Section 3: Population & Demographics

3 Population & Demographic Analysis

3.1 Introduction

Good land use planning must be sensitive to the changing characteristics of the population of a community. Changes in population create changing demands for housing, commercial services, and public facilities and services.

The study of population and growth throughout the County provides an essential foundation for planning of capital improvements, including schools, waterlines and sewers, health and recreation facilities, and transportation facilities. This chapter contains text and exhibits which describe the past and present nature of the County and projections of future growth. Information presented here introduces a number of issues which are central to the Comprehensive Plan. An understanding of these issues is necessary in order to plan effectively for the future.

Demographic data must be viewed in context of the setting and other community characteristics. Northampton County has historically been a rural community with extensive acreage devoted to agriculture. Northampton County is characterized as "rural" by virtually every definition applied by state and federal agencies. Characteristics of Northampton County's status as rural include: (1) it is not adjacent to a metropolitan area; (2) it does not include a town of at least 2,500 people; and (3) its primary commuting area is not an urban core or urban area. Other rural features of Northampton County include low population density and geographic isolation due to its location at the southern tip of the Delmarva Peninsula.

3.2 Population by Age, Race & Sex

The County's population in 2010 was 12,389. There were 5,929 Males (47.9%) and 6,460 Females (52.1%). In 2000 there were 47% males and 53% female.

A shift in the population by age group occurred between 2000 and 2010. Table 3.1 gives a breakdown by age with a column showing the decrease or increase from 2000 to 2010. There is a significant decrease between the ages of 0 and 19; there is also a significant decrease between the ages of 35-44 and an increase between the ages of 50-69.

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Table 3.1 Population by Age, 2000 & 2010

Age Group	2000	2010	% Change
0-9	1543	1361	-11.8
10-19	1918	1344	-29.93
20-29	1016	1259	23.92
30-39	1607	1153	-28.25
40-49	1956	1481	-24.28
50-59	1531	2043	33.44
60-69	1511	1773	17.34
70-79	1325	1163	-12.23
80+	686	812	18.37

In 2000 there were 6,977 (53%) whites, 5,634 blacks (43%) and 482 (3.7%) people of other races in Northampton County, In 2010 there were 7,168 (57.9%) whites, 4,528 (36.5%) blacks, and 693 (5.6%) people of other races in Northampton County. Figure 3.1 shows the 2010 racial composition percentage. There were 874 persons who were Hispanic or Latino in 2010 or 7.1% of the population.

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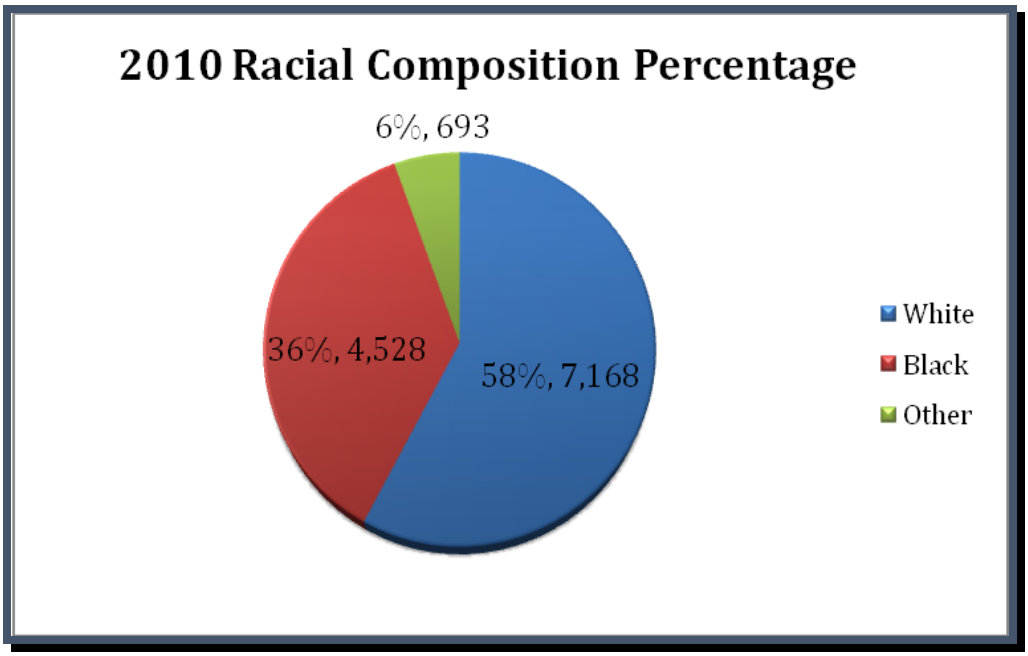
Figure 3.1 Racial Composition



Source: US Census Bureau

3.3 Population Trends

Aside from a slight increase of 0.2% in population from 1990 to 2000 (13,061 in 1990 and 13,093 in 2000), a downward trend in population continues for Northampton County, with the 2010 census numbers at 12,389, a 5.4% decrease from 2000. Figure 3.3 shows population trends from 1890 -2010 for Northampton County. There has been a declining trend since 1930, when the population peaked at 18,565.

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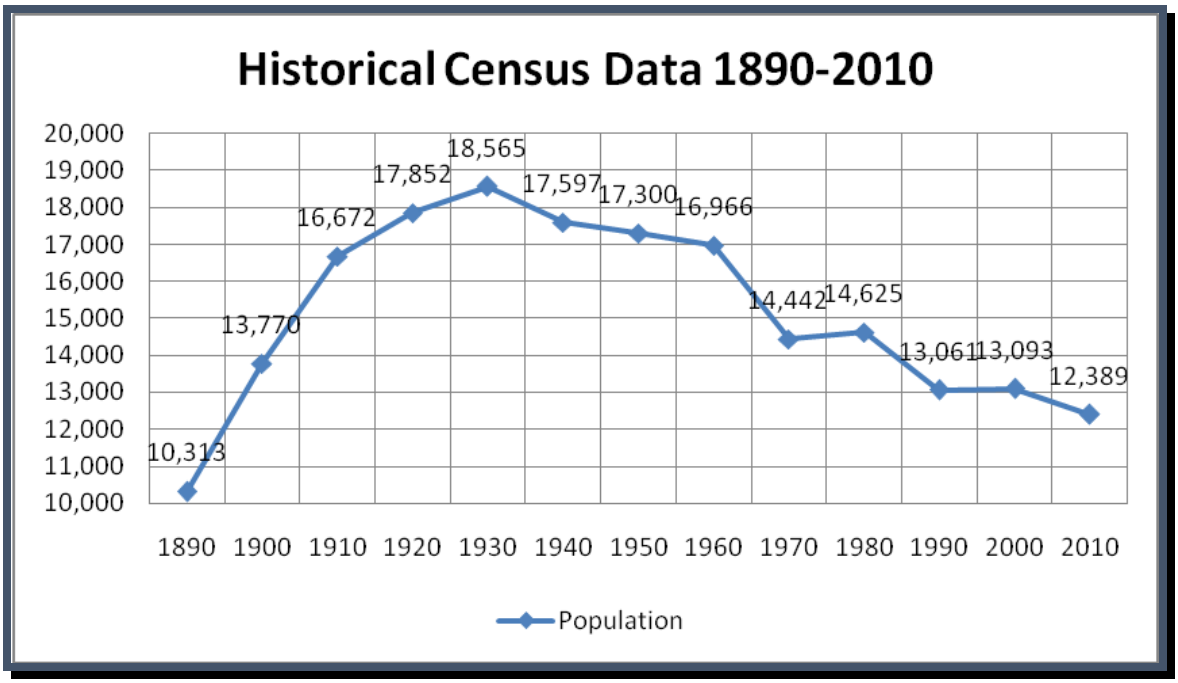
Figure 3.2 Historical Census



Source: US Census Bureau

The County's decrease in population, according to the Weldon Cooper Center, was due to both net migration and natural decrease.

Another noticeable trend is an increase in the median age of citizens. In 2000 the median age was 42.4 and in 2010 it was 47.8. This is above Virginia's median age in 2010 of 37.5. Similarly, Accomack County is above the median age of the state but not as much as Northampton. Table 3.2 shows the median ages for Northampton County, Accomack County, and the Commonwealth of Virginia. The table shows a higher increase in median age for both counties compared to the state. The increase in median age may be due to in-migration of retirees.

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Table 3.2 Median Age

	1990	2000	2010
Northampton County	37.4	42.4	47.8
Accomack County	37.4	39.4	44.7
Virginia	32.6	35.7	37.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010

The public school age population has continued on a downward trend since the 2000 Census. In 2002 the Average Daily Membership (ADM)[1] was 2,112 and in 2011 the ADM was 1,668, a decrease of 21%. In 2000 there were 2,637 school aged children (5-19). In 2010 the number had significantly decreased by 613 to 2,024 children or 23.2%.

It is important to note in addition to the public schools, there are 4 private schools in the County; Broadwater Academy, Shore Christian Academy, Franktown Montessori, and Cape Charles Christian School. Enrollment numbers for the private schools may include both Accomack and Northampton County students. There are 45 students in the County that are enrolled in home instruction. The County also has 11 children filing under religious exemption which allows parents to petition the school board to show they are opposed to attending school because of their religious beliefs. For more information on the school system see Part II Section 7 Community Facilities & Services, Chapter 7.14 Schools & Education.

3.4 Population Projections

Figure 3.3 shows the percent change for the decennial census for the past 80 years. The average change in population was -4.75% per census period.

[1] Average Daily Membership is calculated as the number of days that students in grades K-12 are in attendance at school, divided by the number of days in the school year, and is used to distribute state funding on a per-pupil basis.

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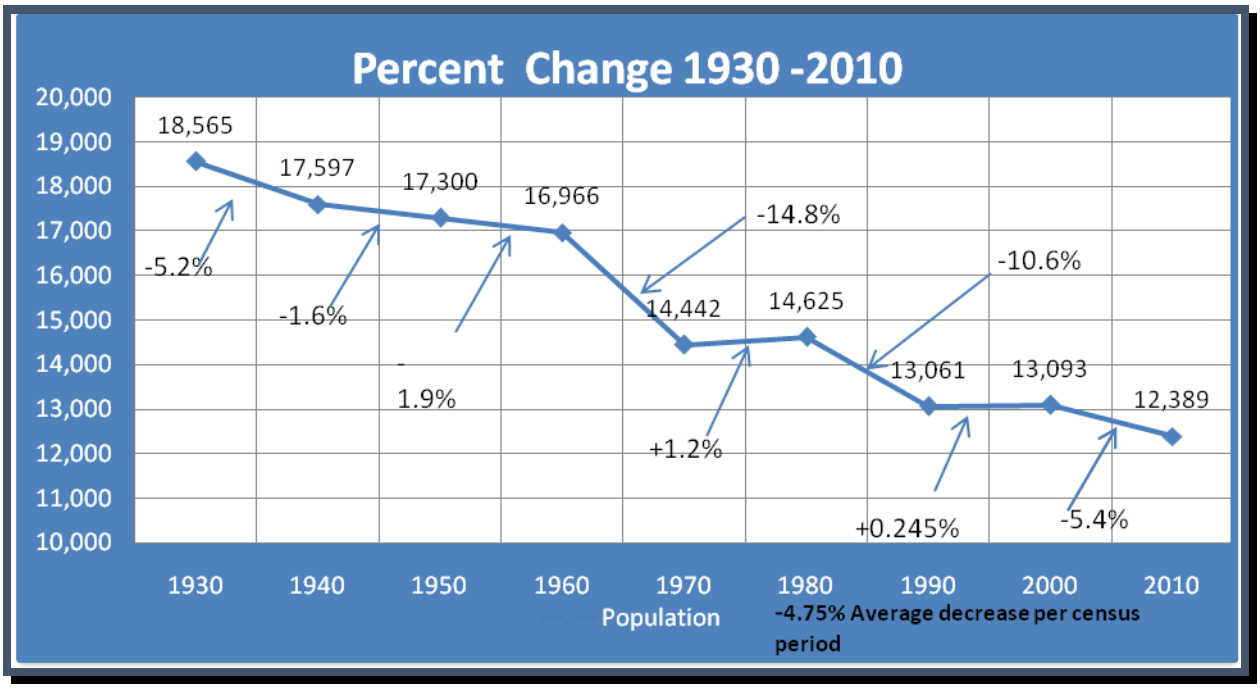
Figure 3.3 Historical Population Trend



Source: US Census Bureau, Northampton County GIS

Preliminary population projections are available from the Weldon Cooper Center through 2040. The projections for Northampton County show a continued decrease in population. Table 3.3 shows the projections from the Cooper Center.

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Table 3.3 Population Projections 2020-2040 Northampton County

	2020	2030	2040
Northampton Co.	12,133	11,996	11,896
Race			
White	6,768	6,330	5,907
Black	4,368	4,268	4,088
Asian	144	210	298
Other	854	1,188	1,602
Ethnicity			
Hispanic* (of any race)	1,221	1,616	2,088
Non-Hispanic* (of any race)	10,912	10,380	9,808
By Age			
0 to 4	582	541	520
5 to 9	595	580	537
10 to 14	693	619	603
15 to 19	608	556	568
20 to 24	448	482	452
25 to 29	495	469	450
30 to 34	620	465	525
35 to 39	642	523	519
40 to 44	598	675	531
45 to 49	626	727	621
50 to 54	677	689	814
55 to 59	980	741	901
60 to 64	1,251	842	897
65 to 69	1,080	1,117	885
70 to 74	879	1,190	839
75 to 79	573	803	870
80 to 84	348	517	733
85 and Over	439	461	632

Source: Weldon Cooper Center

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*"People who identify with the terms "Hispanic" or "Latino" are those who classify themselves in one of the specific Hispanic or Latino categories listed on the decennial census questionnaire and various Census Bureau survey questionnaires – "Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano" or "Puerto Rican" or "Cuban" – as well as those who indicate that they are "another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin." Origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's ancestors before their arrival in the United States. People who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race." Source: US Census Bureau description of "Hispanic Origin".

3.5 Households

In 2000 there were 6,547 total housing units, 5,321 occupied units and 1,226 vacant ones. The occupied units housed a population of 13,093 which translated to an average household size of 2.39. In 2010 there were 7,301 total housing units, 5,323 occupied units and 1,978 vacant units. The occupied units housed a population of 12,389 which translates to an average household size of 2.27.

3.6 Families

According to the 2000 Census, there were 3,546 families living in Northampton County. In 2010 there were 3,359 families, which is a slight decrease from 2000. Of those, 68% or 2,305 consist of husband-wife families. There were 1,703 one-person households in the County.

3.7 Marital Status

There were a total of 4,891 married persons 15 years or older according to the 2010 Census, which is 576 or 11% less than the 2000 Census numbers. Table 3.4 shows the marital status for 2000 and 2010.

Table 3.4 Marital Status, 2000 & 2010

Marital Status	Year		% Change
	2000	2010	
Never Married	2,675	2,817	+1.05%
Married	5,467	4,891	-12%
Separated	419	492	17.4%
Widowed	1,162	1,183	1.8%
Divorced	865	1,089	25.89%

3.8 Poverty

Poverty measurements generated by the United States Census Bureau are determined by comparing a family's income with a government-calculated "measure of need" that would support the members of that family, based upon number and ages of the family members living in the same household. For example, one person, aged over 65 and living alone, needs at least $10,788 annual income (2011) to meet food, clothing, medical and shelter requirements, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. A family of three with two children under age 18 would need more than $18,123 annual income (2011) to live above poverty level. With federal minimum wage currently at $7.25 per hour, a full-time minimum wage worker (40 hours per week/52 weeks per year) would make $15,080 per year; an income level that is approximately 15% below the poverty threshold for a single head of household with two children under age 18.

The U.S. Census Bureau poverty measurements are used by various government agencies eligibility for various government grant and loan programs for projects that involve infrastructure, housing and medical facility improvements in "poor" communities.

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Most government aid programs that provide individual assistance for food, medical care and housing utilize a different measure of poverty that is determined by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. (see, http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/12poverty.shtml)

Poverty levels in rural areas of the United States have historically been higher than metropolitan area poverty levels. While the national poverty level is 15% of the total United States population (2011 U.S. Census data, decennial estimate), the poverty level is at 17% in rural areas and 14.6% in metropolitan areas. This trend is evident across Virginia as well, where the rural regions experience a great deal more poverty on a percentage basis than the urbanized areas. Northampton County, a rural county by government standards, is similar to most of the other rural areas of Virginia in poverty levels; plus or minus 20% and showing large disparities with the suburbanizing areas of northern Virginia. (See Figure 3.4, map illustration of Virginia poverty levels, and table of poverty levels for all Virginia Counties.)

Figure 3.4 shows poverty rate percentages for Virginia in 2010. The Eastern Shore, Southside and Southwest counties of the Virginia have the highest rates of poverty.

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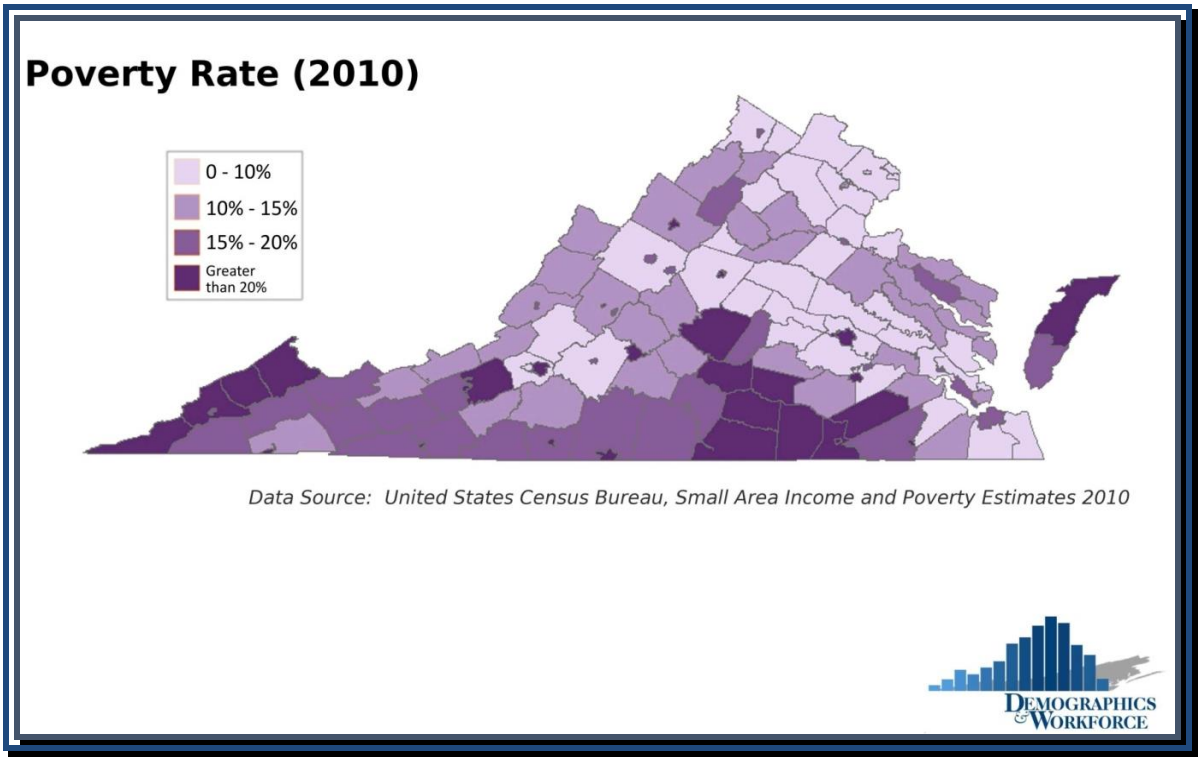
Figure 3.4 Poverty Rate



The United States Census Bureau provides two different sets of poverty statistics that utilize two different methodologies to measure poverty levels; one methodology is based on the American Community Survey (ACS) 5 year rolling estimate from household surveys and statistical modeling, and the other is based upon the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates Program (SAIPE), utilizing sample survey, decennial census and administrative data sources. Both sets of measurements are provided below, in Table 3.5. Under either methodology, Northampton County statistics compare unfavorably with both Virginia state-wide conditions and United States as a whole.

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Table 3.5 Poverty Statistics

Criteria	Northampton County 2000	Northampton County 2011		Virginia, 2011 (ACS, American Fact finder)	United States, 2011(ACS, American Fact finder)
		ACS	SAIPE		
Median Household Income	$28,276	$36,965	$35,594	$61,882	$52,762
Population below poverty threshold	20.5%	20.6%	22.7%	10.7%	14.3%

As is true within the rest of the United States, children, elderly and minority populations are a disproportionate share of the poverty levels in Northampton County. The highest estimate (SAIPE) is 35.1% of the children under 18 years old in Northampton County live below poverty level. Impacts to children can also be measured through public assistance programs. For the 2011-12 school year, the Superintendent of Schools reported that 73.21% of Northampton County public school students received either free or reduced-cost lunch (136 students received reduced-cost lunch and 1,143 received free lunch.) Racial disparities in poverty level are also striking; with minority populations in Northampton County suffering poverty levels above 30%, while the white-only population at about 10.9% is about the same as Virginia as a whole, and less than the United States average. The aging poor, unable to join the workforce, are also a large part of the poverty demographic in Northampton County. 21% of the population over aged 65 lives below poverty level in Northampton County; a level that is almost 3 times greater than Virginia as a whole and more than twice as high as the rest of the nation. Table 3.6 shows the age and demographic groups below poverty level in Northampton County compared with Virginia and United States, using 2010 and 2011 data where available.

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Table 3.6 Age Group and Poverty

Demographic	Northampton County: % Below Poverty (ACS)*		Virginia: % Below Poverty	United States: % Below Poverty
Under 18 (2011)	26.4 (35.1 using SAIPE)		15.3	21.9
18 to 64 (2011)	18.3		10.9	13.7
65 and Older (2011)	21.0		7.5	8.7
Among Families (2010)	15.8		8.2	11.8
Among married couple families with children under 18 (2010)	8.1		5	6.2
Among female householder, no husband present, with children under 18 (2010)	37.5		34.9	31.2
Head of household, less than High School (2010)	39.5		22.9	
Head of household, High School or GED (2010)	16.7		11.6	
Head of household, Bachelor's degree or more (2010)	0.3		2.0	
White, not Hispanic (2000/2011)	2000	2011	8.6	9.8
	7.9	10.9		
Black (2000/2011)	34.7	33.4	19.0	27.6
Hispanic, any race (2000/2011)	40.0	30.9	17.8	25.3

Source: US Census Bureau Data 2011, American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates 2007-2011

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*Figures are estimates based on 90% margin of error. The margin of error can be interpreted roughly as providing a 90 percent probability that the interval defined by the estimate minus the margin of error and the estimate plus the margin of error (the lower and upper confidence bounds) contains the true value.

Poverty rates over the past decade in Northampton County have not improved, in spite of the significant new development projects of Bay Creek and other subdivisions. The last significant period of improvement was between 1990, when the poverty rate in the county was 31.4%, and 2000, where the rate had dropped to 20.5%. In an article published by the USDA Economic Research Service in 2004, Northampton County was identified as an area of persistent rural poverty, not for its overall poverty rate, but for the chronic high poverty rate in the African-American population. (See, Anatomy of Non-metro High Poverty Areas: Common in Plight, Distinctive in Nature; http://webarchives.cdlib.org/sw1vh5dg3r/http://ers.usda.gov/Amberwaves/February04/Features/Anatomy.htm.) The black poverty rate in Northampton County over the past decade has shown little improvement (see Table 3.6 above). Some common features among U.S. counties with black persistent poverty are (1) a large proportion of children being raised in female, head of household families; and (2) low rate of automobile ownership. It should be noted that women's earnings are 77% of men's earnings, and black women's earnings are 69.5% of men's earnings, making it difficult for black, female household heads to earn sufficient wages to support a family. (See, www.pay-equity.org.)

3.8 Health

Health status is affected by numerous factors including education, income and income distribution, social supports, activity level, access to healthy foods, and health behaviors. Northampton County scores low on many health indicators. According to the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, out of 133 counties & cities in Virginia Northampton County ranked 116 for Health Behaviors, 99 for Health Outcomes, 59 for Clinical Care, and 113 for Physical Environment.

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Table 3.7 Health Outcomes and Factors

	NHCO	US	VA	Descriptor
Health Outcomes				
Morbidity	19%	10%	14%	Poor or Fair Health
Poor Physical Health Days	3.6	2.6	3.2	Avg. # of poor physically unhealthy days in past 30 days
Poor Mental Health Days	4.2	2.3	3.1	Avg. # of Mentally unhealthy days in past 30 days
Low birth weight	10.30%	6%	8.30%	% of Low Birth Wt. infants (< 2500 grams)
Health Factors				
Smoking	24%	13%	18%	% adults that report smoking every day or most days and has smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their life
Adult Obesity	30%	25%	28%	% adults that report BMI > or = to 30
Physical Inactivity	31%	21%	24%	% adults who have not participated in any exercise or physical activity in past 30 days
Excessive Drinking	18%	7%	16%	Binge drinking: more than 4 (women) or 5 (men) alcoholic beverages on single occasion in past 30 days or heavy drinking: more than 1(women) or 2 (men) drinks per day on average
Motor Vehicle Crash death rate	28	10	11	Per 100,000 population
Sexually Transmitted diseases	727	92	385	Chlamydia rates per 100,000 population
Teen birth rate	60	21	32	Rate per 100,000 female population, ages 15-19
Clinical Care				
Uninsured	20%	11%	15%	Population < 65 y.o. without insurance
Primary care Physician	826:01	1067:01	1356:01	Ratio of population to primary care physician
Preventable Hospital Stay	58	47	58	Hospitalization rate for ambulatory care-sensitive conditions per 1,000 Medicare enrollees
Social and Economic Factors				
Some College	39%	70%	67%	% of adults 25-44 y.o. with some post-secondary education
HS Graduation	76%	No Data	88%	% of 9th grade cohort that graduates in 4 years
Children in Single Parent Households	44%	20%	30%	
Violent Crime rate	165	66	233	Rate per 100,000 population
Physical Environment				
Access to recreational facilities	8	16	10	Rate of recreational facilities per 100,000
Fast Food restaurants	50%	27%	50%	% of restaurants that are fast food

Source: University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute- 2013 CountyHealthRankings.org

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Table 3.8 Chronic Health Conditions

Condition	Eastern Shore Health District %	Rank out of 35 Districts
Overweight	70%	35
Obesity	33.1%	31
Arthritis	42.3%	34
High Blood Pressure	36%	30
Diabetes	11.9%	29
Disability	23.5%	29
High Cholesterol	40.1%	23

Source: Virginia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. 2005-2007 data. http:www.vahealth.org/cdpc/data.htm

The Eastern Shore Health District (ESHD) includes both Accomack and Northampton Counties and is 1 out of 35 Health Districts in the state of Virginia. Life expectancy for the ESHD has increased since 1987; however it has ranked near the bottom of the state. The life expectancy for males in 2007 was 71.5 years compared to 75.6 U.S. and 75.8 for Virginia. For females the life expectancy was 77.6 compared to 80.8 U.S. and 80.7 for Virginia. The overall cancer incidence for the ESHD is 482.1 per 1,000 (30th) and the mortality is 227.5 per 1,000 (35th). Breast cancer incidence is the highest (35th) of all the districts with 143.1 per 1,000 and the mortality is 30.4 deaths per 1,000 (25th). Table 3.8 shows how the ESHD ranks among all health districts for chronic diseases or health conditions.

As seen in Table 3.7, health indicators show poor health status among many residents of Northampton County. Twenty one percent of Northampton County residents are considered to be in poor or fair health. Many health factors contribute to the poor health status. Excess smoking, drinking, inactivity, and obesity all contribute to chronic health conditions such as diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), arthritis, and high blood pressure, as illustrated in Table 3.8. The high teen birth rate contributes to low birth weight infants, with their concomitant needs. Traumatic injuries

are more common in rural areas and residents face worse outcomes and higher risk of death than their urban counterparts due to lack of ready access to emergency services. As seen in Table 3.7, the motor vehicle crash death rate is 33 per 100,000 in Northampton County, versus 13 per 100,000 in Virginia overall. Time elapsed from time of injury to time of treatment is critical and patients not treated within the first "Golden Hour" have a greatly decreased chance of survival. The move of the Emergency Department from Nassawadox to Onley greatly increases the risk of poor outcomes related to emergency response for Northampton County residents, and taxes the emergency response system.

Factors such as education and living in a rural setting affect health behaviors. "Income and education correlates with health behavior disparities and efforts to change unhealthy behaviors have often proven less effective among low-income, less-educated populations" (Hartley, DA. Rural Health Disparities, population health and rural culture." Am J Public Health. 2004; 94; 1675-1678.) "Rural Women, especially less educated women, are less likely to report (having) sidewalks, streetlights, access to facilities and frequently seeing others exercise in their neighborhood." "Insufficiencies in the built environment can make it difficult for rural residents to exercise and maintain health habits." (Determinants of physical activity in rural compared with urban older and ethnically diverse women in the United States Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health. 2000; 54; 667-672)

Eastern Shore Healthy Communities, an alliance of various Eastern Shore organizations, was formed in 2009 to focus on social structures that influence population health. The focus is on health determinants such as income and income distribution, education, unemployment and job security, employment and working conditions, early childhood development, food insecurity, housing, social exclusion, social safety network, etc. "Reducing poverty and improving health, as it turns out is associated with an improved economy-but one doesn't always come before the other, they are interrelated." (P. Kiger*, Executive Director, Eastern Shore Healthy Communities)* The lead initiative of the strategic plan of Eastern Shore Healthy Communities is to encourage a "Livable Community" in Northampton County, which focuses on a) fortifying existing communities (as opposed to further sprawl) b) building multi-income, multi-type, and mixed use housing within towns c) planning vital amenities (grocers, drug stores, medical facilities, libraries, arts and cultural facilities, and

playgrounds within walking distance) d) improving both active (foot and bike) and mass transportation for connectivity.

Summary:

If the current trends continue, we can conclude the following scenarios:

- The County will experience a continued decrease in population.
- The population will continue to get older due to net migration and aging in place.
- There will be fewer school age children.
- There will be a decrease in the black population.
- There will be an increase in the Hispanic population.
- There will continue to be high rates of chronic disease and adverse health conditions among the population.
- Poverty will remain an issue among single-parent households, households headed by persons with low-education attainment, and the elderly.
- There will be an increased morbidity and mortality rate for Northampton County due to a lack of sufficient emergency services.