

CHAPTER 6: Community Facilities and Services

INTRODUCTION

Community facilities, services, and infrastructure are essential elements of an attractive, livable, and prosperous community. Educational facilities, like schools and libraries, drive the local economy by educating the future workforce, supporting and attracting today's workforce by educating their children, and promoting quality of life. Healthcare and community wellness establishments support resident health, well-being, and safety. Parks and recreation opportunities encourage active lifestyles and draw visitors who contribute to the local tourism economy. This chapter articulates how Prince Edward County is serving its residents' community facilities, services, and infrastructure needs for today and planning for the needs of tomorrow.

KEY THEMES



Academic Excellence

Prince Edward County Public Schools are conditionally accredited facilities, and are a top concern as identified during community engagement, with concerns expressed regarding test scores, building age and function. Prioritizing education quality in addition to maintenance and upgrades to school facilities will improve perceptions and the reality of the Prince Edward education system and facilities.



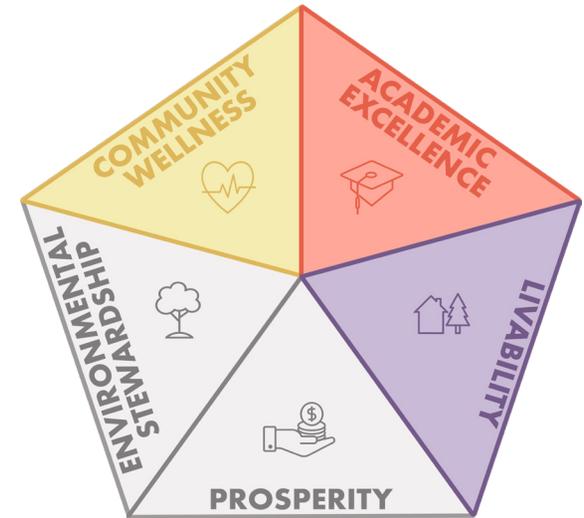
Livability

Community engagement highlighted the desire for improvement and expansion of community services. The topics discussed in this Chapter, especially schools, are influential factors for attracting families and younger professionals to live in the County. With Prince Edward's population projected to remain steady over the next twenty years, attracting this demographic will be vital to build the next generation for the County.



Community Wellness

Community engagement pinpointed the need for additional health services and facilities for residents. The County boasts ample outdoor recreation opportunities that promote active lifestyles. However, the County will improve and expand medical care, which includes diversifying the types of services offered.



COUNTY ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE

EXISTING FACILITIES

COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Prince Edward County provides many essential services for its residents which are delivered by various departments. The Prince Edward County Courthouse, located in Downtown Farmville, houses most of the County's departments, including County Administration, Community Development, Constitutional Offices, Sheriff's Department, Courts, General Registrar, and the Health Department.

This facility was originally constructed in 1939 and renovated in 2020 through a five phase renovation. This project addressed safety and overcrowding issues including:

- Relocated social services outside of the Courthouse
- Allocated additional space to the Sheriff's Office suite
- Added a security vestibule and sally port addition to the building for the safety of all users

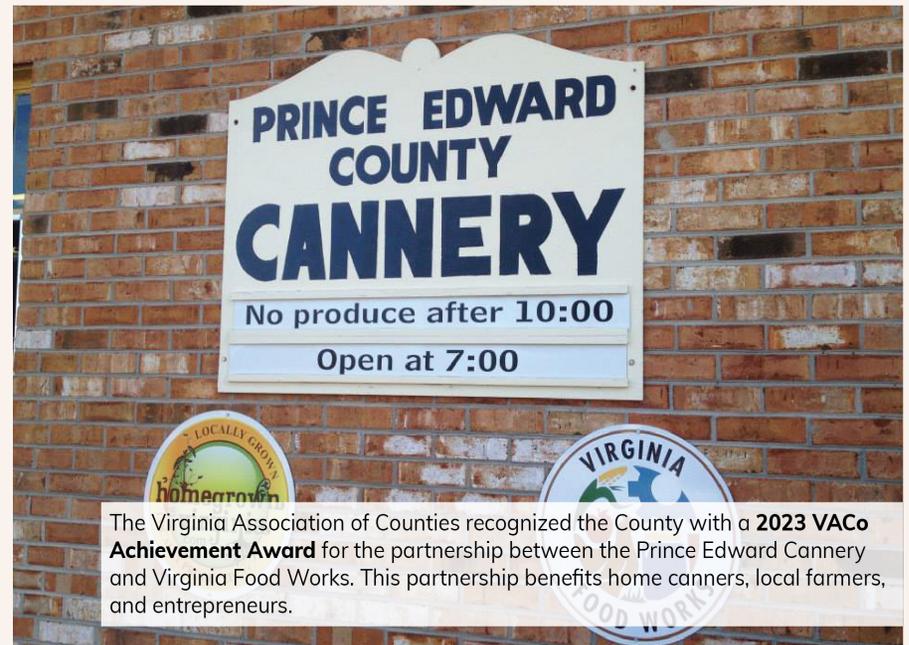


Source: Prince Edward County

CANNERY

Owned by Prince Edward County and operated by a part-time employee, the Prince Edward Cannery is as a distinctive asset to the community. The Cannery, located on Abilene Road near Hampden-Sydney College, was originally founded in the 1940s for the community to preserve their Victory Garden Harvest. The Cannery opened for home canning operation in 1975 and has been a cherished part of the community since.

In 2010, the Cannery received grant funding from the Virginia Tobacco Commission to expand the facility's scope of operations and became the Prince Edward Cannery and Commercial Kitchen. This expansion allowed farmers and food businesses to use the facility in addition to home users. To assist with the business operations of the Cannery, Virginia Food Works, a non-profit organization, assists food producers with navigating food production and food laws to successfully bring their products to the retail market.



Source: Prince Edward County

ANIMAL CONTROL

Prince Edward County Animal Control is located on County Shop Road. With 2 full-time employees in 2023, the Animal Control Department operates the County's animal shelter, which housed a total of 253 dogs and cats.

The Prince Edward County Animal Shelter facility is too small to meet current and projected needs. In addition, the facility has inadequate storage space and is unable to be modified to meet needs or mandated state requirements. To accommodate these needs, the Capital Improvement Plan for FY 22-24 identifies a new animal shelter as a top priority. As stated by the Prince Edward County 2023 Annual Report, a potential site on Commerce Road has been identified for a new facility and the planning and design stage has begun.



Southside Virginia Family YMCA

The Southside Virginia Family YMCA is located on Commerce Road, one mile west of the County's public school campus, and is comprised of a fitness center and a swimming pool. The YMCA provides recreation for all demographics, with programs such as:

- ◇ Aquatics
- ◇ Youth Sports
- ◇ Summer day camps
- ◇ A swim team
- ◇ After school child care
- ◇ Fitness classes
- ◇ Leaders' Club, a program for teens



COMMUNITY CENTERS

Community engagement identified the need for a community center in the County, which is especially acute for teenagers who lack appropriate places to gather. Community centers provide vital services for residents by offering recreational, educational, and commercial opportunities, in addition to gathering spaces for community events.

There is currently an ongoing effort to restore the historic Mary E. Branch School as a community center with a variety of amenities for residents. Because of the building's history and the desire to preserve it, the community re-envisioned the building as a community center to house classrooms, meeting rooms, a kitchen for culinary classes, an auditorium, and potentially mental health resources. The County will continue to partner with the Town of Farmville to rehabilitate this building into a community center.

In addition to this project, the County will partner with institutions such as Longwood, Hampden-Sydney, and the Town of Farmville to provide community amenities at existing facilities. This may include shared use of recreational facilities, community education programs, and innovation centers.



The Mary E. Branch School, located at 632 South Main Street in Farmville, was constructed in 1926, originally as the Farmville Colored School or Farmville No. 2. In 1931, this school's name was changed to Robert Russa Moton High School. Its current name, Mary E. Branch School, was given in 1939 when the new high school opened across South Main Street and adopted the name Robert Russa Moton High School (now the Robert Russa Moton Museum).

Source: Civil Rights Walking Tour of Farmville, Moton Museum

PUBLIC SAFETY

FIRE & RESCUE

Prince Edward County Fire and Rescue Departments are responsible for fire services and emergency medical services (EMS). Seven independent fire departments are operated by a combination of paid and volunteer staff, however most are volunteers (see Map 6-1 for locations). Fire services include fire suppression, rescue/extrication, fire prevention, and public education. Funding for these services is provided by donations acquired by fundraisers in addition to some funding from the County's General Fund. EMS is provided from the Meherrin Volunteer Fire & Rescue Company 5 and the Prince Edward Volunteer Rescue Squad. Rescue equipment include ambulances, an Advanced Life Support quick response vehicle, a mass casualty trailer, an all-terrain vehicle (ATV), and a heavy rescue truck.

In 2023, the County's fire services responded to a total of 1,172 calls, which is an increase of 394 calls from the previous year. The County's emergency medical services also experienced an increase in call frequency during 2023, with 4,046 calls compared to 3,977 calls in the previous year.

Hampden-Sydney College and Longwood University assist in filling emergency service gaps during the academic year, however, this partnership's additional support is unavailable during the summer months due to student volunteers leaving the area for school breaks. A fire and rescue authority in partnership with surrounding localities may be needed to meet future needs. A regional authority with multi-jurisdictional oversight and coordination will streamline resources and provide improved services with shorter response times.



1,712 Fire calls
responded to in
2023



4,046 EMS calls
responded to in
2023

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Prince Edward County Sheriff's Office is responsible for the enforcement of laws. In addition to community policing, deputies provide valuable services to County residents by providing programs and services such as D.A.R.E., Class Action, and drug awareness events. Additional community programs include:

- Project Lifesaver
- Highway Safety Events
- Senior Safety
- Triad
- Crime Solvers
- Neighborhood Watch

The County Sheriff's Office is located in the County Courthouse on North Main Street in Farmville. Longwood University and Hampden-Sydney College have separate law enforcement agencies, although the County Sheriff's Office works with these agencies when necessary. Additional space for the Prince Edward County Sheriff's Office is a primary need, due to overcrowding in the evidence room with no room for expansion at its existing location. In addition, the Sheriff's Office staff share workspaces and computers due to a lack of offices.

The Piedmont Regional Jail serves all Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC) localities, except for Charlotte County. This minimum- to high-security facility opened on May 11, 1988, with capacity for 101 offenders. Due to three expansions over the years, the jail accommodates a maximum of 600 offenders, including U.S. Marshal, state, and local offenders.

The Jail is overseen by the Piedmont Regional Jail Board, composed of two appointed members from each jurisdiction it serves. The Board maintains a list of needed capital improvement projects such as the replacement of food service equipment, information technology upgrades, buildings and grounds maintenance, and security upgrades. In addition, the Piedmont Regional Jail Authority Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) identifies funding for four future expansion projects. This planned expansion includes an administration building, warehouse, annex building, and converting an existing unit to medical housing.



EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

The Farmville Emergency Communications Center (ECC) provides 911 call dispatch for Prince Edward County, including calls originating at Longwood and Hampden-Sydney. The ECC is the primary public safety answering point (PSAP) for the County. The Prince Edward Sheriff's Office serves as the secondary PSAP, maintaining a line for 911 calls that are transferred from the Farmville ECC.

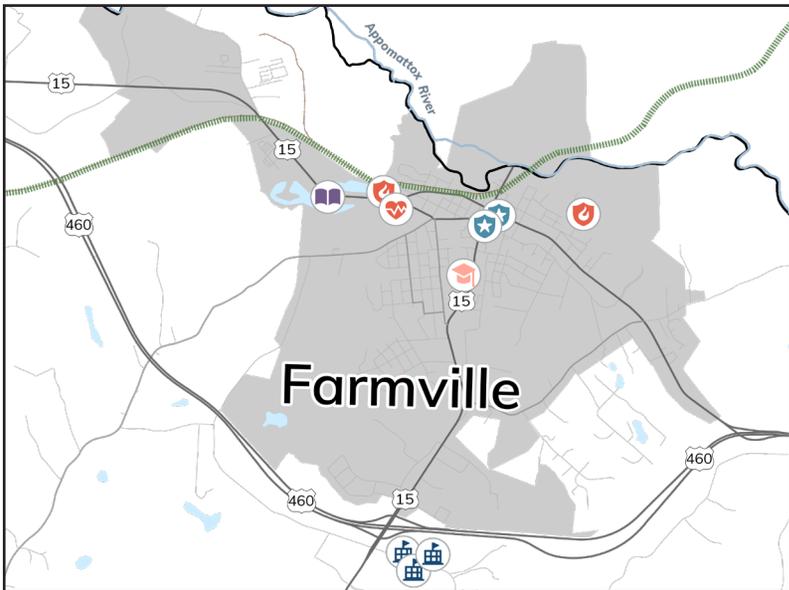
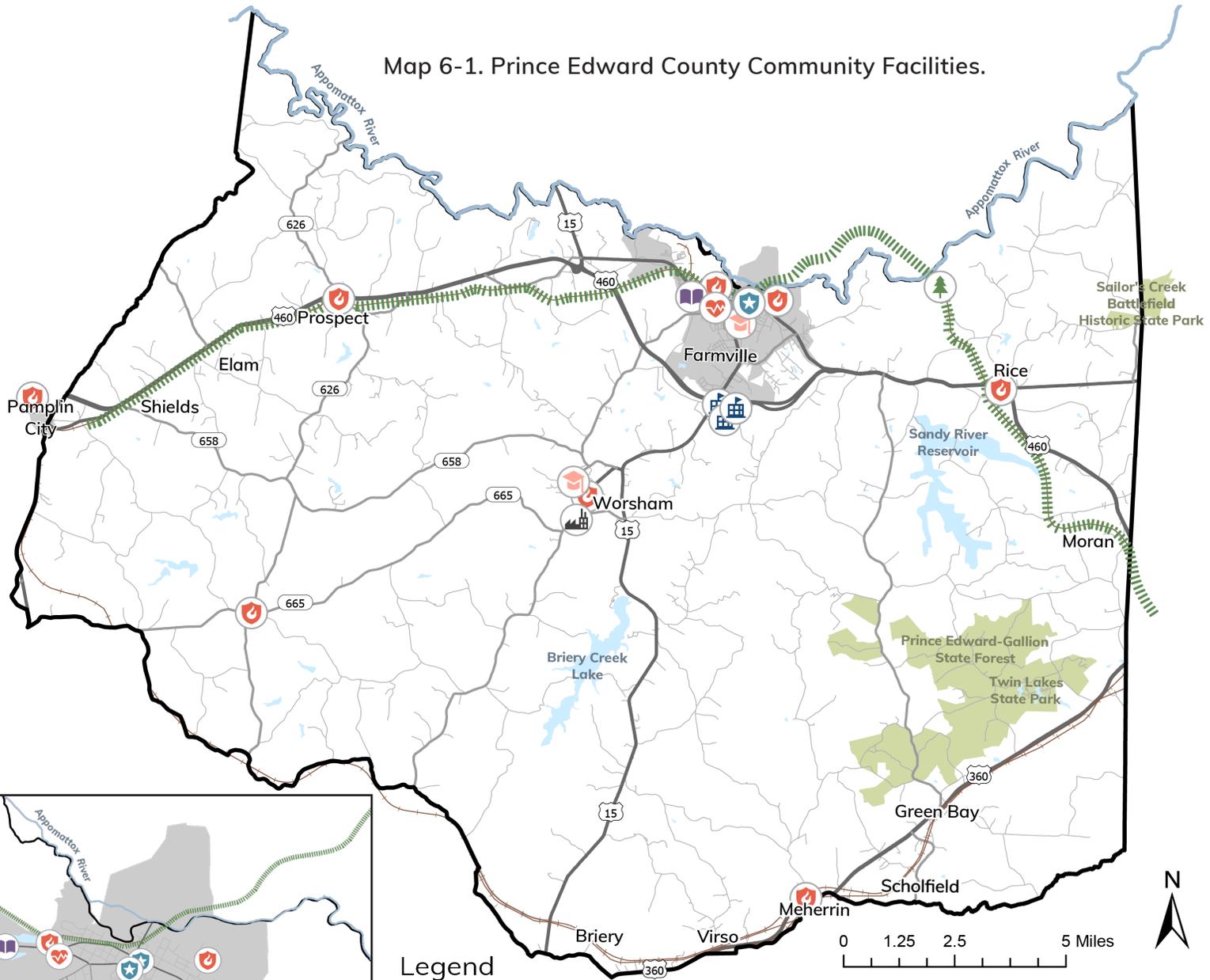
A proposal is under consideration to consolidate the primary and secondary PSAP into one main PSAP. The consolidation will improve efficiency and coordination, among other benefits. The proposal requires the financial support of the County, the Town of Farmville, Longwood University, and Hampden-Sydney College.

The Prince Edward County FY 22-24 CIP identifies a new emergency communications radio system for funding. The system will be used by emergency service agencies countywide and include five tower sites for a 95% coverage rate, greatly improving the County's overall emergency response. The project was approved for purchase in 2023.

EMERGENCY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

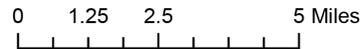
The County's designated Emergency Management Coordinator obtains necessary resources from the state to navigate major emergencies. The Coordinator, in conjunction with the Department of Social Services and the County school system also opens an emergency shelter at Prince Edward County Middle School for residents who may have been displaced during an emergency.

Map 6-1. Prince Edward County Community Facilities.



Legend

- High Bridge State Park - Camp Paradise Entrance
- Cannery
- Hospital
- Law Enforcement
- Library
- Prince Edward County Public Schools
- College or University
- Fire and Rescue
- High Bridge Trail
- Railroad
- County Boundary
- Lakes and Reservoirs
- State Forest or State Park
- Town Boundaries



INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE FUTURE

WATER SERVICE

Prince Edward County's water service is provided by the Town of Farmville's Public Water System and the Hampden-Sydney College community groundwater system. All remaining residents not serviced by these two water systems are served by private wells, estimated to be about half of the County's population.

The Town of Farmville's Public Water System, fed by the Appomattox River, primarily services Town addresses and extends to limited areas outside of Town limits including the Prince Edward County Public School buildings. This water system can service approximately 7,000 people with a design capacity of three million gallons per day (mgd). The water treatment plant was built in 1976 with a capacity of 200,000 gallons of on-site storage and the ability and space to expand storage if needed.

The Hampden-Sydney College community water system is comprised of six drilled wells, two treatment facilities, and multiple storage tanks. The water system can service approximately 1,050 people with a design capacity of 245,280 gallons per day (gpd).

The Sandy River Reservoir was constructed in 1994 to meet future public water demand. The Reservoir will also serve as a backup water source for Farmville's water system once it is integrated. The Reservoir will support future economic growth by providing additional water capacity to Heartland Innovative Technology (HIT) Park.

SEWER SERVICE

The Town of Farmville provides sewer services to locations that receive water service. The Town's sewer system relies on a wastewater treatment facility on Doswell Street adjacent to the Appomattox River. The treatment plant has been in operation since 1994 and treats an average of 1.7 mgd. The maximum capacity of this plant is 2.4 mgd, which provides ample room for growth.

REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY PLAN

Prince Edward County and the Town of Farmville operate under a 2011 Regional Water Supply Plan. The Plan provides an extensive evaluation and discussion of the water supply and resources for the County and the Town, including:

- ◇ Existing Water Supply
- ◇ Existing Water Use
- ◇ Existing Resources
- ◇ Projected Populations and Water Demands
- ◇ Projected Demands Based on Future Land Use
- ◇ Water Demand Management
- ◇ Drought Response and Contingency Plan
- ◇ Statement of Need and Alternative Analysis

REFUSE & RECYCLING

Seven convenience sites are located throughout the County for residents to drop off household waste and recyclables. The convenience sites have limited amenities and gravel surfacing. The County CIP identifies improvements to all convenience sites in the County including paving, new fencing, signage, concrete pads for the compactors, and site lighting. Improvements to the Rice Convenience Center were completed in 2023.

The Prince Edward County Sanitary Landfill is located in Prospect and is operated by the County. The available cells of the landfill have a remaining lifespan of approximately two years, but the County is working to extend that lifespan, but the permitted maximum daily tonnage was increased from 175 tons of trash per day to 300 tons by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality in 2023. In addition, plans have begun for the construction of a new landfill cell which will increase the lifespan by about 12 years.

Table 6-1. Prince Edward County Convenience Sites.

County Convenience Site	Location
Darlington Heights Convenience Site	2872 Buffalo Church Road Pamplin, VA 23958
Green Bay Convenience Site	248 W Stokes Road Green Bay, VA 23942
Prospect Convenience Site	2141 Hidden Lake Road Prospect, VA 23960
Rice Convenience Site	27 Aspen Hill Road Rice, VA 23966
Tuggle Convenience Site	78 Trashmore Road Prospect, VA 23960
Virso Convenience Site	160 Virso Road Meherrin, VA 23954
Worsham Convenience Site	140 County Shop Road Farmville, VA 23901

Source: Prince Edward County



Source: 2023 PEC Annual Report

ELECTRICITY & NATURAL GAS

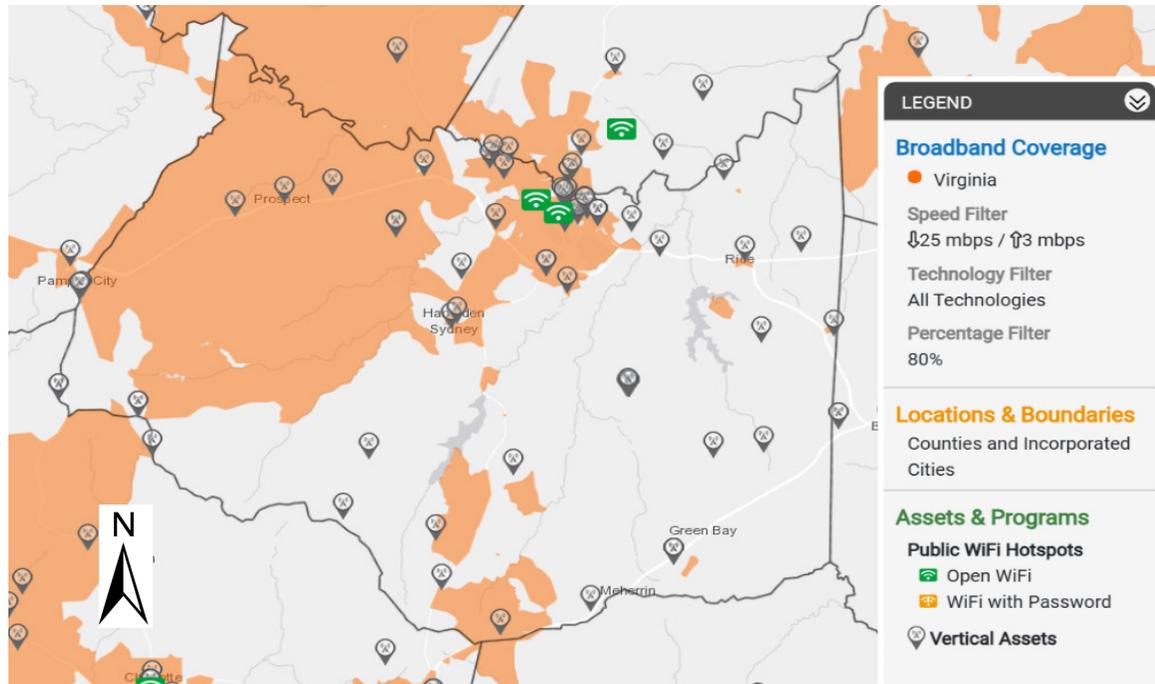
Electricity services in Prince Edward County are provided by Dominion Energy Virginia, Central Virginia Electric Cooperative (CVEC), and Southside Electric Cooperative (SEC) with SEC servicing most of the County. Columbia Gas of Virginia provides natural gas in certain areas of the County.

BROADBAND & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Broadband internet and cellular coverage have become essential to everyday life. Expanding these services to all residents of Prince Edward County will have a significant impact on their quality of life. The need for internet access was identified as one of the top challenges facing the County during community engagement.

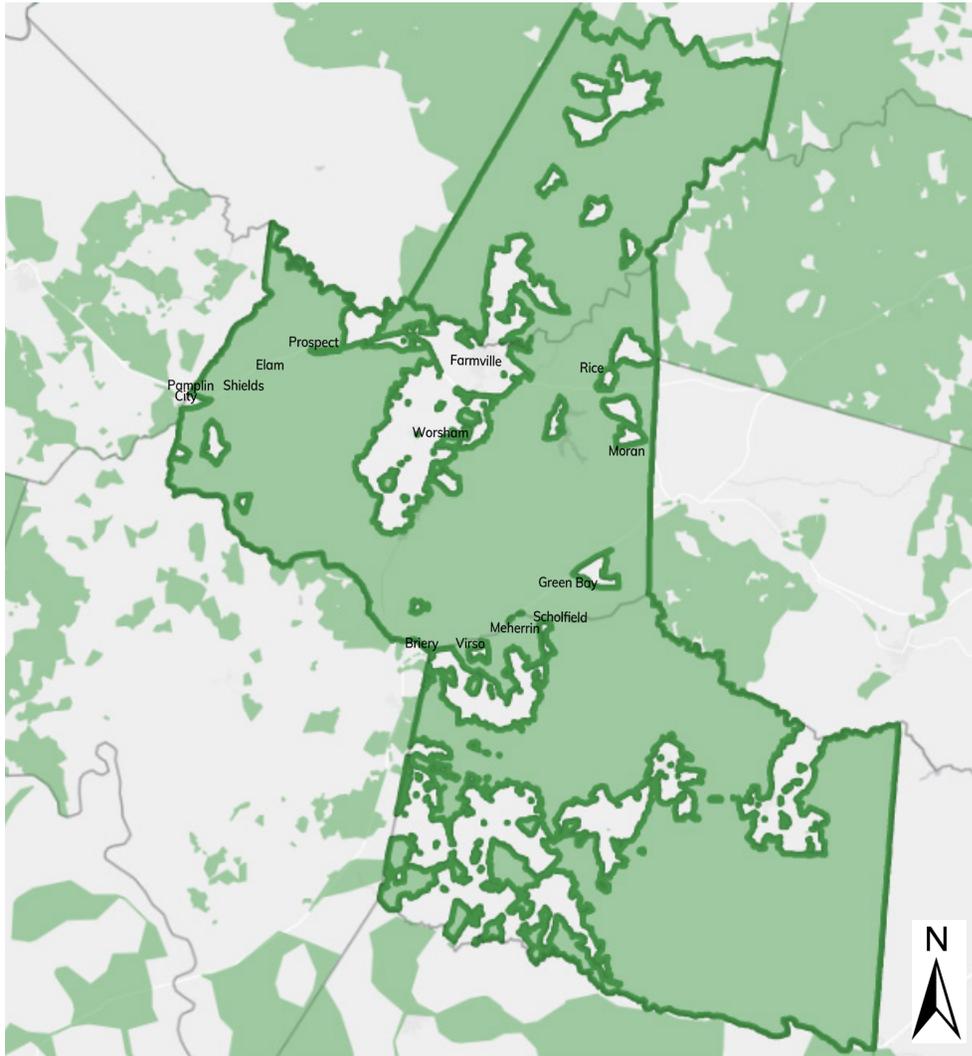
In 2022, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development awarded Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC) and Kinex Telecom \$15 million in grant money for broadband expansion through the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI). VATI works to extend broadband service to areas that are currently underserved. This project will help to achieve universal broadband coverage in Prince Edward County, as well as Cumberland and Lunenburg Counties (see the outlined area in Map 6-3). This expansion is expected to provide fiber broadband to 11,397 underserved residents in the project area by 2027.

Map 6-2. Prince Edward County Broadband Coverage and Wireless Assets as of April 2024.



Source: Commonwealth Connect, April 2024

Map 6-3. 2022 VATI Funding Area for CRC and Kinex Telecom Broadband Expansion.



Source: Commonwealth Connect

The emergence of 5G technology has introduced a compelling alternative to traditional fiber broadband for internet connectivity. 5G fixed wireless access uses the latest cellular technology to deliver internet access while eliminating the need for cable or fiber installation. This route may offer a potentially faster, cost-effective way to provide homes with high-speed internet, particularly in homes with limited or no fiber infrastructure. This service may not yet be available in all areas but is actively expanding and should not be overlooked as a broadband option as it can help to fill crucial service gaps, especially in rural areas.

Source: Prince Edward County



PECPS Career and Technical Education

Prince Edward County Public School operates a Career and Technical Education (CTE) center that provides students with opportunities to build valuable workforce skills in diverse career fields such as agricultural science, automotive technology, culinary arts, business, and more.

In 2023, the Prince Edward County Career and Technical Education Center received a \$37,500 grant from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to purchase eight bundled augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) hardware kits that provide immersive and interactive learning experiences for students in CTE classes. This technology will allow students to collaborate with teachers and classmates in both virtual and real-world learning environments. Course applications for this innovative technology include, but are not limited to animal systems; automotive technology; introduction to health and medical sciences; and veterinary science.



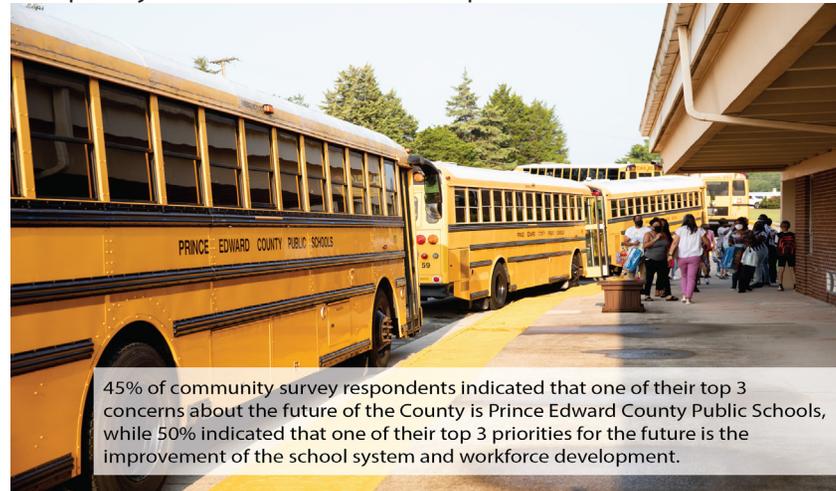
zSpace AR/VR Technology

Source: zSpace Website; <https://zspace.com/technology>

ACHIEVING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Quality public education is essential to a thriving community. Working professionals and families looking to relocate prioritize public education as a top factor in decision making. Additionally, business start-ups and expanding companies depend on public school systems to help attract the workforce they need to be successful. During community engagement, Prince Edward County Schools was repeatedly identified as a top priority by many.

Community engagement respondents were concerned with the quality of education as well as the condition of public school facilities, especially the Elementary School. This contributes to some parents sending their children to private school, or choosing to live in surrounding localities and commute to Prince Edward or Farmville for work. Collaboration between the County and Prince Edward County Public Schools will improve both the perceptions and the reality of Prince Edward County Schools with a concerted approach to providing a robust, quality education offered in updated and modern facilities.



45% of community survey respondents indicated that one of their top 3 concerns about the future of the County is Prince Edward County Public Schools, while 50% indicated that one of their top 3 priorities for the future is the improvement of the school system and workforce development.

Source: Prince Edward County

EXISTING SCHOOL FACILITIES

PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Prince Edward County Public School (PECPS) system operates one elementary school (Pre-K through Grade 4), one middle school (Grades 5 through 8), one high school (Grades 9 through 12), and a career and technical education center on a shared campus just south of Farmville. The campus also includes the School Board Office and bus terminal.

Public School planning is accomplished through the Prince Edward County School Strategic Plan. The plan was adopted in 2018 and is currently being updated, with an expected completion date of Fall 2024. This Strategic Plan will guide specific projects for facility renovations and replacements.

PECPS Strategic Plan

Prince Edward County Public Schools maintains a strategic plan that establishes performance metrics and five-year targeted actions for five main goals.

The Fiscal and Operational Effectiveness section of the strategic plan identifies targeted actions for a five-year timeframe. The following projects have been identified for the 2022-2023 academic year:

- ◇ All campus areas will be monitored remotely for safety and security.
- ◇ High school door replacement completed.
- ◇ Continue to replace plumbing at the elementary and high schools.
- ◇ Continue to replace the high school roof.
- ◇ High school auditorium renovations completed.
- ◇ Finish food services consulting recommendations.
- ◇ Replace two school buses.
- ◇ Equip 20% of the current bus and van fleet with GPS systems.
- ◇ Maintain bus and van fleet in accordance with state standards and recommendations.



Source: Prince Edward County

PROJECTED ENROLLMENT & FACILITY NEEDS

Prince Edward County Public Schools has a total enrollment of approximately 1,800 students. The Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service projections show enrollment in PECPS slightly declining each year with a projected enrollment of 1,598 students in the 2028-2029 school year.

During community engagement, Prince Edward County Elementary School was identified as the facility with the most critical needs. The County's FY 22-24 CIP designates the renovation or replacement of this school as the number two priority. In 2023, the Board of Supervisors approved renovations to the school's existing facility including improved access, security, and traffic flow, in addition to offering more hands-on learning options for the students. The renovation will also relocate the front entrance, which will improve drop-off and pick-up of students. The County's School District was recently awarded a \$8.66 million grant from the Virginia Capital School Projects Fund to help offset the cost of the renovation.

In the 2023-2024 budget the Board of Supervisors increased the real estate tax rate by \$0.04, with \$0.01 of that increase earmarked for the elementary school renovation. In addition, the County implemented a meals tax in 2023 for restaurants and businesses outside of Farmville Town limits. One hundred percent of the proceeds from the meals tax will be used for capital improvements to the Prince Edward County School System.