CHAPTER 2 – COMMUNITY PROFILE

Introduction

This Community Profile chapter has been provided as part of the Town of Bowling Green's Comprehensive Plan Update, *FULL STRIDE TO 2045*. The Plan is a high-level, longer range policy and planning document intended to address topics such as existing and future land use and development, environmental and historic resources, transportation and connectivity, community infrastructure and facilities, economic development, and housing.

The Community Profile establishes the factual context for the Town's Comprehensive Plan. It describes Bowling Green's historical development, population characteristics, housing and neighborhood conditions, workforce and household economics, and the public-school system serving Town residents. These conditions inform later recommendations concerning land use, public facilities, transportation, housing, and economic development.

Location

The Town of Bowling Green is located in the central area of Caroline County (See General Location Map). Route 301/2 bisects the town in a north-south direction and serves as its main commercial street (See Town of Bowling Green Map). State Route 207 is the major east-west access through the town. There is currently a bypass around the southern portion of the town. Fort AP. Hill, a large military base, lies to the northeast of the town. Bowling Green is approximately 40 miles north of Richmond and 20 miles south of the City of Fredericksburg. Baltimore, Maryland, accessible via U.S. Route 301, is approximately 100 miles north of the town.

History and Historic Resources

Caroline County was created in 1727 from the Counties of Essex, King and Queen, and King William. The County was named in honor of Queen Caroline, wife of George II.

The earliest recorded settlement in Bowling Green occurred between 1667 and 1675. Major Thomas Hoomes constructed the "Old Mansion" on land granted to him in 1667. The town became widely settled approximately sixty years later, and was formally incorporated in 1837.

As early as 1736, the Town of Bowling Green was known as "New Hope." During this time, roads were built to transport tobacco from Needwood to New Hope and Chesterfield (Ruther Glen) across Dogue Bridge (Milford) to Port Royal. These roads were the foundation for the present day Routes 301 and 207.

The original County Courthouse was built in the Ideal-Kidds Fork-Shumansville triangle in 1732. It was relocated several times afterward, until the present Courthouse was constructed on Main Street in 1803 and replaced in 1835.

Bowling Green suffered extensive damage by fire twice in its history; first on Easter Sunday, 1905 and on the same day fifty years later in 1955. In both cases, the Main Street commercial district was completely destroyed.

On January 1, 1998, the town's first annexation of a portion of Caroline County took place which more than doubled its size.

Population and Demographics

Bowling Green remains a small but changing community. Recent estimates point to a younger median age, a housing stock that is largely occupied, growing work-from-home participation, and continuing pressure on selected public-school facilities. Because many Town estimates are drawn from five-year survey periods, the chapter emphasizes long-term patterns and reporting context rather than treating each estimate as a precise annual count.

2024 ACS population	Median age	Occupied housing units	2025-26 CCPS enrollment
1,561	**31.9 years**	**586 of 616**	**4,663 students**

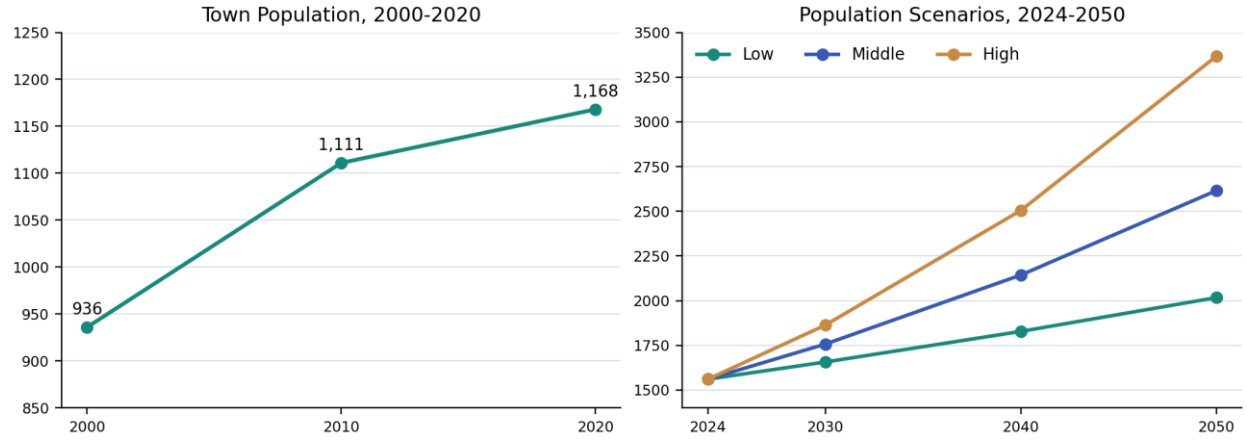
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024 ACS Five-Year Estimates; Caroline County Public Schools, end-of-year 2025-26 enrollment data.

Population Change and Outlook

Bowling Green grew from 936 residents in 2000 to 1,111 residents in 2010, an increase of approximately 18.7 percent. Growth slowed during the next decade, reaching 1,168 residents in the 2020 Decennial Census, or about 5.1 percent growth from 2010. Across the full 2000-2020 period, the Town added 232 residents and grew by approximately 24.8 percent.

The 2020-2024 ACS five-year estimate places the Town's population at 1,561. This estimate should be used as a current planning baseline rather than treated as directly interchangeable with a single-day Decennial Census count. The Town's projection scenarios begin with that ACS baseline and illustrate a range of possible outcomes. By 2050, the scenarios range from 2,017 residents under the low-growth case to 3,366 residents under the high-growth case; the middle scenario reaches 2,615 residents.

Figure 2-1. Historical Town Population and Population Scenarios



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, 2010, and 2020 Decennial Census; 2020-2024 ACS Five-Year population base; consultant scenario calculations using the Berkeley Group compound-growth formula. The historical graphic uses a Town-scale axis so change is legible.

Table 2-1. Population Benchmarks and Scenarios

Year	Historical count	Low scenario	Middle scenario	High scenario
2000	936	-	-	-
2010	1,111	-	-	-
2020	1,168	-	-	-
2024 base	-	1,561	1,561	1,561
2030	-	1,657	1,757	1,863
2040	-	1,828	2,143	2,504
2050	-	2,017	2,615	3,366

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census; 2020-2024 ACS Five-Year Estimates; consultant projection calculations. Projections are planning scenarios, not Census forecasts.

Age, Race, Sex, and Educational Attainment

The 2020-2024 ACS estimates a median age of 31.9 years in Bowling Green. Adults ages 25 to 34 form the largest reported ten-year age group, with 262 residents, followed by residents ages 35 to 44, with 204. Residents age 65 and older total 313 across the reported age categories, representing approximately one-fifth of the estimated population. This age structure indicates that the Town serves both working-age households and a substantial older population with differing housing, mobility, and service needs.

The ACS estimates 652 male residents and 909 female residents, or approximately 41.8 percent male and 58.2 percent female. The Town's reported racial composition is 76.5 percent White, 15.8 percent Black or African American, 4.2 percent two or more races, and 1.7 percent other races. Approximately 0.8 percent of residents are reported as Hispanic or Latino. Because ACS values are survey estimates, small differences should be interpreted with attention to sampling uncertainty.

Among adults age 25 and older, 6.5 percent have less than a high school diploma, 44.8 percent have a high school diploma or equivalent, and 17.1 percent have some college experience without a degree. An additional 7.6 percent hold an associate's degree, 17.9 percent hold a bachelor's degree, and 6.1 percent hold a graduate or professional degree. Compared with Virginia, Bowling Green has a larger share of adults whose highest attainment is a high school diploma and a smaller share with graduate or professional degrees.

Table 2-2. Selected Demographic Indicators

Indicator	Bowling Green	Comparison / context
2020-2024 ACS population	1,561	Current five-year planning estimate
Median age	31.9 years	ACS Table B01002
Female population	58.2%	909 residents
White population	76.5%	Race/ethnicity estimate
Black or African American population	15.8%	Race/ethnicity estimate
Bachelor's degree or higher	24.0%	17.9% bachelor's + 6.1% graduate/professional

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024 ACS Five-Year Estimates, Tables B01001, B01002, B03002, and S1501.

Housing and Neighborhoods

Housing Supply and Occupancy

The ACS estimates 616 housing units in Bowling Green. Of these, 586 units are occupied and 30 are vacant, producing an estimated occupancy rate of 95.1 percent and vacancy rate of 4.9 percent. Detached single-family homes are the largest structural category, with 384 units. The Town also includes 83 attached single-family units, 10 units in two-unit buildings, 100 units in buildings with three or four units, 22 units in buildings with five to nine units, and 17 units in buildings with ten or more units. This mix provides a broader range of housing forms than a detached-home-only market, although detached housing remains dominant.

The bedroom distribution includes seven units reported with no bedroom, 116 one-bedroom units, 277 units with two or three bedrooms, and 216 units with four or more bedrooms. A "no bedroom" unit generally refers to a studio-type or single-room housing unit in which living, eating, and sleeping areas share one open space.

Housing Age, Tenure, Value, and Cost

Housing-age estimates show that the 1960-1979 period represents the largest reported construction cohort, accounting for 38.0 percent of the housing stock. Units built from 2000 through 2009 account for 25.2 percent, while units built in 1939 or earlier account for 10.7 percent. Records for units built in 2010 or later were supplemented with information from the Caroline County Commissioner of Revenue. These figures indicate that neighborhood reinvestment, maintenance, accessibility improvements, and infrastructure coordination will remain important alongside new construction.

Homeownership has increased over the long term. Owner occupancy rose from approximately 57.6 percent in 2000 to 64.3 percent in the 2020-2024 ACS estimate. The current estimate includes 377 owner-occupied units and 209 renter-occupied units. The median owner-occupied housing value is estimated at $336,300. Median monthly housing costs are $1,512 for households with a mortgage, $511 for owners without a mortgage, and $751 for renters.

Housing-cost burden is most pronounced among renters. Approximately 49.0 percent of renters are estimated to spend more than 30 percent of gross monthly income on housing, compared with 19.5 percent of homeowners with a mortgage and 12.0 percent of homeowners without a mortgage. The renter figure suggests that affordability and the availability of appropriately priced units should remain central considerations in future housing policy.

Table 2-3. Housing Profile Summary

Measure	Value	Planning context
Total housing units	616	586 occupied; 30 vacant
Detached single-family units	384	Largest structural type
Owner-occupied share	64.3%	377 owner-occupied units
Median owner-occupied value	$336,300	2020-2024 ACS estimate
Median rent	$751/month	Median monthly housing cost
Cost-burdened renters	49.0%	More than 30% of gross income

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024 ACS Five-Year Estimates, DP04 and Tables B25002, B25003, B25024, B25034, B25041, B25075, and B25077; Caroline County Commissioner of Revenue supplemental records for the newest structures.

Economy and Workforce

Workers and Industries

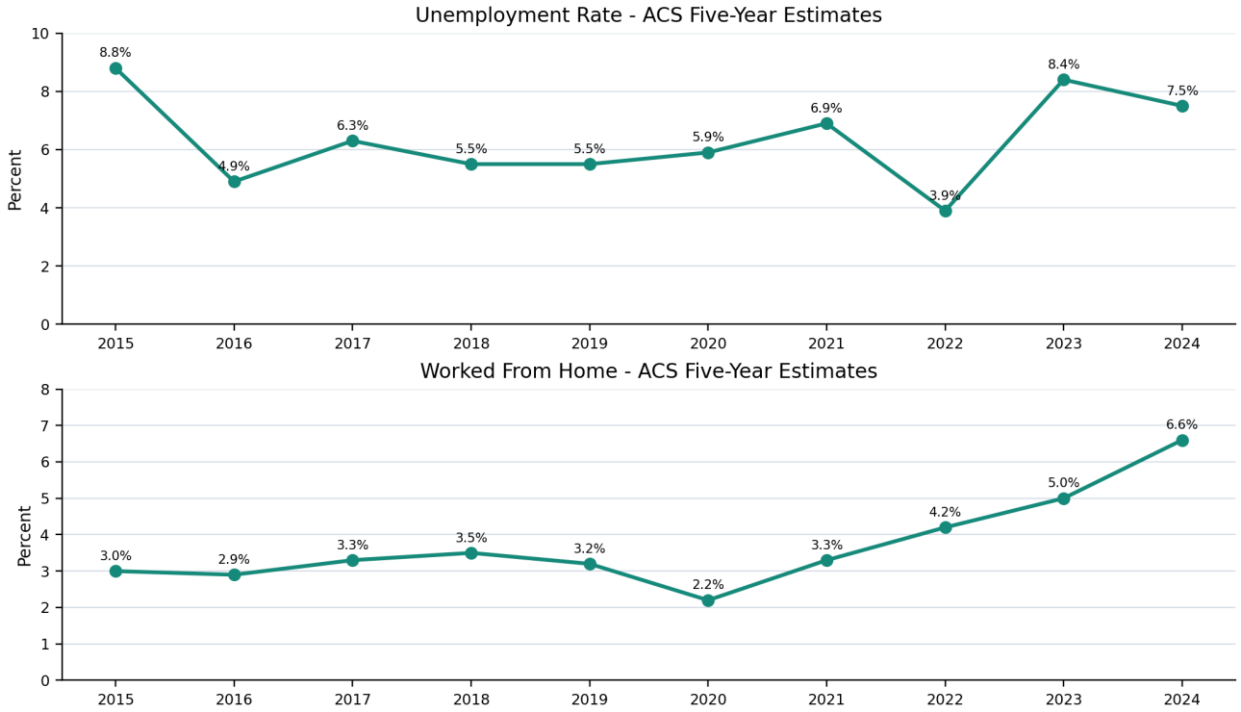
The 2020-2024 ACS identifies 568 employed workers in Bowling Green. Private wage and salary workers account for approximately 67.8 percent of the employed population, while government workers account for 28.5 percent and unpaid family workers account for 3.7 percent. The workbook identifies educational services, health care and social assistance as the largest reported industry grouping, followed by manufacturing and public administration. These sectors reflect the Town's role within the County seat and the broader regional economy.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages data provide employer-based context for Caroline County. In the second quarter of 2024, the County had 786 covered establishments, average monthly employment of 6,556, an average weekly wage of $911, and total quarterly wages of approximately $77.6 million. Unlike the ACS, QCEW measures jobs reported by covered employers and is available at the County level rather than as a Town household estimate.

Unemployment and Working From Home

Bowling Green's ACS unemployment estimate varies across the annual five-year vintages, declining from 8.8 percent in the estimate ending in 2015 to 4.9 percent in 2016, then fluctuating through the decade. The estimate ending in 2024 is 7.5 percent. Work-from-home estimates follow a different pattern, remaining near 3 percent through much of the earlier period, falling to 2.2 percent in the estimate ending in 2020, and then increasing to 6.6 percent by 2024.

Figure 2-2. Bowling Green Unemployment and Work-From-Home Trends



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, annual ACS Five-Year Estimates ending 2015 through 2024, Table DP03. Unemployment and work-from-home measures are presented separately.

Interpreting the 2020 pattern. The ACS value labeled 2020 is the 2016-2020 five-year period estimate, not a calendar-year 2020 rate. Pandemic months therefore represent only part of the pooled 60-month estimate. Bowling Green also has a smaller survey sample and generally wider margins of error than Caroline County or the region. In addition, BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics are monthly or annual model-based estimates, while ACS rates are survey period estimates. The programs should not be treated as directly interchangeable.

Household Income

Median household income is estimated at $82,500, while median family income is $93,995 and median married-couple family income is $96,071. The estimate for nonfamily households is substantially lower at $31,328. Poverty estimates also vary by age: 15.2 percent for residents under age 18, 16.4 percent for adults ages 18 to 64, and 2.9 percent for residents age 65 and older. These figures show that household type and age are important to understanding economic conditions within the Town.

Table 2-4. Selected Economic Indicators

Indicator	Value	Source / scope
Employed workers	568	Bowling Green ACS
Private wage and salary workers	67.8%	Bowling Green ACS
Median household income	$82,500	Bowling Green ACS
Median family income	$93,995	Bowling Green ACS
County QCEW establishments	786	Caroline County, 2024 Q2
County average weekly wage	$911	Caroline County, 2024 Q2

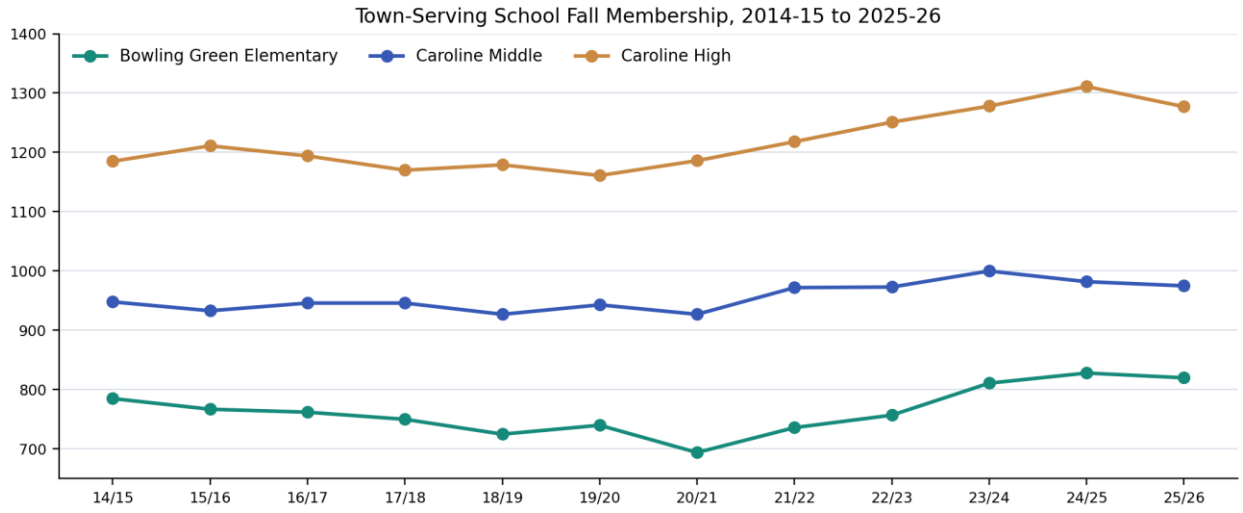
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024 ACS Five-Year Estimates, Tables DP03 and S1903; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, QCEW, Caroline County, 2024 Q2.

Education

Town-Serving Schools and Enrollment Trends

Bowling Green residents are served by Caroline County Public Schools. The Town-serving enrollment history used in this chapter includes Bowling Green Elementary School, Caroline Middle School, and Caroline High School. Virginia Department of Education fall membership for those three schools totaled 2,918 students in 2014-15 and 3,072 students in 2025-26, an increase of 154 students, or approximately 5.3 percent. The 2025-26 fall membership totals are 820 students at Bowling Green Elementary, 975 at Caroline Middle, and 1,277 at Caroline High.

Figure 2-3. Town-Serving School Enrollment History



Source: Virginia Department of Education, Fall Membership by School, 2014-15 through 2025-26. The figure includes Bowling Green Elementary School, Caroline Middle School, and Caroline High School only.

Division Enrollment, Capacity, and Projections

Several school tables use different reporting sets and dates. The Caroline County Public Schools facility-planning baseline covers all five public schools and totals 4,564 students for the actual 2023-24 school year. School-provided end-of-year data for 2025-26 cover the same five schools and total 4,663 students. The VDOE fall-membership history and grade table cover only the three Town-serving schools and therefore total 3,072 students in 2025-26. The differences are expected once the school coverage and reporting date are aligned.

Table 2-5. School Enrollment Reporting Reconciliation

Reporting set	Schools included	Reporting point	Enrollment
VDOE fall membership history	BGES, Caroline Middle, Caroline High	Fall 2025-26	3,072
CCPS facility planning baseline	All five public schools	Actual 2023-24	4,564
CCPS current enrollment	All five public schools	End of 2025-26	4,663

Sources: Virginia Department of Education Fall Membership by School; Caroline County Public Schools demographic study; Caroline County Public Schools end-of-year 2025-26 data supplied for the Comprehensive Plan.

At the school level, the most recent end-of-year figures show that Bowling Green Elementary and Lewis and Clark Elementary exceed the planning capacities carried in the facility study. Bowling Green Elementary reports 845 students compared with a planning capacity of 809, while Lewis and Clark reports 1,048 students compared with a capacity of 919. Madison Elementary, Caroline Middle, and Caroline High remain below their respective planning capacities. Divisionwide capacity exceeds total enrollment, but the distribution of students means that systemwide totals can mask school-specific constraints.

Table 2-6. 2025-26 End-of-Year Enrollment and Planning Capacity

School	Enrollment	Planning capacity	Over / under (+/-)
Bowling Green Elementary	845	809	-36
Lewis and Clark Elementary	1,048	919	-129
Madison Elementary	475	538	+63
Caroline Middle School	1,016	1,116	+100
Caroline High School	1,323	1,437	+114
Division total	4,663	4,819	+156

Source: Caroline County Public Schools, end-of-year 2025-26 enrollment data; planning capacities from the CCPS facility-planning table. A negative value indicates enrollment above planning capacity.

The demographic-study projection increases total division enrollment from the 4,564-student 2023-24 baseline to 5,380 students in 2033-34, an increase of 816 students, or approximately 17.9 percent. Projected growth occurs across the elementary, middle, and high school grade groups. Because elementary capacity constraints are already concentrated at particular schools, enrollment, attendance areas, classroom needs, and capital improvements should be monitored together rather than through divisionwide totals alone.