



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2021.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Franklin County

Program Title: Franklin County Housing Summit

Program Category: Community & Economic Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Steve Sandy

Title: Assistant County Administrator

Department: County Administration

Telephone: 540-483-3030 Website: www.franklincountyva.gov

Email: steve.sandy@franklincountyva.gov

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Steve Sandy

Title: Assistant County Administrator

Signature: *Steve M. Sandy*

An aerial photograph of a lake with several houses and docks along the shoreline. The water is calm, and the surrounding area is lush with green trees and grass. The text "2021 FRANKLIN COUNTY HOUSING SUMMIT" is overlaid in large, white, bold letters.

2021 FRANKLIN COUNTY HOUSING SUMMIT

PREPARED BY

Department of Planning and Community Development

540-483-3030

steve.sandy@franklincountyva.gov



Franklin County
A Natural Setting for Opportunity



PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since the recession, Franklin County, Virginia, has struggled with the lack of a diverse housing stock. The County identified this as an issue when they were conducting the Village Plans for Ferrum and Westlake in 2019 and 2016, respectfully. The stakeholder groups in those projects expressed their housing concerns and described the need for housing, specifically rental and senior housing opportunities. In 2018, The Board of Supervisors reaffirmed strategic goals to increase population growth and develop more housing opportunities for seniors. The County's development of the new Summit View Business Park also highlighted the need for more housing opportunities. The County decided to first analyze the current housing situation by participating in two housing market studies, hosting work sessions, and researching housing needs throughout the County.

To assist in this effort, the County secured grant funding in 2020 from Virginia Housing and Development Authority (VHDA) to have Bowen Research conduct a market study of Ferrum, specifically, and analyze one 82-acre County-owned parcel for potential housing development. In addition, The Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission (RVAC) had RKG Associates conduct a regional housing study on behalf of its member communities of Roanoke County, Roanoke City, Salem, and Franklin County in late 2020. This study also looked at the housing needs and land availability in Franklin County compared to that of the region.

These housing studies solidified that there is an immediate need for all housing types

across all socio-economic classes in the County. The study conducted by Bowen Research suggests that the Village should focus on a regional approach to develop solutions across the whole housing spectrum ranging from low-income, multi-family, single-family, elderly, rental units, etc. It also identified opportunities for the development of vacant land and adaptive reuse. RVAR's study found that the region also faces the same housing challenges identified in the Ferrum study. This study suggested implementing effective zoning, housing rehabilitation, regional coordination, and regional infrastructure programs to facilitate additional housing opportunities.

In response to these housing needs and their capacity, the County chose to take a market-based approach. To encourage housing development, the County needed to develop an innovative solution to bring all the major parties (realtors, builders, developers, and resources) together. After discussions between the Board of Supervisors, staff, and state housing agencies, each stakeholder felt confident that hosting a housing summit would be a logistical next step. This event was initially proposed to be held in 2020 to present study findings, but due to COVID restrictions and the desire to be held in person, the event was delayed until June 3, 2021.



Franklin County Board of Supervisors



PROGRAM EXECUTION

At the direction of the Board, a housing initiative initially started as a workgroup of selected board members and various staff members, including the County Administrator, both Assistant County Administrators, Economic Development Director, Clerk to the Board of Supervisors & Public Affairs Manager, Director of Planning and Community Development, and the Senior Planner. With an overall end goal of connecting the most invested individuals in the housing market in Franklin County with each other, staff wanted to make sure that the participants walked away from the event connected and informed about the housing needs and opportunities in the community.

The first step was to secure the venue. The Franklin Center for Advanced Learning and Enterprise is managed by the Franklin County Workforce Development Consortium—a partnership offering employment, training, and educational services to employers and citizens of Franklin County. It provided the perfect venue for the housing summit.

County staff worked to secure key presenters and resources to present the current quality of life trends in Franklin County. County staff, housing consultants, and regional economic development officials presented at the meeting. Christopher Whitlow, the County Administrator, opened the Summit with a general overview of the County and briefly described Franklin County's great quality of life, great schools, low taxes, and the County's development potential. Patrick Bowen, President of Bowen National Research Group, also presented the Franklin County Ferrum Housing Study results. He highlighted the findings of the study and recommendations that showed a demand for

housing. Steven Sandy, Assistant County Administrator, provided an overview of the Roanoke Regional Housing Study prepared by RKG for the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission, which also identified the demand for housing in the County and Roanoke region. Johnathan Knopf, the Senior Research Associate of Housing Forward Virginia, presented a brief overview of housing trends and legislation at the state and federal level and the impact on the local economy. John Hull, Executive Director of the Roanoke Regional Partnership, presented the trends they see at the regional level and the amenities and opportunities for potential development. Shirley Holland, Vice President of Planning & Community Development at Carilion Clinic, spoke about the housing needs from the perspective of corporate investment and quality of life. She even shared resources regarding utilities, specifically water, as she also serves as the Franklin County representative on the Western VA Water Authority Board. During lunch, Tom and Eric Fransler, Berkshire Hathaway, presented a real estate market analysis for Franklin County, including data showing recent housing increases. The afternoon session was conducted as a round table discussion format for networking and discussion about barriers to development that the group can work to resolve and address.



John Hull, Executive Director – Roanoke Regional Partnership



The housing summit was invitation-only due to continuing COVID protocols but had approximately 70 attendees, including builders, developers, realtors, and representatives from the community (utilities, local employers, etc.). The individuals who attended were from local companies and regional housing groups, and some were from as far as North Carolina. The summit lasted from 10:00 AM-2:00 PM, and many of the attendees stayed and networked long after the summit ended.

Following the summit's conclusion, a unique website was launched (franklincountyva.gov/housing), which allows attendees to access each of the presentations from the day of the summit and provides a platform for county staff to continuously upload helpful development information. In addition to using the URL link, each participant was given a name tag equipped with a QR code they can scan to direct them to the housing-specific website.



Since continued contact with interested developers is important to the County, an email account, housing@franklincountyva.gov, was shared as a direct contact for anyone to

reach out for additional one-on-one information. County staff and board members have been in conversation with those interested in development since the event. At the conclusion of the summit, a survey prepared by the West Piedmont Planning District Commission was distributed to each attendee with the hopes of gathering vital information on the County's processes and areas that can be improved. Initial responses provided feedback and ideas on improving interactions with the County (permitting processes, etc.) as a first step to facilitating housing growth. The County intends to provide regular updates on the web page and a newsletter to keep all interested parties up to date on the progress of the County's housing efforts.



Christopher Whitlow, Franklin County Administrator



NEXT STEPS

As a result of the summit, the County has been engaged by several developers interested in developing housing in the County. In addition, personal site visits have been arranged to review the County's 82-acre parcel. Staff is also continuing to work with state housing agencies to identify grant opportunities to review the existing zoning/subdivision building codes and assist with master plan development. Additionally, those who attended the housing summit have been entered into a housing email contact list. The County plans to periodically send emails to keep in contact with participants and development stakeholders. Franklin County plans to continue its housing initiative over the next 12-24 months, using the housing summit as one of the first steps. In addition, the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission is preparing a housing needs survey for distribution to citizens and business owners.





AWARD CRITERIA

Offer an innovative solution to a problem, situation, or delivery of services.

While many other localities across the Commonwealth have hosted housing summits, Franklin County focused on connecting builders, developers, realtors, and resources; incorporating new technology; and collaborating with local, state, and federal resources. Because of this approach, Franklin County feels they added an innovative edge to the existing model creating a foundation for development growth in Franklin County.

Promote intergovernmental cooperation and/or cooperation with local, state, and federal entities and/or a private enterprise in addressing a problem or situation.

At the housing summit, hosted on June 3, 2021, Franklin County staff collaborated with the Bowen National Research Group, Housing Forward Virginia, the Roanoke Regional Partnership, Carilion Clinic, Virginia Housing, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, West Piedmont Planning District Commission, Ferrum College, and Berkshire Hathaway to provide an informative summit that highlighted the opportunities for development within the County.

As Franklin County recognizes this housing shortage is not limited to County boundaries, a collaborative approach to address the shortage was emphasized. In addition to facilitating a diverse speaking group, the County methodically invited attendees of different backgrounds to this event. The summit had attendees from the public school system, Ferrum College, utility companies within the County, developers, builders, realtors, and other vital stakeholders in the development process. In addition,

all seven members of Franklin County's Board of Supervisors were in attendance. This showed the County's commitment to initiate a housing effort and seek solutions to provide housing options to residents in Franklin.

One of the summit goals was to help organically connect participants needed in the development process and create a comfortable platform to ask the County staff questions and receive feedback.

Provide a model that other local governments may learn from or implement in their own localities.

There are many localities across the Commonwealth that are currently struggling with housing constraints. It has become an important topic in the past several years, and it seems like every locality has a slightly different problem and requires a slightly different solution. A housing summit is an excellent first step for a locality to gather all the key players to the table and foster collaboration and innovation. The model we used here in Franklin County could be replicated by other localities who have or are currently conducting housing studies and want to encourage a market-based approach.





MEDIA

An article from our local newspaper about the summit and the efforts of the County.

- https://thefranklinnewspost.com/news/local/franklin-county-looks-to-address-housing-needs/article_138bd892-c872-11eb-ae39-f3441b1e1ba3.html

The website the County created with the agenda and up-to-date information.

- www.franklincountyva.gov/housing



FRANKLIN COUNTY GOVERNMENT LEADERS MEET

WITH HOUSING PROFESSIONALS TO ADDRESS HOUSING SHORTAGE

For Additional Information: County Administration (540) 483-3030

Rocky Mount, Virginia – Rocky Mount - Franklin County government leaders convened a housing summit on June 3 with housing professionals from across the area to present recent housing study information and identify ways to address the County's housing shortage. The summit was a collaborative opportunity to discuss the results of the studies with builders, developers, and realtors from the region and county leaders to learn directly from the housing professionals how we can help facilitate housing growth.

Government leaders in Franklin County were recently presented with the results of housing studies that demonstrate the need for additional housing in Franklin County. In response to these results, the leaders reached out to the development community to start the conversation about housing availability in the County and what actions can be taken to address this important issue. Franklin County and the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC) initiated separate housing market studies in 2019 to help identify market gaps and barriers to needed housing growth in the region. Among the market analysis and demographic and economic assessments typically found in most housing market studies, the study also included an assessment of market gaps and barriers to housing. One unique and impactful facet of the RVARC study is a Land Suitability Analysis conducted by RKG's consultant J.M. Goldson, LLC. Parcels were scored by their ability to support residential housing by location, suitability, and desirability for development.

The findings of the studies, the strong real estate market, and the continued growth of businesses in the County demonstrate that the County is poised to meet the need for additional housing stock in Franklin County. The County will be conducting surveys with development professionals and members of the general public in the coming months to evaluate housing needs and barriers to development further. Over the remainder of the year, County leaders will discuss this issue, update growth plan strategies, and determine how the County can best encourage and facilitate needed housing growth.



Housing Summit

June 3, 2021

9:30 - 10:00

Check In & Morning Refreshments

(Whole Bean Coffee & Daylight Donuts)

10:00 - 10:30

Welcome & Overview of Franklin County

- Christopher Whitlow, Franklin County Administrator

10:30 - 11:30

Presentation of Housing Studies

- Ferrum/Franklin County Study - Patrick Bowen, President - Bowen National Research Group
- Roanoke Regional Study Overview - Steven Sandy, Assistant County Administrator - Franklin County
- Statewide Planning Study - Johnathan Knopf, Senior Research Associate - Housing Forward Virginia

11:30 - 11:40

Break

11:40 - 11:50

Roanoke Region Perspective - John Hull, Executive Director - Roanoke Regional Partnership

11:50 - 12:00

Corporate Perspective - Shirley Holland, V.P. of Planning & Community Development - Carilion Clinic

12:00 - 12:45

Lunch *(Center Stage Catering)*

Franklin County Real Estate Market Analysis

Tom & Eric Fansler, Berkshire Hathaway

12:45 - 1:30

Housing Network Connections

Questions/Answers

Ice Cream *(Homestead Creamery)*

1:30 - 2:00

Closing & Next Steps