

## **IX. Existing Conditions Analysis**

### ***A. Introduction***

#### **1. Purpose**

The Existing Conditions Analysis provides a snapshot of the current conditions of the county from a planning perspective. Demographics, socioeconomics, housing, employment and economy, transportation, community facilities, natural resources, and land use elements have all been analyzed.

Information for the Existing Conditions Analysis was compiled from a variety of sources including the current Plan, studies and reports developed for the county, personal interviews with key county staff, and a public opinion survey.

This analysis forms the foundation for the development of the Plan by helping to identify issues and areas of concern that are addressed in the Comprehensive Plan through the development of goals, objectives, and policies. Please note that the majority of the data found in the Existing Conditions Analysis has not been updated since its completion in November 2005. Therefore, some of the information in the Existing Conditions Analysis may be out of date as of the adoption date of this Plan.

### ***B. Description of County and Natural Resources***

#### **1. Location**

Augusta County is located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, a largely rural valley of agricultural and manufacturing communities. The Valley covers an area along the northwestern edge of the state, running southwest to northeast. Augusta County is located approximately midway between the northern and southern ends of the Valley, and essentially covers the width of the Valley, including portions of two mountain ridges. It is bordered by the Virginia Counties of Rockbridge to the south, Albemarle and Nelson to the east, Rockingham to the north, Highland and Bath to the west, and Pendleton County, West Virginia to the west.

Interstate 81 bisects the county in a northeast to southwest direction, while Interstate 64 enters the county from the east, intersecting with I-81 at the edge of the Staunton city limits. Railways also bisect the county in a north to south direction as well as east to southwest. The Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport is located in the northern part of the county, and headwaters of both the James and Shenandoah Rivers, as well as a small portion of the Potomac River, originate in the county. Augusta County is approximately 150 miles southwest of Washington, D.C., 100 miles west of Richmond, 85 miles north of Roanoke and approximately midway between Atlanta and New York. **Map 9** shows the location of the county.