

Plan Prince George's 2035 Town Meeting Summary Report

College Park, MD, June 15, 2013

Over 300 Prince Georgians gathered on Saturday, June 15, 2013 for the Plan Prince George's Town Meeting. Plan Prince George's 2035, a project to update of the county's general plan, builds on the 2002 Prince George's County Approved General Plan and will help the county address existing, changing, and new priorities, such as economic development, sustainability, community health, and transit-oriented development. The update will incorporate new ideas, current data, and recently completed planning initiatives.



At the outset of the program, participants heard an overview of the county's General Plan and key trends that have and will impact the county into the future. For the remainder of the program, participants learned about and discussed six potential "downtown" locations that could become major economic engines for the county in the future: three "high performers," three "game changers," as well as other ideas for priority investment districts.

Who Attended the Town Meeting?

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

	June 15	Census
Gender		
Female	57%	52%
Male	43%	48%
Age		
18 - 24	18%	20%
25 - 34	16%	19%
35 - 44	15%	18%
45 - 54	18%	19%
55 - 64	15%	14%
65 and better	19%	10%
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	60%	64%
Asian American	2%	4%
Caucasian	22%	15%
Latino/Hispanic	11%	15%
More than one race	5%	2%
Where do you live in the County?		
North	36%	29%
South	17%	
Live outside of the County		18%

Household Income June 15 Census

Income Range	June 15	Census
Under \$25,000	6%	15%
\$25,000 to \$50,000	8%	19%
\$50,000 to \$75,000	15%	18%
\$75,000 to \$100,000	13%	14%
\$100,000 or more	48%	34%

How important is it to preserve the rural areas of our county?

	Pre	Post
Not important at all	7%	4%
Somewhat important	18%	22%
Important	25%	24%
Very Important	49%	49%

How important is it to prioritize development to be more transit-oriented?

	Pre	Post
Not important at all	2%	0%
Somewhat important	5%	2%
Important	23%	13%
Very Important	69%	84%

How important is it to have "downtowns" equally distributed across the county – north, central, south?

	Pre	Post
Not important at all	13%	4%
Somewhat important	21%	21%
Important	17%	29%
Very Important	49%	47%

If you were able to think of which location in the county is best primed for becoming a real downtown Prince George's, which would be your top 2?

Greenbelt Metro	14%
College Park/U-MD Metro	21%
Riverdale MARC	6%
Prince George's Plaza Metro	21%
New Carrollton	18%
Largo Town Center	21%
Suitland Center	5%
Branch Avenue	9%
Westphalia Center	7%
Other	9%

Today Impacts Tomorrow—After a presentation on what key issues Plan Prince George's 2035 will address over the next 20 years, participants discussed what was most exciting and of most concern for the county in the next 20 years.

What is most exciting to you for the county in the next 20 years?

- Stimulate economic development
- Create more jobs
- Attract more retail options
- Improve education & education facilities
- Create livable, walkable communities
- Increase housing, retail, & jobs around transportation
- Continue to encourage the arts & cultural diversity
- Develop more recreational facilities
- Improve public safety
- Improve quality of government services & leadership

What concerns you the most?

- Ensure development benefits **everyone** throughout the County
- Lack of improvement in school performance
- Lack of improvement in public safety
- Lack of government efficiency and integrity
- Ensure that infrastructure supports development (e.g. roads & schools)
- Protect the environment, preserve open space
- Increase in obesity and health problems
- Lack of job opportunities and growth

Key Elements of a Downtown

What do you see as the most important elements of creating a successful downtown in Prince George's County?

- Develop mixed uses – commercial, retail, residential, cultural
- Create walkable communities
- “Create a diverse set of amenities (restaurants, entertainment, beauty, etc.) to match the uniqueness and diversity of the county
- Ensure greater affordability in housing
- Provide access to transportation/transit hub
- Create safe, clean, family friendly gathering places



Part 2: Three High Performing Public Investment Districts

Prince George's Plaza Metro Area:

What do you see as the key advantages for Prince George's Plaza as potential, economically competitive downtown?

- Already established, a natural development point – “let's move forward”
- Existing infrastructure and transportation network
- Close to educational institutions
- Proximity to DC, can attract DC residents
- Historic character
- “Lots of space for development”
- Existing employers

What do you see as the key disadvantages for Prince George's Plaza as potential, economically competitive downtown?

- Current mall “drags down the area”
- Poor traffic flow and congestion in and around the site
- Concerns with crime and safety
- Lack of green space
- Connectivity challenges—walking between shopping amenities and Metro
- Lack of high end retail

College Park-University of Maryland Metro Area:

What do you see as the key advantages for College Park as potential, economically competitive downtown?

- University of Maryland: large student population, available land, large employer
- Income diversity
- Opportunity for start-up business
- Proximity to 495, Purple Line and Downtown DC

What do you see as the key disadvantages for College Park as potential, economically competitive downtown?

- Too much traffic and congestion
- “Impediment to creating a true downtown” due to perception as a college town



New Carrollton Metro Area:

What do you see as the key advantages for New Carrollton as potential, economically competitive downtown?

- Many transportation options (Amtrak, MARC, Metro rail and bus, major highways) and good access and proximity to Baltimore, Annapolis, DC, & Virginia
- Diverse existing jobs and retail and opportunity for more development
- “It's poised to take off”

What do you see as the key disadvantages for New Carrollton as potential, economically competitive downtown?

- Lack of diverse housing stock and quality
- Geographic disconnect between north and south
- Crime—real and perceived
- “Outdated suburban environment” – dated structures, not walkable, no sense of place

Part 3: Three Game Changing Public Investment Districts

Greenbelt Metro Area:

What do you see as the key advantages for Greenbelt as potential, economically competitive downtown?

- Access to Beltway, College Park, BWI bus, proximity to other counties
- Diversity (cultural)
- Opportunity to revamp existing retail
- Proximity to historic Greenbelt
- Proximity to large employers
- Potential for high-density development

What do you see as the key disadvantages for Greenbelt as potential, economically competitive downtown?

- Safety issues
- Apartments are not high end
- Wetland issues
- Need new ramp for infrastructure/ development off of the Beltway
- Federal installations might not be connected to the community

Largo Town Center Metro Area:

What do you see as the key advantages for Largo as potential, economically competitive downtown?

- Right off the Beltway, near Metro, retail, and restaurants
- Potential hospital development
- Several major facilities bring people into the community (e.g., FedEx, PGC Community College, Cap Center Blvd.)
- Close to recent quality development –Woodmore Town Center

What do you see as the key disadvantages for Largo as potential, economically competitive downtown?

- Poorly designed shopping center – not walkable, lack of diverse retail
- Furthest from DC–promotes sprawl
- Crime and bad reputation
- “Missing a sense of community”

Branch Avenue Metro Area:

What do you see as the key advantages for Branch Avenue as potential, economically competitive downtown?

- Publicly owned land – opportunity for investment
- Proximity to Joint Base Andrews
- Availability of housing
- DC/Beltway/South County access
- Existing Federal facilities

What do you see as the key disadvantages for Branch Avenue as potential, economically competitive downtown?

- Traffic and congestion problems
- Not enough retail
- Not walkable
- “High percentage of crime and/or perceived crime”
- “Nothing there to attract me” – isolated
- Outdated infrastructure

NOTES:

The Plan Prince George’s 2035 Town Meeting was broadcast live on the internet, although viewers were not able to submit votes or comments during the meeting.

Not all participants voted in every individual poll. Percentages reflect only those residents voting in each poll.

To access meeting documents go to: <http://planpgc2035.com/town-meeting-documents>.

Which of these 3 places do you believe has the best potential to be a “downtown?”

Prince George’s Plaza	27%
College Park/U-MD	33%
New Carrollton	40%

If all three of these 3 game changing events occurred, which place do you believe has the best potential to be a “downtown?”

Largo Town Center	57%
Greenbelt	30%
Branch Avenue	13%

Of the other 4 centers, which do you believe should be further considered for “downtowns?”

Suitland Metro	16%
Riverdale MARC	11%
West Hyattsville Metro	19%
Cheverly Metro	7%
Another location	14%
No other location	33%

Would you support the county annually targeting investment in 2-3 “downtowns?”

Yes	79%	Not sure	19%
No	2%		

Did your perspectives about the role of “downtowns” in the county change today?

Not at all	24%
Slightly	32%
A Good Amount	26%
A lot	18%

What is your level of satisfaction with the meeting?

Very Low	1%
Low	4%
Medium	22%
High	34%
Very High	39%