

Pulaski County

Household Profile

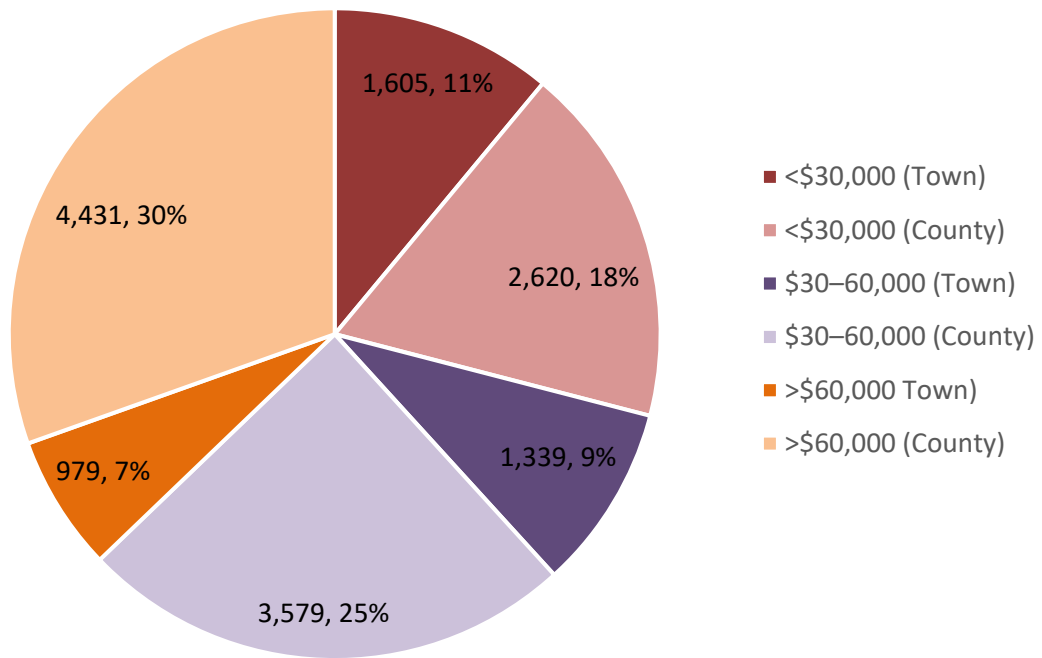
Pulaski County had an estimated population of 33,417 people in 2018 living in 14,525 households, which comprise approximately 20% of the NRV total. About one third of the county's households live in the two towns of Pulaski and Dublin. Pulaski is the larger of the two, with 4,730 households compared to 980 in Dublin.

Approximately 24,530 residents live in owner-occupied households (10,507 units), and 8,887 live in renter households (4,018 units), indicating a relatively high homeownership rate of 72.3%. The towns have disproportionately more rental units than the unincorporated county does, with 50% of all rental units located in towns. Approximately half of the households in Dublin rent their homes compared to nearly 40% of Pulaski ones.

The proportion of households with a householder over the age of 60 is nearly 40% (5,941 households). This is relatively high compared to the NRV overall but like Giles, Floyd, and localities without university populations. The median age is 46.3, well above the national average of 37.9. Weldon Cooper population projections suggest that the number of people 65 and older will continue to increase over the next 10 years.

Median household income in Pulaski County is \$52,638, approximately that of the NRV average. An estimated 4,446 or 13.4% of county residents live in households with incomes below the poverty level, although the rate for the Town of Pulaski is closer to 22%. As shown in Figure 20, nearly two thirds of households in Pulaski County have incomes of \$60,000 or lower.

**Figure 27: Households by Income Level
Pulaski Town and Pulaski County**
NRVRC Tabulation of 2017 ACS 5-year Estimates



More than 2,200 households in Pulaski pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing and therefore may need more affordable housing. Although renters have higher rates of cost burden, most cost-burdened households in the county are owners. Almost 30% of renter households pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs compared to only 16% of owner households.

Housing Stock Profile

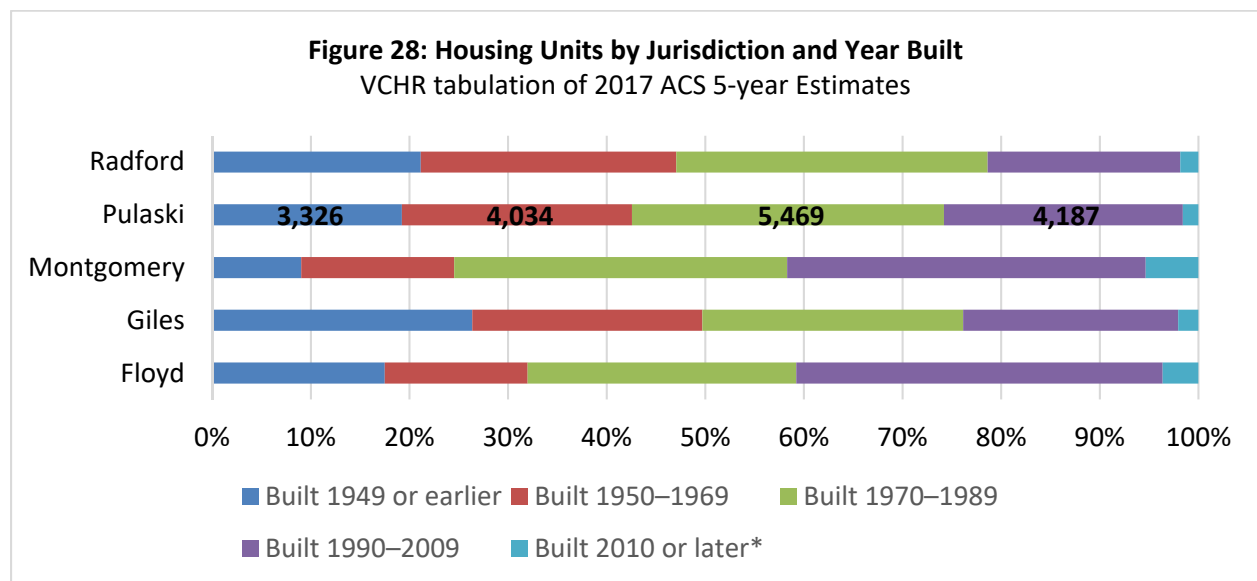
Existing housing stock in Pulaski is located mainly in several small, urbanized areas north of Claytor Lake and the New River, including the Towns of Pulaski and Dublin as well as the county Fairlawn area across the New River from the City of Radford. In addition to having the best access to roads, utilities, and amenities such as shopping and public services, these areas are also near the county’s employment hubs, including several large manufacturing firms near Interstate 81 as well as retail and professional services.

Several areas along rural roads and highways have significant residential development, including large mobile home developments along state highways, along the frontage of rural farm roads, and in small communities such as Draper and Parrott. The section of Pulaski County on the south shore of Claytor Lake and the New River is less developed and is geographically isolated from much of the county’s infrastructure, requiring costly upgrades to expand water/sewer systems and broadband availability. Small communities on the south side of the lake include Allisonia, Hiwassee, and Snowville, and Claytor Lake itself has both campgrounds and housing developments along portions of the shore.

Each of the communities in Pulaski County has different development patterns and housing characteristics based on the history of industrial development and growth in the NRV region. Residential and industrial buildings in the Town of Pulaski reflect the strong growth of the town during the early and mid-20th century. Numerous historic buildings and large portions of the housing stock are at least 50 to 100 years old. Although some smaller farming communities may have been there before, rural areas have a very varied housing stock of old and new development and include many modular and manufactured homes. Housing in Dublin and Fairlawn reflect post-WWII development and the new industrial facilities along the interstate, with several older neighborhoods as well as newer subdivisions.

In recent years, Pulaski County has developed more “bedroom community” subdivisions, which allow workers to live in Pulaski County and travel to jobs at regional employment hubs in the universities and industrial parks as well as nearby shopping. The ongoing development of the subdivisions near the Pete Dye River Course in Fairlawn and a large, proposed subdivision community adjacent to the new Pulaski County Middle School between Dublin and Pulaski represent the largest areas of ongoing new development.

The age of the Pulaski County housing stock is like that in the rest of the NRV, with concentrations of older housing in the towns and village areas and newer developments in subdivisions around the county. About 26% of the 17,266 housing units in Pulaski County were built since 1990 (4,531 units). The remaining 74% are older: 8,084 units were built between 1960 and 1989, and 4,651 were built before 1960.

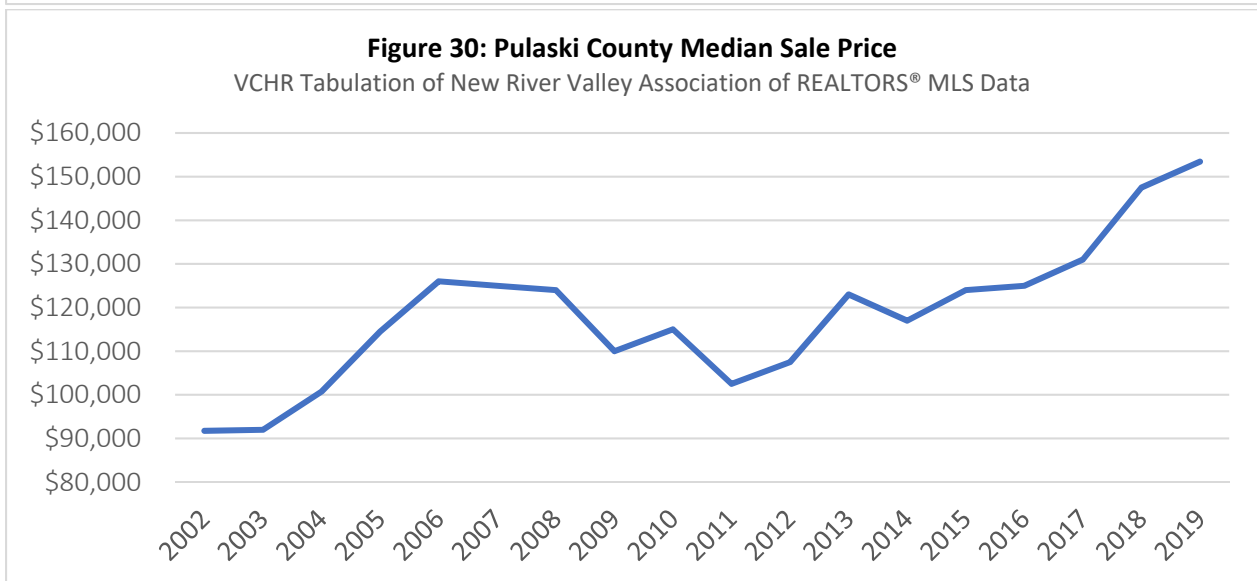
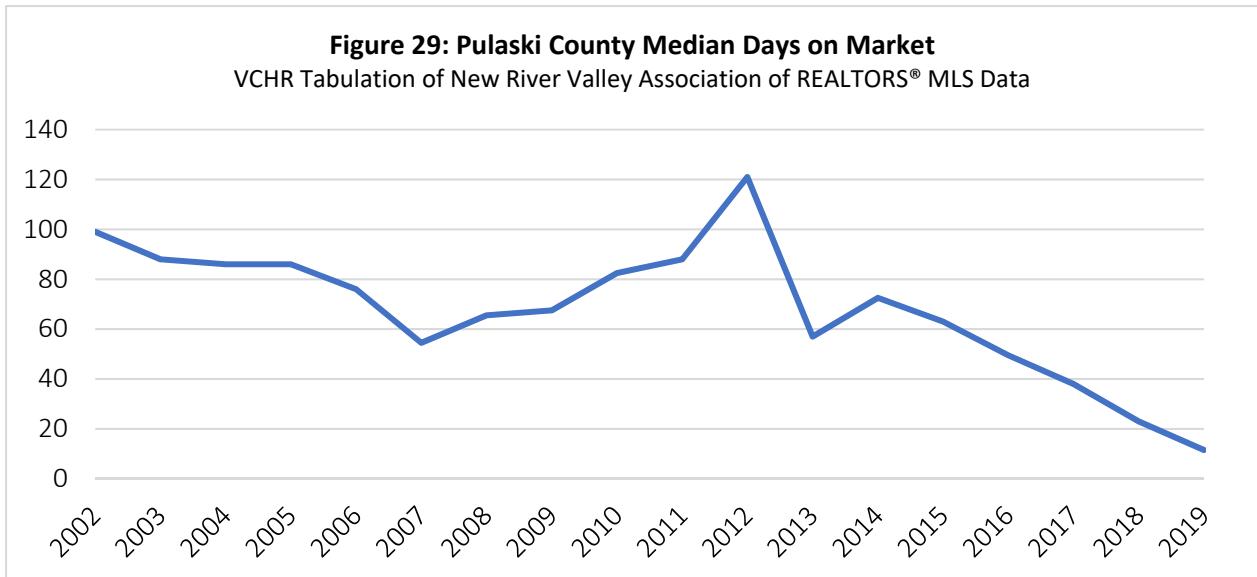


*Although the sample of existing homes built since 2010 in Pulaski is too small to provide a reliable estimate, between 163 and 383 homes were built in this period.

Of the estimated 4,814 residential units in the Town of Pulaski, 48.5% were built before 1960. The town has many well-preserved historic houses from the early and mid-20th century that provide unique housing options at relatively low prices. Moreover, several investors are working to rehabilitate historic houses in the residential historic district. Other neighborhoods with older housing stock have units that have

significant maintenance, disinvestment, and blight issues, including some abandoned or uninhabitable units. Town code enforcement and tax sale efforts seek to remedy the worst conditions and rehabilitate or redevelop these older structures.

In total, 16 percent of Pulaski County housing units (2,712 units) are vacant, many of which are vacation/recreation homes or market vacancies (for-sale or for-rent). More than 1,000 units are long-term vacancies: abandoned, slated for demolition, or otherwise held and not occupied long term, more than 300 of which are in the Town of Pulaski. The sample of units that are vacant for-sale and vacant for-rent is too small to provide a reliable market vacancy rate. However, a drop in median days on the market and an increase in median sale price and median contract rent indicate increasing demand for housing units.



Pulaski's median sale price has risen 32 percent by 2019 since its pre-recessionary peak in 2008, and median days on the market fell to 11.5, which is an 82 percent decrease in the same period.

Median gross rent for rental units in Pulaski County is \$657, well below the regional average of \$857. As noted previously, few rental opportunities exist, especially in newer developments. Median monthly owner costs in Pulaski County are \$1,088 for units with a mortgage and \$373 for units without a mortgage, somewhat lower than the regional average.

Housing Need

This section highlights the most prominent housing challenges and opportunities, but is not exhaustive. Many challenges discussed in this local profile are not limited to Pulaski County and its towns and influence communities throughout the region. As such, many of the opportunities and strategies are addressed by regional and partnership approaches. The Local, Partnership and Regional Strategies (separate document) detail opportunities and actions each jurisdiction can undertake to promote the health of our region's housing market and submarkets.

Challenges

Pulaski County has many older housing units that have maintenance or upgrade needs as well as many units in need of expensive repairs to remain or become habitable and compete with better housing options. Some neighborhoods require significant investment to preserve and upgrade aging housing stock or targeted redevelopment to add more modern housing options. The aging housing stock is located not only in the historic industrial towns but also in rural areas with aging mobile home parks and farmhouses.

The aging population in Pulaski County may require different housing features and community amenities from their current ones. Focus group participants mentioned issues such as a lack of newer single-level housing models and the need for more walkable communities with nearby amenities and shopping. These amenities are critical to housing demand among other groups, including families and young professionals. The town and county are working to facilitate development in areas with existing amenities to attract new residents from around the region to Pulaski communities.

Many residents in Pulaski County and the NRV, especially those at the lower end of the income scale, struggle to find affordable and appropriate housing options. As in other NRV localities, lower-income residents and especially renters struggle to find affordable, appropriate housing near jobs and amenities. Although Pulaski County has relatively few rental options, it is an affordable place to live for both renters and owners if housing is available.

Opportunities

Although the county's residential population has been shrinking slightly as the rest of the region grows, job growth presents an opportunity to attract workers to live there. Pulaski County is capitalizing on commuters to the region's well-paying jobs, with several high-end subdivision developments planned or

under development in Fairlawn and in the area near the new Pulaski County Middle School. Superior housing stock with relatively affordable prices and walkable surroundings along with community development efforts may spur new amenities and services; in addition, these increase with housing and the community and must be cultivated concurrently. Attention to ever-changing housing and community amenity preferences are critical to the success of new developments serving as more than a bedroom community.

The Town of Pulaski has a unique revitalization opportunity to use its historic assets to build a community of new and current residents. Successful revitalization efforts across Virginia and the nation are tailored to local conditions, seek to build a stronger sense of place, and seek to integrate new residents with long-term ones⁶. Blight removal and renovations can revitalize neighborhoods, whereas new construction and renovation that brings new residents can support struggling businesses. Moreover, mixed-income, affordable housing can deconcentrate and alleviate poverty. Private investors have begun the process of purchasing and renovating several historic commercial and residential structures in the Town of Pulaski, creating dozens of downtown apartment units and stabilizing neighborhoods of historic mansions in northwest Pulaski. Town and county infrastructure can complement investor efforts by upgrading aging water and sewer systems. Regional partners are working to expand regional broadband capacity from trunk lines to serve more residential areas and broaden residential demand.