One-hundred ten residents from Prince George’s County gathered on December 1, 2009 at Clarion Hotel in Oxon Hill, to explore opportunities and challenges for the county and brainstorm ideas to support a vision for its future. The Forum was the fourth 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.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>December 1</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>December 1</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and better</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income Level</th>
<th>December 1</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0-24,999</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000-49,999</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-74,999</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000-99,999</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 and above</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure/prefer not to say</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>December 1</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American/Black</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than one race</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Geographic Representation | Lake Arbor/Kettering/Largo and surrounding area | 2% |
|                          | Capitol Heights/District Heights/Suitland area | 9% |
|                          | Upper Marlboro/Westphalia/ Camp Springs area    | 12%|
|                          | Temple Hills/Oxon Hill/Fort Washington area    | 50%|
|                          | Friendly/Brandywine/Clinton/Accokeek area       | 12%|
|                          | Somewhere else in the county                    | 4% |
|                          | Outside Prince George’s County                  | 12%|

Participant deliberating at the Community Forum.
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.

- **Live**: Envision the communities in which we live—or want to live—and how we contribute to a high quality of life. Topics in Live include:
  - Housing
  - Public safety
  - Health and human services
  - Historic preservation
  - Urban planning

- **Work**: Envision what a sustainable, vibrant economy that benefits all should look like in the future. Topics in Work include:
  - Economic development
  - Jobs
  - Small business development and entrepreneurship
  - Agriculture
  - Business retention and attraction

- **Learn**: Envision what a quality education for everybody—our children, young adults, and lifelong learning—should look like. Topics in Learn include:
  - Pre-school learning
  - Lifelong learning
  - K-12 schools
  - Higher education
  - Workforce development

- **Serve**: Envision 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 Serve include:
  - Governance
  - Non-profit community
  - Citizen engagement
  - Planning
  - Faith-based organizations

- **Enjoy**: Envision how we would like to spend our time with family and friends enjoying community amenities and natural green spaces. Topics in Enjoy include:
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Arts and culture
  - Heritage
  - Entertainment
  - History

- **Sustain**: Envision how to sustain a higher quality of life for ourselves and for future generations, including our children, grandchildren, and new residents. Topics in Sustain include:
  - Transportation and other public facilities
  - Energy efficiency
  - Climate change
  - Sustainable development
  - Natural environment
  - Agriculture
  - Water quality

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.

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:

- The county has great public libraries and other public services.
- There are high quality developments throughout the county, including the National Harbor and great restaurants.
- Wonderful and rich cultural heritage and rural character.
- There is great potential for economic development in Prince George’s County.
- Close proximity to D.C. but not in the city.
- Abundance of green space and parks.
- Highly involved citizens.
- A beautiful county with great neighborhoods.
- A diversity of landscapes (rural, urban, and suburban).
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. Revitalize neighborhoods and high-end residential communities within the Beltway.
2. Invest in affordable housing for working class people.
3. Build better and more convenient shopping for residential neighborhoods.
4. Encourage a community-law enforcement partnership where intelligence is shared and officers spend time getting to know the community.
5. Create walk-able communities with strong families—accessible to businesses, libraries and community centers.

**Envision Ideas for WORK**
1. Make Prince George’s County a leader in innovation with a thriving tech corridor.
2. The county should become a center of new energy production via natural gas, nuclear and bio-mass energy in rural areas.
3. Create a more diverse array of job opportunities—people shouldn’t have to leave Prince George’s County to find work.
4. Ensure job training is available within the county to provide the skills necessary to compete in global economy, especially for young people.
5. Build more options for commuting, including light rail and telecommuting.
6. Create an active small business/micro-business environment.

**Envision Ideas for LEARN**
1. Invest in high quality teachers and pay them what they deserve.
2. Have public schools make dramatic improvements—schools should become top ranked in the state, have higher graduation rates, and have well-maintained facilities.
3. Ensure a greater focus on accessing higher education, including establishing and dispersing satellite campuses, trade schools, and technology training centers throughout the county.
4. Create a greater emphasis on a globally-oriented education system.
5. Invest in Pre-K and youth learning/activity centers.

**Envision Ideas for SERVE**
1. Encourage more faith-based organizations to serve the public, e.g. “creating a pathway to successful reentry of ex-offenders into the community”.
2. Develop a thriving nonprofit sector that supplements government services and operates as a “third sector” partner with business and government.
3. Create a network of civic associations that provide education and leadership training.
4. Foster greater transparency, responsiveness and accountability from government agencies.
5. Encourage greater philanthropic giving.
6. Get more citizens involved in making the county a better place to live.

**Envision Ideas for ENJOY**
1. Create more affordable public recreation opportunities for children and youth.
2. Offer more quality entertainment venues and activities including spaces for arts, historical and cultural activities.
3. Preserve open space; do not overbuild our communities.
4. More actively promote tourism through innovative programs such as winery tours, spas, and stays at bed and breakfasts, etc.

**Envision Ideas for SUSTAIN**
1. Make all businesses and homes are green.
2. Ensure that environmental and sustainability issues are always part of county planning and development.
3. Create a county that is energy efficient, with a mix of renewable power sources.
4. Invest in environmentally friendly transit systems, including metro/light rail, mass transit, and trails.
5. Ensure that county leaders have vision, are responsive to constituents, and hold convenient meetings throughout the county.

Participants sharing their visions during a table discussion.
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 (74%)
2. Leverage mixed-use development—Metro, MARC, Amtrak (39%)
3. Market county’s assets and target core growth industries (32%)

The remaining votes:
4. Successfully recruit federal agencies (31%)
5. Leverage the strengths of the higher education system (31%)
6. Preserve rural character and develop green urban areas (25%)
7. Leverage opportunities with non-profits (13%)
8. Leverage county’s proximity to D.C. and Annapolis (13%)
9. Leverage success at National Harbor (12%)

Additional opportunities brainstormed by participants included:
- Improve public safety in the county through a more responsive law enforcement.
- Promote Prince George’s County as a leader in innovation in technology and biotechnology.
- Encourage residents to take greater advantage of the county’s wonderful library system.
- Develop a better countywide health care system.
- Create more affordable housing options and more livable communities.

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 (65%)
2. Public school system reputation (60%)
3. Training needed for jobs in new & existing industries (38%)

The remaining votes:
4. High tax burden on residents (32%)
5. Access to high quality health care not affordable for many (25%)
6. Insufficient coordination across sectors and governments (24%)
7. Few incentives to attract new business (19%)
8. Pressure to develop in the rural and farm areas (14%)
9. Competition for scarce tourist and recreational dollars (6%)

Additional challenges brainstormed by participants included:
- High rates of HIV, teen pregnancy and other health issues.
- The growing demand of aging residents for support and health services.
- Inadequate public transit and failing infrastructure.
- Lack of parental involvement in schools.
- People look for the county leadership to set standards instead of setting the standards for ourselves.
**Evaluation Results**

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

**Learn Anything New?**

97% of participants learned something new from the forum and 73% learned quite a bit (34%) or a lot (39%).

**Level of Satisfaction with Meeting:**

75% of participants were highly (46%) or very highly (29%) satisfied with the forum.

**Level of Interest in Staying Involved:**

76% of participants are highly (49%) or very highly (27%) interested in staying involved in *Envision Prince George’s* initiative.

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**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. Help to develop a community that will meet the will and needs of residents.
2. Volunteer and become more involved in our public schools.
3. Pressure the rural and agriculture tiers to fully utilize BARC, ARS and the National Agriculture Library.
4. Work with developers to ensure that new infrastructures are high quality and thoughtfully placed.
5. Work to get new field turf for our public school ball fields.
6. Encourage youth to take part in existing county activities.
7. Promote public integrity by fostering open and transparent government.
8. Work to reform the planning and development process in the county.
9. Be more involved with *Envision Prince George’s*.

**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. Encourage my immediate community to get involved with *Envision Prince George’s*.
2. Convene meetings like this every year.
3. Help the Hispanic community set up new business in the county.
4. Publicize *Envision* to faith-based groups, particularly area mega churches.
5. Provide leadership training for community organizations.
6. Get youth involved in making Prince George’s a great county.
8. Help to get our federal representatives on board with *Envision*.
10. Promote and share *Envision* activities through social media and micro-blogging.
Next Steps

Through two 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 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*!

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