

# Forum Report



## *Envision Prince George's* Community Forum Prince George's County, Maryland – November 19, 2009

More than 70 residents from Prince George's County gathered on November 19, 2009 at Show Place Arena in Upper Marlboro, to explore opportunities and challenges for the county and brainstorm ideas to support a vision for its future. The Forum was the third of six being held this fall to provide input into the development of a vision and action agenda for the county. This Community Forum Report contains the ideas and priorities generated at the Forum.

*Envision Prince George's* is an initiative launched by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and is a landmark countywide public engagement and collaboration effort. *Envision Prince George's* is a call to action to develop and implement a vision for Prince George's County's future with a vibrant economy and a high quality of life for all.

The *Envision Prince George's* Community Forum was free and open to anyone who lives, works, learns, serves or enjoys the county. Language translation services and materials were provided to encourage participation by a diverse cross-section of the community.



Participants deliberating at the Community Forum.

### Who Attended the *Envision Prince George's* Community Forum?

Community Forum demographics are compared with the demographics of Prince George's County.

<u>Gender</u>	<u>November 19</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>November 19</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Female	51%	52%	African-American/Black	70%	64%
Male	49%	48%	Asian/Pacific Islander	0%	4%
			White/Caucasian	23%	18%
<u>Age</u>			Hispanic/Latino	0%	12%
15-24	2%	19%	Native American	0%	.2%
25-34	16%	17%	Native Hawaiian	0%	0%
35-44	23%	20%	More than one race	7%	2%
45-54	33%	19%	Other	1%	.3%
55-64	16%	13%			
65 and better	11%	11%			
<u>Household Income Level</u>			<u>Geographic Representation</u>		
\$0-24,999	4%	13%	Cheverly/Glenarden/Landover area		5%
\$25,000-49,999	2%	21%	Bowie/Glenn Dale/Mitchellville area		8%
\$50,000-74,999	12%	22%	Lake Arbor/Kettering/Largo area		17%
\$75,000-99,999	23%	17%	Capitol Heights/District Heights/Suitland area		7%
\$100,000 and above	56%	28%	Upper Marlboro/Westphalia/ Camp Springs area		39%
Not sure/prefer not to say	4%		Temple Hills/Oxon Hill/Fort Washington area		7%
			Friendly/Brandywine/Clinton/Accokeek area		8%
			Somewhere else in the county		5%
			Outside Prince George's County		3%

## Live Work Learn Serve Enjoy Sustain

The six *Envision* areas are closely interconnected. Sustaining a high quality of life for the county requires that all of these areas be addressed together.

<b>Live</b>	<p><i>Envision</i> the communities in which we live—or want to live—and how we contribute to a high quality of life. Topics in <b>Live</b> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Housing</li> <li>■ Public safety</li> <li>■ Health and human services</li> <li>■ Historic preservation</li> <li>■ Urban planning</li> </ul>
<b>Work</b>	<p><i>Envision</i> what a sustainable, vibrant economy that benefits all should look like in the future. Topics in <b>Work</b> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Economic development</li> <li>■ Jobs</li> <li>■ Small business development and entrepreneurship</li> <li>■ Agriculture</li> <li>■ Business retention and attraction</li> </ul>
<b>Learn</b>	<p><i>Envision</i> what a quality education for everybody—our children, young adults, and lifelong learning—should look like. Topics in <b>Learn</b> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pre-school learning</li> <li>■ Lifelong learning</li> <li>■ K-12 schools</li> <li>■ Higher education</li> <li>■ Workforce development</li> </ul>
<b>Serve</b>	<p><i>Envision</i> how everyone can find a way to serve the county and how residents, leaders, and organizations can work together to serve the county more effectively. Topics in <b>Serve</b> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Governance</li> <li>■ Non-profit community</li> <li>■ Citizen engagement</li> <li>■ Planning</li> <li>■ Faith-based organizations</li> </ul>
<b>Enjoy</b>	<p><i>Envision</i> how we would like to spend our time with family and friends enjoying community amenities and natural green spaces. Topics in <b>Enjoy</b> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Parks and Recreation</li> <li>■ Arts and culture</li> <li>■ Heritage</li> <li>■ Entertainment</li> <li>■ History</li> </ul>
<b>Sustain</b>	<p><i>Envision</i> how to sustain a higher quality of life for ourselves and for future generations, including our children, grandchildren, and new residents. Topics in <b>Sustain</b> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Transportation and other public facilities</li> <li>■ Energy efficiency</li> <li>■ Climate change</li> <li>■ Sustainable development</li> <li>■ Natural environment</li> <li>■ Agriculture</li> <li>■ Water quality</li> </ul>

## What is one thing you really like about Prince George's County?

*Participants were asked to share one thing they really liked about the county that everyone should know about. Responses included:*

- It is an **environmentally friendly** county.
- Great **community programs** exist through The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.
- A **good mix of geography**—everything from urban to rural within a 10 minute distance.
- The **great diversity of our county**—ethnicity and socio-economic.
- Abundance of **parks and green space**.
- **Access to transportation options**.
- The county's **opportunity for economic growth is unlimited**.
- Prince George's County is **much better than its reputation**.

For more information on ***Envision Prince George's***, please visit our website at: [www.envisionprincegeorges.org](http://www.envisionprincegeorges.org) or call 301-952-3594. TTY access 31-952-4366.

## Brainstorming Vision Ideas

*Participants brainstormed ideas in all six of the Envision areas: Live, Work, Learn, Serve, Enjoy, and Sustain. A range of ideas were proposed, including:*

### Envision Ideas for LIVE

1. Create more vibrant communities with a variety of affordable quality housing for residents of every income level.
2. Ensure that the county's law enforcement is respected by the community.
3. Revitalize aging infrastructures in the county.
4. Provide affordable health care to all citizens.
5. Invest in urban planning that will result in a mix of great schools, jobs and entertainment in each neighborhood.

### Envision Ideas for WORK

1. Create additional higher paying jobs for residents.
2. Bring more federal government agencies to the county.
3. Encourage new businesses—with a range of industries—to come to the county.
4. Create a central business district.
5. Encourage more small and local businesses that really know the community to open.

### Envision Ideas for LEARN

1. Invest in the best qualified teachers.
2. Emphasize community involvement in schools.
3. Create more boys and girls club facilities available during non-school hours.
4. Upgrade the county's public schools—better facilities, smaller class sizes.
5. Provide job training and mentoring programs for young people.
6. Build an International Center to encourage learning about other cultures and languages.

### Envision Ideas for SERVE

1. Foster partnerships and collaboration among faith-based organizations, non-profits, schools, HOA's and government agencies.
2. Create more internship opportunities for youth, provided by government agencies and universities.
3. Connect volunteers with available service opportunities.
4. Develop a large-scale mentoring initiative to increase collaboration among businesses, residents and organizations.
5. Operate government with transparency and integrity—"raise the bar for county government officials".
6. Create a centralized system of information regarding youth services, opportunities and resources.

### Envision Ideas for ENJOY

1. Enhance parks and recreation facilities.
2. Create a range of cultural venues and entertainment for all county residents to enjoy, especially low income residents and families.
3. Leverage National Harbor to develop tourism in the county.
4. Bring in more high-end retail and restaurants.
5. Develop cultural arts festivals to celebrate the county's diversity.
6. Make Prince George's County the hospitality center of the region.

### Envision Ideas for SUSTAIN

1. Rebuild the image of the county through schools, events, and attractions.
2. Invest in sustainable and quality housing for all income brackets.
3. Add transportation such as trolleys to serve remote areas.
4. Preserve natural environment by maintaining green space.
5. Invest in local farms and wineries.



Participants listening to a summary of the vision ideas they brainstormed.

## Most Important Opportunities for the County to Leverage over the Long-Term

Participants were provided a list of nine opportunities to review and prioritize. **The top three opportunities** were as follows:

1. Improve education system and expand workforce training (65%)
2. Leverage mixed-use development—Metro, MARC, Amtrak (40%)
3. Market county's assets and target core growth industries (40%)

### The remaining votes:

4. Preserve rural character and develop green urban areas (36%)
5. Successfully recruit federal agencies (36%)
6. Leverage opportunities with non-profits (18%)
7. Leverage the strengths of the higher education system (16%)
8. Leverage success at National Harbor (16%)
9. Leverage county's proximity to D.C. and Annapolis (9%)

### Additional opportunities brainstormed by participants included:

- Improve the way the county government responds to public concerns.
- Create more affordable housing options.
- Develop a better county-wide health care system.
- Better transition military families into existing neighborhoods.
- Develop and promote farm land and rural businesses.

## Most Important Challenges for the County to Address over the Long-Term

Participants were also provided a list of nine challenges to review and prioritize. **The top three challenges** were as follows:

1. Public safety and crime perceptions (72%)
2. Public school system reputation (67%)
3. High tax burden on residents (39%)

### The remaining votes:

4. Pressure to develop in the rural and farm areas (30%)
5. Access to high quality health care not affordable for many (23%)
6. Few incentives to attract new business (19%)
7. Training needed for jobs in new & existing industries (19%)
8. Insufficient coordination across sectors and governments (18%)
9. Competition for scarce tourist and recreational dollars (4%)

### Additional challenges brainstormed by participants included:

- Combating the perception that a majority minority county does not deserve first class services.
- The pockets of poverty that exist in the county.
- Electing qualified leaders who can build confidence within the electorate.
- Lack of national chain stores and exclusive shopping and dining opportunities.

## Call to Action

### Personal Actions

Participants discussed what personal actions they could take to make a difference in Prince George's County and within their local communities. Here is a list of actions participants committed to taking in 2009 and 2010.

1. Be more involved with education and youth initiatives.
2. Volunteer to work with a senior citizens group.
3. Work to better the county's government.
4. Help with economic development in the areas surrounding the Largo Town Center area.
5. Promote Prince George's County and share the wonderful attributes and rich history of the county.
6. Work for the development of public transit, particularly the purple line.
7. Become a foster parent and be more involved in our school system.
8. Continue to work with Boys & Girls Clubs to improve their facilities and have more collaboration with government officials.

### Help *Envision Prince George's*

Participants discussed other ideas or suggestions about how they might help *Envision Prince George's* fulfill its mission. Here is a list of nine examples of recommendations participants made.

1. Get the children involved and committed to making Prince George's County the greatest place to live.
2. Convene more town meetings just like the current ones being held by *Envision*.
3. Get military and government transitional families more involved in the county.
4. Organize a large event with an emphasis on "family first" at a place like Show Place Arena.
5. Speak with home owner associations about what *Envision* is doing.
6. Volunteer to help with the town meeting in March 2010.
7. Place a notice of *Envision* meetings on the county's TV channel.
8. Share with others the activities that *Envision Prince George's* will have in the future.
9. Talk to neighbors of other cultures and ethnicities and encourage participation.

## Evaluation Results

*Participants were asked five questions to better evaluate the Community Forum. The results were as follows:*

### Level of Satisfaction with Idea Generation:

**93% of participants** were highly (44%) or very highly (49%) satisfied with the **ideas generated from their table discussions**.  
**86% of participants** were highly (34%) or very highly (52%) satisfied with the **ideas generated from the forum overall**.

### Learn Anything New?

**93% of participants** learned something new from the forum and 65% learned quite a bit (49%) or a lot (16%).

### Level of Satisfaction with Meeting:

**86% of participants** were highly (42%) or very highly (44%) satisfied with the forum.

### Level of Interest in Staying Involved:

**66% of participants** are highly (24%) or very highly (42%) interested in staying involved in *Envision Prince George's* initiative.

## Next Steps

Through three additional Community Forums, innovative educational activities, online discussions and a countywide town meeting, *Envision Prince George's* will continue to engage those who live, work, play, serve, and more in Prince George's County to explore what kind of county they want to create in the future.

- **Next Community Forums**
  - December 1 – Clarion Hotel, Oxon Hill
  - December 3 – Prince George's Ballroom
- Youth Community Forum – December 5, University of Maryland
- Share your ideas on the website: [www.envisionprincegeorges.org](http://www.envisionprincegeorges.org)
- Text **ENVISION** to **41411**
- 1,000 person Town Meeting to Finalize Vision, Goals, Priorities, and Strategies
  - March 20, 2010 at Prince George's Sports & Learning Center in Landover
- Tell a friend about *Envision Prince George's*!

For more information on  
***Envision Prince George's***,  
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