

Anticipating the Future

A Discussion of Trends in Fairfax County



March 2006

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors



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Foreword

By Gerald E. Connolly
Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Two years ago in my inaugural address, I referenced a line from one of our country's most beloved songs, *America the Beautiful*:

"O beautiful for patriot dream, that sees beyond the years..."

I challenged our community then to continue "seeing beyond the years," to look beyond the expedient and the easy, and to dig in and do the hard work together to build the community that we will pass on to our children and grandchildren. Last year, Supervisor Dana Kauffman took that pledge one step further when he challenged the staff to look at the available data and predict what the future might hold for us. What will our population look like? What economic and social changes can we expect? And what policy choices are we likely to face as a result of those changes?

This report, *Anticipating the Future*, responds to that challenge and much more by providing a picture of where we have come from, where we are, and where we will be in Fairfax County from a half-century perspective. It paints a vivid picture of a community that has profoundly changed, shaped not just by the world around us but largely by our own initiative. It also paints a picture of a community still in motion, poised to respond to the challenges ahead.

We have achieved amazing things here in Fairfax County, long-term residents and newcomers working side-by-side. We have taken the ideal of the "American melting pot" and made it real. In 30 years, Fairfax County transformed from a suburban bedroom community into a vibrant and diverse urban county of more than a million people, doubling in size and earning international respect as a major employment center and cultural destination in its own right. In 1970, less than four percent of our population was foreign-born; by 2004, fully one in four residents was born outside of the United States, bringing with them a diverse tapestry of cultural and economic resources. In 1970, 36 percent of county residents who worked outside of the home worked at job locations in Fairfax County. Today, nearly 55 percent of us work in the county in which we live. Indeed, in 2004, the number of jobs and the number of employed residents in Fairfax County were nearly equal. Thirty years ago Fairfax was an overwhelmingly white, Caucasian bedroom community to Washington D.C. Today we are almost 40 percent minority and our population draws from over 100 countries across the globe. We are an enthusiastically diverse, urbanizing economic powerhouse for the entire region.

Conventional wisdom holds that communities cannot undergo such rapid change without experiencing increased crime, unemployment, and social breakdown. Here in Fairfax County, we have proven the conventional wisdom wrong. Through our actions and choices, we have built a quality of life that is virtually unmatched in the United States: the finest schools; the lowest crime rate; excellent libraries; an unparalleled urban park system; the best-managed county government in the nation as selected by *Governing Magazine*; and best of all, an extraordinarily diverse, educated, hard-working and involved citizenry.

Our community has accomplished great things, but we still have work to do. We face an array of issues – traffic congestion, the environment, new development and revitalization, technological advances, education for our youth, and the changing needs of an aging population – that present both challenges and opportunities as we enter the next thirty years. We are already making progress on many fronts, but tough choices lie ahead. Improving transportation is vital to our continued growth and quality of life, and only creative thinking and bold cooperation now will enable us to meet our transit needs for the next thirty years. If we are to address the congestion challenge, we need to change the growth patterns of the past to a more transit oriented development, with emphasis on multi-modal transportation systems and congestion mitigation measures, such as telework. These measures also have the benefit of preserving and protecting our natural resources and ensuring that future residents will enjoy clean air, clean water, and green spaces throughout the County.

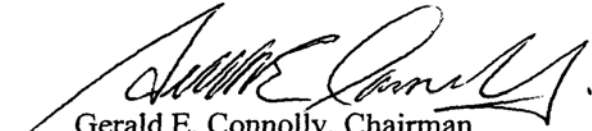
Our population is “aging in place,” which will bring new demands for mobility, affordable and accessible housing, and recreational, economic and volunteer opportunities. Thirty years ago, just over three percent of our population was age 65 years or older. In 2004, that percentage was 8.6 percent and by 2020, it is estimated to reach 11.6 percent. Our structures are aging in place as well, and we can expect new building to give way to renewal and improvement, with the needs of an older population in mind. While maintaining excellence in our education system may not require the pace of school construction of the past two decades, we can expect to see a shift toward renovation (as opposed to new construction), not just to revitalize aging infrastructure, but also to equip our schools and other public facilities with the state-of-the-art technologies that our citizens and students will need and expect.

As our economy grows even more global, we must continue to attract new businesses as well as an increasingly educated and mobile workforce by offering technology-savvy government services and outstanding community amenities. We will continue to see the widespread integration of technology into all aspects of our daily life while also transforming government services of all types. Technology has been the engine of our County’s growth, and our citizens expect their government to take advantage of that technology to provide fast, efficient, and high-quality services.

As our reputation for high expectations and achievement spreads, we can continue to expect to be a preferred destination of many individuals and families from around the world, with much of our future growth coming from immigration. Maintaining pride in our image as a true melting pot will help us meet this challenge with the same level of respect, cooperation and focus on success that we have shown as a community in the past.

While we can only anticipate what the future holds for Fairfax County, we know one thing is certain: the vibrant civic life that has served us so well over the past 30 years is the key to our continued success. In Fairfax County, active citizen involvement – through Boards and Commissions, special task forces, public hearings, town hall meetings, Neighborhood Watch, citizens associations and home owner associations – nourishes, informs and shapes public policy. In our thriving civic culture the voice of any citizen can and will be heard. This civic involvement and the willingness to engage in the real work of the community are cultural norms here in Fairfax County that we must nurture and support as we grow in size and diversity. We can accomplish this and the other tasks that lie ahead through involvement, dialog and debate.

I am confident that *Anticipating the Future* will both inform and inspire a community dialog that is as exciting and productive as our community itself. I look forward to participating in that dialog, as together we make the choices that will shape our collective future.



Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors, in particular Supervisor Dana Kauffman, for seeing the need for this report and being the catalyst for its creation. I would also like to acknowledge the excellent work of the County's Chief Demographer, Anne Pickford Cahill of the Department of Systems Management for Human Services, as the primary researcher and author of the report.

Introduction

Guideline:

On May 24, 2004, as part of the Budget Guidelines, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors directed staff to review currently occurring and forecasted changes to the county's demographics and the impact of these changes on county services delivery and costs. Growth in the number of seniors, residents with special needs, and our new immigrant populations will have an impact on the county's budget and the capacity of county government to provide services. Staff was further directed to share the findings with the school system.

The Board of Supervisors, in initiating this work, has taken the lead to encourage staff to begin a process of creative thinking and innovation in order to prepare Fairfax County for the future. The goal of this study is to increase knowledge and awareness of key trends impacting the county and to help provide a framework for discussion and public policy decisions. In November 2004, a working paper was released summarizing future trends with a focus on seniors. This report updates and expands upon the initial work.

Focus:

By increasing their knowledge and awareness of key demographic and economic factors that influence future program and services planning, service providers and planners might better prepare for future changes. Users of this information must be careful not to isolate components out of context of other factors that, when considered, may change the outlook or interpretation. The discussed trends have many cross interactions and each trend affects multiple populations directly and indirectly. Thus, it is vital for decision-makers to include and review trends that are not directly specific to the primary population of interest because too narrow a focus may provide a misleading picture.

A wide variety of trends and implications are discussed, but the primary focus of this study is on the trends most likely to influence and impact county government programs and services. Although the trends discussion has been organized around 11 topic headings, often information within a topic area applies to other areas. The 11 topic areas are:

- Rapid population growth and urbanization
- Transformation from a suburban bedroom community to a major employment center
- A population growing older
- Rapid cultural and ethnic diversification
- Children and youth
- Housing trends
- Patterns of income and wealth

...the primary focus of this study is on the trends most likely to influence and impact county government programs and services.

- Health care issues
- Rapid technological change
- Community safety
- Community engagement

Methodology:

The Department of Systems Management for Human Services partnered with the Department of Management and Budget to define the methodology for the study and to conduct the background research. An extensive review was conducted of existing public and private sector literature and data. From this review, significant trends and data needs were identified. On the state and local government level, very little information was found linking demographic trends to service implications beyond simple population growth linkages. In addition to the external literature review, Fairfax County specific data were analyzed. Where Fairfax County specific data were unavailable, national data were used if it added depth to the study.

To add perspective, to identify issues not captured and to identify implications, four two-hour focus group sessions were conducted with Fairfax County agency staff, public safety staff, and school staff. More than 70 staff members from 26 county agencies and the Fairfax County Public Schools participated in the focus groups. Smaller meetings and interviews with key staff that provided additional insights followed the focus groups. It also was felt that the perspective of experts not associated with Fairfax County government would provide additional depth to the study. Dr. Stephen Fuller, Director of the Center for Regional Analysis of the George Mason University School of Public Policy, provided advice and information about business and economic trends. Ken Billingsley of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, Henry Wulf of the U.S. Census Bureau, and George Barker of the Health Systems Agency of Northern Virginia (HSANV) were peer reviewers on the draft report and provided additional insights and guidance.

Trend 1:

Rapid population growth and urbanization

Facts:

- Fairfax County is now one of the most populous and densely settled counties in the nation. In terms of both population size and density, Fairfax County ranks among the top 2 percent of all counties in the nation. As of the 2000 decennial Census, Fairfax County ranked 36th in population size and 28th in density out of the 3,141 local jurisdictions nationwide.¹
 - The January 2004 population of Fairfax County is estimated to be 1,022,298 persons, making Fairfax County more populous than seven states – Alaska, Delaware, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming.²
 - The January 2004 population density of Fairfax County is estimated to be 2,588 persons per square mile. As of 2000, Fairfax County was the 15th densest Virginia jurisdiction with a greater density than that in the Virginia Cities of Chesapeake, Danville, Harrisonburg, Lynchburg, Petersburg, Roanoke, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach.³
 - Fairfax County Public Schools is the 12th largest school district in the nation with a September 2005 enrollment of 163,534 students.⁴
- Over the past three decades, Fairfax County has been one of the most rapidly growing jurisdictions in the United States in terms of population growth – more than doubling the size of its population since 1970.⁵ The county, by all measures, is a mature jurisdiction and is now entering a new stage - that of post-suburbanization. No longer is the county's identity that of a suburb providing labor for a central city but it is a complex blend of suburban and urban lifestyles. The focus of future development is shifting from accommodating new growth to that of redevelopment and providing more lifestyle choices for an increasingly diverse population.

“The focus of future development is shifting from accommodating new growth to that of redevelopment and providing more lifestyle choices for an increasingly diverse population.”

- One result of the rapid population growth experienced by the county has been that vacant land in the county has been diminishing rapidly. Between 1980 and 1990, vacant land in Fairfax County diminished by more than 30,000 acres. Between 1990 and 2000, vacant land diminished by an additional 15,500 acres. As of January 2004, Fairfax County had only 24,093 acres of zoned but vacant land.⁶

Future Trends:

- Population will grow rapidly through 2010, adding a projected 163,200 persons to the county during the decade between 2000 and 2010.⁷
- Between 2010 and 2020, population growth will slow dramatically as vacant residential land becomes scarce. The county is projected to add only 60,400 persons during the 2010-2020 decade.⁸

	Estimates					Projections	
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2004	2010	2020
Total Population	454,275	596,901	818,584	969,749	1,022,298	1,133,000	1,193,400
Household Population	444,564	590,211	804,578	959,452	1,008,517	1,119,200	1,179,600
Persons per Square Mile	1,130.04	1,495.99	2,051.59	2,455.06	2,588.10	2,868.35	3,021.27
Public School Enrollment	133,362	126,860	128,288	154,523	164,667	175,985	
Acres of Vacant Land		75,550	45,042	29,529	24,093		

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses (1970 – 2000 population, household population and persons per square mile); Fairfax County Department of Systems Management for Human Services (2004 – 2020 population, household population and persons per square mile, and all years of vacant acres); and Fairfax County Public Schools (public school enrollment).

Note: Population projections are preliminary 2004 projections by the Fairfax County Department of Systems Management for Human Services.

- The jurisdictions (Loudoun County, Prince William County and the Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park) bordering Fairfax County on the west are experiencing rapid residential development. These jurisdictions project that their combined populations will increase by 61 percent or 181,400 persons between 2000 and 2020.⁹

Implications:

- Rapid population growth strains local government's ability to build infrastructure to meet demand – public facilities, roads, sewers, etc.
- New residential construction creates some increase in tax revenues due to growth, but a controversy exists over whether residential development generates enough additional tax revenues to pay for the additional costs of local government services used. Cost of community services studies (COCS) suggest that all residential growth costs more in services than it provides in tax revenues, but more complex fiscal impact analysis techniques suggest that not all types of residential development costs more in services than it provides in tax revenues.¹⁰ For example, middle- and high-income childless households, such as those containing seniors, are likely to contribute more in tax revenues than they cost in services.¹¹
- As vacant residential land becomes scarce, there is increasing pressure to redevelop existing neighborhoods. Although redevelopment is often associated with the loss of affordable housing, it does provide opportunities to make communities more livable and accessible if accessibility for the disabled and other qualities that create a sense of place are given prominence during the planning stages.
- Higher density residential development in Fairfax County and its neighboring jurisdictions will increase traffic congestion, but residential development at high-density levels make public transportation alternatives more viable. Density alone, however, is unlikely to shift residents from their motor vehicles. Thus, planners must incorporate special measures that encourage

residents to modify their commuting and local travel behaviors and to encourage residents to use public transportation alternatives.

- “Transportation is the means by which people connect to or stay connected to the goods, services, and social opportunities of the communities in which they live.”¹² Older as well as less experienced drivers may find navigating congested roadways difficult and frightening. “Older Virginians adapt to the effects of aging on their mobility by informal means, such as restricting the time of day when they drive... and driving fewer miles. Virginia drivers over the age of 60 traveled, on average, about 8,300 miles during 2001. Younger drivers traveled over... 14,800 miles, on average.”¹³
- Traffic congestion makes it more difficult to travel to services provided in central locations and makes it more difficult for emergency services to quickly respond to emergency situations. Traffic congestion may reduce the number of on-site visits a service provider can accommodate in a day if that provider must travel the same distances to provide services. In addition, traffic congestion is likely to increase demand for services that can be brought into the home, services clustered in communities, and alternative transportation services such as ‘Seniors on the Go.’

Although redevelopment is often associated with the loss of affordable housing, it does provide opportunities to make communities more livable ... if accessibility for the disabled and other qualities that create a sense of place are given prominence during the planning stages.

Trend 2:

Transformation from a suburban bedroom community to a major employment center

Facts:

- Fairfax County has evolved into a major economic engine for the Washington Metropolitan Area and the state of Virginia.
 - “The economy that has emerged in Fairfax County is different from the District’s economy that is built around the federal government and its national capital functions.... *Fairfax County’s* economy in 1980 was small and immature. It reflected an employment base that either commuted out to higher value added, higher paying jobs, or one whose market was largely the county’s resident population.... In 1980, Fairfax County’s GCP (*gross county product*) totaled \$16.5 billion (in 2004 dollars),.... By 2000, Fairfax County’s economy was different. While the county’s population had *grown* 60 percent,... its gross county product expanded by 291 percent (in inflation adjusted dollars)... a rate more than double the metropolitan gain.... Where Fairfax County accounted for 13.9 percent of the regional economy in 1980, by 2000 its share was 24 percent....”¹⁴
 - The number of jobs located in Fairfax County exploded over the last three decades. While population doubled in size since 1970, the number of jobs located in Fairfax County increased by 5½ times.¹⁵
 - Fairfax County’s labor force also has grown faster than population growth. Some of that growth is due to the entrance of more women into the labor force and some is due to the baby boom generation expanding the size of the working age population in relation to children and seniors. In 1970, 43.4 percent of Fairfax County women age 16 years and older were in the labor force and by 1990 the percent of women in the labor force increased to 70.7 percent. Since 1990, the percent of women in the labor force has dropped slightly to approximately 66 percent.¹⁶
 - Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church accounted for 42 percent of the job growth in the Metropolitan Washington Area between 1990 and 2000.¹⁷ In 2004, there were more jobs located in Fairfax County than the combined total number of jobs located in the cities of Richmond, Norfolk, Virginia Beach, and Hampton.¹⁸
 - Between 1970 and 2004, the number of employed residents who worked at job locations in Fairfax County increased from 35.6 percent to 52.5 percent.¹⁹

- The types of jobs held by Fairfax County residents and the types of jobs located in Fairfax County have changed dramatically over the past few decades. The county has been a magnet for employers seeking a highly educated labor force. This infusion of new employers has diversified the job market from one primarily dependent on government and trade jobs to one based on private sector information and services jobs.
 - Today Fairfax County residents are less likely to be employed by the federal, state, or local government. In 1970, nearly a third of all employed residents were federal government employees. As of 2004, the federal government was still the largest single employer of county residents but fewer than one out of seven residents, or 14 percent, were federal employees.²⁰
 - In 1970, wholesale and retail trade businesses that catered to suburban residents made up the county's largest job sector – one out of every five jobs. Local government, the next largest sector, provided 16 percent of all county based jobs. The service sector, where the majority of high tech and federal contractor jobs are classified, provided slightly less than 16 percent of all county based jobs. Over the past three and a half decades, jobs in the retail and wholesale trade sector and the local government sector increased in number but grew slower than total job growth in Fairfax County. As of March 2004, retail and wholesale trade provided 12.7 percent of all jobs and local government only 8.4 percent. However, the number of jobs in the information and service sector experienced explosive growth. This sector is now the largest, providing nearly 60 percent of all Fairfax County jobs.²¹
- “In 1980, the salary structure of *the county's* residentially based economy was below *the region's* average... the average salary in Fairfax County was only 88 percent of the metropolitan average.... In 2000, the average salary for all jobs in Fairfax County was \$56,267, an inflation adjusted increase of 65.7 percent from 1980. During the same period, the metropolitan area's *average* salary increased only 35.5 percent. Where the county's average salary was lower than the area average in 1980, by 2000 it had made up the gap and surpassed the area average.”²²

	Estimates					Projections	
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2004	2010	2020
At-Place Employment	96,666	192,361	403,700	577,000		683,900	774,500
Private Sector Jobs as Percent of All Jobs		78.4%		87.6%			89.7%
Mean Salary, All Jobs (2004 dollars)		\$ 33,947		\$ 56,267			\$ 70,122
Live and Work in Fairfax County	35.6%	38.3%	49.7%	52.7%	52.5%		
Labor Force	190,137	326,811	499,056	548,812	564,270	651,673	672,619
Women in Labor Force	43.4%	61.7%	70.7%	66.1%	65.8%		
Men in Labor Force	85.7%	85.1%	85.2%	80.4%	80.6%		
Per Capita Workers	0.419	0.548	0.610	0.566	0.552		
Percent Federal Government Workers	30.4%	23.5%	17.4%	14.0%	14.1%		
Percent Self-Employed	4.3%	4.2%	5.6%	5.6%	6.1%		
Gross County Product (billions of 2004 dollars)		\$ 16.519		\$ 64.552			\$ 128.376

Sources: Virginia Employment Commission, ES202 Nonagricultural Employment (1970 and 1980 at-place employment); Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Round 7.0 Employment Estimates and Forecasts (1990 through 2020 at-place employment); U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses and American Community Survey (live and work in Fairfax County, labor force, women in labor force, men in labor force, per capita workers, percent Federal Government workers, percent self employed);

Future Trends:

- “Fairfax County’s economic base is projected to continue evolving over the next 20 years but it will not experience a level of fundamental change similar to what it did during the previous 20 years. The county’s economy in 2000 *will* be much more similar in structure to its projected economy in 2020 than to the 1980 economy. As a result, the rates of gain are projected to slow although these will still outpace the gains achieved at the metropolitan level and economic gains will also outpace population growth confirming the economy’s external market orientation.... Fairfax County’s gross county product is projected to grow to \$128.4 billion (in 2004 dollars),... *accounting for 27 percent of the region’s output in 2020.*”²³
- Fairfax County is projected to add approximately 106,900 additional jobs during the 2000-2010 decade and an additional 90,600 jobs during the 2010-2020 decade.²⁴ As Fairfax County adds jobs, its economic dependence on direct federal government employment will further decrease. However, many of the new jobs created during the next decade are likely to be tied indirectly to the federal government as many of these jobs may be as the result of federal or military contracts. “The service sector, with 56 percent of all county jobs by 2020 is the future.... The only other sector to grow faster than the average for all sectors will be transportation and communications.... Retail, which had accounted for 18 percent of the county’s job base in 1980, will only account for 8.5 percent of total county jobs by 2020.”²⁵
- The growth in Fairfax County’s labor force is not expected to keep pace with the growth of jobs during the next two decades. It is unlikely that labor force expansion will be fueled by more women entering the labor force in the future as labor force participation rates of women have leveled off and dropped slightly during the last decade.²⁶ “*These factors will make the county’s economy increasingly dependent on external sources of labor.*”²⁷
- A fundamental change in the way people work has been occurring in the labor market. During the past decade, a sharp increase has occurred in the number of workers who are alternative or contingent workers – temporary contract workers, freelancers, consultants, etc. “According to a nationwide 2003 study, alternative workers now make up 28 percent of the U.S. labor force.... A wide variety of social and economic factors contribute... *but the most significant... has been the emergence of careers that are ‘skills-based’ rather than ‘company-based’.... Rather than rely on the once-formidable security of a full-time job, more and more individuals are exercising their career control by working contract-based assignments exclusively.... One study projects that by 2007, contingent workers will make up more than half of the U.S. workforce.*”²⁸

Implications:

- What Fairfax County's business structure and job market will look like in the future is not completely clear. On one hand, some analysts think that job creation and how people work will continue to be similar in nature to that of the current past; that is, businesses will continue to draw from local labor pools and most workers will continue to report to centralized work locations. Others think that the

...the employment market is ripe for undergoing a major change to skill- and project-based employment drawn from a global labor market.

employment market is ripe for undergoing a major change to skill- and project-based employment drawn from a global labor market.

- Under the first scenario, a job and business market following traditional trends, it is expected that job creation will outpace housing.
 - In 2020, “the Fairfax County economy will have achieved some maturity (in size and structure) relative to some of the younger and smaller economies in the area’s third tier counties. It will not capture a disproportional share of the best new jobs as the county did during the 1980s and 1990s. As a result, while its mean 2020 salary will increase to \$70,120 (in 2004 dollars), up 25 percent, the mean 2020 salary gain within the Washington area will be larger (30 percent) although its dollar value will still lag *behind* Fairfax County.”²⁹
 - “As *Fairfax County’s* economy matures in the out years..., its future *economic* performance will become increasingly dependent on its ability to attract nonresident workers to satisfy its growing workforce requirements.”³⁰ Employment of nonresident workers within the county will further increase traffic congestion.
 - Rapid job expansion puts inflationary pressure on the price of housing as households compete for housing near employment centers.
 - Expansion of Fairfax County’s business sector may lessen some tax burdens on residents.
- The second scenario suggests a major paradigm shift in how people are employed and work. Growth in the number of alternative and freelance workers may result in a major increase in teleworkers, reducing the demand for commercial space. Businesses may draw these alternative workers from the world labor market rather than be restricted to finding employees from the local labor market.
 - One result of globalizing the labor market is that businesses may not require as much physical space as when workers typically reported to a central work location. Workers may no longer be located where the business is located but work from afar.
 - These types of changes in the labor market also may make it more difficult to statistically count jobs using traditional methods because workers may work at home but be employed by businesses in other jurisdictions or even countries. In addition, job statistics may show sharp increases in the number of jobs due mainly to the short contractual nature of a project-based workforce.
 - This major paradigm shift in the labor market would have a major impact on the choices people make about where to live. The choice of where to live would no longer be influenced by the location of their employer but would be influenced by other lifestyle amenities. Communities that cannot offer residents an attractive array of amenities may see their populations decrease.
- Private sector employment is expected to grow more rapidly than government sector employment. The expansion of private sector employment will further lessen the importance of the federal government as an employer. As this occurs, the county’s economy will become more likely to be affected by private sector business cycles.

Trend 3:

A population growing older

Facts:

- Fairfax County’s population is growing older as is that of the nation – with a boomer turning 50 every seven seconds.³¹ The county’s population has grown older primarily due to two influences: the aging of the baby boom generation and increases in life expectancy.
 - The median age of Fairfax County residents has increased by more than 12 years since 1970. In 1970, the median age of the county’s population was 25.2 years; by 2004, median age had increased to 37.6 years.³²
 - In 1970 when the baby boomers ranged in age from 6 to 24 years, persons 19 years and younger comprised 42.2 percent of Fairfax County’s total population; as of 2004, this age group comprised only 27.7 percent of total population. The most dramatic shift in the proportion of children to adults occurred between 1970 and 1990. While the county’s total population grew by more than 364,300 persons between 1970 and 1990, persons 19 years and younger increased by fewer than 29,000 persons. Since 1990, children have remained a relatively constant proportion of total population.³³
 - Life expectancy at birth in the United States was 70.8 years in 1970; by 2000, life expectancy had risen more than six years to 77.0 years.³⁴

The median age of Fairfax County residents has increased by more than 12 years since 1970..., from 25.2 years to 37.6 years.

	Estimates					Projections	
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2004	2010	2020
Total Population	454,275	596,901	818,584	969,749	1,022,298	1,133,000	1,193,400
Population 19 Years and Younger	191,951 42.2%	193,323 32.4%	220,909 27.0%	266,163 27.4%	275,553 27.7%	299,300 26.4%	308,800 25.9%
Population 65+ Years	13,674 3.0%	26,989 4.5%	53,544 6.5%	76,818 7.9%	85,619 8.6%	104,400 9.2%	138,600 11.6%
Population 85+ Years			3,798 0.5%	6,922 0.7%	8,178 0.8%	9,604 0.8%	9,876 0.8%
Median Age	25.2	30.1	33.1	35.9	37.6	39.0	

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses (1970 – 2000 population and 1970 – 2004 percent population by age and median age) and Fairfax County Department of Systems Management for Human Services (2004 population and 2010 – 2020 projections).

Note: 2004 population age characteristics are based on household population only. Household population does not include residents who live in group quarters such as barracks, dormitories, correctional facilities and other institutions or who are homeless.

- Since 1995, Fairfax County has experienced a net out migration of seniors age 65 to 84 years, and a net in migration of older seniors age 85 years and older. Although more seniors move out of Fairfax County than move in, seniors were less likely to move from Fairfax County between 1995 and 2000 than between 1985 and 1990. Between 1985 and 1990, two out of every 11 seniors moved from Fairfax County; between 1995 and 2000, two out of every 13 seniors moved.³⁵

- Even with a net out migration of seniors, the senior population has increased steadily in both number and in size relative to total population since 1970. The number of Fairfax County residents 65 years and older increased six fold, from 13,674 persons (3.0 percent of total population) in 1970 to 85,619 persons (8.6 percent of total population) in 2004.³⁶

Future Trends:

- Fairfax County will experience a steady increase in the number and percentage of persons age 65 and older through 2010 due to longer life spans and the number of persons currently between 60 and 65 years old who are expected to remain county residents.
 - Persons 65 years and older are projected to increase in number and as a proportion of Fairfax County's total population. By 2010, this age group will be 9.2 percent of the county's total population, increasing to 104,400 persons.³⁷
 - Under the middle population growth assumption for the United States, the U.S. Census Bureau projects life expectancy at birth to increase between one and two years per decade through 2020.
 - Fairfax County's median age is expected to increase. Based on past trends and future projections, median age will increase to about 39 years by 2010.³⁸
- The senior population in Fairfax County will expand more rapidly after 2010 because the oldest baby boomers will reach age 65 in 2011, increasing the rate of growth of this age group. By 2020, it is projected that there will be 138,600 persons age 65 and older living in Fairfax County and they will be 11.6 percent of the total population.³⁹
- Beginning in 2012, the United States is expected to experience a decline in the number of working-age persons per person of retirement age. Nationally, the Census Bureau predicts that the number of working-age persons per person of retirement age will remain fairly constant through 2012 at five persons of working age for every older American. After 2012, this ratio will decrease to fewer than three persons of working age for every older American in 2030. After 2030, the ratio of working age adults to older adults will level off and the age distribution of the American population should stabilize. One factor driving the stabilization of the population age distribution is rising fertility rates.⁴⁰
- Persons 19 years and younger are projected to decline as a proportion of Fairfax County's total population but continue to increase in number. By 2010, it is expected that there will be 299,300 persons 19 years and younger living in the county, comprising 26.4 percent of total population. In 2020, this age group will decline to 25.9 percent of total population but will represent 308,800 persons.⁴¹

Beginning in 2012, the U.S. is expected to experience a decline in the number of working-age persons per person of retirement age., from five to fewer than three workers for every older American.

Persons 19 years and younger are projected to decline as a proportion of Fairfax County's total population but continue to increase in number.

Implications:

- A major component of the decision to age in place will depend on whether seniors perceive Fairfax County as a ‘livable community.’ That is, a community “that has affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community features and services, and adequate mobility options, which together facilitate personal independence and the engagement of residents in civic and social life.”⁴²
 - “The measures of successful aging... include: *the* presence of friends and family who provide support; involvement with the world and other people; ability to make choices about things that affect how one ages; ability to adjust to changes related to aging; ability to care for oneself; capacity to influence others’ lives in positive ways; ability to cope with challenges of later years; optimism about future finances; ability to pursue hobbies and interests; general quality of life; ability to meet all needs and some wants; and rarely or never feeling isolated.”⁴³
- A growing senior population may shift priorities as seniors are seen as an increasingly influential “market.” More public and private support services may be developed specifically for this emerging market. But despite the projected rapid growth of the senior population, in 2020 persons age 65 and older are projected to be only 11.6 percent of Fairfax County’s total population⁴⁴ – a proportion that is slightly lower than that for the nation in 2000. Persons age 65 and older were 12.4 percent of the nation’s total population in 2000.⁴⁵
 - The growing influence of seniors as a proportion of total population is often associated with a lessening of support to fund education and youth services. This may not become an important issue in Fairfax County because of high and rising education levels among the county’s senior population (well educated persons of all age groups tend to be more supportive of educational funding) and because seniors will still be a relatively small proportion of total population in 2020.
- Programs serving persons 65 years and older will be impacted by strong growth in the target population. The proportions of seniors with disabilities increases dramatically with age – in 2000, 11.7 percent of persons age 65 to 74 had at least one disabling condition, 22.8 percent of those 75 to 84 years had at least one disabling condition, and 45.7 percent of those age 85 and older had at least one disabling condition.⁴⁶ Examples of existing adult and aging programs that will be affected include transportation, geriatric mental health, home based care, adult day care, senior recreation, senior center programs, medication assistance, etc.
 - The growth in demand for senior assistive services (health and need based), however, may initially be slower than the overall growth of the senior population as data suggest that baby boomers may work longer, accumulate more wealth, and be more physically active and healthy than the generations that preceded them.
 - Society’s definition of what a “senior” is may evolve according to the changing expectations of different age groups and their ability to maintain their independence. In 1970, age 55 was commonly used as the age at which individuals became eligible for senior programs. Today, age 60 or 65 is more commonly associated with program

Society’s definition of what a “senior” is may evolve according to the changing expectations of different age groups and their ability to maintain their independence.

eligibility for seniors. There also has been a shift toward associating different levels of need with different levels of old.

- Because the oldest baby boomers will turn 75 in 2021, the need for assistive services and programs will accelerate after 2020. The most rapid growth of the 85 years and older population will occur between 2030 and 2050, and it is this age group that needs the most assistance with daily living.
- Through 2030, the size of the caregiver population as a proportion of total population is expected to decline. With children remaining approximately the same proportion of total population and seniors increasing as a proportion, the proportion of working-age population will shrink. With increasing life expectancies, more of the working-age population may find themselves a part of the “sandwich” generation – those caring for both children and elders. These caregivers also may find themselves caring for their elders for a longer period of time. In addition, the baby boomers had fewer children than their parents and many remained childless so there will be fewer family caregivers available to care for this generation. These factors may impact on productivity and the ability of some family caregivers to stay in the labor market. Thus, growth in the demand for programs that provide support and respite for caregivers and care for those without family caregivers will increase.
 - Longer life expectancies also may result in a growing number of “young” elderly caring for the very old. These caregivers may need a different menu of support services than younger caregivers.
 - The shift from working age to older adults may decrease tax collections because older persons “tend to spend more money in non-taxed areas such as health care services.... Also... *real estate tax* exemptions could lead to the reduction in property tax collections....”⁴⁷
- Age does not equal need, but some county programs provide discounts to seniors dependent only on age and not need. As the senior population experiences rapid growth, more and more residents will receive these discounts, such as bus, park, and recreation discounts, when many of them could afford to pay full price. This may lessen the county's ability to provide need-based discounts to younger residents.
- Following a national trend, the aging of the county's population will have major impacts on the workforce and workplaces in Fairfax County.
 - Fairfax County is expected to have stronger job creation than housing development through 2020. The retirement of seniors from the workforce will further aggravate worker shortages. “Currently, there are worker shortages in education, government and nursing, and very few young people are going into occupations such as farming. These sectors will be hit even harder as baby boomers begin to retire.”⁴⁸
 - Businesses may need to design strategies to retain older workers and to entice into the labor pool younger adults who are not in the labor market. Worker shortages also may accelerate the globalization of the labor market. Businesses that cannot find local workers may look to employ overseas workers.

Age does not equal need, but some county programs provide discounts to seniors dependent only on age and not need. As the senior population experiences rapid growth...these age-based discounts may lessen the county's ability to provide need-based discounts to younger residents.

Trend 4:

Rapid cultural and ethnic diversification

Facts:

- Since 1970, Fairfax County has been a rapidly diversifying community. Fairfax County's racial and ethnic minorities have grown rapidly over the past several decades, increasing from 6.8 percent of population in 1970 to 38.2 percent in 2003.⁴⁹
 - In a recent study, counties were ranked on diversity by determining the probability that two randomly selected persons would be of a different race or ethnicity. Among the 524 counties nationwide with a population of 100,000 persons or more, Fairfax County was ranked 20th for its increase in diversity between 1990 and 2000.⁵⁰
 - Children and young adults in Fairfax County are more racially and ethnically diverse than older adults. 2000 Census data reveal that 41 percent of the children (persons under age 20) living in Fairfax County are racial and/or Hispanic minorities and that nearly half of all young adults in their twenties were racial and/or Hispanic minorities. Conversely, only 18 percent of residents age 65 and older are racial and/or Hispanic minorities.⁵¹

	Estimates						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2002	2003	2004
Percent Minority	6.8%	13.8%	22.6%	35.6%	37.8%	38.2%	39.5%
Language Other Than English Spoken at Home							
Persons 5+ Years		59,895	143,418	270,421	302,327	320,039	300,416
<i>Pct. of Persons 5+ Years</i>		10.7%	18.8%	30.0%	32.9%	34.6%	32.5%
Persons 65+ Years			7,182	15,492	18,253	23,052	19,840
<i>Pct. of Persons 65+</i>			13.6%	20.4%	22.4%	27.8%	23.2%
Linguistic Isolation (no person age 14 or older in household speaks English "very well")							
Persons 5+ Years			32,683	65,523	79,024		
<i>Pct. of Persons 5+ Years</i>			4.3%	7.3%	8.6%		
Persons 65+ Years			1,677	4,023			
<i>Pct. of Persons 65+</i>			3.2%	5.3%			
Foreign Born	16,139	54,109	127,506	237,677	260,936	280,817	259,227
<i>Pct. of Total Population</i>	3.5%	9.1%	15.6%	24.5%	26.3%	28.3%	26.0%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses (1970 – 2000) and American Community Surveys (2002 – 2004).

- Between 1990 and 2000, Fairfax County became an immigrant gateway – a place immigrants choose as their destination on entering the United States. Foreign-born residents of Fairfax County have increased dramatically since 1970. In 1970, only 3.5 percent or 16,139 residents were foreign born. By 2004, Fairfax County had an estimated 259,227 foreign-born residents; this represents more than one out of every four residents. In contrast, the foreign born are only 12 percent of the U.S. population.⁵²

- During the 1990 to 2000 decade, the increase in Fairfax County’s foreign-born residents made up 73 percent of the net increase in total population.⁵³
- In 2000, Fairfax County contained 61 percent of Northern Virginia's foreign-born population but only 53 percent of the region’s total population.⁵⁴
- Fairfax County’s foreign-born population comes from a large number of different countries with no one group forming a predominant majority. “Only New York City, among major immigrant gateways in the United States, has a foreign-born population as diverse as that found in Northern Virginia and the metro area.”⁵⁵ In 2000, the largest group of foreign born residents came from El Salvador but they only represented 10.3 percent of all foreign born persons and only 2.5 percent of total population.⁵⁶
- Fairfax County tends to attract highly educated foreign-born residents. A larger proportion of Fairfax County’s foreign-born adults have a four-year college degree than adults nationwide. Among Fairfax County’s foreign-born adults age 25 and older, 41 percent have a four year college degree or more education compared to 24 percent of all adults nationwide. Although there is a high level of educational attainment among many of Fairfax County’s foreign-born adults, there also is a large proportion of foreign-born adults that have never completed high school – 22 percent.⁵⁷

Fairfax County tends to attract highly educated foreign-born residents. A larger proportion of Fairfax County’s foreign-born adults have a four-year college degree than adults nationwide.

- As with the foreign-born population, Fairfax County residents age 5 and older speaking a language other than English at home have increased rapidly in number. In 1980, 59,895 persons (10.7 percent of the population age 5 and older) spoke a language other than English at home. As of 2004, an estimated 300,416 persons or one out of every three residents spoke a language other than English at home.⁵⁸

- Among county residents age 5 and older who speak a language other than English at home, 53.6 percent indicated they also spoke English “very well” and an additional 26.9 percent spoke English “well” (2004).⁵⁹
- The U.S. Census Bureau defines a household as linguistically isolated if no member of the household age 14 or older speaks English “very well.” In 2000, 7.3 percent of Fairfax County residents age 5 and older lived in a linguistically isolated household. This is nearly a quarter of those residents who speak a language other than English at home.⁶⁰

As of 2004, an estimated 300,416 persons or one out of every three residents spoke a language other than English at home.

- The senior population in Fairfax County, although not as diverse as the general population, has become much more diverse over the last several decades. In 1980, 6.4 percent of persons age 65 and older were racial minorities but by 2000 that proportion had more than doubled to 18.3 percent.⁶¹
 - In 1980, 13.6 percent or 7,182 persons age 65 or older spoke a language other than English at home; in 2000, the number of seniors speaking another language at home had more than doubled to 15,492 persons.⁶²

- Among persons age 65 and older speaking a language other than English at home, more than a quarter lived in households that were linguistically isolated (2000). By language spoken at home, 23.6 percent of seniors living in Spanish-speaking households were linguistically isolated, 15.2 percent of seniors living in households speaking Indo-European languages were linguistically isolated, 39.5 percent of seniors living in households speaking an Asian or Pacific Islander language were linguistically isolated, and 22.3 percent of seniors living in households speaking other languages were linguistically isolated.⁶³
- Although there are no estimates for Fairfax County, undocumented immigrants are estimated to be 20 to 29 percent of Virginia’s foreign-born population. Approximately 80 percent of the nation’s undocumented immigrants come from Mexico and other Latin American countries. Among the nation’s undocumented adult immigrants age 18 and older, an estimated 41 percent are women. There also are a substantial number of children who are undocumented immigrants. Children comprise an estimated 17 percent of the nation’s undocumented immigrant population, and it is estimated that for every undocumented child there are an additional two children born in the U.S. to undocumented parents.⁶⁴

Future Trends:

- Fairfax County is likely to continue to diversify over the next two decades. It is very difficult to predict how rapidly diversification will occur because of unknowns such as federal immigration policy. However if the same trends and rates that occurred between 1990 and 2000 continue through 2010, approximately 45 percent of Fairfax County’s total population may be racial and ethnic minorities and 39 percent may speak a language other than English at home.
- National data show the number of undocumented immigrants growing rapidly since 2000, increasing nearly 23 percent in four years. In addition, the national data suggest that these undocumented immigrants are more likely to settle in the new destination gateways rather than the traditional gateways of the past.⁶⁵ Because Fairfax County is one of the new destination gateways, the growth rate of the county’s undocumented immigrant population may exceed that for the nation.

Implications:

- Outreach to the county’s diverse groups is difficult, especially for those without identified leaders and those that are relatively small in number.
 - Fairfax County has no predominant minority culture. Local government will find it challenging to accommodate the wide breadth of language and cultural diversity. Fairfax County Public Schools indicate that over 100 languages currently are spoken by families with children enrolled in the schools.⁶⁶ Other than English, Spanish is the most frequently spoken language in the county. Data from the 2000 Census indicated that 36 percent of those who spoke a language other than English at home spoke Spanish. However, the next largest language category, Korean, was spoken by only 9 percent of those who spoke another language at home.⁶⁷

- Although immigrants bring assets such as a strong work ethic and a strong desire to better their lives, they also face challenges to achieving their economic goals. The assets and challenges vary by culture, economic status, educational attainment, English ability, and immigration status.
 - Educational attainment is strongly tied to income – those with higher levels of educational attainment tend to have higher incomes. Additional factors that influence career opportunities and income for the foreign born are citizenship status and English ability. Households headed by foreign-born residents of Fairfax County had a 1999 median household income of \$62,000 compared to \$87,100 for households with native-born heads. Among households with foreign-born heads, those with a naturalized citizen as the head of household had a 1999 median household income that was nearly \$14,000 higher than those households headed by a resident who was not a citizen. Among households with foreign-born heads who speak a language other than English at home, households whose heads spoke English ‘very well’ had a 1999 median household income \$15,000 above those whose heads spoke English ‘well,’ \$24,300 above those whose heads spoke English ‘not well,’ and \$36,800 above those whose heads spoke English ‘not at all.’⁶⁸
 - Programs for limited English proficient (LEP) students in the schools will continue to grow, as well as the need for language interpretation services in other programs. English communication skills are extremely important for immigrants in obtaining jobs and advancement. Households with heads that do not speak English at all have a median household income that is less than half that of households with heads who speak English ‘very well.’⁶⁹ In a survey conducted by Fairfax County, immigrant families recognized that the English skills of the adult family members affected the ability of their children to perform in school and those with poor English skills often relied on their children to translate for them.⁷⁰ Persons immigrating to the United States as seniors often find it more difficult to learn English than younger immigrants, and those who cannot speak English often feel very isolated. It is very important that opportunities exist in the community for adults to learn English skills beyond basic levels of English communication.
- Successful integration is a two way street. Fairfax County is likely to see shifts in what are considered the “cultural norms” of the county as different cultural groups become more influential and integrated into the fabric of the county.
 - More influential cultural groups may demand specialized services tailored to the needs of their group, creating competing demands for limited financial resources that are not adequate for tailoring programs for all groups. This may create equity challenges for Fairfax County Government.
 - Due to both cultural and economic differences, some of the county’s recent residents from different cultures are more apt to violate what other residents may perceive as “community cultural norms.” For example, these recent residents are more likely to live in multigenerational households, are more likely to overcrowd housing units in order to find affordable housing, and are more likely to seek economic opportunity and jobs in new and different ways (day labor).

Successful integration is a two way street. Fairfax County is likely to see shifts in what are considered the “cultural norms” of the county as different cultural groups become more influential and integrated into the fabric of the county.

- Fairfax County government must find ways to incorporate the diversity of its residents into its workforce and the makeup of its boards, authorities, and commissions. The development of leadership skills and civic engagement in the county's diverse populations are important attributes for the successful integration of newcomer communities. Members of these diverse populations must be involved in the decision-making processes of the county.
- The rapid growth in the county's diversity is already having impacts on how local government services and programs are designed and delivered. As program planners and service providers look to the future, they must be careful not to generalize regarding expectations and needs based on race, ethnicity, language, or culture.
 - Anecdotally, service providers indicate that it takes substantially more time to serve a customer who speaks a language other than English when the service provider is not fluent in the customer's language.
 - As the senior population diversifies, programs such as home-based and congregate meals may need to undergo changes to reflect this diversity as seniors may not want to enroll in programs that only offer unfamiliar foods.
- Rapidly changing state and federal laws and policies are likely to complicate local challenges in determining policies for Fairfax County's immigrant population. Even small changes in federal policies can result in major unintended changes locally. A growing undocumented immigrant population will further complicate the issues faced by Fairfax County government.
 - The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires that all children, including those who speak other languages, show proficiency in English and mathematics. Although a worthy goal, the federal law places a large challenge before jurisdictions such as Fairfax County that are experiencing a growing population of students with limited proficiency in English. The costs associated with achieving the NCLB goal will primarily be borne locally.

Trend 5: Children and Youth

Facts:

- Today, children and households containing children make up a much smaller proportion of total population and total households than in 1970.
 - In Fairfax County, the proportion of total population younger than 20 years decreased from 42.2 percent of population in 1970 to only 27 percent of population in 1990. The decline reflected the movement of the baby boom generation from childhood to adulthood. After 1990, the proportion of population younger than 20 years increased slightly as a proportion of total population because the baby boomers were now having their own children.⁷¹
 - The majority of Fairfax County households (61.7 percent) contained related children in 1970; however, by 2004, only 35.6 percent of Fairfax County households contained related children.⁷² This trend also is a reflection of the aging of the baby boom generation and their decisions about when and whether to have children.
 - The percentage of single-parent households with related children has not changed much since 1970. But because a smaller percentage of households contain children today than in 1970, children are much more likely to live in a single-parent family. Only one out of every eleven households with children were single-parent households in 1970 compared to one out of every five households with children in 2004.⁷³

In Fairfax County, the proportion of total population younger than 20 years decreased from 42.2 percent of population in 1970 to only 27 percent of population in 1990.

	Estimates					Projections	
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2004	2010	2020
Total Population	454,275	596,901	818,584	969,749	1,022,298	1,133,000	1,193,400
Population 19 Years and Younger	191,951 42.2%	193,323 32.4%	220,909 27.0%	266,163 27.4%	275,553 27.7%	299,300 26.4%	308,800 25.9%
Family Households with Related Children	61.7%	44.4%	38.2%	36.3%	35.6%		
Single-Parent Households	5.5%	6.7%	6.4%	6.1%	7.4%		
Poverty Rates							
All Persons	4.2%	3.9%	3.5%	4.5%	4.4%		
Under Age 5 Years		6.4%	4.2%	5.5%	8.9%		
5 to 17 Years		4.3%	4.0%	5.4%	5.7%		

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses (1970 – 2000 population and 1970 – 2003 population by age and median age) and Fairfax County Department of Systems Management for Human Services (2003 – 2020 population and 2010 – 2020 projections).

Note: 2004 population characteristics are based on household population only.

- Children in Fairfax County are more likely to live in poverty than adults. Since 1980, poverty rates for children have tended to be higher than those for all persons.⁷⁴

- According to the 2000 Community Assessment, households with children in the Fairfax-Falls Church area were more likely to run out of money for basic needs such as housing, utilities and medicine than households without children – 20 percent of households with children ran out of money for basic needs compared to 14 percent of all households.⁷⁵
- Fairfax County’s children are more racially and ethnically diverse than the population as a whole. As of 2003, 38.2 percent of Fairfax County’s total population were racial or ethnic minorities while 45.1 percent of persons under age 20 years were racial or ethnic minorities.⁷⁶

- Black/African American and Hispanic students in Fairfax County Public Schools are more likely to drop out and have difficulty passing academic proficiency tests. During the 2003-2004 school year, 4 percent of Black/African American students dropped out and 9.3 percent of Hispanic students dropped out. In comparison, 1.1 percent of White students and 1.8 percent of Asian students dropped out of school.⁷⁷ On Standards of Learning (SOL) proficiency tests, more than 92 percent of White students achieved English, math, and science proficiency. Among Black/African American students, 71 percent achieved English proficiency, 72 percent math proficiency, and 68 percent science proficiency. Among Hispanic students, 74 percent achieved English proficiency, 76 percent math proficiency, and 70 percent science proficiency.⁷⁸

Many of the county's children are children of immigrants. An estimated 38 percent of Fairfax County children under age 18 had at least one foreign-born parent in 2000.

Over 75% of the children in Fairfax County who are children of immigrants were born here and are U.S. citizens.

- Many of the county's children are children of immigrants. An estimated 38 percent of Fairfax County children under age 18 had at least one foreign-born parent in 2000.⁷⁹ Nationally, the percent of all children who are children of immigrants increased from 6 percent in 1970 to 19 percent in 2000.⁸⁰ However, most of the children in Fairfax County who are children of immigrants were born here and are U.S. citizens – 76 percent of the county’s children of immigrants were born in the United States and an additional 3.5 percent are naturalized citizens. Younger children are more likely to be native born than older children. Among children age 13 to 17, who have a foreign-born parent, only 57 percent were born in the United States.⁸¹

- Out of a total enrollment of about 163,830 students, there were 29,834 limited English proficient (LEP) students in the Fairfax County Public Schools during the 2004-2005 school year. Fairfax County schools contain 44 percent of all Virginia students designated as LEP students.⁸² Census 2000 data for Fairfax County indicate that one out of every five children with at least one immigrant parent live in a linguistically isolated household; that is, a household in which no member age 14 or older can speak English very well.⁸³

- In terms of their likelihood of participating in risky and anti-social behaviors, Fairfax County adolescents are similar to their peers nationwide. A 2003 survey of Fairfax County 8th, 10th and 12th grade students found levels of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use similar to levels found in national studies.⁸⁴

A 2003 survey of Fairfax County 8th, 10th and 12th grade students found levels of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use similar to levels found in national studies.

- Alcohol was the substance used most frequently by Fairfax County 8th, 10th and 12th grade students. Among 12th graders, 45.8 percent

- had at least one alcoholic drink in the past 30 days and 27.6 percent participated in binge drinking (drinking five or more drinks in a row) in the past two weeks. However, Fairfax County 8th, 10th and 12th graders were slightly less likely to indicate 30 day use of alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana in 2003 than they did in 2001.⁸⁵
- *“In the 2001 study of Fairfax County 8th, 10th and 12th graders, 46 percent of respondents indicated that they had been bullied, taunted, ridiculed, or teased at least once, with 11.8 percent reporting 10 or more occasions in the past year.”⁸⁶*
 - Fairfax County adolescents who spoke languages other than English at home were less likely to participate in school or non-school extra-curricular activities. They also were less likely to think that there were extra-curricular programs available to them in their communities according to the 2001 study of Fairfax County 8th, 10th and 12th graders.
 - When secondary students were asked if they participated in school or non-school extra-curricular activities (sports, 4-H, boys and girls clubs, pep clubs, etc.) more than once a month, nearly two-thirds of those who speak English at home indicated that they did participate in such activities. In contrast, fewer than a third of those who speak Spanish at home indicated participation and only 43 percent of students speaking other languages at home indicated participation.⁸⁷
 - When secondary students were asked if sports teams, scouting, boys and girls clubs, 4-H clubs, and service clubs were available in their communities for persons their age, students who spoke a language other than English at home were more likely to say no. Sports teams were the activity adolescents were most likely to identify as being available in their communities for persons their age. Only 12 percent of students who speak English at home indicated that sports teams were not an activity available for people their age in their communities. However, among students who spoke languages other than English at home, they were more than twice as likely as the students who spoke English at home to say the sports teams were not available in their communities for persons their age.⁸⁸

Future Trends:

- Fairfax County’s population younger than 20 years is expected to grow slowly in number through 2020 but shrink as a proportion of total population. The growth in children and youth in Fairfax County will slow considerably because baby boomers are now at the very end of their child bearing years.
- The population of persons younger than 20 years in Fairfax County is expected to become more racially and ethnically diverse. Hispanics and Asians are expected to grow the most rapidly among the racial and ethnic groups.
- Hispanic children have poverty rates double that for all children.⁸⁹ As Hispanics become a larger proportion of population, poverty rates among children may increase faster than poverty rates for other age groups.

Implications:

- Fairfax County will need to expand the capacity of its school system through 2020 to accommodate a growing number of school age children. The future growth of the school age population is expected to be much slower than that experienced through the 1990s.
- As the foreign-born population in Fairfax County grows, it is very important that the county have structures in place that will help immigrant families succeed. For the most part, the needs of children in immigrant families are similar to those of all children but they also have strengths and challenges that are unique.
 - These assets and challenges vary by culture, economic status, parental educational attainment, parental English ability, and immigration status. The assets include a higher likelihood of living in a two-parent family and living with parents who have a strong work ethic and a desire to improve their standard of living.
 - The challenges faced by these children include the difficulties of navigating two, often dissimilar, cultures; discrimination; language barriers; and the greater likelihood of living in a low income family. Immigrant parents may have more difficulty interacting with teachers and other professionals who come in contact with their children; may have difficulty helping their children with their studies due to parental language or educational barriers; and, for various reasons, may be more reluctant to seek help from schools and other external resources.
 - LEP students are more likely to have difficulty achieving proficiency standards set by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Overall, 86 percent or more of Fairfax County Public School students achieved English, math, and science proficiency based on SOL tests. Among LEP students, 75 percent achieved English proficiency, 80 percent math proficiency, and 72 percent science proficiency.⁹⁰
- Communities can influence factors that protect youth from participating in risky and/or antisocial behavior. “Research during the past 30 years supports the view that delinquency, alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, along with school achievement and other important outcomes in adolescence, are associated with specific characteristics in the student’s community, school, and family environments, as well as individual characteristics.... In fact, these characteristics have been shown to be more important in understanding these behaviors than ethnicity, income or family structure.”⁹¹ Examples of factors that protect adolescents include opportunities to participate in family, school, and community activities; feeling appreciated and being rewarded for being involved; and involvement in school, faith-based, and other community groups.⁹²
 - “Bullying is a learned behavior that is a significant contributor to youth violence, including suicide. It is a form of harassment that can be physical, verbal, or visual in nature and occurs over a period of time. All too often, adults dismiss bullying as youthful behavior that is just a part of growing up.... Bullying, harassment, and other aggressive behaviors can lead to violence or gang involvement...”⁹³

Recreational and educational programs that appeal to all cultural groups need to be made available. Research suggests that youth involved in such programs are less likely to participate in risky or antisocial behaviors.

- Recreational and educational programs that appeal to all cultural groups need to be made available. Research suggests that youth involved in such programs are less likely to participate in risky or antisocial behaviors. The higher dropout rates and lower proficiency scores for minority students suggest that some of the county's minority youth are not obtaining the skills and support needed. For example, LEP students may need access to tutoring in their primary language even after developing fairly strong English skills as they may have difficulty understanding abstract ideas explained only in English.⁹⁴

Trend 6:

Housing trends

Facts:

- The style and size of homes being built in Fairfax County have changed dramatically since 1970. Today's homes are larger in size, more densely grouped, and less likely to be detached single-family homes.
 - In 1970, nearly 70 percent of the housing in Fairfax County was single-family detached units, 24.4 percent was multifamily units, and only 5.9 percent was single-family attached or townhouse units. As of 2004, single-family detached units had declined as a proportion of total housing units to 49.4 percent and townhouses had increased to 24.6 percent.⁹⁵
 - The median size of a Fairfax County single-family detached home has more than doubled since 1970. In 1970, the median size of a single-family detached home was about 1,800 square feet. The median size of a Fairfax County single-family detached home built in 2003 was slightly larger than 3,700 square feet. For townhouses in Fairfax County, the median size has increased from 1,496 square feet in 1970 to 1,846 square feet in 2003.⁹⁶
 - New Fairfax County homes tend to be larger than homes built in other parts of the country. The overall median size of single-family detached and attached homes built in 2003 was approximately 2,800 square feet.⁹⁷ This is a third larger than the national median size of a new one-family house— 2,137 square feet in 2003.⁹⁸ In 2003, 20 percent of all new homes built nationwide were 3,000 square feet or larger;⁹⁹ in Fairfax County, 47 percent of all newly constructed single-family detached and attached homes were 3,000 square feet or larger. In addition, Fairfax County contains more than 300 homes that are more than 8,000 square feet in size, larger than many nonresidential structures.¹⁰⁰
- Most of the new housing being constructed in the county is being built at the high end of the market.
 - In 2004, the median sales price for new single-family homes was 33 percent higher or \$164,000 above that for existing homes; for townhouses, the median sales price was 29 percent higher or \$98,000 above that for existing townhouses; and for multifamily units, the median price of new units was 50 percent higher or \$117,000 above that for existing units.¹⁰¹
 - Privately owned rental housing complex units as a proportion of total housing units declined between 1980 and 2000, from more than 20 percent to less than 16 percent of

The median size of a Fairfax County single-family detached home has more than doubled since 1970, from about 1,800 square feet to more than 3,700 square feet.

housing stock. Between 2000 and 2004, privately owned rental complex units as a proportion of total housing units increased slightly to 16.6 percent of the housing stock.¹⁰²

- Newer rental complexes rent their units for higher amounts than older complexes. In January 2004, rental complexes built within the last year had an average monthly rent of \$1,461 – 26 percent higher than the overall average monthly rent (\$1,157) for all rental complex units in the county.¹⁰³
- Housing prices in Fairfax County have risen more rapidly than income between 1970 and 2004.
 - The median market value of owner occupied housing has increased considerably since 1970. In 1970, the median value of a housing unit was \$35,400. By 2004, the median housing value had increased nearly 10 times to \$349,000.¹⁰⁴ In comparison, median household income increased by 5½ times its level in 1970.¹⁰⁵
 - The average monthly cost of a rental complex unit also has increased more rapidly than median household income since 1980. Average monthly rent increased from \$334 in 1980 to \$1,157 in 2004.¹⁰⁶

	Estimates						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2002	2003	2004
Single Family Units	69.7%	59.3%	53.9%	50.6%	49.7%	49.7%	49.4%
Tow nhouse Units	5.9%	14.6%	22.3%	24.3%	24.4%	24.6%	24.6%
Multifamily Units	24.4%	26.1%	23.8%	25.1%	25.9%	25.7%	26.0%
Median home size by year built in square feet							
Single Family	1,819	2,146	3,230	3,709	3,708	3,721	
Tow nhouse Units	1,496	1,340	1,470	1,731	1,804	1,846	
Average Rental Complex Unit Rent		\$334	\$734	\$989	\$1,157	\$1,168	\$ 1,157
Renters spending 30% or more of income on housing							
All renters		31.9%	38.6%	31.9%	39.1%	44.5%	45.4%
Renters 65+ years			59.0%	53.0%	56.0%		
Median Market Value of Ow ner Occupied Housing Units	\$ 35,400	\$ 87,200	\$ 194,700	\$ 226,800	\$ 265,600	\$ 307,600	\$ 349,000
Ow ners spending 30% or more of income on housing							
All ow ners		20.6%	26.0%	19.6%	22.1%	26.0%	25.1%
Ow ners 65+ years			13.2%	17.6%	21.2%		

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses (1970 proportion of housing units by type and median market value; 1970 – 2000 renter and owner proportion of income spent on housing) and American Community Surveys (2002 – 2004 renter and owner proportion of income spent on housing) and Fairfax County Department of Systems Management for Human Services (1980 – 2004 proportion of housing units by type, home size, average rental complex rent and median market value).

- Housing affordability is determined by more than just the ratio of income to housing cost. The affordability of owned housing is influenced by loan costs (interest rates and type of loan). One method of assessing housing affordability is to look at the proportion of households spending more than 30 percent of income on housing.
 - Due to a combination of increasing income, low interest rates and low home price inflation between 1990 and 2000, the proportion of Fairfax County homeowners spending more than 30 percent of income on housing shrank from 26 percent to 19.6 percent of owner-occupied households. Since 2000, this trend has reversed because housing prices

have risen dramatically. The proportion of homeowners spending more than 30 percent of income on housing increased to over a quarter of homeowners as of 2003 and 2004.¹⁰⁷

The proportion of homeowners spending more than 30 percent of income on housing increased to over a quarter of homeowners as of 2003 and 2004. Since 2000, the percent of renters spending 30 percent or more of income on housing has risen to 45.4 percent.

- In 1990, the proportion of homeowners age 65 and older spending more than 30 percent of income on housing was half that of all Fairfax County homeowners, 13.2 percent compared to 26.0 percent of all homeowners. Since 1990, the proportion of homeowners age 65 and older spending 30 percent or more of income on housing has risen to nearly the same level as that for all homeowners. In 2002, the percent of older homeowners paying 30 percent or more of income for housing costs was 21.2 percent.¹⁰⁸
- The percentage of renter households spending more than 30 percent of income on rental costs has followed a similar trend pattern as that for homeowners, but renters are more likely than homeowners to spend 30 percent or more of income on rent. In 2000, one out of five county homeowners spent 30 percent of income or more on housing whereas one out three renters did. Since 2000, the percent of renters spending 30 percent or more of income on housing has risen to 45.4 percent.¹⁰⁹
- Renters age 65 and older are more likely than homeowners or younger renters to be paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. In 1990, three out of five renters age 65 and older paid more than 30 percent of their income for housing costs. In 2000, this proportion had decreased; however, by 2002 it had increased almost to the 1990 levels.¹¹⁰
- Approximately three quarters of the households in Fairfax County were owner occupied in 2004. In general, older adults are more likely to be homeowners than younger adults and older adults are more likely to have lived in their homes for a longer period of time. However, after age 85 homeownership rates drop.¹¹¹
 - Persons age 65 to 84 are more likely to be homeowners in Fairfax County than younger adults. In 2000, 69.2 percent of householders younger than age 65 were homeowners whereas 87.2 percent of householders age 65 to 74 were homeowners and 80.7 percent of householders age 75 to 84 were homeowners. After age 85, homeownership in Fairfax County drops dramatically to 57.2 percent.¹¹²
 - Among homeowners age 65 to 74, the majority (56.1 percent) were paying mortgages in 2000. For those homeowners age 75 and older less than a third had mortgages.¹¹³
 - Older homeowners, age 65 and older, were more likely to have lived in their homes for a longer period of time than younger homeowners. In 2000, 10.3 percent of all homeowners had lived in their homes for 21 to 30 years and 7.0 percent had lived in their homes more than 30 years. In contrast, 23.1 percent of homeowners age 65 and older had lived in their homes 21 to 30 years and 39.8 percent had lived in their homes more than 30 years.¹¹⁴

Future Trends:

- Fairfax County's Comprehensive Plan suggests that single-family detached homes will remain approximately half of the county's housing stock in the future, while townhouses and multifamily homes will each represent about a quarter of the housing stock.
- With vacant land rapidly diminishing, future residential development in Fairfax County is expected to occur at higher densities than in the past.
- Analysts who track the real estate market feel that speculation has been driving home prices up in the Metropolitan Washington Area since the stock market crash in 2000. As gaps between home values, personal income, and rental rates increase, the likelihood of a price adjustment in home values increases. Based on a comparison between income and home prices, The Local Market Monitor suggests that home prices in the Washington Metropolitan Area are overpriced by 17 percent.¹¹⁵ Despite price adjustments that may occur due to speculation in the near future, the long-term picture favors increasing housing prices.
- Recently, monthly rental complex rents have grown slowly or not at all while the prices of multifamily condominiums have risen sharply. These market trends have made the conversion of apartment complexes to condominiums an appealing proposition for apartment owners. The movement to convert apartment complexes will lower the stock of rental complex units.
- Job growth coupled with low vacancy rates will apply upward pressure on housing values and rents during the next two decades. How this will affect housing affordability depends on income growth. A recent study conducted by the Virginia Tech Center for Housing Research for the Fairfax County Housing Authority concludes that the gross deficit in affordable housing units is more than 17,000 units and predicts that this deficit is likely to worsen in the future.¹¹⁶

Despite price adjustments that may occur due to speculation in the near future, the long-term picture favors increasing housing prices.

Implications:

- Affordable housing issues will continue to challenge the county. A number of market forces are aggravating the housing affordability problem. Among them are the type of housing being built, job growth and speculation.
 - Most of the new housing units being built are larger and more expensive than existing units, causing the county's housing stock to become less economically diverse.
 - The county enjoys low unemployment rates, job growth, and low housing vacancy rates. This tends to put upward pressure on housing prices and rental costs.
 - An additional component pushing housing costs higher, at least temporarily, is financial speculation. Housing has become an investment market following the stock market crash in 2000.
- Extremely large and densely placed homes are generating intense controversy in many communities about esthetics, congestion, affordability, and safety.

- While household sizes and home lots have been shrinking in size, the size of homes has been increasing. “A variety of terms are used to describe supersized homes including McMansion, monster home, starter castle, and megahome.”¹¹⁷ These large homes (3,000 square feet or more), though often desired by homebuyers, have stirred controversy in many communities. Opponents of these large homes say that when these homes are built in older established neighborhoods, the large homes do not blend in esthetically and they reduce the stock of more affordable housing. “Inflicting massively oversized structures on neighborhoods that have an established pattern of small houses on small lots is the epitome of public rudeness.... Communities should not be catering to this kind of nouveau riche excess.... Proponents see McMansions as a benefit to communities... emphasizing that infill development uses existing infrastructure, reduces sprawl and revitalizes suburbs.”¹¹⁸
- A second set of concerns has surfaced about the trend of building larger and larger homes among fire suppression professionals. These large homes are often built closely together increasing the risk of fires spreading to neighboring structures. In addition, structures of 8,000 square feet or more, a size comparable to a commercial building, require the use of fire fighting techniques more akin to those employed in commercial properties.¹¹⁹ However, these large homes do not have the same building code requirements as commercial buildings; for example, single-family homes are not required to have sprinkler systems.
- In general, the owned housing stock in Fairfax County is not accessible or “visit-able” for someone with a mobility impairment. Much of the county’s housing stock is vertical in nature and often requires occupants and visitors to navigate steps just to enter the structure. As the proportion of seniors increases relative to total population, the proportion of persons with mobility impairments is likely to rise. Some impacts of this lack of accessibility are a greater reliance on rehab facilities when residents are released from the hospital, greater isolation for those who age in place, and major rehab/construction costs for those who age in place or bring elderly relatives to live with them.
 - Most of the accessible apartments and condominiums located in Fairfax County are newly constructed due to recent changes in law. Because these units are newer units, they tend to be much more expensive.
 - In a survey of persons age 50 and older conducted by AARP, it was found that the ‘livability’ of one’s home had a major impact on the respondent’s view of their community and their ability to age in place. “Residents whose homes would not meet their physical needs well were less likely to view their home and community favorably and were also less likely to be engaged with their community.... Residents whose homes do not meet their physical needs well as they grow older were less likely to want to remain in their current home... were less likely to report wanting to live in the same community in five years... were less likely to socialize with neighbors... and frequently feel isolated.”¹²⁰
- How much a household spends on housing in relation to income has a direct impact on the household’s ability to be self-sufficient. As the percent of income spent on housing increases, households become much more likely to run out of money for basic needs such as housing, utilities, food, and medicine. Among Fairfax-Falls

As the percent of income spent on housing increases, households become much more likely to run out of money for basic needs such as housing, utilities, food, and medicine.

Church area households spending less than 20 percent of income on housing, only 7.6 percent ran out of money for basic needs one or more times during a year. But among households spending 50 percent or more of income on housing, 40.5 percent ran out of money for basic needs one or more times during the year.¹²¹

- To afford housing, some Fairfax County residents are turning to money saving strategies that involve personal and/or financial risk.
 - Severely overcrowded housing units can result in health and safety risks to those residents living in the overcrowded units. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of housing units considered severely overcrowded (those with more than 1.5 persons per room) increased from 1.5 percent of all housing units to 2.8 percent of all housing units. Among renter-occupied housing units, the percent of severely overcrowded units increased from 3.9 percent to 7.4 percent.¹²²
 - A recently appearing private market strategy to help homeowners afford more expensive homes is the interest only mortgage. Interest only loans allow borrowers to pay only the interest for a set period of time. A disadvantage to this type of loan is that it shifts additional risk to the homebuyer who is gambling on price inflation. It is estimated that more than a third of the Washington area mortgage market in 2004 was interest only loans; five years ago, interest only loans made up only about 2 percent of the loan market.¹²³ If home prices do not continue to rise, foreclosure rates may increase as homeowners are unable to meet their financial obligations.
 - A third affordability strategy is the recent interest in 40-year mortgages. By stretching payments over 40 years, monthly costs are lowered and prospective homebuyers increase the price of a home for which they can qualify. On the negative side, 40-year loans increase the total paid for the home (interest is paid for more years) and decrease the rate buyers build equity.
 - Senior homeowners who no longer have a mortgage can tap into reverse mortgage programs to provide themselves with income. Because these types of programs are relatively new, seniors considering these options may need consumer information and protection.
- Rapid home price inflation may place affordability burdens on existing homeowners who purchased their homes prior to the price increases. Unless tax rates are lowered, increases in home prices place additional tax burdens on residents – especially seniors with fixed incomes and younger households where income is growing more slowly than housing prices. Between 2000 and 2003 in Fairfax County, the average home assessment increased by 54 percent while median household income changed very little. Although tax rates were decreased, the average tax paid per household on a home increased 34 percent in real dollars.¹²⁴
- Senior homeowners who have aged in place are often occupying older housing units. Homes 15 to 30 years old frequently need major items such as roofs, heating and cooling systems, and kitchens and bathrooms replaced or renovated. Persons age 65 and older have lower incomes due to retirement and are sometimes less able to afford these repairs. In addition, physical limitations may prevent some seniors from doing repairs they may have been able to do themselves when younger.

Trend 7:

Patterns of income and wealth

Facts:

- Fairfax County is one of the wealthiest jurisdictions in the nation, but growth in household income over time has not been equal for all groups.
 - Median household income in Fairfax County grew rapidly between the 1970 and 2000 Censuses, from \$14,854 to \$81,050. Since the 2000 Census, the American Community Survey estimated that median household income grew to \$88,133 in 2004, an increase of 8.7 percent in four years.¹²⁵
 - Fairfax County experienced a widening of the income gap between those with the most and the least income during the 1990 to 2000 decade. An analysis of family income distributions between the 1980, 1990, and 2000 Censuses showed that when adjusted for inflation the income gap between the lowest earning quartile and the highest earning quartile remained stable between 1980 and 1990. Between the 1990 and 2000 Censuses, however, the gap between the lowest earning quartile of families and the highest earning quartile widened by more than 50 percent or about \$25,000.¹²⁶
 - Because many persons are retired at age 65 and older, median household income for householders age 65 and older is lower than that for all householders. In 2002, householders age 65 and older had a median household income of \$59,249 compared to \$85,310 for all households.¹²⁷
 - Increases in median household income for Fairfax County householders age 65 and older have not kept pace with those for all households. In 1980, the median household income of householders age 65 and older was 85 percent of that for all households; in 2002, it was less than 70 percent.¹²⁸

Fairfax County experienced a widening of the income gap between those with the most and the least income during the 1990 to 2000 decade. The gap between the lowest earning quartile of families and the highest earning quartile widened by more than 50 percent or about \$25,000.

	Estimates						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2002	2003	2004
Median household income							
All households	\$ 14,854	\$ 30,011	\$ 59,284	\$ 81,050	\$ 85,310	\$ 80,753	\$ 88,133
Householders 65+ years		\$ 25,496			\$ 59,249		
Persons below poverty level	18,619	23,092	28,210	43,396	44,012	41,165	
Poverty rate	4.2%	3.9%	3.5%	4.5%	4.5%	4.2%	4.4%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses (1970 – 2000) and American Community Surveys (2002 – 2004).

- Although Fairfax County has experienced poverty rates well below those of the nation, many county residents struggle with economic self sufficiency issues.

- Since 1970, poverty rates in Fairfax County have been well below national rates, fluctuating between 3.5 percent and 4.5 percent. Although Fairfax County's poverty rates are very low, there were an estimated 43,893 persons below poverty in 2004.¹²⁹ The number of persons below poverty in Fairfax County is larger than or equal to the 2004 population in 98 of the 134 local jurisdictions in Virginia.¹³⁰
 - The poverty level does not adequately reflect the income level needed for self-sufficiency in Fairfax County. A self-sufficiency study conducted by Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) analyzed costs in six jurisdictions in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area: the District of Columbia, Montgomery County, Prince Georges County, City of Alexandria, Arlington County and Fairfax County. Among these six jurisdictions, expenses associated with self-sufficiency rose fastest in Fairfax County between 1999 and 2005. In particular, Fairfax County residents experienced higher increases in housing costs and taxes. In 1999, Montgomery County and Arlington County required higher self-sufficiency wages than Fairfax County for survival but in 2005 Fairfax County required the highest self-sufficiency wage among the jurisdictions studied.¹³¹
 - According to the WOW study, a single adult living in Fairfax County in 2005 would need an hourly income of \$14.45 or an annual income of \$30,517 to meet basic needs for self sufficiency.¹³² This is more than three times the federal poverty guideline for 2005.¹³³ A family containing two adults, a preschooler, and a school-age child would need a combined hourly wage of \$31.48 or an annual income of \$66,504 to meet basic needs.¹³⁴ The income needed for this family of four is nearly three and a half times the federal poverty guideline for a family of four.¹³⁵
- According to a recent study, a family containing two adults, a preschooler, and a school-age child would need a combined hourly wage of \$31.48 or an annual income of \$66,504 to meet basic needs for self sufficiency...nearly three and a half times the federal poverty guideline for a family of four.*
- Over the past two decades, major changes have occurred in the nation's retirement programs and how retirement is financed. In 1981, 80 percent of retirement programs nationwide were defined benefit plans or pension plans. Since the 1980s, many retirement programs were converted to defined contribution plans such as 401K plans. In 2000, only 40 percent of retirement programs remained defined benefit plans.¹³⁶
 - National data on the sources of income show that there has been a shift to more reliance on wage and salary income among persons 65 years and older since 1984 while the reliance on interest income, dividends, rental income, and other property income has shrunk. In 1984, wages and salaries contributed 26.8 percent of total income for persons 65 to 74 years and contributed 9.3 percent of total income for persons age 75 and older. In 2002, wages and salaries contributed 37.4 percent of total income for those 65 to 74 years and 12.2 percent for those 75 years and older.¹³⁷
 - Interest income, dividends, rental income, and other property income contributed 10.8 percent of total income for those 65 to 74 years and 17.3 percent of total income for those 75 years and older in 1984. Interest income, dividends, rental income, and other property income declined dramatically as contributors to total income in 2002 – 4.1 percent for those 65 to 74 years and 8.3 percent for those 75 years and older.¹³⁸

	Estimates of Sources of Income					
	1984		1990		2002	
Sources of Income before taxes - Persons 65 to 74 years						
Wages and salaries	\$ 4,212	26.8%	\$ 5,439	25.3%	\$ 13,134	37.4%
Self-employment	\$ 712	4.5%	\$ 973	4.5%	\$ 1,451	4.1%
Social Security and retirement	\$ 8,670	55.2%	\$ 12,176	56.6%	\$ 18,276	52.0%
Interest, dividends, rental income, etc.	\$ 1,701	10.8%	\$ 2,400	11.2%	\$ 1,438	4.1%
Other	\$ 426	2.7%	\$ 515	2.4%	\$ 819	2.3%
Sources of Income before taxes - Persons 74 years and older						
Wages and salaries	\$ 1,092	9.3%	\$ 1,133	7.3%	\$ 2,925	12.2%
Self-employment	\$ 692	5.9%	\$ 215	1.4%	\$ 803	3.4%
Social Security and retirement	\$ 7,480	63.9%	\$ 10,976	71.1%	\$ 17,327	72.5%
Interest, dividends, rental income, etc.	\$ 2,026	17.3%	\$ 2,716	17.6%	\$ 1,990	8.3%
Other	\$ 422	3.6%	\$ 394	2.6%	\$ 844	3.5%

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1984, 1990 and 2002 Consumer Expenditure Survey.

- An analysis conducted by Dr. Stephen Fuller concluded that home equity comprises a major portion of wealth – approximately half the total assets held by Fairfax County homeowners age 65 and older. Dr. Fuller estimated that senior homeowners with incomes below \$75,000, on average, had total assets of less than \$500,000 (including the equity in their homes).¹³⁹

Future Trends:

- Median household income levels in Fairfax County are likely to remain one of the highest in the nation because of the area’s low unemployment rates, high levels of educational attainment, and the types of jobs available to residents.
- The widening gap between the rich and poor may become amplified in the future due to labor market changes and to the intergenerational transfer of wealth. Wage growth of lower skilled workers is not keeping pace with that of highly skilled workers. In addition, changes in estate and inheritance laws have enabled wealthy families to pass more wealth on to their heirs.
- Over the next two decades the average age of retirement is likely to increase by a couple of years as the eligibility age for Social Security Income increases. Typically age at retirement has been closely aligned to the age at which employees become eligible for Social Security Income.¹⁴⁰
- The educational attainment levels of persons 45 to 64 years are higher than those for persons 65 years and older, especially among women in Fairfax County. Among women, the percent with at least a four year college degree is 50.1 percent for those 45 to 64 years and 26.2 percent for those 65 years and older; the rates for males are 68.0 percent and 57.2 percent, respectively.¹⁴¹
- Employers are expected to continue to convert retirement plans to defined compensation retirement plans.

Implications:

- The widening household income gap between the wealthiest households and the poorest households in Fairfax County is partially due to a widening wage gap between skilled and unskilled employment. “Workers who acquire more skills and more knowledge typically earn a higher wage than those who don’t. Economists call this difference in wages between high-skill

and low-skill workers the skill premium. Over the past 30 years the skill premium has increased dramatically. Although economists are still debating the causes of this increase, it seems likely that skill-biased technical change has played a large role.... The average wage of a college-educated worker was about 59 percent higher than that of a high-school-educated worker in 1970 and about 75 percent higher in 1996. The skill premium began to rise dramatically beginning around 1980.”¹⁴²

- Unskilled workers are more likely to lack health insurance, and persons without health insurance tend to have poorer overall health. Nationally, 40 percent of workers who have less than a high school education lack health insurance.¹⁴³ In Fairfax County, 59.3 percent of adults with less than a high school education lack health insurance and 13.3 percent of adults with only a high school diploma or GED lack health insurance. Among college graduates or those with post graduate education in Fairfax County less than 2 percent lack health insurance.¹⁴⁴ As the income gap amplifies between the most and least wealthy, the number of residents without adequate health care may increase.

Because they are better educated and more likely to have been in the labor force than earlier generations, women may have more financial resources when they retire than earlier generations.

- Typically higher educational attainment levels are associated with higher earning power. Thus it is likely that at retirement the better educated adults who are currently 45 to 64 years will have higher incomes than the less well-educated generation that preceded them in Fairfax County. Better educated and more likely to have been in the labor force than earlier generations, women especially may have more financial resources when they retire than earlier generations.
- Between 2010 and 2020, the first of the baby boom generation will reach age 65, the age typically associated with retirement. A 2003 Congressional Budget Office (CBO) study took a comprehensive look at a wide range of studies on the financial preparedness of the baby boomers for retirement. These are the conclusions from the CBO study:
 - “As a general rule, the more types of wealth that such studies account for, the larger the share of the baby-boom generation that appears prepared for retirement....”
 - “Fewer boomers are likely to live in poverty than is the case with current retirees....”
 - “Most ... studies suggest that about half of boomer households are on track to accumulate enough retirement wealth to maintain their working-age standard of living after they retire.... The other half of households are likely to face a drop in their living standard at retirement, especially if they retire when they now intend to. In many cases, the shortfall will be modest and can be made up through a few additional years of work. However, ... net worth among families whose earners did not graduate from high school appears to have declined ... many of those baby boomers are likely ... to find themselves largely dependent on government benefits.”¹⁴⁵
- With more residents retiring under defined compensation plans (i.e., 401K plans), retirement income and wealth become more tied to fluctuations and risks in the investment markets. A pronounced downturn in financial markets may result in pronounced increases in residents’ demands for financial support services at a time when financial support assets in the community also are declining.

- Policymakers and program planners need to engage in dialogues about shifting definitions around how need is defined. For example, the income level at which a family becomes self-sufficient in Fairfax County is at least three times above the federally defined poverty threshold. But in addition to income, more attention may need to be paid to wealth and its liquidity - especially for those programs serving seniors as some seniors are low income but have sufficient assets or wealth. However, the costs of implementing eligibility criteria that take into account wealth will need to be weighed against total program costs and policy goals.
 - County government must constantly nurture relationships between other levels of government, community based organizations, and its residents in an attempt to meet changing needs efficiently. Federal and state regulations sometimes hamper efforts to better target the populations most in need because they may not include wealth as a factor in determining need. The county needs to investigate ways to address these types of inequities.

Trend 8:

Health care issues

Facts:

- “The United States spends a larger share of its gross domestic product (GDP) on health care than any other major industrialized country. Expenditures for health care represent nearly one-seventh of the Nation’s GDP, and they continue to be one of the fastest growing components of the federal budget. In 1960, for example, health care expenditures accounted for about 5 percent of GDP; by 2000, that figure had grown to more than 13 percent.”¹⁴⁶
 - Nationally, the median per person medical expense rose from \$567 in 1996 to \$856 in 2001, a 51 percent increase. For persons under age 65, the median medical expense rose 49.7 percent during the five-year period; and, for persons age 65 and older, it rose 55.2 percent. Additionally, the 2001 median cost for a person age 65 and older was more than four times higher than that for a younger person, \$3,049 compared to \$690. Nearly 20 percent of these expenses were paid out of pocket.¹⁴⁷
 - As with overall medical costs, prescription costs are higher for persons age 65 and older than for younger persons. Nationally, the median per person prescription expense more than doubled between 1996 and 2001, rising from \$114 in 1996 to \$240 in 2001. Prescription costs for both age groups rose at about the same rate, but persons age 65 and over spent five times more on prescriptions than younger persons, a median of \$918 in 2001 compared to \$176 for those who are younger. Persons younger than age 65 paid only 38 percent of prescription costs out of pocket in 2001 whereas persons age 65 and older paid nearly 56 percent of their prescription costs out of pocket.¹⁴⁸
- Only 7.6 percent of Fairfax County residents lacked health insurance in 2004. Adults, age 19 to 64 years, were more likely to be uninsured than children under 19 years – 9.6 percent of adults lack health insurance and 4.6 percent of children lack health insurance. Most Fairfax County residents obtain health insurance benefits through their jobs, but the size and type of employer and the skill level of the worker impact on the likelihood of having coverage.¹⁴⁹
 - In 2004, 77.8 percent of Fairfax County adults ages 19 to 64 years were covered by group health insurance, 7.3 percent had individual policies, and 5.3 percent were covered by public health insurance.¹⁵⁰
 - Unskilled adults are less likely to be covered by health insurance. Among Fairfax County adults who have not completed high school, 59.3 percent lack health insurance coverage. Among adults who possess only a high school education, 13.3 percent lack health insurance. In comparison, less than 2 percent of adults with at least a four-year college degree lack health insurance in Fairfax County.¹⁵¹

Only 7.6 percent of Fairfax County residents lacked health insurance in 2004. Most residents obtain health insurance benefits through their jobs, but the size and type of employer and the skill level of the worker impact on the likelihood of having coverage.

- Fairfax County residents employed in the construction, personal services, and retail sectors were the least likely to be offered health insurance by their employers. Fewer than half (45.5 percent) of workers in the construction industry indicated that they were offered health insurance, 58.7 percent of personal services workers were offered health insurance, and 60.1 percent of retail workers were offered health insurance.¹⁵²
 - Residents who are part-time workers are more likely than those who are unemployed to lack health insurance. Unemployed adults were more than twice as likely as employed adults to lack health insurance, 17.0 percent compared to 7.2 percent. However, a quarter of the adults who worked less than 34 hours per week were uninsured - a rate more than 40 percent higher than that for the unemployed.¹⁵³
 - Generally, persons working for small employers are more likely to lack health insurance coverage than those working for large employers. Only 1.2 percent of persons working for an employer with more than 100 employees lack health insurance compared to 16.7 percent of persons working for an employer with fewer than 11 employees. Less than a third of those employers who have fewer than 11 employees offer health insurance compared with 57.4 percent of employers with 11 to 50 employees and 87.9 percent of employers with more than 50 workers.¹⁵⁴
- Residents who are part-time workers are more likely than those who are unemployed to lack health insurance. A quarter of the adults who worked less than 34 hours per week were uninsured - a rate more than 40 percent higher than that for the unemployed.*
- Fairfax County residents without health insurance are less likely to have a usual source of care and visit doctors less frequently. More than half (53 percent) of Fairfax County residents without health insurance indicated that they have no usual source of care compared to only 11 percent of those with private insurance and 17 percent of those with public insurance. When asked how many visits they had made to a doctor during the last three months, 56 percent of those without health insurance had not made any visits whereas only 19 percent of persons with private insurance had not made any visits and 5 percent of those with public insurance.¹⁵⁵
 - Fairfax County residents who indicated that their health was poor were nearly 10 times more likely to lack health insurance than those residents with excellent or good health. Nearly a third of residents who have poor health lack health insurance, but only 3.1 percent of those with excellent health and 3.7 percent of those with good health lack health insurance.¹⁵⁶
 - Asians and Hispanics are more likely to lack health insurance than other races or ethnicities. During the past several decades, Fairfax County has experienced strong growth among Asians and Hispanics. Asian and Pacific Islanders have grown from 23,184 persons in 1980 to 148,496 persons in 2002. During the same time period, Hispanics increased from 19,983 persons to 122,013 persons.¹⁵⁷
 - In 2004, 6.4 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders living in Fairfax County lacked health insurance compared to 3.1 percent of White residents and 3.9 percent of Black residents. Among Hispanic residents, a third (32.6 percent) lacked health insurance.¹⁵⁸
 - The foreign born population in Fairfax County has increased by five times since 1980.¹⁵⁹ The diversity of this population has introduced new health issues into the county. For example,

tuberculosis has been a concern in Virginia with the number of cases increasing from 292 in 2000 to 332 in 2003. The Fairfax Health District has accounted for over 28 percent of all Virginia tuberculosis cases since 2000. In 2003, the majority of Virginia’s tuberculosis cases (62.3 percent) involved persons born outside of the United States.¹⁶⁰

- Life expectancy at birth for residents of the United States has increased consistently. Persons born in 1940 had a life expectancy at birth of 62.9 years, whereas persons born in 2001 have a life expectancy of 77.2 years.¹⁶¹ Medical science has done a very good job of finding cures for diseases and techniques for prolonging life. Today, two big factors influencing a person’s quality of health are weight and physical activity levels. The prevalence of obesity among Virginia adults has increased from 10.1 percent in 1991 to 20.0 percent in 2001.¹⁶² Obesity contributes to a large number of health problems, and lack of physical activity is one of the major causes of obesity. “Industry data indicates that overweight and obese individuals cost the payers of health services 37 percent more than for those of normal weight..... *and* only 16 percent of the *nation’s* population met the goal of 30 minutes of moderate activity five or more days per week. Among those 75 and over, only 12 percent meet the goal of 30 minutes five or more days a week.”¹⁶³
- The likelihood of having one or more disabilities increases dramatically with age. As shown by 2000 Census data, only 7.1 percent of persons 5 to 20 years have one or more disabilities. In sharp contrast among non-institutionalized persons 65 to 74 years, over 22 percent have one or more disabilities; among 75 to 84 year olds, 41.4 percent have one or more disabilities; and among persons 85 years and older, nearly three quarters have at least one disability. Of those persons 85 years and older, a third have a self-care disability and more than half have a disability that limits their ability to go outside their home.¹⁶⁴

	2000 Census Estimates					
	65 to 74 Years		75 to 84 Years		85 Years and Older	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Non-institutional population	44,502	100.0%	26,212	100.0%	8,082	100.0%
No disabilities	34,617	77.8%	15,355	58.6%	2,217	27.4%
One or more disabilities	9,885	22.2%	10,857	41.4%	5,865	72.6%
Sensory disability	2,368	5.3%	3,595	13.7%	2,477	30.6%
Physical disability	6,535	14.7%	7,579	28.9%	4,243	52.5%
Mental disability	2,112	4.7%	3,522	13.4%	2,622	32.4%
Self-care disability	1,711	3.8%	3,269	12.5%	2,622	32.4%
Go-outside-home disability	4,124	9.3%	5,368	20.5%	4,182	51.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census, PUMS. A sensory disability is defined as blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment. Physical disability is defined as a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying. A mental disability is defined as a learning, remembering, or concentrating condition lasting six months or more. A self-care disability is defined as a dressing, bathing, or getting around the inside of the home condition lasting six months or more. A going outside the home disability is defined as a condition lasting six months or more that makes it difficult to go alone to shop or visit a doctor’s office.

- A 2002 report from the Fairfax County Long-Term Care Task Force identified critical issues impacting the care of persons needing assistance with daily living. Among county programs for seniors who need assistance with daily living, many are currently filled to capacity. For example:
 - The Adult Day Health Care program currently serves 110 clients and has a waiting list of 96 persons.
 - The Home Repair for the Elderly program repairs about 80 homes per year and has a waiting list of 40 homes.

- At the time of a study conducted in 2000, there were no affordable assisted living beds available in the county.¹⁶⁵
- Anecdotal information suggests that there are shortages of geriatric specialists, in-home providers, and nursing home staff. “Thirty-eight states have established minimum nurse staffing standards *for nursing homes*. Virginia does not... Virginia ranks 48th in per capita health care spending for the elderly, poor, and persons with disabilities.... ‘Shortage of staff’ is the most frequent nursing home complaint received by Virginia’s Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.”¹⁶⁶

Future Trends:

- Most analysts expect health care and prescription medicine costs to continue to increase faster, on average, than other items.
- Hispanics and Asians and Pacific Islanders are expected to continue to be two of Fairfax County’s fastest growing population segments.
- The proportion of Fairfax County’s population that is foreign born is expected to continue to grow rapidly over the next decade unless federal policies on immigration change dramatically.
- Under the middle population growth assumption for the United States, the U.S. Census Bureau expects that life expectancy at birth will increase by slightly more than half a year every five years through 2020.
- “The incidence of disabilities among the elderly – everything from arthritis to Alzheimer’s – doubles every five years after age 65.”¹⁶⁷
The need for programs and other resources in the community to serve the frail elderly who need assistance with daily living, mental health services for age-related problems, and treatment for chronic or acute illnesses will increase as the senior population increases.
- The Virginia Employment Commission predicts that physicians and surgeons; registered nurses; and nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants will be among the state’s fastest growing occupations between 2002 and 2012. During this time period, there will be an average of 6,470 job openings per year for physicians and surgeons in Virginia, 2,060 job openings per year for nurses, and 1,020 job openings per year for nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants.¹⁶⁸

The incidence of disabilities among the elderly – everything from arthritis to Alzheimer’s – doubles every five years after age 65. The need for community resources to serve the frail elderly... will increase as the senior population increases.

Implications:

- If purchasing patterns for health insurance do not change among Hispanics and Asians, Fairfax County can expect to have a growing proportion of uninsured residents.
- As more foreign-born seniors enter Fairfax County, it is likely that the proportion of persons 65 years and older without health insurance will increase because these immigrants often do not qualify for Medicare.

- As life expectancy increases, the proportion of seniors age 85 and older is likely to increase. Based on 2000 data, nearly three quarters of seniors age 85 and older in Fairfax County had one or more disabilities.¹⁶⁹ How able these older residents will be to care for themselves independently in the future depends greatly on steps they take to keep physically active and to maintain their health.
- The county and its health care businesses may find it increasingly difficult to fill vacant positions. The lower paying health occupations in particular may become increasingly difficult to fill (i.e., home health aides and nursing home/assisted living facility staff).
- As most programs currently serving the frail elderly are at or near capacity, demand for these services is likely to grow more quickly than the current programs can accommodate.

Trend 9:

Rapid technological change

Facts:

- The residents of Fairfax County have been rapid adopters of new technology. Because of high education levels, high income levels, and the county's occupational mix, many of the county's residents feel comfortable experimenting with and using new technologies. One example of how rapidly Fairfax County residents embraced a new technology is the experience of home computer ownership and Internet use. 1990 is considered the starting point of the World Wide Web. Ten years later, 78.7 percent of Fairfax-Falls Church households had Internet access at home compared to 41.5 percent of households nationwide. Among households with persons age 65 and older, 58.1 percent had home Internet access. Even at low income levels (below \$25,000), 35.4 percent of Fairfax-Fall Church households had Internet access at home.¹⁷⁰

Future Trends:

- Fairfax County residents are likely to continue to be rapid adopters of new technologies in the future due to high education and income levels.
- “Researchers and marketers are developing everything from simple gadgets to complex computer systems to ease *the baby boomers* into old age.... Some solutions are already here... kitchen accessories with thicker handles for arthritic hands... door levers instead of doorknobs.... More ambitious products are in the works.... Research by Boston University biomedical engineer Jim Collins found that older people have better balance if the nerves in their feet are stimulated by vibrations. That led to a design for vibrating shoes that can help wearers avoid falls.... Automakers and university researchers are testing and refining sensors, monitors, and other devices to compensate for the coming decline in the reaction time and awareness of boomers *who continue to drive*.... Researchers also are tackling health care for the elderly. The leading idea: systems that monitor a person's health from home.”¹⁷¹

The residents of Fairfax County have been rapid adopters of new technology. 1990 is considered the starting point of the World Wide Web. Ten years later, 78.7 percent of Fairfax-Falls Church households had Internet access at home.

Implications:

- Already many residents register for classes and pay tax bills through the county's Web site. As new technologies become available, service providers may be able to experiment with new and creative ways to deliver services. For example, Fairfax County needs to develop and nurture programs that find ways of using technology to replace some of the services currently provided by in-home providers who are in very short supply.

- In a diverse county where a third of residents speak a language other than English at home, Fairfax County must take into account the needs of its diverse population when developing programs using new technologies.
- Increased use of technology may modify current patterns of work and leisure and affect transportation system demands and patterns. For example, teleworking has just begun to influence where and how work is done.

Trend 10: Community Safety

Facts:

	Calendar Year						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2002	2003	2004
Violent Crimes - Murder, Rape, Robbery, and Aggravated Assault							
Number	503	993	1,001	861	961	1,028	978
Rate per 100,000 Population	120.87	177.36	130.31	93.38	99.91	105.84	99.67
Property Crimes - Burglary, Larceny and Motor Vehicle Theft							
Number	18,439	26,265	26,205	21,245	21,665	19,784	18,181
Rate per 100,000 Population	4,430.74	4,691.02	3,411.32	2,304.07	2,252.45	2,036.93	1,852.79
Total Emergency Call Volume			343,735	554,851	614,409	543,159	541,967
Percent Wireline 911				39.2%	33.3%	37.2%	35.5%
Percent Cellular 911				39.3%	42.9%	40.9%	44.0%

Source: Fairfax County Police Department, 1980 through 2004; Department of Public Safety, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, *Serious Crime in the Metropolitan Washington Area*, 1970. Crime rates calculated using service population which is total Fairfax County population less the populations of the towns of Herndon and Vienna, the population residing at Fort Belvoir, and the population of Lorton Correctional Facility.

- In terms of violent crime, Fairfax County is one of the safest places to live in the United States.
 - In 2003, the national violent crime rate was 4½ times higher than that in Fairfax County and the national property crime rate was 1¾ times higher than that in Fairfax County.¹⁷²
 - A Fairfax County resident today is less likely to be the victim of either a violent crime or a property crime than during the previous three decades. Fairfax County crime rates increased through 1980 and then decreased over the next two decades. As of 2004, the violent crime rate was 44 percent lower than it was in 1980 and the property crime rate was 61 percent lower.¹⁷³
- The victims of crime as well as the perpetrators of crime are more likely to be teenagers and young adults.
 - Persons age 12 to 24 years are more than twice as likely to be victims of violent crimes as persons age 25 to 49 years.¹⁷⁴ Excluding juvenile offenders, 62 percent of all jail inmates and 57 percent of all state prison inmates are under age 35.¹⁷⁵
 - “According to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), persons age 65 or older generally experienced victimizations at much lower rates than younger groups of

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people from 1993 through 2002.... The elderly experienced nonfatal violent crime at a rate 1/20th that of young persons.... Households headed by persons age 65 or older experienced property crimes at a rate about a fourth of that for households headed by persons under age 25.”¹⁷⁶

- Emergency call volume to the Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC) increased 61 percent between 1990 and 2000. The sharp increase in call volume was not due to a sharp increase in emergencies but to the popularization of cellular telephones. Prior to the advent of mobile phones, the PSCC would receive only a couple of calls reporting a traffic accident, but now it is not unusual for dozens of calls to be received. Since 2000, more 911 emergency calls are made from cellular telephones than from wireline telephones.¹⁷⁷

	Calendar Year		Fiscal Year				
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2002	2003	2004
Total Incidents	25,017	43,489	59,123	81,856	89,246	87,621	91,373
Percent EMS			68.1%	67.9%	68.0%	68.8%	68.3%
Percent Fire Suppression			27.0%	26.7%	26.4%	24.8%	25.3%
Number of Fires	3,768	3,193		986	1,355	828	884
Rate per 1,000 Population	8.3	5.3		1.0	1.3	0.8	0.9
Structure Fires	1,287	1,011		839	669	569	555
Percent Residential	80.1%			82.5%	77.1%	77.0%	75.7%
Fire Deaths	4	13	3	8	7	5	7
Rate per 1,000,000 Population	8.8	21.8	3.7	8.3	7.0	4.9	6.8
Fire Loss (\$1,000)	\$ 2,452.4	\$ 7,867.0	\$15,994.0	\$29,319.3	\$29,929.5	\$16,598.3	\$27,029.5
Fire Loss as Percent of Total Taxable Real Estate Assessed Value*	0.060%	0.039%	0.022%	0.034%	0.026%	0.013%	0.021%

Source: Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department.

* Rate for 1970 adjusted to reflect that properties were assessed at 40 percent of market value. In all other years, properties were assessed at 100 percent of market value.

- When all types of fires are considered, Fairfax County residents are less likely to experience a fire or die from a fire than residents nationwide. However, when a residential fire does occur, Fairfax County residents were more likely to die.
 - “Every 20 seconds, a fire department responds to a fire somewhere in the nation.”¹⁷⁸ Nationwide, there were 5.4 fires per 1,000 population in 2003; among jurisdictions with populations greater than 500,000 persons, the rate of fires per 1,000 population was slightly lower – 3.9 fires.¹⁷⁹ Fairfax County residents, however, experienced fires at rates well below those nationally – approximately 1 fire per 1,000 population since 2000.¹⁸⁰
 - Residents of Fairfax County are less likely to experience a fire or die from a fire than they were in 1970. The number of fires per 1,000 population decreased by 23 percent, and fire related deaths per million population decreased by 89 percent.¹⁸¹
 - The majority of Fairfax County fires are structure fires (i.e., fires involving buildings). In 2003, one-third of all fires were structure fires nationally, while two-thirds of all fires occurring in Fairfax County were structure fires. Among structure fires, approximately three quarters are residential fires both locally and nationally.¹⁸²

- Fairfax County has a lower per capita death rate than the nation due to the county’s lower fire incident rates. Nationally, there were 13.5 deaths per million population attributed to fires in 2003,¹⁸³ whereas fewer than 8.5 deaths per million population have been attributed to fires in Fairfax County since 2000. However, on a per residential structure fire basis, Fairfax County has experienced higher death rates than those nationwide. From 2002 to 2004, there was an average of 10.9 residential fire deaths per 1,000 residential structure fires in Fairfax County¹⁸⁴ compared to 7.8 deaths nationwide in 2003.¹⁸⁵
- “When physical and cognitive abilities are limited, as is often the case for the very young and the very old, the risk of death and injury from fire rises.... Children and older adults account for 45 percent of fire deaths *nationwide*.”¹⁸⁶ During the past three years, adults age 65 and older have accounted for 37 percent of the fire deaths in Fairfax County but comprise only 8 percent of the total population. Children in Fairfax County have not been overrepresented among those dying from fires in the last three years.¹⁸⁷

Future Trends:

- There is a rapidly expanding annual number of offenders being released back into communities nationwide – more than 630,000 adult offenders are released annually.¹⁸⁸ This expansion is due to rapidly rising incarceration rates.
 - “Over the past 30 years, state sentencing policies have changed dramatically while the state incarceration rate has increased roughly 324 percent *nationwide*. Many criminologists have attributed much of the growth in the incarceration rate to the set of get-tough sentencing and corrections policies enacted since the late 1970s.”¹⁸⁹
 - Of those adult offenders released, more than half commit new crimes within three years of their release.¹⁹⁰
- The nature of crime is changing. A decade ago, public safety was primarily a local or regional activity. Today, Fairfax County’s public safety organizations must respond to dangers faced by residents of Fairfax County that may originate elsewhere in the world.
 - Internet-related fraud and identity thefts have increased dramatically in the United States since 2000. In 2000, the Federal Trade Commission received about 31,000 identity theft complaints and 33,000 Internet-related fraud complaints; in 2004, these complaints had increased to 246,570 identity theft complaints and 205,568 Internet-related fraud complaints.¹⁹¹
 - The Fairfax County Police Department’s Financial Crimes Section recently worked on a “major credit card fraud case *that* required the cooperation of law enforcement agencies from Fairfax County to Scotland to the United States Secret Service and involved suspects from the metropolitan and Mid-Atlantic area as well as overseas.”¹⁹²
- The personal communication technology market is undergoing rapid changes. Traditional wireline telephone service is competing with newer technologies such as cellular telephones and

The nature of crime is changing. A decade ago, public safety was primarily a local or regional activity. Today, Fairfax County’s public safety organizations must respond to dangers faced by residents of Fairfax County that may originate elsewhere in the world.

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). As these new ‘telephone’ technologies become available, they often are not compatible with existing 911 systems.

- Cellular telephones are commonplace in Fairfax County households. When a cellular telephone was used to call 911 a few years ago, no location information was automatically available to the dispatcher. Newer cellular telephones are now providing location information through the use of GPS technology embedded in the telephones, but there are still older cell phones being used without this enhancement.
- “Worldwide, wholesale and retail VoIP traffic volume exceeded 6 billion and 15 billion minutes, *respectively*, in 2000. VoIP will account for approximately 75 percent of world voice services by 2007 (Frost and Sullivan, 5/2001).”¹⁹³ A recent survey conducted by Level 3 Communications found that nearly three quarters of their respondents were interested in VoIP services and that cost savings is the primary reason for interest. Persons who indicated the most interest were young adults, college graduates, and Hispanics.¹⁹⁴ Some of the static connection VoIP providers provide enhanced 911 service to their customers, but many do not. The nomadic VoIP systems typically do not provide 911 service and those that do rely on the user to enter current location information to ensure that their calls are properly routed.

The personal communication technology market is undergoing rapid changes. As these new ‘telephone’ technologies become available, they often are not compatible with existing 911 systems... The local costs associated with keeping abreast of these new technologies are likely to be significant.

- Over the next two decades, several of the highest risk groups for fire related injuries or deaths are expected to increase in number in Fairfax County. These groups include children, the elderly, and persons with limited English skills.
- As land becomes scarce in Fairfax County, single-family detached homes are being built with only a few feet of separation and there has been an increase in the densities of all types of housing units.

Implications:

- Over the past decade, Fairfax County’s public safety organizations have seen a dramatic shift their roles – from local to global. Public safety organizations must look beyond their traditional roles to meet new and developing challenges that are moving these organizations into new and uncharted territories. Homeland security issues, Internet crime, identity theft, human trafficking, and gang activity require Fairfax County public safety personnel to develop networks and working relationships that are different from those of the past. These recent community safety challenges require the development of extensive communication and coordination networks among many levels of government, both locally and globally. The challenges require that public safety organizations tap the resources of other types of organizations and individuals that are not typically thought of as public safety providers and require dedicated time and resources for developing new skills needed to address these community safety issues.
- Increasing density, coupled with traffic congestion in the county, impedes the ability of public safety personnel to travel quickly to emergencies. The greater traffic congestion also is tied to increases in aggressive driving incidents.

- “The reentry of serious, high-risk offenders into communities across the country has long been the source of violent crime in the United States.”¹⁹⁵ With this reentry population rapidly increasing in size, more attention needs to be focused on finding effective methods to determine risk, to prepare the community for absorbing these individuals, and to prepare and monitor these individuals as they return to the community.
- The communications industry is a rapidly changing market. The future will bring an ever-widening array of ‘telephone’ technologies that will require local public safety communication centers to scramble to accommodate these into enhanced 911 service. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has been reluctant to require emerging telephone technologies to be fully compliant with 911 technologies for fear of reducing innovation and competition. In addition, FCC regulations requiring full 911 services may be ineffective as customers can contract with overseas service providers offering VoIP and can obtain software that allow calls to be made without a service provider.¹⁹⁶ The local costs associated with keeping abreast of these new technologies are likely to be significant.¹⁹⁷ Because Fairfax County residents are often early adopters of new technologies, it also is likely that there will always be a portion of emergency calls that are not compatible with enhanced 911 service. Therefore, strategies will need to be in place to educate the public and work around these challenges.
- The increasing popularity and demand for ‘wireless’ voice and data transmissions has resulted in increasing levels of interference and overload on the ability to accommodate this demand. These ‘wireless’ transmissions are particularly prone to being overwhelmed during widespread public safety emergencies. In response to this concern, the FCC is reconfiguring the airways to better protect public safety transmissions. However, this remains a communication concern when public safety organizations partner with other types of organizations and citizen volunteers.
- “People with low literacy skills lack the ability to read materials as simple as a food or prescription label. Comprehending the directions on a space heater, the warning label on a gasoline container... or fire safety brochures can be impossible.... Adults with literacy problems are less likely than others to have smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, and first-aid kits in their homes.”¹⁹⁸ In addition, some adult immigrants have not been exposed to the same basic preparedness, safety, and emergency information as the native born population. They may not know to call 911 in an emergency. Immigrants also are more likely to be uninsured and, therefore, suffer greater uncompensated financial losses when property is stolen or destroyed. New immigrants often have different norms than persons born in the United States. For example, they may come from a country where the police are feared because of their brutality and corruption. Thus, there is a need to target ongoing public safety educational programs directly to the county’s foreign-born adult population and a need to actively recruit members of these emerging populations into public safety careers.
- The inclusion of fire experts on committees and boards participating in the building code processes would place additional emphasis on the fire safety of new materials and construction techniques when building codes are being modified. As higher density construction occurs, incorporating fire safety measures and equipment, such as residential sprinkler systems in all housing types, may reduce loss of life and the potential for fires to spread from structure to structure.
 - Higher development densities increase the risk of a fire moving swiftly to multiple housing units and buildings. “In some cases, townhouses are safer than close-together single-family houses, because attached townhouses are required to be built with firewalls separating the units.... A 1988 Canadian study of two similar structures 5.9 feet apart showed that it took 4

minutes and 50 seconds for the second house to ignite. Thirty seconds later, the second house was fully engulfed.”¹⁹⁹

- “There is a general belief that... new buildings offer greater fire safety than their predecessors.... The reality, however, is that many of the new construction methods... are building new disasters for the future....”²⁰⁰ The extensive use of vinyl, plastic, and other petroleum-based products in the construction and furnishing of homes has resulted in fires that burn hotter, accelerate more rapidly, and release deadly fumes.²⁰¹ Laminated wood I-beams are used frequently in new construction. These manufactured I-beams under normal conditions have a structural strength equal to or stronger than that of a solid wood I-beam and can be built to span larger areas. But when a fire occurs, laminated I-beams burn through in an estimated 30 minutes, whereas a solid wood I-beam takes an estimated 2¼ hours to burn through. This faster burn through rate accelerates the spread of fires and increases the potential for structural collapse.²⁰²

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Trend 11:

Community engagement

Facts:

- “Community engagement comprises a wide range of activities, including social encounters with neighbors, volunteering, and participation in community planning and political activities, all of which link a person with his or her community.... Homes, neighborhoods, and transportation facilitate this interaction and affect how people of every age make economic, social, and emotional investments in their communities. At the same time, the community benefits from the engagement of individuals and their investments of time and interest in community activities and affairs.”²⁰³
 - One measure of how engaged citizens are in their communities is voter registration and turnout. Fairfax County enjoys higher than average rates for both these measures. In November 2004, 633,034 persons were registered to vote and 73.8 percent or 467,044 persons voted in the general election.²⁰⁴
 - Fairfax County’s newest residents, immigrants and refugees, feel a strong connection to this community and consider Fairfax their home. In a study of eight immigrant and refugee communities with children in Fairfax County Public Schools, it was found that 48 percent owned homes in Fairfax County, 91 percent reported feeling that Fairfax County is home, 83 percent said their neighbors made their families feel welcome, and 80 percent indicated that they would be willing to volunteer some of their time to improve the neighborhood in which they live.²⁰⁵
- The likelihood of an individual volunteering some of his or her time to a community organization varies according to educational attainment, age, and race or ethnicity.
 - A national study (2003) on volunteerism shows that there is a direct correlation between educational attainment and volunteerism. College graduates were more than twice as likely to volunteer as persons with only a high school degree. In addition, those with college educations were more likely to volunteer more time, a median of 60 hours per year compared to 48 hours.²⁰⁶
 - The age group that was most likely to volunteer was persons 35 to 44 years – nearly 35 percent of this age group volunteered time through an organization in 2003. The second highest participation rate (33 percent) was among persons 45 to 54 years. The median number of hours volunteered by these age groups was 50 and 52 hours per year,

Fairfax County’s newest residents, immigrants and refugees, feel a strong connection to this community and consider Fairfax their home... 48 percent owned homes in Fairfax County, 91 percent reported feeling that Fairfax County is home, 83 percent said their neighbors made their families feel welcome, and 80 percent indicated that they would be willing to volunteer some of their time to improve the neighborhood in which they live.

respectively.²⁰⁷ It is very likely that the higher rates of participation among these age groups are due to, in part, the fact that many have children and they are volunteering at schools and organizations that serve their children.

- Although only 24 percent of persons age 65 and older volunteered, those who did volunteer worked a median of 88 hours per year, more than 70 percent higher than the median hours of 35 to 54 year olds.²⁰⁸
- Non-Hispanic Whites are more likely to be volunteers than other racial/ethnic groups.²⁰⁹
- Over 60 percent of those who volunteered did so through a faith-based organization, an educational organization, or a youth-services organization.²¹⁰
- Fairfax County government has participated in the national trend to nurture citizen and community engagement. The Fairfax County Consolidated Community Funding Pool is an example of how seed money is provided to community-based organizations to nurture programs that provide human services to county residents. In addition, Fairfax County government has sponsored programs such as Neighborhood Colleges, Citizen Police Academies, and the Citizens Corps – programs that develop leadership skills among the county’s residents.
- Fairfax County has an active and strong network of community-based organizations. In March of 2003, 64 community-based organizations that provide services to Fairfax County residents answered a survey on type of human services provided and the sources of their funding. The total value of services provided by these 64 organizations exceeded \$48.6 million, and they represent only a portion of all the community based organizations that provide services to county residents.²¹¹

Future Trends:

- Fairfax County residents have shown an extremely strong interest in county sponsored leadership programs, filling spots more rapidly than originally anticipated and creating waiting lists for some programs.
- Anecdotally, some of the county’s community based organizations have expressed concerns about the aging of their volunteer staff, the difficulties of recruiting volunteers willing to work longer blocks of time, and the problem of finding volunteers to fill jobs requiring higher levels of commitment and responsibility. In addition, some community based organizations struggle with management and organizational issues such as paying adequate wages to recruit staff, sustainability of programs after the loss of key employees, and having the resources necessary to secure funding.
- It is not clear whether the county will reap more or less volunteer hours as the county’s senior population expands. It is not yet clear whether the baby boomers will choose to work after they reach “Social Security” age. In addition, persons 65 years and older volunteer at lower rates but those who do volunteer are likely to work more hours.

Implications:

- There is a direct positive link between how individuals feel about the quality of their lives and their level of community engagement and attachment. “Community attachment is linked to successful aging. Older adults who are very attached to their local community... are much more likely to agree with statements that positively describe their sense of self-control, their success in dealing with aging, their life satisfaction, and their quality of life.”²¹²
- Although national studies suggest a lower rate of volunteerism among racial and ethnic minorities, county data suggest these groups are very interested in their communities and would be willing to volunteer time to improve their neighborhoods. There will be a growing need to use non-traditional methods of engaging residents from the multi-ethnic and non-English speaking communities.
- Volunteers and community-based organizations can make a huge impact on the quality of life for residents in a community. Local government is reluctant to meet needs in areas that are not mandated for publicly funded services. By encouraging community-based organizations to assist, the quality of life for residents can be improved greatly. For example, in fiscal year 2003, for every dollar of seed money provided by Fairfax County government to the Consolidated Community Funding Pool, “another \$4.72 in cash, donated goods, services, and volunteer time was leveraged by community based organizations....”²¹³
 - An engaged community with a strong network of community- and faith-based organizations will improve the quality of life for all Fairfax County residents. County government needs to develop ways to catalyze and foster community engagement, especially in emerging communities. Community- and faith-based organizations need to be provided access to the training and tools that will help them to effectively build capacity, develop leaders, network and communicate with other organizations, and deliver services.
- Too much dependence on community-based organizations and volunteers may result in an imbalance of services. For example, there may be a lack of manpower where the need is greatest as volunteers may be less willing to travel to where the most need for services resides and organizations may limit the type of clientele and geographical area served.

There is a direct positive link between how individuals feel about the quality of their lives and their level of community engagement and attachment.

In FY 2003, for every dollar of seed money provided by Fairfax County government to the Consolidated Community Funding Pool, another \$4.72 in cash, donated goods, services, and volunteer time was leveraged by community based organizations.

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