

APPENDIX B1:

Community History & Background



“There is one peculiarity about the population of Manassas. It is especially cosmopolitan.”

—George Carr Round, 1897

History

The Railroad and the Civil War

The founding of Manassas was linked to the presence of the railroad. In 1850, the Virginia Legislature authorized the construction of a new railroad line that would join an existing line at the site of the Town. The point at which these two railroads joined was known as Manassas Junction. During the 1850s, a small rural settlement grew up as a direct result of these railroads.

In 1861, Manassas Junction’s proximity to Washington, D.C., and the strategic nature of the two rail lines made Manassas an important prize to both Union and Confederate forces. As a result, considerable action took place in the area, including two major battles of the Civil War—respectively called the First and Second Battles of Manassas or Bull Run. The Civil War gave Manassas an identity. However, true growth and development of

the area did not occur until after the war ended. Much of what is referred to today as Historic Downtown is the area where that growth began.

The Town of Manassas and the County Seat

The railroad remained through the devastation of the war, creating a vital link between Manassas and the economic and social life outside of the area. In 1873, the Town of Manassas was officially chartered. Though sparsely populated and dominated by dairy farming, the rural settlement began to resemble a small town. When the County seat moved from Brentsville to Manassas in 1894, it spurred residential and business growth. The County Courthouse and related facilities continue to play a vital role in the City’s development.



Notable Leaders

Several notable people contributed to the early development of Manassas. George Carr Round, a former Union soldier, lawyer, and real estate agent, wrote the original charter for the town, was a charter member of the Town Council, served as the first Town Clerk, and was instrumental in establishing public schools.

Robert Portner, a German immigrant and entrepreneur who made his fortune as a brewer in Alexandria, built his summer home Annaburg in 1892. The City acquired Annaburg in 2019. The additional 2,000 acres he owned included Liberia, the 1825 house and grounds used as a Civil War military headquarters and visited by President Lincoln, which is now a City park.

Architect Albert Speiden designed many of the town's turn of the twentieth century landmark buildings including the Old Town Hall, the Hopkins Candy Factory (now the Center for the Arts of Greater Manassas/ Prince William County), the Nichol/Post

Office, former Hibbs and Giddings Store, and the People's National Bank buildings. These buildings are now Center Street retail and restaurant space.

Despite being born into slavery in 1852 and without the benefit of a formal education, Jennie Dean's vision changed the lives of countless African Americans in Manassas, Prince William County, and the region. After almost a decade of fundraising, she established the nationally recognized Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth in 1894. The school was designed as a private residential institution providing both academic and vocational training within a Christian setting at a time when segregated schools offered few opportunities for African Americans. When the school closed in 1938, it became a segregated regional high school. The site is now a City interpretive park that includes a memorial to Jennie Dean.



LIBRARY AND TRADES BUILDING, INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL FOR COLORED YOUTH, MANASSAS, VA.



Peoples National Bank, Manassas, Va.

Dowell's Pharmacy, Manassas, Va.



The Early Twentieth Century and Post World War II Development

In 1905, a fire swept through much of the town and burned more than 30 frame buildings. Rebuilt in brick and more fire-resistant materials at the direction of new Town ordinances, the Town grew with a mixture of heavy commercial, warehouse, and retail uses occupying small lots in a grid-street pattern parallel and perpendicular to the tracks. The slow and steady growth of the town continued throughout the early twentieth century when many of the existing buildings in the Historic Downtown were built. The restoration of the railroad depot in 1995 began a revitalization movement that continues today.

From 1913 through 1916, water and sewer lines were laid through the center of the Town as electric, water, and sewer service was established. The City continues to own and operate its utilities.

The early 1950s marked the beginning of a period of moderate expansion for the Town and its immediate surroundings. Several small manufacturing plants brought new jobs to the area. At the same time, workers employed in metropolitan Washington began to discover that Manassas was a good place to live, with relatively low living costs and a reasonable commuting distance. Growth in manufacturing and professional businesses continued throughout the 1950s and the 1960s. Shopping centers, new residential neighborhoods, and small



commercial establishments sprang up along the Town's Route 28 and Route 234 corridors.

Manassas Regional Airport, which began as a small landing field on Sudley Road in 1932, was acquired by the Town and opened at its present location in 1964. It is now the largest general aviation airport in the Commonwealth.

The proximity of air, rail, major roadways, and local colleges were key considerations when International Business Machines (IBM) located a major manufacturing facility in Manassas in 1968. Although IBM sold their Federal Systems Division in Manassas in 1992, Micron's recent \$3 billion expansion, and investments at companies like High Purity Systems and Aurora Flight Sciences prove that manufacturing and high-technology companies continue to thrive as an integral part of the economy of Manassas.

The City Today

In the early 1970s, before the Town became a city, 5.7 square miles of land was added from the County. This not only increased the population by approximately 3,000 people, but gave the Town a large amount of undeveloped land. The Town became the City of Manassas in 1975. In 1984, the area along Godwin Drive was annexed into the City, making the total land area ten square miles.

Improved transportation systems, such as the Virginia Railway Express in 1992, Hastings Drive construction in the 1980s and 90s, and the construction of the Prince William Parkway in 1995, played a vital role in the City's growth.



Historic Downtown

The continuing transformation of the roughly three square block area of the historic district began in 1997 when public sentiment spurred the first phase of the Historic Downtown's revitalization. Historic Manassas Inc., the Old Town Business Association, city leaders, and community activists joined forces on a four-part revitalization that would transform a former parking lot into the Loy E. Harris Pavilion; a path beside railroad tracks into the City Square walkway; a former industrial building into the Center for the Arts at the Candy Factory; and Battle and Main streets into tree-lined outdoor dining destinations.

The Loy E. Harris Pavilion, completed in 2000, has become a recognized town center that brings together residents and visitors for ice skating in the winter, a renowned Farmer's Market from spring through fall and a schedule of free concerts, performances, movies, and cultural festivals.

With pedestrian access in mind, the scenic two block-long City Square Walkway project connecting the Harris Pavilion to the Center for the Arts at the Historic Candy Factory and beyond to Main Street, was completed in 2002. In addition to beautifying an area adjacent to the railway track, the project encouraged outdoor dining areas.

The Center for the Arts at the Candy Factory's exhibition gallery offers a space for local artists, while classrooms provide room for arts education, and a performance space accommodates repertory and community theater productions.

In 2005 and 2006 the sidewalks on Center Street were widened to encourage pedestrian traffic and slow traffic flow. A five-story 1,500 space parking garage for commuters and visitors, a joint project with Virginia Railway Express that was completed in 2008, spans Battle and Main Streets and makes ample parking available in the revitalized area.



Demographics & Development



Citywide Demographics

Overview

Manassas has a population that is characterized by growing racial and ethnic diversity and an increasing proportion of families. College degrees are becoming more common and employment rates are rising. The city has a diverse, high-quality housing stock that offers some of the most affordable homes in the region, though affordability remains a concern for many residents.

Manassas is becoming increasingly diverse in race and ethnicity as well as in the income of its residents. Its housing stock is strong, as evidenced by a low vacancy rate and rising rents and sales prices.

Trends in the city's socioeconomic and housing conditions point to a growing concern over housing affordability. As the city continues to welcome new residents from elsewhere in the state who may be

seeking Manassas's relatively affordable housing stock and accessible jobs, the supply of housing will likely continue to tighten.

The data presented in the analysis that follows relies primarily on data from the 2010 Decennial Census, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates from 2006 to 2010 and from 2013 to 2017, and Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Employment Statistics. Sales data for 2013 to 2017 was obtained from the Metropolitan Regional Information Service (MRIS), which uses the Real Estate Business Intelligence Platform to track sales activity and generate summary statistics. All dollar amounts are inflation-adjusted to 2017 dollars.

Additional demographic data can be found at www.manassascity.org/demographics.



Manassas Residents

Manassas's demographic change is characterized by growing populations of color and a consistent influx of new residents from other parts of the state. Though the City's elderly population is growing, family households dominate.

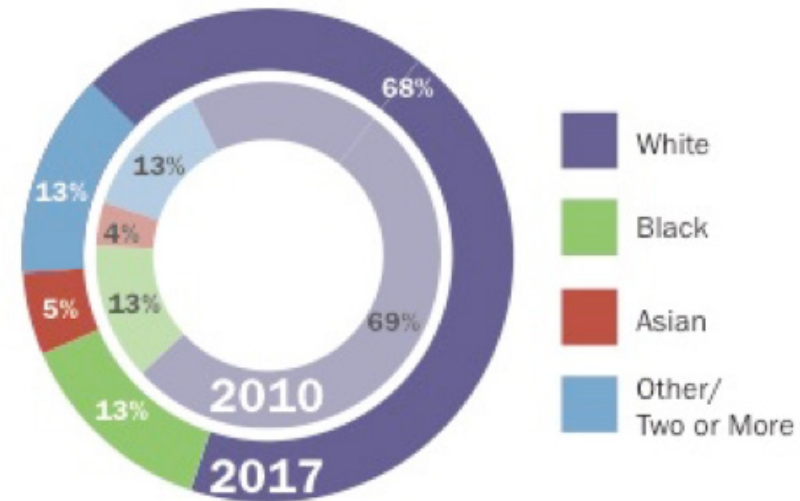
Population Growth

The Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service provides the official population projections for Virginia and its localities. The most recent estimates, released in June 2019, project that the Manassas population will grow from 43,099 residents in 2020 to 48,916 in 2040. These estimates are the basis for level of service projections used in this Plan.

Population Change

Manassas had 41,379 residents in 2017, nearly 15 percent higher than its population in 2010. The population growth is represented primarily by communities of color: while the proportion of the city's White population decreased slightly since 2010, the Black, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino populations grew by 21 percent, 56 percent, and 35 percent, respectively. As of 2017, less than half of Manassas residents are White and non-Latino, and more than a third are Latino of any race.

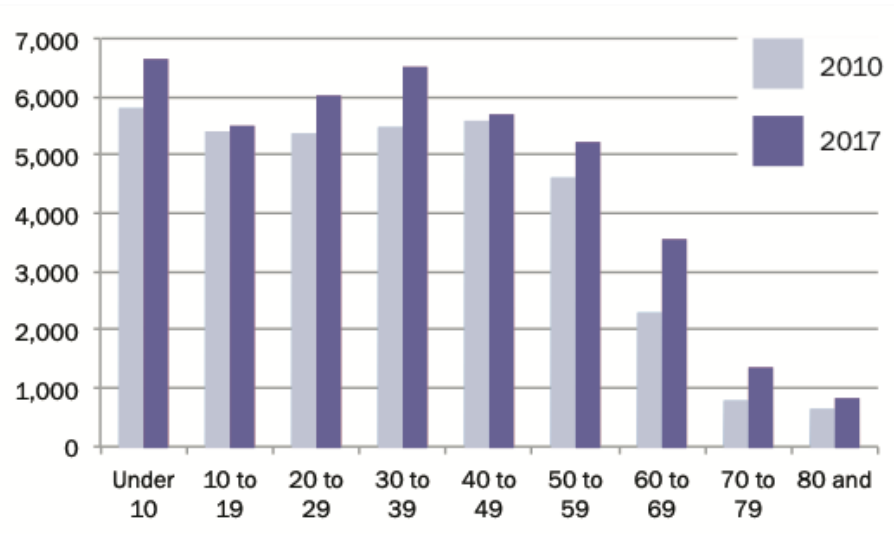
Race, 2010 and 2017



Geographic Mobility in the Last 12 Months

Around 16 percent of Manassas residents moved within the past year. The majority of those who moved (seven percent of all residents) came to Manassas from elsewhere in Virginia. This trend of in-migration from elsewhere in the state has been consistent since 2010, when nearly 11 percent of all residents had moved to Manassas from another Virginia county in the past 12 months. Six percent of all residents moved from another house within the city between 2016 and 2017.

Number of Residents by Age Group, 2010 and 2017



Age

While the city’s population growth has been fairly evenly distributed across age groups, the number of elderly residents has grown faster than the number of children. In 2010, only ten percent of Manassas residents were over the age of 60; in 2017, 14 percent of residents were over 60.

The share of residents under the age of 20 decreased slightly, shifting from 31 percent in 2010 to 29 percent in 2017.

Household Size

The average housing unit in Manassas is home to 3.3 persons, up from the 2010 average of 3.1 persons. The city’s households are much larger on average than those of Virginia as a whole: the state’s average household size was 2.6 persons in both 2017 and in 2010. It is possible that the city’s relatively large average household size points to overcrowding in some units, but this explanation is not reliably supported in the data. Family households in Manassas have an average size of 3.8 persons, while in Virginia the average family household contains 3.1 persons.

Average Household Size in Manassas and Virginia, 2017



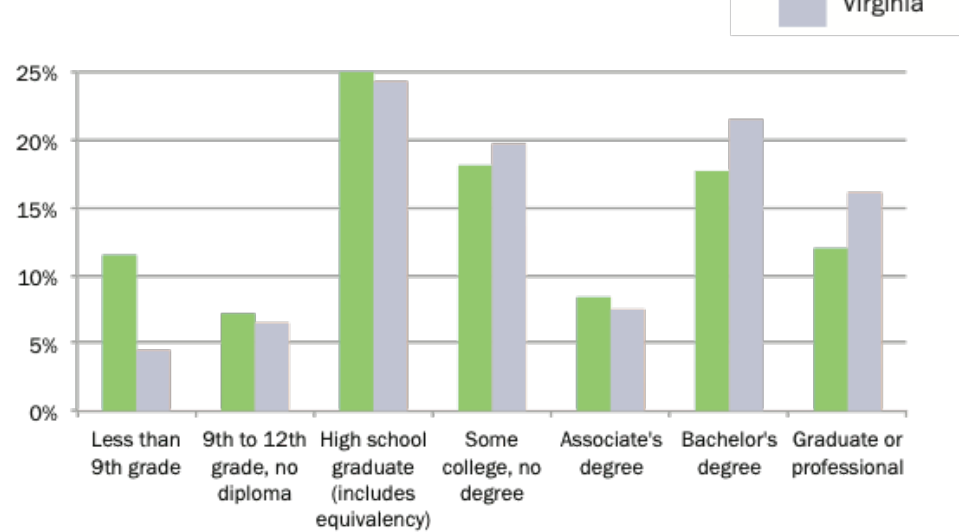
Families

The larger average household size in Manassas may also be partly attributed to its rate of family households, which is higher than the state as a whole. Among nonfamily households, it is less common for a householder to be living alone in Manassas than it is in the rest of Virginia.

Households by Income Group in Manassas and Virginia, 2017



Educational Attainment in Manassas and Virginia, 2017



Economic Trends

Though Manassas's median household income declined between 2010 and 2017, college degrees are more common in Manassas and unemployment rates have dropped.

Household Income

Manassas's median household income of \$77,551 is well above the Virginia median of \$68,766. Manassas generally has more households with income above \$75,000 than the state as a whole.

Education

Close to 30 percent of Manassas residents over the age of 25 have a Bachelor's or Graduate degree, a rate slightly lower than that of Virginia as a whole: 38 percent of the state's over-25 population has at least a Bachelor's degree. Still, educational attainment is on the rise in Manassas. In 2010, only 28 percent of residents had a Bachelor's or Graduate degree.

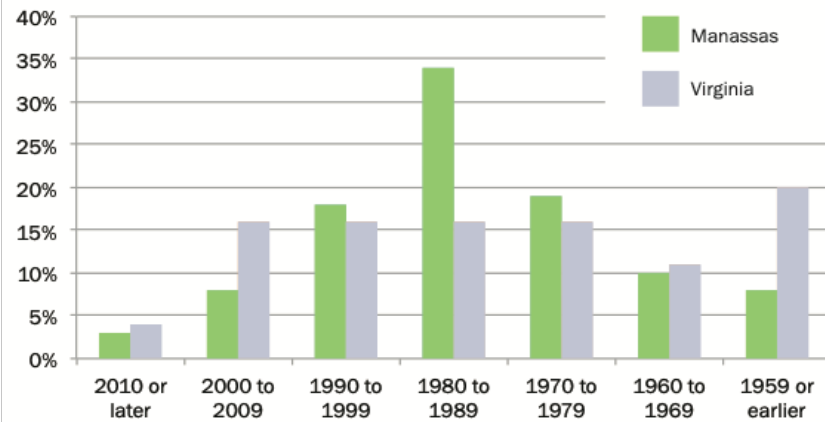
Manassas has a notably higher proportion of residents who do not have a high school diploma than the state as a whole. Almost 19 percent of City residents over the age of 25 did not graduate from high school, and 12 percent have less than a 9th grade education. These rates have declined only slightly since 2010.

Employment

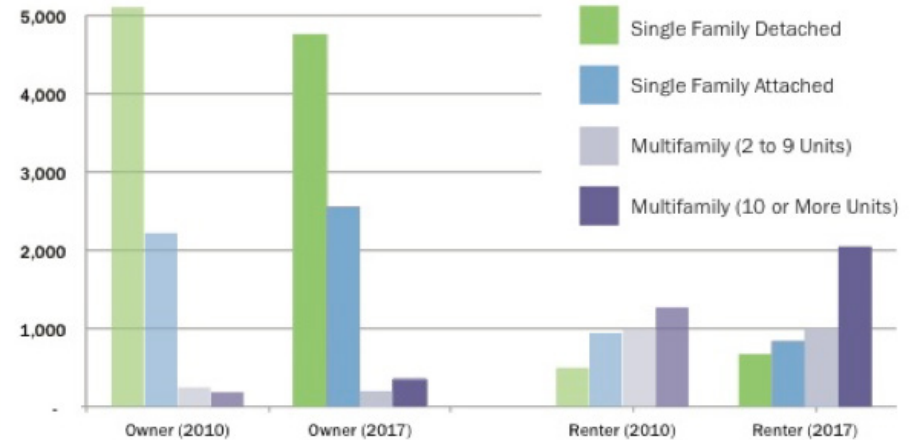
Workers with low educational attainment tend to have a harder time finding employment, but Manassas's unemployment rate has been consistently lower than that of Virginia since 2010.

Unemployment rates in both Manassas and the state as a whole declined steadily between 2010 and 2017. Manassas's unemployment rate decreased from 7.0 percent in 2010 to 3.4 percent in 2017, while the rate in Virginia decreased from 7.1 percent to 3.8 percent.

Percent of Residential Structures by Year Built in Manassas and Virginia, 2017



Number of Housing Units by Type and Tenure, 2010 and 2017



Housing Stock

Manassas has a housing stock that is mostly made up of single family detached owned homes and larger multifamily apartments.

Vacancy

With only 6.8 percent of houses vacant, the city's vacancy rate is significantly lower than the statewide rate of 10.4 percent. There has been a steep decline in residential vacancy in Manassas since 2010, when the city's vacancy rate of 9.9 percent was comparable to Virginia's 10.3 percent vacancy rate.

Age of Housing Stock

The majority of Manassas homes were built in the last four decades. A little over half of all residential structures were built between 1980 and 1999, and another 30 percent were built between 1960 and 1979. Manassas's residential structures have a median age of 34 years, giving the city a newer overall housing stock than Virginia's median age of 37 years. Very few units have been built in Manassas since 2000 compared to the state as a whole.

Tenure

A little less than two thirds of Manassas households own their homes, but renter rates are on the rise. Between 2010 and 2017, the proportion of renters in the city increased from 32 percent to 36 percent.

Housing Type

The majority (43 percent) of Manassas's housing stock is made up of single family detached houses. A little over a quarter are single family attached homes. Multifamily units are most often located in larger developments: nearly 20 percent of the total housing stock are units in developments with ten homes or more. Nine percent of units are in multifamily developments containing between two and nine units.

Housing Cost

Though housing values and monthly owner costs have declined since 2010 and the city's housing stock is more affordable than the Northern Virginia region as a whole, there is an increasing shortage in housing that meets the needs of lower-income households.

Housing Value

The median value of owner-occupied homes in Manassas is \$307,000. Almost half of all owner-occupied houses are valued between \$300,000 and \$500,000, and an additional 30 percent are valued between \$200,000 and \$300,000. Only around 19 percent have a value lower than \$200,000. The real value of homes in Manassas has actually declined since 2010, when the median value was \$325,800.

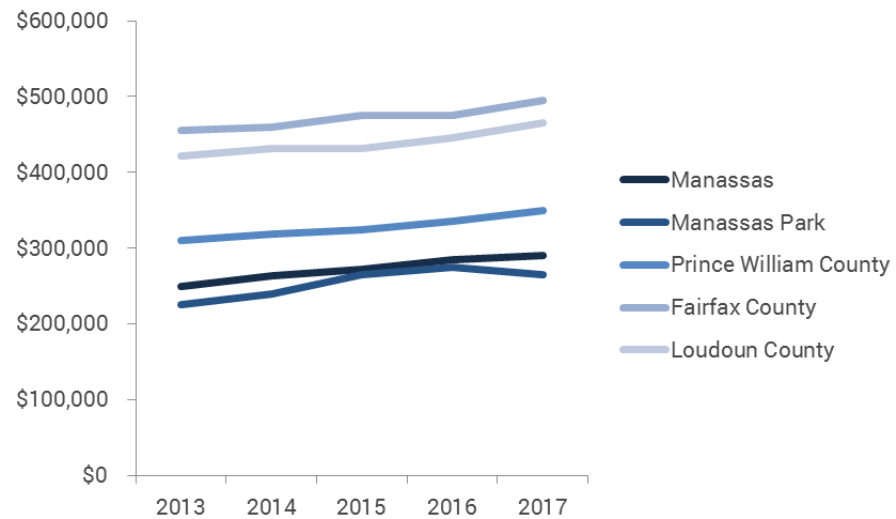
Monthly Owner Costs

Likewise, the inflation-adjusted monthly cost of housing for owners with a mortgage decreased from \$2,239 in 2010 to \$2,022 in 2017. Monthly costs for owners without a mortgage decreased from \$699 to \$649.

Sales Prices

Housing prices in Manassas tend to be lower than its neighboring localities, which include the City of Manassas Park, Prince William County, Fairfax County and Loudoun County. However, Manassas has seen a decrease in the availability of affordably priced housing stock over the past few years. In 2013, 10 homes that sold for less than \$200,000 accounted for 30 percent of all residential sales, but in 2017 this segment of the inventory accounted for only 21 percent of all residential sales.

Median Sales Price in Manassas and Surrounding Areas



Gross Rent

The decrease in homes for sale at low price points has likely contributed to the city's rising renter rate, yet rental housing is also becoming more expensive. The median gross rent in Manassas increased by about five percent between 2010 and 2017. In 2017, median gross rent was \$1,439. Almost 45 percent of all apartments in the city rent for between \$1,000 and \$1,500, while an additional 30 percent cost between \$1,500 and \$2,000.

Cost Burden

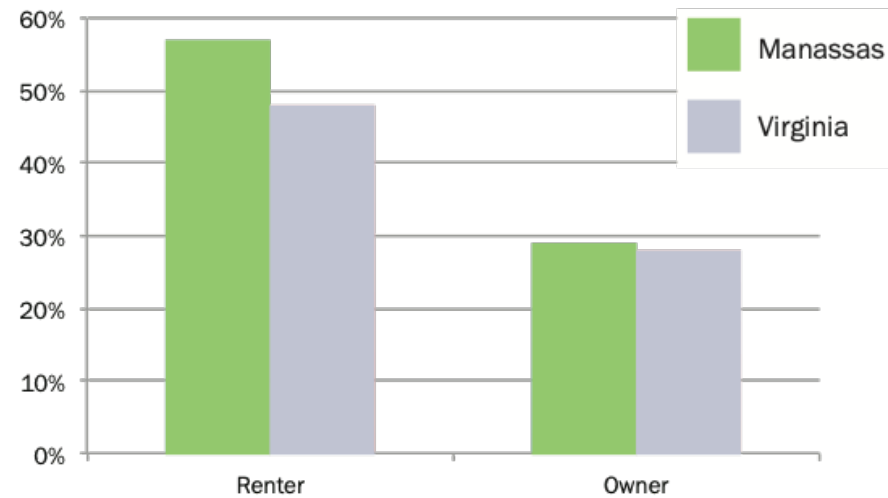
The rising cost of rental housing contributes to a cost burden rate among Manassas renters that is much higher than the rate of renter cost burden in Virginia as a whole. In total, 57 percent of the city's renter households pay more than 30 percent of income in housing costs each month. In Virginia, 48 percent of renters are cost burdened.

Rates of cost burden among Manassas owners are more comparable to those of the state as a whole. Around 29 percent of the city's owners pay more than 30 percent of their income in housing costs, as do 28 percent of Virginia owner households.

Affordability Gaps

Overall, households earning less than 50 percent of the area median income have difficulty finding housing that is affordable to them. Housing is considered affordable to a family when its monthly cost is no more than 30 percent of the family's monthly income. In Manassas, there were 2,805 households with incomes below \$55,150, but only 2,395 units (rental and sales) were affordable for them.

Cost Burden Rate in Manassas and Virginia, 2017



To put this affordability issue into perspective, the starting salary for a teacher in the Manassas City Public Schools District is \$46,078 for an individual with a Bachelor's degree, the starting salary for a police officer with the Manassas City Police Department is \$49,920, and the median earnings for an administrative assistant and food service worker are \$31,378 and \$15,589, respectively. People employed in

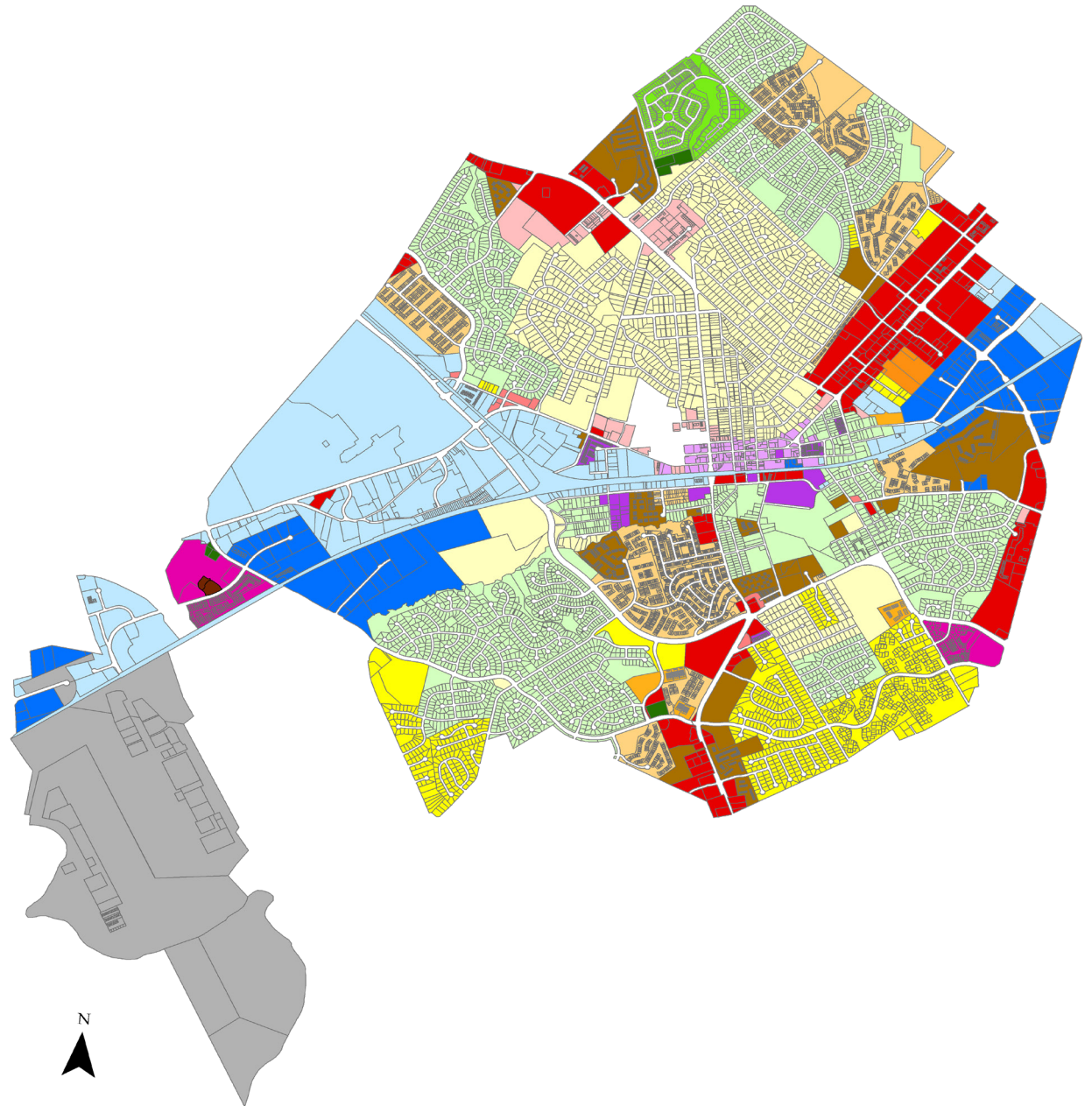
these positions might have trouble finding affordable housing within Manassas as single income earners.

Development & Build-Out

Zoning

The zoning ordinance and zoning map provide for the orderly development of land and serve as the land use regulations for Manassas. The following is an approximation of current land use in Manassas based on zoning.

- Residential – 47%
- Industrial – 18%
- Airport – 12%
- Commercial – 8%
- Mixed – 3%
- Public Right-of-Way – 14%



Zoning Map (For Illustrative Use Only)

Build-Out Analysis

The build-out analysis in **Table B2** provides an estimate of the maximum by-right and planned future residential development within the City of Manassas. This analysis is not intended to show an ideal or preferred development condition, but rather provides an estimate of additional housing units that may be constructed under an estimated “low” and “high” scenario. This data is used when developing infrastructure plans for utilities and schools, as well as by the regional transportation planning board for developing the regional traffic model.

The “low” estimate includes vacant lots where new dwelling units may be built by-right under current zoning plus the following approved rezonings that are under development or where construction has been recently completed:

- Hastings Marketplace (Apartments)
- Landing at Cannon Branch (Townhomes and Condominiums)
- Jefferson Square (Townhomes and Single Family Detached Homes)

The “high” estimate includes the low estimate plus long-range estimates within the Downtown and Mathis character areas. It should be noted that to achieve the high estimate would require multiple rezonings approved by the City Council.

Table B2 - Build-Out Analysis

Character Area	Existing Dwelling Units	Low Build-Out Additional Units	High Build-Out Additional Units
Suburban & Traditional Neighborhoods	14,026	51	51
Neighborhood, Business, & Heavy Commercial		37	37
Downtown		205	1,277
Mathis¹		12	2,100
Sudley Medical		0	216
Godwin Technology		140	361
Totals	14,026	445	4,042

¹ Buildout estimate for the Mathis character area is preliminary. Additional market and land use analysis is required to refine this estimate.

