown of the regional population data.

Figure 1: George Washington Region Population Over Time

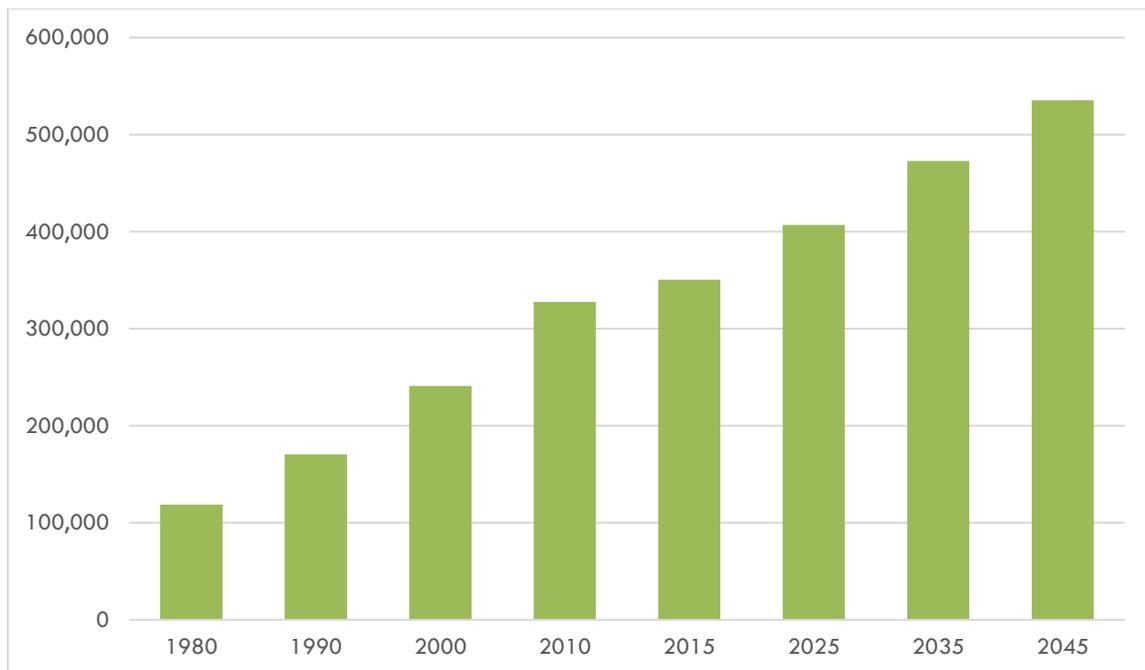


Table 1: George Washington Region Total Population Figures and Forecasts 2015 - 2045

	Virginia	GWRC % of State	GW Region	Caroline County	King George County	Spotsylvania County	Stafford County	City of Fredericksburg
2015	8,382,993	4.2%	350,535	29,792	24,600	128,998	140,176	26,969
2025	9,145,616*	4.4%	406,870	33,341	28,002	147,334	166,155	32,038
2035	9,874,244*	4.8%	472,999	37,908	32,724	170,595	195,137	36,635
2045	10,528,817*	5.1%	535,363	42,177	37,185	192,503	222,554	40,944

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

The population of the GW 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 begin to think about and conceive planning protocols to furnish bicycle and pedestrian facilities as well as assimilate bicycle and pedestrian travel with other modes of transportation. Rather than having bicycle and pedestrian facility planning considered an afterthought behind facilities designed exclusively for motor-vehicle use, they should be treated with equal attention. The rendering of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the GW 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, ancillary amenities, and continually swelling traffic volumes on local roadways all supply 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 GW Region reported walking or cycling to work. This is less than half of the national average during that same period (3.4%).

A safe, thorough bicycle and pedestrian network is a vital aspect of every transportation system. Apart from the obvious health benefits associated with cycling and walking, these activities can be utilized as a viable means of transportation, more importantly in the urbanized environs. With proper planning measures and roadway design, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure can also be implemented in suburban areas.

This update to the *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 activists 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.

PURPOSE

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. More importantly, it enhances the ability of communities to invest in projects that can improve the safety and practicality of bicycling and walking for everyday travel."*

The 2045 LRTP will build upon the planning policies identified in FAMPO's 2040 LRTP, as well as new planning processes the organization is implementing to tackle an ever-changing transportation landscape.

This plan takes a comprehensive approach to bicycle and pedestrian planning by:

- Identifying existing facilities/conditions within the region;
- Identifying the types of cyclists;
- Developing strategies for improving bicycle and pedestrian safety;
- Establishing recommendations for specific roadway improvements that will link users to desired destinations/services;
- Developing a regional primary system that will act as a connector between localities in the region, as well as other PDC's, via the East Coast Greenway, U.S. Bicycle Route 1, Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, etc.);
- Citing the VDOT and AASHTO (American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials) design guidelines;
- Developing a prioritized implementation schedule;
- Providing a complete account of available funding sources and opportunities;
- Providing a sample maintenance schedule for current and future bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

STUDY AREA

The Study Area of this plan is the entire 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 and runs through Caroline, Spotsylvania, and Stafford counties, as well as the City of Fredericksburg. Please refer to **Map 1** for a visual representation of the study area.

The GW Region is bordered to the north by the Northern Virginia Planning Commission (PD 8) and the Rappahannock-Rapidan Planning Commission (PD 9); to the south by the Richmond Regional Planning Commission (PD 15); to the east by the Northern Neck Planning Commission (PD 17); and to the west by the Thomas Jefferson Planning Commission (PD 10).

Map 1: George Washington Region



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The *George Washington Region Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* was developed in a public process by means of the BPAC. The BPAC includes staff from the jurisdictions located within the study area, staff from VDOT and 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, the *Spotsylvania Trailways Master Plan* and comprehensive plans from the regional 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.