FY 2012 Highlights & Annual Report

October 2012

Rappahannock-Rapidan
REGIONAL COMMISSION

Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission
420 Southridge Parkway, Suite 106
Culpeper, VA 22701
(540) 829-7450
www.rrregion.org

ABOUT THE RRRC

The purpose of Planning District, or Regional Commissions, as set forth 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 [regional 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****."*

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC), one of 21 such regional, or Planning District Commissions across the state, provides a variety of cost-effective, coordinated and professional technical services to its member local governments.

Such services, among others, include:

- Grant-writing, technical assistance, and program administration
- Project management
- Land use planning and mapping (GIS)
- Rural transportation planning, corridor study development, rideshare/commuter services delivery, bicycle and pedestrian facility planning, and public transit integration
- Environmental planning, including, water quality improvement efforts, such as Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development and Implementation, water supply and hazard mitigation planning, and open space and agricultural/rural character preservation

All are central facets of the Planning District/Regional Commission's role.

Across the Commonwealth, Planning District/Regional Commissions also collectively constitute an accessible data network .

Each serves as an Affiliate State Data Center for its respective region. In this role, they provide important information to local government, businesses and community residents.

Planning District/Regional Commissions are the designated point of contact for the Commonwealth's Intergovernmental Review process, and in turn provide vital regional input and feedback on proposed plans for a host of other agencies and entities.

The program work of Planning Districts/Regional Commissions has been meeting the needs of local and state government for over 40 years, with the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC) having served its member jurisdictions since the organization's founding in 1973.

Finally, commissions facilitate enhanced regional coordination and broad-based citizen participation in a cost effective manner.

REGIONAL COMMISSIONERS & STAFF

COMMISSIONERS

Culpeper County
John Coates
*Sue D. Hansohn, *Chairman*

Fauquier County
Paul S. McCulla
*Chester W. Stribling, *Executive Committee At-Large*

Madison County
Ernest Hoch
*Doris Lackey, *Executive Committee At-Large*

Orange County
Julie Jordan Summs
Grover C. Wilson, Jr.

Rappahannock County
*John W. McCarthy, *Treasurer*
Roger Welch

As of September 2012
*RRRC Executive Committee Member

Town of Culpeper
James Clements
Calvin "Chip" Coleman

Town of Gordonsville
*Robert Coiner, *Executive Committee At-Large*

Town of Madison
William L. Lamar

Town of Orange
*Harry Hopkins, Jr., *Vice-Chairman*
Greg Woods

Town of Remington
Evan "Skeet" Ashby

Town of The Plains
Robert Gurtler

Town of Warrenton
W. Hunt Cheatwood
Powell Duggan

Town of Washington
John Fox Sullivan

STAFF

Jeffrey Walker, AICP, *Executive Director*
Jenny Biché, *Mobility Program Coordinator*
Michelle Edwards, *Regional Planner II—Environmental*
Sue Hromyak, *Office Manager/RRRC Commuter Services*
Patrick Mauney, *GIS Program Manager*
Terry Snead, *Grants Administrator/Fiscal Officer*
Cathy Zielinski, *Human Services Planning Program Manager*

Opposite Page: Taste of the Mountains, Town of Madison, VA
Left: Brandy Station, VA
Cover, Top Left: Rappahannock River Canoe Landing
Cover, Lower Right: Rappahannock County, VA
Cover, Lower Left: Town of Washington, VA

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

Environmental planning is one of the cornerstones of the Regional Commission's overall mission and programs range from Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) studies to stormwater management and environmental education and outreach. Working with area jurisdictions and organizations, the Regional Commission works to provide leadership and project management on a variety of environmental issues that transcend local and regional boundaries.

Highlights this year included the second Living Lands Planning Workshop in April, the coordination of a local and regional data review and submission for the Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan of the Commonwealth's Chesapeake Bay TMDL initiative, the development of a second pet waste outreach program in Orange County and continued work towards developing a regional green infrastructure base map and sustainable agriculture needs assessment.

CHESAPEAKE BAY TMDL

The Regional Commission coordinated a local and regional review for the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and submitted data and comments to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) on behalf of its member jurisdictions in early 2012. The submittal included comments from several counties in the region, as well as John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District. RRRC also forwarded local urban stormwater BMP data, at localities' request, and a list of resources needed by the region for Bay TMDL implementation. The regional resource needs, which were identified by the RRRC Chesapeake Bay TMDL stakeholder committee, covered the following categories:

- Funding
- Authority
- Education
- Technical assistance

Local government participation in the WIP process, in accordance with state guidelines, was strictly voluntary.

Following the review and submissions by all PDCs in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, DCR aggregated individual locality information into the state-level plan, and submitted the final Phase II WIP to EPA in March 2012. This effort is just one step in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL process. Future efforts of the Chesapeake Bay states will focus on implementation of the Phase II WIP, with 2-year milestones and implementation reviews by EPA. The RRRC Chesapeake Bay TMDL stakeholder committee is on-hold until future developments warrant the committee's involvement.

2012 RRRC LIVING LANDS

The second RRRC Living Lands Planning Workshop, focusing on **Fostering Sustainable Agriculture for Economic Development**, was held on April 19, 2012 at the Daniel Technology Center at Germanna Community College in Culpeper, Virginia.

Sustainable agriculture does not only include organic farming or environmentally friendly farming practices. The USDA defines sustainable agriculture using the "3 Pillars of Sustainability:"

- Profit over the long term
- Stewardship of our nation's land, air and water
- Quality of life for farmers, ranchers and their communities

While sustainable agriculture is a broad topic, the primary goal of this workshop was to provide local government staff, officials, and community organizations with information and tools to foster sustainable agriculture in their communities, and by extension, across the region.

Participants discussed planning tools to preserve local farms and promote local food, and heard case studies from successful producers, community organizations and local governments. The workshop also provided a forum for the agricultural community to identify obstacles, as well as explore alternative approaches for enhanced implementation of sustainable agricultural practices.

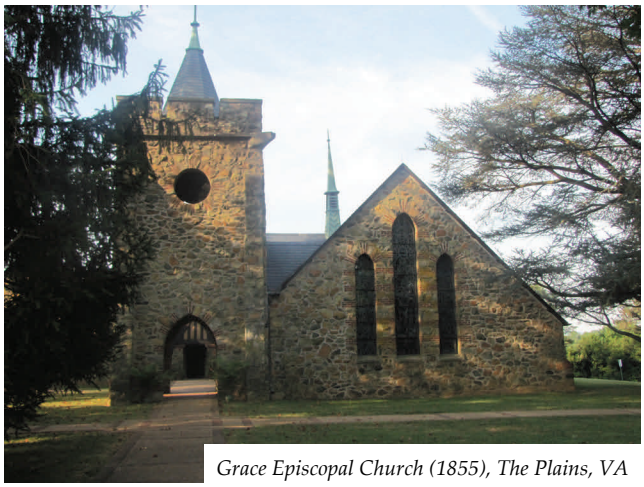
NINTH ANNUAL PLANNING WORKSHOP HELD AUGUST 9TH IN THE TOWN OF THE PLAINS

The ninth annual RRRC Living Towns Planning Workshop was held on August 9, 2012 at Grace Episcopal Church in the Town of The Plains. Workshop attendees heard presentations on diverse topics including recreational trails and their connection to community development and vitality, community engagement approaches and the importance of unique local museums, among a wide array of topics. Keynote speaker Jesse Richardson led a compelling discussion of the English trail system and the potential for replication in the United States.

View of award winning garden of Linda Hostetler; The Plains, VA

Speakers from Virginia Tech, Appalachian Sustainable Development, as well as the City of Charlottesville and the Town of Wytheville, Virginia shared success stories and lessons learned in integrating parks and trails with local and regional planning and economic development initiatives.

The 2012 Living Towns Workshop also provided an opportunity to experience and explore the historic Town of The Plains. Forlano's Market provided a delicious lunch and local historians gave a mid-day walking tour of historic sites in the town, including Grace Episcopal Church, Linda Hostetler's private gardens and the Afro-American Historical Society of Fauquier County.



Grace Episcopal Church (1855), The Plains, VA

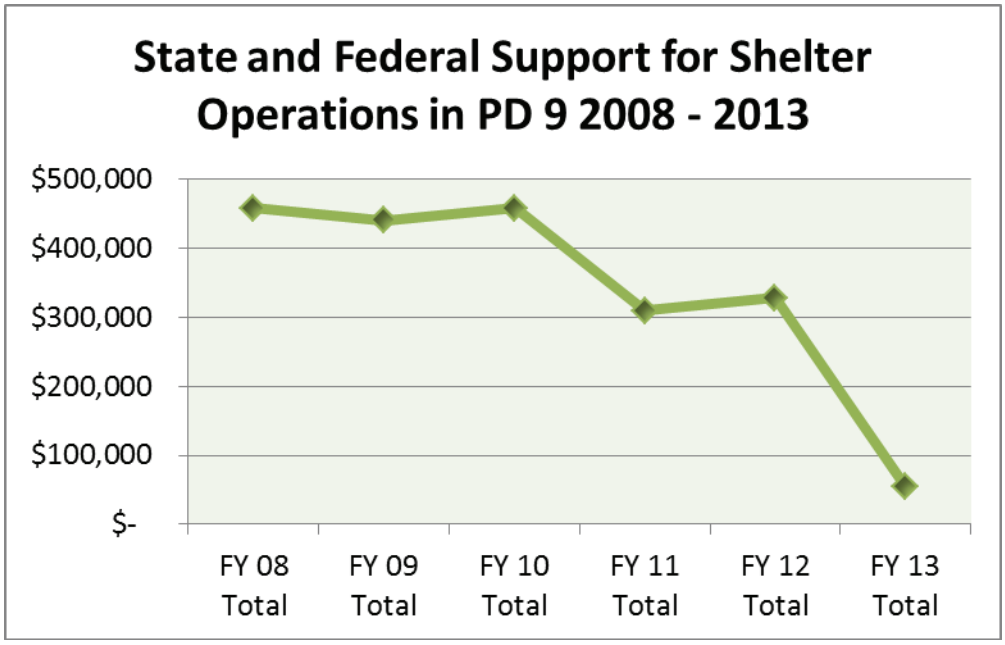
LIVING TOWNS HISTORY

The purpose of the Living Towns annual workshop series is to bring together representatives of the region's towns with those of public and private sector entities to network and exchange information on planning, revitalization and preservation of towns as vital economic living centers.

2002: Town of Orange
2003: Town of Warrenton
2004: Town of Remington
2005: Village of Marshall
2006: Town of Gordonsville
2007: Village of Sperryville
2008: Town of Madison
2009: Living Lands Workshop
2010: Town of Culpeper
2012: Town of The Plains

HOMELESS SERVICES

The economic recession of 2008 started with the collapse of the housing market. In 2012 the housing market is beginning to see the first signs of recovery, but parts of the Rappahannock-Rapidan Region are still feeling the impact of foreclosures, a decline in home values, and an increased number of individuals and families who have lost their homes or are in danger of becoming homeless. Unfortunately, at the same time as the need for housing assistance was increasing, the resources of the nonprofit organizations that provide assistance were being cut back. Federal and state funding priorities have shifted away from support for emergency shelters and transitional housing, and are now emphasizing Rapid Re-housing.



RRRC is playing a lead role in identifying and implementing a regional response to the changes in homeless services funding.

In fall of 2011, state and federal funding reductions for homeless programs became critical for local shelters. Greater Orange Community Development closed its emergency shelter and transitional program and other area shelter programs were likewise considering closing or scaling back their services.

RRRC, in collaboration with the regional continuum of care planning group, convened a regional forum on Homelessness and Affordable Housing (pictured below). The forum was attended by state and local government representatives, human services and homeless service providers, concerned community members, and formerly homeless. The result of the forum was a consensus that a regional solution is strongly needed. Shelter providers, local human services agencies and related stakeholders agreed to work together through the Foothills Housing Network (formerly the Piedmont Housing Network) to develop a coordinated intake and assessment process and collaborative approach for rapid re-housing.

Regional Homelessness & Affordable Housing Forum, December 2011

& AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In April of this year, RRRC, on behalf of the Foothills Housing Network, submitted applications for two Virginia Department of Housing grants. The first application, in conjunction with the Homeless Prevention Program (HPP), proposed to respond to area households in imminent danger of homelessness by providing rental and utility assistance and case management. The second, in conjunction with the Homeless Solutions Grant (HSG), set out to provide rental and housing stabilization assistance to homeless individuals and households. Both proposals were awarded funding, and are being administered by separate non-profits, with a coordinated intake and assessment process, and oversight by the Foothills Housing Network (FHN). Each commenced serving area families in August.

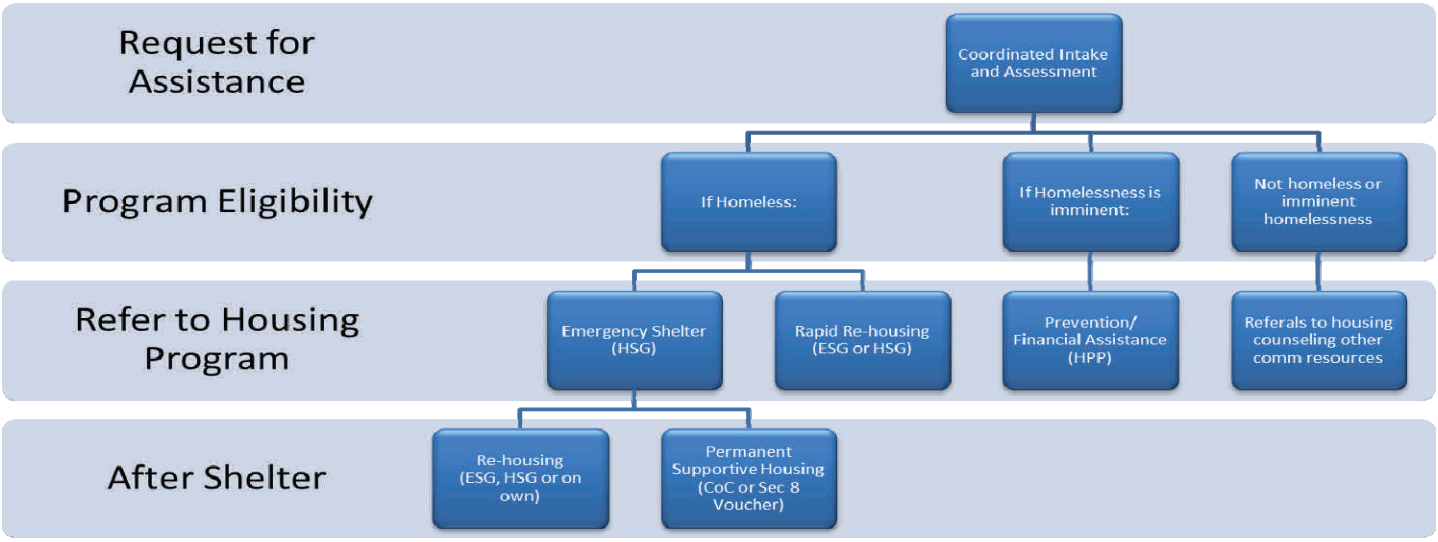
The HPP and HSG-funded efforts represent two preliminary outreach strategies of an ultimately comprehensive envisioned framework of homeless assistance, supportive services, and affordable housing that will need to come together to meet the needs of low-income and disadvantaged families and households in the Rappahannock-Rapidan Region. RRRC serves as the lead agency and fiscal agent for the Foothills Housing Network and is working with local leaders to explore best practices, secure funding and build a coordinated, cost-effective, and responsive regional housing organization.

WHAT IS RAPID RE-HOUSING?

Rapid Re-housing is a proven model for moving households as quickly as possible out of homelessness to permanent housing. While some individuals and families need longer-term and more intensive supports best provided in a shelter or transitional program, many homeless families only need short-term assistance with rent, deposits and housing location assistance. Families that are placed in permanent housing immediately without a shelter stay, or after a brief stay in shelter, usually fare better than under the older emergency-shelter-to transitional-housing model. Studies have also shown that the cost of service is lower under rapid re-housing and outcomes for children are improved.

The success of a rapid re-housing approach to homelessness depends on several factors: 1) Most obviously, appropriate affordable housing must be available. Even with grants that provide rental subsidies, the program requires landlords willing to rent to homeless families with less than stellar credit and employment histories. A regional Housing Locator service is an indispensible part of Rapid Re-housing. 2) Benefits are fashioned around the needs and strengths of each family or individual. There is not a guaranteed duration of assistance. Case management is offered, but mainstream supportive services such as employment search, education and training, mental health and substance abuse counseling must be identified and accessible from community resources. 3) A strong region-wide collaboration is needed to generate a collective impact on homelessness. Coordinated intake and assessment assures easy access to services, as well as transparency and equal treatment. A coordinating organization is necessary to bring all of these components together to create an effective program.

Proposed Rappahannock-Rapidan Rapid Re-Housing Program

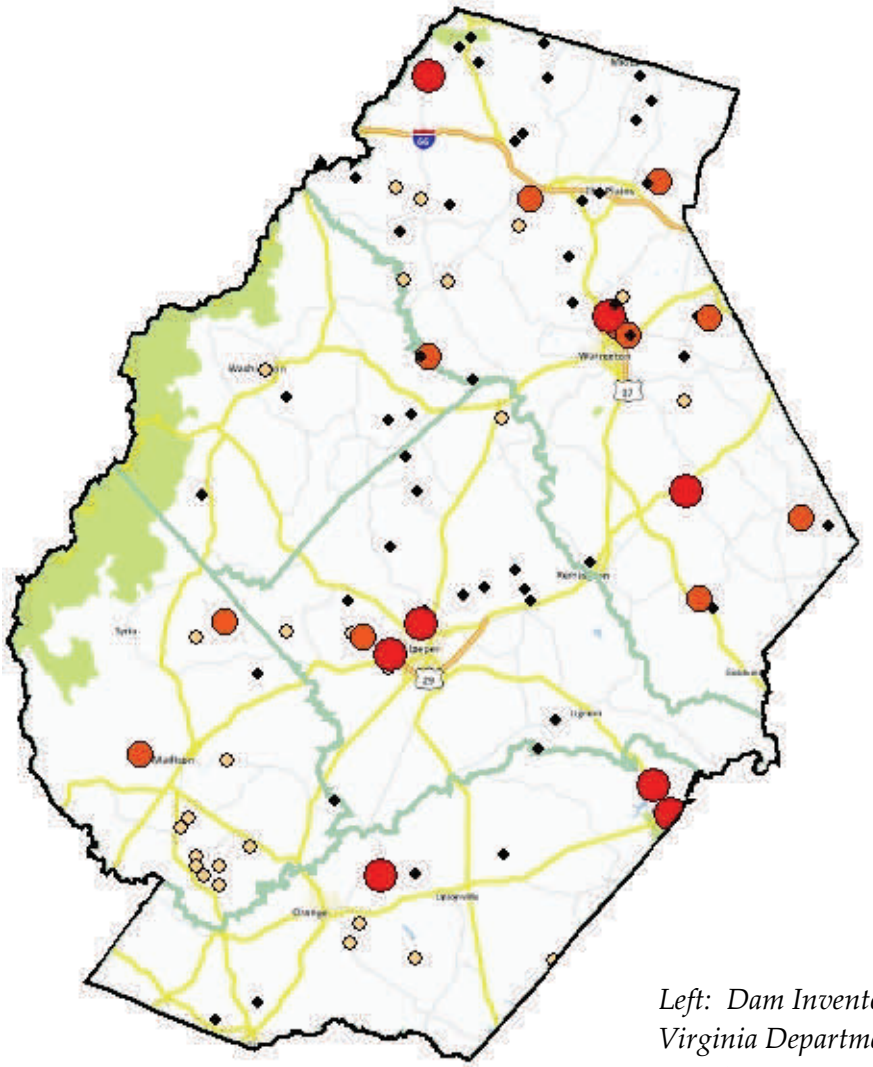


HAZARD MITIGATION

The Regional Commission, in coordination with participating member jurisdictions, completed a required update to the *Rappahannock-Rapidan Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan* and received acceptance of the update from the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 2012. The region's original plan, adopted at the local level in 2004 and 2005, as mandated under federal regulations, required an update in order for participating jurisdictions to remain eligible for FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant program, which provides funds for mitigation projects in order to reduce losses and suffering so that there is less demand for money and resources in the aftermath of a disaster.

MITIGATION PLAN ADOPTION DATES	
Culpeper County	July 3, 2012
Fauquier County	July 12, 2012
Madison County	July 10, 2012
Orange County	July 24, 2012
Rappahannock County	August 6, 2012
Town of Culpeper	July 10, 2012
Town of Madison	July 5, 2012
Town of Orange	August 20, 2012
Town of Remington	July 9, 2012
Town of Warrenton	August 14, 2012

The 2012 Hazard Mitigation Plan update process began with a series of stakeholder meetings in 2010 involving local planning and emergency management staff, public safety representatives, local utility providers, as well as representation from the region's two community colleges and hospitals. Regional Commission staff assisted localities with updating and incorporating new strategies to be included in the Hazard Mitigation Plan update, based on locally identified priorities and unique hazard identification. The Regional Commission has also completed Hazard and Vulnerability analyses in support of the plan update in order to comply with Federal Emergency Management Agency guidelines. As part of the process, a review of historic hazard events was revised to include references to the severe winter storms in February 2010, as well as the August 23, 2011 earthquake that affected much of the region and to update data from the previous plan, including demographics and loss data from various storms in the past decade.



Following acceptance of the revised plan from FEMA, each of the ten participating jurisdictions adopted the plan locally and remain eligible for Hazard Mitigation grant programs. Regional Commission staff will continue to review the plan after federally-declared disasters, as required by FEMA and will coordinate with the Regional Emergency Managers committee to identify potential mitigation projects in the region. The next update of the plan will be required by 2017, though localities may change their mitigation strategies at any time throughout the interim period.

Left: Dam Inventory & Classification map, displaying dams regulated by Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation in the Rappahannock-Rapidan region with their regulation classification

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation planning is a critical area of focus for the Regional Commission and assistance is provided to local governments and citizens through two standing committees focused on transportation issues in the region and by the Commission's Commuter Services program.

Route 29 near Culpeper, Virginia

RRRC COMMUTER SERVICES

New marketing initiatives continue to make RRRC's Commuter Services program even more visible than ever. A Google Adword campaign, newspaper print and on-line ads, Comcast campaign, crawl on the local weather channel, and staff participation at local fairs and events are increasing awareness of available services. You can even *Like Us* on Facebook!

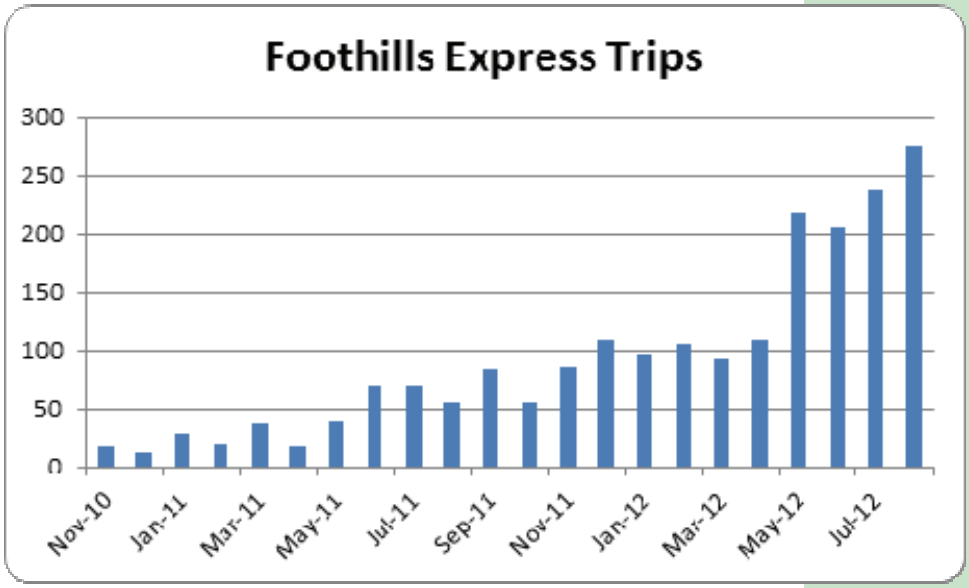
Exploring new partnerships with area employers, local governments and commuters who work in and outside of the region, continues to be a central aim of RRRC's Commuter Services program as part of its commitment to serving area commuters.

COMMUTER SERVICES

creative commuting solutions by RRRC

FOOTHILLS AREA MOBILITY SYSTEM

RRRC staff also serves facilitator for the Foothills Regional Mobility System committee and has working to actively expand the Mobility Management program in coordination and cooperation with the Rappahannock-Rapidan Community Services Board and Virginia Regional Transit.



Highlights of the program in 2012 included the expansion of the Foothills Express service to Charlottesville from two to three days per week, the awarding of a grant from the Federal Transportation Administration's Veterans Transportation and Community Living initiative to assist with the expansion of the regional one-call center, which assists with transportation scheduling and in-person travel training, as well as tracking unmet transportation needs of the elderly and disabled members of the community.

REGIONAL DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP AWARDS

IN RECOGNITION OF LONG-STANDING AND SIGNIFICANT AREA CONTRIBUTIONS

The RRRC annual *Distinguished Leadership—Citizen & Government Awards* were initiated in 2007 to acknowledge the achievements and contributions of member jurisdiction citizen and government community leaders who have gone above and beyond in their promotion and encouragement of enhanced regional communication, coordination and planning across the R-R Region, or Planning District Nine.

In October 2011, the Regional Commission presented John McCarthy, Rappahannock County Administrator, RRRC Commissioner & Northern Piedmont Community Foundation Chairman with the *Government Award* for his unparalleled leadership, body of accomplishment and record of service to the community, "dedicating his life and work to the region and his locality."

Town of Remington resident Mary Root was similarly presented with the *Citizen Award* for her tireless contributions as a member of the Fauquier County Architectural Review Board & Sesquicentennial Committee, among other numerous civic commitments. She has given generously over the years, not only to the Town of Remington, but the regional community at large.

2011 RRRC Leadership Awards
Left: John McCarthy
Below: Mary Root

PREVIOUS REGIONAL DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP AWARDEES

	Government	*Citizen*
2007	Harry Atherton	Khalil Hassan
2008	Ruth Updike	David Scott
2009	Robert Anderson	Bev Hunter
2010	Frank Bossio	John J. 'Butch' Davies
2011	John McCarthy	Mary Root

Cedar Mountain, Culpeper, VA

COMMITTEES OF RRRC

The Regional Commission staffs a number of active committees on a wide range of subjects. The main goals of each committee include information dissemination and data sharing, collaborative grant development and regional project and strategy identification and implementation.

Foothills Area Mobility System Steering Committee

The **Rural Transportation Technical Committee** is made up of town and county planners, Virginia Department of Transportation representatives and regional transportation stakeholders. The RTC meets on the first Wednesday of each month.

The **Foothills Area Mobility System** steering committee, pictured at right, includes representatives from the Regional Commission, Rappahannock-Rapidan Community Services Board, Virginia Regional Transit, both hospitals in the region and other transportation providers in the region. The FAMS steering committee meets every other month.

The **PD9 Regional Tourism Committee**, comprised of tourism directors and other interested stakeholders, meets on a quarterly basis to update each other on area tourism efforts, identify needs, and explore mutual interests and options. The Regional Tourism Committee generally meets on a quarterly basis.

The **Foothills Housing Network** (formerly named the Piedmont Housing Network) serves as the Continuum of Care planning group for Planning District 9. FHN is part of the Virginia Balance of State Continuum of Care and as such, coordinates homeless services and activities within the region. Members of Foothills Housing Network include shelter providers, five county Departments of Social Services, Aging Together, Community Action Partnerships, Rappahannock Rapidan Community Services, Piedmont United Way and other stakeholder in homeless services and affordable housing. RRRC serves as lead agency and fiscal agent for FHN. The Foothills Housing Network meets monthly.

The **RRRC Land Use & Environment Committee** includes local land use administrators, planners and environmental managers and provides an opportunity to exchange information, review state regulations and discuss land use and environmental issues of regional importance. This committee meets quarterly.

The **RRRC Chief Administrative Officers Committee** is made up of regional County Administrators and Town Managers and provides the region's administrative leadership a chance to discuss topics of timely local and regional importance, as well as share information on current issues facing each locality. The committee generally meets quarterly and on an as-needed basis.

The offices of the **RRRC/Planning District 9** are located in **Southridge Office Park**, S. 106, just off Rt. 29Bus/Madison Road in the Town of Culpeper. Office hours are M-F 8:30-5:00.

(540) 829-7450 phone **(540) 829-7452** fax **planinfo@rrregion.org**

Rappahannock-Rapidan REGIONAL COMMISSION

The Town of Washington

Route 20 Looking East from the Town of Orange