

# Prince William County 2030

*A Live, Work, Play and Retire Community*

*Leading the Way*



*Sense of Community*

*Accessible Community*



*Infrastructure Matches Population*



*Partnerships Equal Success*

*Active, Engaged Citizens*



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# FOREWORD

Two decades ago, in October 1988, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) appointed a 14-member Commission on the Future. This first-of-its-kind effort in Prince William County was a community-driven process to envision all aspects of life in the County in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The final product of that inaugural Future Commission was a description of the amenities, programs, services and opportunities desired by Prince William County residents in the year 2010. That community vision included the practical, the prescient and the progressive: The Future Commission Report for 2010 called for cross-county highways to ease travel for County residents, an accessible cultural center for the visual and performing arts, and the preservation of numerous County historic sites. Other vision statements, many created by local children, challenged the community to think in new ways. The 2010 vision also laid the foundation for County government strategic planning, to ensure follow-through on the Future Report 2010.

With 2010 on the near horizon and many of the benchmarks from the first Future Commission process already achieved, the BOCS established a new Commission on the Future in 2006. The BOCS appointed 16 citizens to lead a community process that would envision Prince William County's preferred future in the year 2030. The Commission began its work in August 2006 and spent the next 16 months developing this report. As illustrated in the appendices, the *Future Commission 2030* conducted an inclusive process, engaging Prince William County residents with diverse experiences, interests and ideas. *The Future Commission 2030's* report is not an attempt to predict the future, but is a collective vision of what we want life to be like in Prince William County in 2030 for ourselves, our children and grandchildren, our co-workers and neighbors.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document represents the people’s vision for Prince William County in the year 2030. The vision described in the following pages is the result of a year-long process led by the 16 members of the *Future Commission 2030* and includes the input of nearly 1,800 residents. Through a combination of community meetings, the County’s annual citizen survey, email correspondence and an online questionnaire, residents offered wide-ranging ideas about their preferred future. The people who provided this input reflect the diversity of our community, with participation by students and teachers, business owners and employees, representatives of non-profit organizations and hospitals, members of civic groups and homeowners associations, as well as Prince William County Government employees and many individual citizens.

When *Future Commission 2030* members examined the thousands of ideas suggested during the community process, several consistent themes emerged. These “golden threads,” which appear throughout the report, articulate a clear vision of what citizens want Prince William County to be in 2030. This is the community they envision:

- **A Live, Work, Play and Retire Community** – In 2030, residents have all the major amenities available in their community – housing, jobs, lifelong education, medical care, assisted living, recreation and leisure, arts and culture. Catering to its residents’ needs and wants, Prince William County is a self-sustaining community.
- **Active, Engaged Citizens** – The County has a highly involved citizenry. Whether weighing in on issues before the Board of County Supervisors, voting in elections, serving on volunteer boards and commissions, maintaining attractive neighborhoods or partnering with local schools, an extraordinary number of our citizens and businesses actively participate in the affairs of local communities.
- **Sense of Community** – Residents are proud to call Prince William County home, proud to tell others about the strong sense of community which encompasses all who live here. As a Stonewall Jackson high school student told the *Future Commission 2030*, “Prince William County embraces the diversity it contains and turns it into a positive benefit for the community.” Working together, our community takes advantage of the experiences, talents and assets of all residents.
- **Accessible Community** – We take the term “accessibility” to new levels in 2030. With virtually all public services available electronically, 24/7 transportation options that accommodate seniors and persons with disabilities, housing available for all income levels, and major amenities dispersed throughout the County, our communities are accessible to all.
- **Infrastructure Matches Population** – From transportation and education to arts and culture, human services, open space and recreation, Prince William County is remarkable for providing sufficient infrastructure to meet its residents’ needs, even as the population continues to grow and diversify.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Partnerships Equal Success** – The majority of our public initiatives and community services are delivered through partnerships. Leveraging the strengths and resources of multiple organizations is the normal way of doing business in 2030. Government and non-profits, public schools and arts organizations, universities and local employers, environmental groups and public agencies, even multiple communities work as partners to achieve larger goals.
- **Leading the Way** – In 2030, Prince William County is a role model in many areas. From the provision of public services to protecting our natural resources, we lead the Commonwealth of Virginia and, in many cases, the nation. Not satisfied with average performance, our community always strives to excel.

Reflecting these seven key themes, the following report describes a broad community vision, which is deliberately ambitious and far-reaching in scope. Some elements of the 2030 vision represent bold change, others demand long-term planning and commitment, while others simply require the continuation or enhancement of current initiatives.

The *Future Commission 2030* recognizes that much of this vision cannot and will not be solely implemented by the Prince William County Government. In these instances, the Board of County Supervisors must provide leadership and create a climate that moves these visions forward. The following report is “The Community’s Vision for 2030” and, as such, will require action by almost everyone.

The *Future Commission 2030* has chosen to present this report as if it was written in the year 2030. We believe this approach communicates a dynamic, vibrant and inspiring vision of our future. Part I of the report includes eight vignettes, telling Prince William County’s story from the viewpoint of various residents and visitors in 2030. Part II summarizes the community input we received through a categorized list of vision statements. Woven throughout the report are real quotes from Prince William County residents who participated in the *Future Commission 2030* process and drawings by local elementary school children. The *Future Commission 2030* is pleased to present the community’s vision for life in Prince William County in 2030.

**PART I:  
COUNTY LIFE IN 2030**

# Joe and Marge Harrington

Community Today, the nation's most respected publication, set out to discover why Prince William County was just voted the 2030 Most Livable County in the Nation. Our reporters went to the Occoquan River Walk and asked several residents why they thought Prince William County won this award.

Joe Harrington, 70ish and retired, is surprised he's still in the County. "I can't believe I'm still here," he said. "Marge and I had always planned to move to Florida when we retired, but after a number of house-hunting expeditions, we realized we already have everything we wanted here, and why would we want to move away from the grandchildren?" Joe and Marge live in Cherry Mill, one of several town center communities in Prince William. "When we first moved to the County, we lived in a house on 10 acres. That was great but our needs changed, so we moved to a community where everything we need is close by." Services are integrated with residences in Cherry Mill. Within the community is a school, library and a number of restaurants, shops and businesses.

"Marge loves to walk, so she is happy she can do all her shopping nearby. When we need to go farther, we get on the OmniTrail." The OmniTrail is a network of trails, sidewalks and paths connecting neighborhoods, shopping, natural areas and other amenities. On the trail, you can walk, bike, use your Personal Travel Vehicle or JetPack. "We got rid of our car 10 years ago. We were tired of the maintenance expense. Besides, using the OmniTrail is faster." Trails have replaced roads in many areas for non-vehicular traffic; the County also has alternate "roads" for small, ecologically friendly off-road vehicles that are popular among residents and tourists.

The Harringtons say they feel safe in their community even as it continues to grow and change. "The crime rate is low, the neighborhoods are well lit and people are so friendly. How many communities do you know where a 72-year-old feels perfectly safe walking to the grocery store for ice cream late at night?" asks Joe with a smile.

Though retired, Joe and Marge are busier than most 9-to-5ers. "Well, Marge is really interested in languages. I think she's on her fourth. She's now auditing Serbian at Prince William University. My interests are less cerebral. I'm taking a course about classic movies in the media room at Hill Elementary."

Hill Elementary? For Joe? You bet. In Prince William, schools are not just for children anymore. School buildings now serve the whole community. In

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*"Prince William is a place to be active and ageless."*

addition to regular classes, the buildings house adult learning, non-profits and other community groups. “With all that goes on in there, the lights are on 24 hours a day. Thank heavens for solar power!” says Joe of his local school. “I don’t know how they’d afford it otherwise.” Both Joe and Marge play BollyBall at the local recreation center. “Marge likes to schedule court time at 3 a.m. She likes it when there are fewer people around. Anyway, she doesn’t have to get up early in the morning anymore!

“I’m not a complete slouch. I volunteer a few days a month, helping Dumfries DataMart Company with its accounting,” says Joe of his participation in a program connecting seniors to the younger workforce. “I like to keep my hands in what’s current. Besides,” he says with a grin, “I figure this will give me an ‘in’ for their adult day care program if I ever need it,” referring to the support service the company provides for seniors.



Still healthy, Joe and Marge are not concerned about their future. “While we don’t like to consider ourselves ‘old,’ we really enjoy the senior programs at the Neabsco Center.” To support aging-in place, community centers throughout the County host wellness activities and geriatric care services. “Most importantly, we don’t have to go far for medical care.” The community’s medical care is the best in the area, featuring a system of interconnected services so medical expertise is accessible to those who need it. Specialty services are available through the local health care system, including a trauma center and a cardiac center. Home telemetry services are also available for those who need monitoring outside a hospital setting. “Marge and I keep up with the latest trends at the Neabsco Center so we can reduce our need for doctors,” says Joe. “We’d rather spend our time having fun.” ■

*“PWC is a model community  
a livable community,  
attracting diverse  
groups of people.”*



# Amy Chang

We asked Amy Chang, 33, why she lives in the County. “Sorry, I don’t live here. I’m from California, and I’m just here for the Universal Wizbang Convention. I’d heard about Prince William from some of my friends but this is my first time here. I’m really glad they held the convention here. The Prince William County Convention Center is first-rate. It’s really easy to get around the County and the people are so friendly.

“I can’t believe how much there is to do here, and it’s all so easy to find. When we arrived, we were given e-info about County venues, local history and historic sites. From there, I just popped on the OmniTrail and started exploring. It’s so pretty here, there are trees and flowers everywhere.” Flowers and shrubs are planted near roads, public buildings, businesses and homes. Roadway medians, shoulders and entrances to the County are attractively landscaped, often with native trees, shrubs and wildflowers.

“Where’s the trash?” muses Amy. There is no litter, both because citizens recognize their responsibility and because the County enforces anti-littering laws. Communities and businesses hold regular clean-ups to retrieve trash that has inadvertently made its way into the environment. “I’m being careful about my trash,” she says. It’s not hard. Prince William County has long been a “green” community. All public buildings, facilities and parks have recycling programs. With participation in recycling and composting programs near 100 percent, the need for landfills has nearly been eliminated.

Local college students have even won a national award for an advanced technology to convert recyclables to energy.



Katie Chavarria, Swan Creek Elementary

“It’s so cool how there’s art everywhere,” says Amy as she explores a small sculpture garden. Art adorns buildings, libraries, parks and most public spaces. Easily accessible galleries and small performance venues provide space for local artists to perform or display their work. Bandstands and amphitheaters enliven neighborhoods and parks. “I’ve been to a bunch of free concerts. I don’t know how they do it here. I have to pay a lot to go to concerts near my home.” Business partnerships provide robust financial and volunteer support, enhancing the local arts scene.

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“I never realized there was so much history here. I thought I’d have to go into DC to find a good museum, but I spent all day yesterday on the History Trail and I didn’t even make a dent!” she says. The History Trail, part of the OmniTrail, connects large and small museums throughout the County – including the new Prince William History Museum – as well as Civil War battlefields, restored historic homes and other historic sites unique to Prince William County.

“At night, I like to go to the waterfront. The hotel gave me the water taxi schedule. There are a bunch of great restaurants and clubs along the water, and it’s fun just to hang out. My friend who lives in DC is meeting me there. She’s taking the hovercraft from the Navy Yard to the landing here at Occoquan River Walk. She has to use a motorized scooter to get around, but this place is so accessible we know it won’t be a problem.

“This is a great community,” adds Amy. “I’d love to come back. And who knows, if they open another Wizbang facility here, maybe I’ll make it permanent?” ■

“People know Prince William County is THE PLACE to be.”



# Ray Chock

It isn't hard to get Ray Chock, 52, to speak. In fact, he has a confession. "OK, so I'm a Prince William County booster. Part of what attracted me to this County was its citizen participation." Ray takes that involvement to an even higher level. "I guess I've always been an overachiever, and once I'm into something I really go for it." Ray commutes to DC twice a week, but he works from the Coles Telework Center on other days. "Since I'm close by, it's so much easier to get involved in my community."



Involved he is. Ray is president of his homeowners' association (HOA), troop leader for local 135 and a board member of a local non-profit organization. "When I first moved here, I wanted to do something, so I went down to the Coles Volunteer Center. Everything looked interesting! I finally narrowed it down to three." All of this volunteering also brought him to the attention of his Supervisor, who appointed Ray to the Prince William County Planning Commission.

Volunteer organizations, established in all magisterial districts, maintain a clearinghouse to connect interested citizens with relevant volunteer activities. With logistical support from the County government, volunteers help run educational programs, clean-up and improve local parks, introduce environmentally friendly ideas to developers, and operate as "green volunteers" to identify and implement forest and stream restoration projects.

Ray's HOA and troop meetings are held at the new Library. The Library is the center of the community, with communication links and a large meeting room. "It's a great facility and it helps us keep connected. Before, we had a hard time finding a place to meet and a harder time getting people to come. With this new facility, we get people stopping by all the time because they came here for some other reason, to get some e-info or return a book."

Ray and his HOA work with the County government to ensure that aesthetics are maintained. "I want to make sure this is a nice place to live, and I want to make sure property values are maintained. I'm glad the County finally recognizes all the work we do." Ray's HOA works with the County on a revitalization program for homeowners who are unable to meet or sustain the community's appearance standards. "Sometimes a house falls into disrepair because the owners are elderly or don't have the resources to maintain it. No one wants to let that happen. It's not good for the homeowner or the community."

His work on the Planning Commission gets him really fired up. "Prince William citizens ensure that we have a sustainable future. New development is always initiated in conjunction with an integrated transportation strategy. Construction standards for all roads require trees and additional landscaping, attractive lights and pedestrian/bicycle access.

"It's not just me," Ray notes. "Everyone here is really involved." A higher percentage of residents serve on government advisory groups than in any other Virginia locality. Citizens are active participants in the planning, zoning and redevelopment processes. Many residents provide input to the Board of County Supervisors in person and online. Voter turnout leads the Commonwealth. ■



*"Citizens care, take part in and are vested in the future of the County."*



# Maria and Diego Bolanos

Maria Bolanos, 58, is the proprietor of Le Shoppe Gourmet. “I opened my first store in Fairfax 30 years ago. I thought Fairfax was the best location for an upscale store, even though I lived in Prince William. Finally I thought, ‘Wait a minute! I live in Prince William and I want high-end goods. I bet my neighbors do, too.’ I opened my first store here in 2010. Since then I have opened four more throughout the County. Besides the demographics of the County, I think most of their success is due to the location—all of my stores are easily accessible from the OmniTrail.”

“The County makes it really easy for businesses to get established and prosper,” adds Maria. Coordinated business development services, such as utility connections and



*“I can walk to unique, upscale shops right in my neighborhood.”*

construction permits, allow easy set up of new businesses and ensure that the infrastructure keeps step with business needs. “And they don’t just encourage you to set up shop here then forget about you. The technical, management and leadership training programs help you grow your business here.

“When people hear I’m from Prince William, they always ask me a lot of questions because they’ve heard what a great place it is for business,” says Maria. “I’m happy we have that reputation and I want to keep it that way.” To ensure that commercial areas remain attractive, Maria joined the Prince William County Business Alliance, a non-profit that identifies ways to improve commercial areas which no longer meet the needs and standards of the community. “Business real estate is too valuable to lay dormant, and we have found creative ways to re-use empty stores and warehouses. I want to make sure our commercial areas are

thriving because that’s good for my business and the community as a whole.”

In addition to the low commercial vacancy rate, Prince William County has a strong local workforce. “I don’t have any problems finding or retaining staff. The workforce here is great: well motivated, educated and close by. I also partner with TATEN to employ some developmentally disabled adults.” TATEN is a community-based organization that provides human services in partnership with the community and local businesses. “It’s a win-win,” says Maria. “I don’t think you need the County government to do everything. This way we cut out the middleman.

“I take advantage of the great community services as well.” She points to her son, Diego, who has stopped by the store. “Diego loves to go to the Occoquan Complex after school. And he’s not just goofing off – well, at least not all the time!” The Occoquan Complex is an elementary school *and* a community center, housing recreational and meeting spaces.

“Mom is always happy when I’m at the Complex,” adds Diego. “They let teens help kids at the elementary school practice their reading or math. They also have a great computer room. And a lot of days my friends and I get ready for soccer season with a pick-up game on the indoor fields. Mom’s happy to know where I am—and that I’m not getting into trouble. I think it’s a really cool place to go after school. ” ■

# Paul Pasternak

In the back of Le Shoppe Gourmet, Paul Pasternak, 47, is delivering local produce to Maria. “I first moved to Prince William County because of its open space. I just wanted to get away. Once I got here, though, the agriculture business was so attractive, I got hooked.”

Paul’s farm is located in the Rural Crescent, a contiguous stretch of land that supports natural areas as well as agricultural enterprises. “I wanted to live in an environmentally friendly, sustainable community,” he says. “Prince William has a clean, safe water supply and state-of-the-art water management. The County produces its own utilities, wind- and solar-generated electricity, alternative energy sources, reclaimed water and recycled solid waste. All utilities are underground. This was very important in my choice of residence.



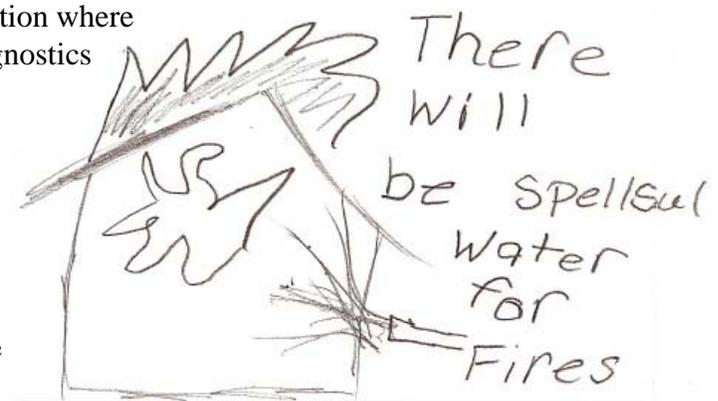
“I did get some start-up help from the County, but it didn’t take me long to make a profit,” he adds. Since Prince William is one of the few local areas with open space, its agricultural goods are at a premium. Locally produced goods are featured at major restaurants and farmers’ markets. The community also has co-op farmland arrangements.

Another important aspect of Prince William County for Paul is the availability of community services. “My son is disabled and I had to live where his needs could be met. We were able to keep him at home through high school, and we’re working on a transition plan so he can move into assisted living in our neighborhood when he graduates. The Brentsville Alliance has been really helpful in finding a job for him and place to live in the community.”

Paul is also a volunteer firefighter/EMT. “I appreciate all I get from the County, and I think it’s important to give back to the community. Besides, I really enjoy learning disaster response skills and teaching prevention techniques to my neighbors.” Since emergency calls have decreased through better awareness and safety, stations provide safety education and preventive health activities to support community-wide health goals.

“I’m pleased that I can support the community from home. This way I can keep an eye on the farm.” Fire stations have basic equipment on-site, but specialized firefighting equipment is pre-positioned at high-risk facilities. Fire and rescue personnel have access to robotic technologies to respond to emergencies and increase the safety of first responders. They can access electronic information about the location where a fire or other emergency is underway. Electronic diagnostics are linked to local hospitals and medical personnel.

“Even better, we have few fire emergencies,” says Paul. In general, structures are constructed with fire-resistant materials. Building codes and construction standards increase structural safety and decrease the risk to emergency responders. All new residential units have automatic sprinklers while older units have been retrofitted. High-risk facilities have yard sprinklers with monitoring capability to detect fires and direct sprinklers toward the heat source. “It’s always a good thing when we’re not busy.” ■



Zoe Lewczak,  
Nokesville Elementary

# Sam and Jessica Jarrett

Sam Jarrett, 27, is eating one of Maria's pastries near the Community Bandstand. "Well, I have to confess, when I got my master's degree, I was just looking for a job. I was more concerned with pay and benefits than which County I'd live in." Wife Jessica, 26, agrees. "We were so broke that we were a bit narrowly focused, but we really lucked out! This is such a great community—it's fun, it's safe and people are so proud to live here."



Sam lives and works in Prince William County. A schoolteacher at Bristoe Middle School, Sam's decision to take a job here was heavily influenced by the salaries offered to local teachers and the Prince William County Housing Partnership. "With Sam's job and the Housing Partnership, we are able to live in a really great community," says Jessica. "We won't have to move when we start a family." The partnership provides housing

options that are affordable for public servants in Prince William County communities. Sam and Jessica's townhouse is indistinguishable from its neighbors in every respect except for their mortgage payment.

But Sam is even happier with his choice of employers. "This school system is the premier in the nation. We don't focus on rote learning; we make sure students graduate with the technological and problem-solving skills to make them competitive anywhere in the world. Of course, we'd be nothing without our community partnerships." Citizens, practicing professionals and scholars are actively involved with the local educational process. Business owners are involved in curriculum development to better meet local employment needs. The local media publicizes student successes. Businesses support volunteer and work programs for high school students. Local museums, aquariums, parks and historic sites offer educational programs which involve and benefit the community and the schools.

"Of course, schools are nothing without parental involvement. The degree to which Prince William County parents are actively involved is amazing," adds Sam.

Overcrowding? Sam's never heard of it. "I read that there used to be overcrowding in schools and classes were conducted in trailers. I can't imagine that. That must have really stunk. My school facility is great, really state-of-the-art, and it offers programs for the community as well as our students. My only complaint is there are too many options. I'm really interested in the Archery Club, but I have to go home some time!"

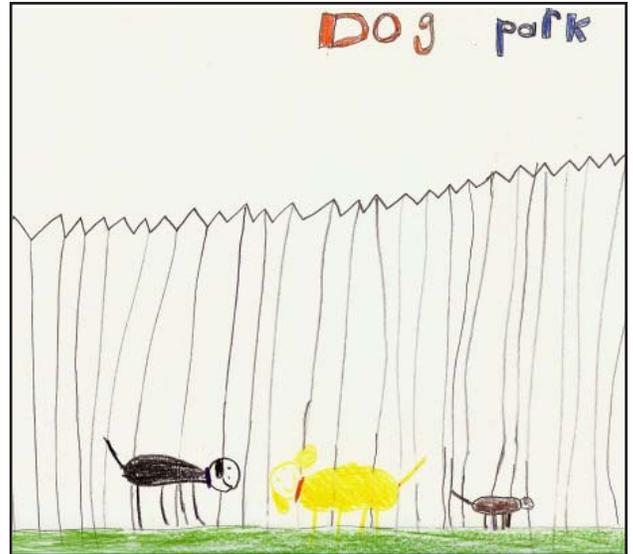


Seleny Hernandez,  
Occoquan Elementary

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“Well, you do get home first since you work so close. Someone has to take Max to the Pet Park.” Jessica works for an association in the District. “When we first moved here, I thought it would be too far to commute, but the regional transportation is really great. I just take the OmniTrail to the Gainesville Metro Station and it’s smooth sailing from there.” Regional transportation entities provide a comprehensive public transportation system. Affordable, accessible transportation services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, providing cross-county connectivity and access to all major points within the metropolitan area.

Sam and Jessica spend a lot of time at their local park, one of many beautiful, well-maintained parks throughout the County. “Besides going to the Pet Park with Max, Sam and I like to take long walks on the OmniTrail. It’s much cheaper than shopping!” Sam and Jessica are still on a tight budget, so they take advantage of as many low-cost opportunities as they can. “Tonight we’re going to a play at The Performing Arts Center at George Mason University. Afterwards we’ll walk around and watch artists at work. It’s great to see the creative process firsthand.” ■



Kelli Duffus,  
Nokesville Elementary



*“The County has an enclave of artists who can live, work, perform and exhibit in PWC.”*

Ashlee Franks, 45, the Bull Run District Supervisor, overheard my conversation with the Jarretts. “I’m sorry but I have to interrupt. I can help you understand why Prince William County is so livable. It all starts with the County government.”

Serving on the Board of County Supervisors is a full-time job, and Ashlee takes her job seriously. “I don’t know how they did it part-time. In order to keep up with my constituents and the issues, I’m going all day.” In addition to weekly constituent meetings at the Northwest Multi-Purpose Center, Ashlee is available virtually to respond to their issues and concerns. “My iBerry goes off all the time. When someone has a need, I want to respond quickly. And most of the time I can help immediately by sending them a link.” Residents and businesses can obtain records, download forms, submit applications, pay fees and taxes, and vote electronically. “If they have to go to a government site, that’s just as easy because it’s in the Multi-Purpose Center next to my office. I can make sure they have what they need, without either of us traveling very far. Plus, they might be going to the center anyway to go swimming or take a pottery class.”



The County is known for its good government. Building on fiscal and management policies established in preceding decades, Prince William County maintains the highest possible bond rating, substantial debt capacity to fund public facilities and an award-winning performance measurement system.

“Well, I can’t take all the credit,” says Ashlee, “but I have worked hard to make sure more services are available here than in other counties, yet, because of efficiency and community partnerships, the tax burden is the lowest in the Commonwealth. I’m proud we support the neediest citizens without overburdening the taxpayers.” The County emphasizes prevention, decreasing the need and cost for critical care services. Prevention programs help to minimize homelessness, allow the elderly to stay in their homes and assist at-risk youth. These services are provided through community partnerships aligned with the population and location of residents. “The people who understand the clients are the ones providing the services; you don’t get any better than that.

“We value our citizens. They make sure we’re going in the right direction,” she adds. “Residents are major contributors to the County’s visioning and planning processes, from the Future Report through the Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Plan and Annual Fiscal Plan. Local communities play a big role in developing land use plans and in zoning enforcement.

“Of course, this wouldn’t be as successful if Prince William County didn’t take the lead with the General Assembly to ensure we have the legislative tools we need at the local level,” says Ashlee. “Now we can ensure that zoning and land use are appropriate for our needs.

“And we’re not resting on our laurels; a great deal of our attention is on maintaining our infrastructure. A good example is road maintenance. Even though we have built most of the roads in the Comprehensive Plan, we still need a systematic, well-funded program for maintenance.” The extensive road network, part of the County’s integrated transportation system, allows traffic to flow smoothly, connecting major thoroughfares with neighborhood streets and providing access to all areas of the County. “We work every day to make sure Prince William County remains the most livable community in the country.” ■

# Devan and Keisha Jackson

We find Devan Jackson fishing with his daughter along the banks of the Occoquan River. Devan declined to give his age, but his bright eyes and energetic demeanor bespeak an active lifestyle and good health. His daughter, Keisha, is a senior at the high school in Haymarket.

“This is a great place!” she exclaimed. “We moved here four years ago, just in time for me to start high school. Of course it was Dad’s business that brought us here, but it turns out we might have come anyway once we learned about the great schools and all the other things to do.” Fishing, as it turns out, is not Keisha’s real passion. “I ride horses competitively – fishing is just for quality time with Dad.”

Devan laughs and makes another cast. When he’s not fishing, Devan is a successful corporate executive. “We moved the business here because of the educated work force, comprehensive planning and economic development environment. I knew when I put my company in this area, it was in a designated commercial zone. We can plan our company’s growth and know where to place additional facilities. Keeping the offices and production sites in commercial areas that are an easy drive from the neighborhoods where our employees live makes them happy and more productive. Plus, with the great colleges and universities in this community, our employees have so many options to continue their education and keep up with the latest trends in our industry.

“Quality of life is very important to us as a family. We chose to live where we can have horses and a little room to stretch. And I try to get to the school to stay engaged with the teachers and Keisha’s after-school activities. But I don’t have to sacrifice my business life to get that opportunity. In fact, I’ve even found ways to provide vocational opportunities for some students at Keisha’s school. This is a unique place to find that kind of balance.”

Keisha agrees with her Dad. “Sometimes it is hard to appreciate how good it is here. For starters, I have so many more choices at school here than where we used to live.” During the school day she works with the Robotics Club building an entry for the national competition. “We won at nationals last year, so we are trying hard to repeat,” she almost whispered. “So I go from working with the highest-tech gadgets and computers during the day, to riding my horse on the trails through the Bull Run Wilderness Area in the afternoon, then back to homework and the ‘Virtual Professor’ at night. Some of the work is extra but, since all of Virginia’s state colleges accept the courses for credit, I get a leg up before I even graduate from high school. I want to be a large animal veterinarian, and it’s just as hard to get into vet school as med school. I can get ahead by taking the advanced courses and online classes.”

“Some day I will probably end up working for her,” sighed Devan. “Thank goodness for the County’s long-range planning. I don’t know anywhere else where we could find this balance of family life and business life. Working in an office building is okay during the day, but being able to come home to find all this is even better.” And, as if on cue, the line goes taught and Devan diverts his attention to more interesting activity in the water. ■



*“We have the perfect blend of green space, housing & businesses.”*



**PART II:  
VISION STATEMENTS FOR 2030**

During the many community meetings held by the *Future Commission 2030*, the citizens of Prince William County provided more than 7,500 individual suggestions. The *Future Commission 2030* reviewed those inputs in detail over the course of several months, distilling the suggestions into vision statements for 2030. Part I of this report, “County Life in 2030,” presented a firsthand narrative of many of those vision statements, but not all of the community’s good ideas could fit into a few brief scenarios. Also, some of the vision statements can benefit from a little more explanation. Part II of the report, which follows, presents a more comprehensive list of vision statements distilled from the vast citizen input and provides additional detail not contained elsewhere. As with the preceding section, the vision statements are written in the present tense – from the viewpoint of a citizen living here in 2030.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business is thriving in Prince William County. Wide-ranging businesses are located in the community, from ‘mom and pop’ enterprises to Fortune 500 companies, and from manufacturing to professional service firms. The reason for this economic success is the creative partnership forged between the County, its educational providers, business community and citizens. Not only does our community have a diverse economy with many new businesses, but the County has also spearheaded and supported the redevelopment of older commercial and residential communities.

### **Business Environment**

**Thriving Business Environment** – Prince William County is a desirable business location with a

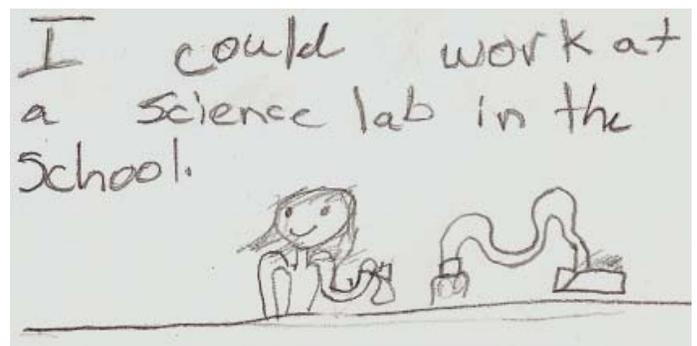
strong local workforce. Business real estate is too valuable to lay dormant, and less successful businesses are quickly replaced by more vibrant ventures. Strip malls and commercial areas that no longer meet the needs and standards of the community are redeveloped into attractive commercial spaces with interesting architecture and integrated services. Vacancy rates are low so there is no blight caused by empty stores or warehouses.

**Local Employment** – Prince William County is home to hi-tech, biotech and federal government employers. Residents can easily travel to local job locations.

**Town Centers** – Strategically placed town centers provide an opportunity for people to live, work and play in one location. Access to job sites, restaurants, nightlife, shopping, medical care and senior activities is available by public transportation in a pedestrian-friendly environment.

**Small Business Climate** – Small businesses, including home-based businesses, thrive in all parts of the County. Business owners are diverse, employ all age groups and provide jobs for a variety of skill levels.

**Agribusiness** – The County encourages local farms, and agriculture is a thriving facet of our economy. Farming is a competitive choice for a career or a lifestyle. Locally produced goods are featured at major restaurants and farmers’ markets. The community also has co-op farmland arrangements.



Caroline Davis,  
Mountain View Elementary

**Integration with Transportation** – We have high-density, planned developments clustered around existing transportation hubs. New development is always initiated in conjunction with an integrated transportation strategy which emphasizes mass transportation.

## **Business Incentives**

**Sustainability** – Prince William County communicates its business-friendly environment by providing incentives for economic development and economic sustainability. New businesses continue to locate in our community and existing businesses are able to expand.

**Small Business** – Small business zones provide incentives to entrepreneurs, attracting them to the community. A County-owned investment fund encourages micro-businesses.

**Training** – Technical, management and leadership training are available throughout the County.

**Coordinated Services** – Coordinated business development services, such as utility connections and construction permits, allow easy set up of new businesses.

**Flexible Work-Life Centers** – Technology centers are available for businesses that are too small or unable to afford their own offices. Affordable child and adult care are also available at employment locations and schools.



## **EDUCATION**

Our education system is the premier system in the nation. Education curricula and physical infrastructure are seamlessly integrated to accommodate the entire citizenry, from pre-K

through graduate programs, workforce training and continuing education. Reflecting the community's level of commitment, education is Prince William County's predominant public service. Combined with the community's institutions of higher education, Prince William County's schools continue to give students the keys to a successful life. With the values, skills and knowledge from this joint partnership, these new adults are the community's most valuable resource.

## **Community-Based Schools**

**Community Use** – Our schools are the focal point of our communities. School facilities, fully integrated into their communities, support community programs during daytime, evenings and weekends. County residents have access to school facilities, including libraries and sports venues.

**Community and Parental Involvement** – A climate of equity, diversity and collaboration exists between students and the community. Parents, citizens, practicing professionals and scholars are actively involved with the local educational process. Business owners are involved in curriculum development to meet local employment needs. The local media publicize student successes. Businesses support volunteer and internship programs for high school students. All parents are actively involved with their children's education and pursue their own educational goals.



*Ebony During,  
Rosa Parks Elementary*

**School Facilities** – Overcrowding in schools is a thing of the past due to the timely funding and construction of new facilities as well as the creative use of space. Every school is an environmentally friendly, state-of-the-art facility. New design and construction standards reduce maintenance requirements so school facilities can be used virtually 24/7.

**Expanded Opportunities** – Local museums, aquariums, parks, historic sites and cultural facilities offer educational programs that involve and benefit the community and the school system.

## **Elementary and Secondary Education**

**Individual Achievement** – All students – average, gifted and those with special needs – learn to their fullest potential. Education is tailored to each student’s needs and is developmentally appropriate, allowing each student to begin their careers or higher education on equal footing.

**Standard Testing** – The public schools’ “measures-of-success system” is built around the national academic metrics system and sets the standard for national academic achievement. Our

students score in the top 10% nationwide.

**Ready for Advancement** – Graduates of Prince William County Public Schools have a desire to learn and the skills to be lifelong learners. Our students graduate with the technological and problem-solving skills to make them competitive throughout the world. The percentage of students pursuing higher education is the highest in the County’s history. However, even those who choose not to seek further education can find good jobs.

**Academic Skills** – Students “learn how to learn,” gaining the ability to grasp new subjects and new skills. Core curriculum requirements include reading and writing English, mathematics and science. Students learn about life skills, such as budgeting, filing taxes, signing contracts, and handling credit cards and checking accounts, in a practical setting. Academic standards are strictly enforced for advancement to the next grade level.

**Arts Education** – Through partnerships with local colleges, universities and arts venues, schools offer an arts curriculum that spotlights the significant arts and cultural aspects of Virginia and Prince William County.

**Physical Education** – Physical education is available in all grade levels. Prince William students score at the highest level on the President’s Physical Fitness aptitude tests. Students learn about health habits and skills.

**Individual Choice** – Secondary schools offer substantial individual choice and allow students a degree of flexibility to set their own pace through an *a la carte* menu of classes available in traditional classrooms at different times of day or online. Public school resources and facilities are available to every child of school age, including students who are home schooled or attend private schools. Internships are available at local businesses, offering more choices for students and more life-skills education. The drop-out rate is low because students perceive the immediate relevance of education.

**School Employment** – Employee salary and benefits packages attract the highest quality teachers and staff in the nation. All teachers are



certified and professionally qualified to teach their assigned classes.

**Diversity** – Prince William County Public Schools continue to serve a diverse community. Secondary language education is offered at all grade levels, and opportunities exist for students to practice their alternate language skills. National, global and multicultural perspectives enhance student learning.



**Reasonable Cost** – County residents can obtain a college education at an affordable price. Educational opportunities at all local higher education institutions are offered at a lower cost for County residents, and grants are available so no citizen misses the opportunity for a higher education. Senior citizen classes are available at a discount or for free through selected institutions. Many residents take advantage of distance learning technologies and educational savings programs to make higher education affordable.

## **Higher Education**

**Range of Opportunities** – The County’s array of higher learning opportunities sets us apart. We are home to nationally recognized institutions of higher education, including a college of liberal arts, graduate studies and several professional schools conferring both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Various training and certification programs are also available.

**Student Attainment** – Graduates of our colleges and universities have the knowledge and skills to ensure their proficiency in a variety of careers.

**National Recognition** – The colleges and universities in Prince William County are cited in national rankings of higher education institutions.

**Connection to Business** – The local education system and business community have strong links. Employees can work in Prince William County during the day and obtain a world-class education in evenings and on weekends. Expansive higher education options offer new skills for employment, focusing on needs of the local business community. Our top medical teaching university trains local students for various medical professions and supports local hospitals.

**Accessible Learning** – Several campuses are located across the County, including the mid-county area, and satellite university sites supplement main campuses. Higher education students have access to a full range of technology training both on and off campus. Residents can also learn at their own pace via County-sponsored, on-demand television and Internet in their homes.

**Research and Development** – Local university science and engineering programs allow students to pursue work on research, development and engineering for private companies, military bases and federal agencies.

**Lifelong Learning** – Opportunities are widely available for lifelong learning. Adults can learn a new hobby, further their formal education, receive job training, learn a new language and develop new life skills. Residents have many low-cost options including classes at libraries, public school buildings, parks, museums and senior centers. Educational opportunities also exist for those incarcerated in the criminal justice system.

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## **ENVIRONMENT**

Prince William County is known for its dedication to improving the environment. We lead the way in numerous energy-saving initiatives and have created green communities with alternative energy programs, clean air and clean waterways. Our beautiful streets and landscaped communities reflect the community’s commitment to the environment.



**Clean Community** – Litter is a thing of the past because people recognize its impact on the environment and because the County enforces anti-littering laws. Communities and businesses hold regular clean-ups to retrieve trash that has inadvertently made its way into the environment. Shoppers have their own reusable bags.

**Waste Management** – The County has 100 percent participation in recycling and composting programs, so the need for landfills has nearly been eliminated. All public buildings, facilities and parks have recycling drop-off centers.

**Green Government Initiatives** – We have pioneered widespread alternative energy production and use. County vehicles run on energy sources generated locally. A combination of zoning regulations, incentives and education programs protect existing trees and streambeds during and after construction. The County has substantial requirements to preserve open space and mature trees on development sites. We have a natural, integrated approach to stormwater management using vegetated buffers, created wetland systems and permeable surfacing options.



**Beautification** – Flowers and shrubs are planted on roads, public buildings, businesses and homes. Roadway medians, shoulders and entrances to the County are attractively landscaped, often with native trees, shrubs and wildflowers. Landscaped areas of parking lots sit lower than the surface of the lots, so excess water flows to plants and trees, rather than down drains.

**Clean Air** – The air is clean, pleasant to breathe and affords clear views of the skyline in all directions. We actively participate in regional clean air initiatives, while our businesses and residents contribute fewer airborne pollutants per capita than any surrounding community.

**Reduced Noise & Light Pollution** – Outdoor light sources minimize upward diffusion of light, providing better, more efficient illumination of ground areas while minimizing impact on the night sky. We can see the Milky Way on clear nights. Natural and man-made noise barriers minimize noise pollution.

**“Green” Volunteers** – Master gardener and master naturalist clubs work closely with County government, homeowners associations and individual homeowners to identify and implement forest and stream restoration projects. Trained volunteers assist the Public Works Department to monitor construction sites and introduce environmentally friendly ideas to developers.

**Water Quality** – We have a clean, safe water supply. Rivers and perennial and intermittent streams are clean, sustaining both wildlife and people. Homeowners and homeowners associations with Resource Protection Areas know where the boundary is located and are proud to protect buffers on streams.

**Utility Innovation** – Prince William County produces its own utilities, such as wind- and solar-generated electricity, alternative energy sources, reclaimed water and recycled solid waste. Prince William has state-of-the-art water management. All utilities are underground.

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## HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Prince William County residents have a strong sense of history and live respectfully alongside the artifacts of their rich heritage. Our community is known for having identified and preserved all of its historic sites, structures and areas of archeological interest.

Residents have a deep appreciation for vibrant cultural arts and relish the opportunity to visit local museums and cultural venues. The County and the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park partner on many cultural initiatives.

## **Historic Preservation**

**Accessible Resources** – Information about our history and historic sites is easily available to residents and visitors via both print and electronic communication.

**Living History** – Re-enactments abound on a regular schedule. Historic sites are not just buildings: they have gardens, changing exhibits, historians, docents and shops.

**Connected Sites** – Residents and visitors alike find it pleasant to go on the history trail that links legacy areas and historic sites by car, bus, bike or foot. This trail traverses the County’s historical sites, showcasing our community’s connection to all phases of American history.

**Hands-on History** – Historic sites and structures are an accessible laboratory, and all students are well-schooled in their community’s important role in America’s story.

## **Cultural Arts**

**Center of Cultural Arts** – Prince William County is widely known as a thriving center for the arts.

The Performing Arts Center at George Mason University presents local, national and international artists in music, dance and theater and displays the work of local artists. Easily accessible galleries and small performance venues provide space for local artists to perform or display their work throughout the County. Bandstands and amphitheaters enliven neighborhoods and parks. These venues also encourage the celebration of our historic legacy and vibrant international community.



**Public Art** – Art adorns buildings, parks and most public spaces where residents and visitors can experience the talents of local artists. Public buildings, including libraries and major public buildings, showcase the work of local artists.

**Artists at Work** – Residents and tourists can observe artists at work and purchase their creations at artisan centers. Interactive workshops and classes for all ages are a unique and popular feature of these centers. Classes and workshops provide a special opportunity for our senior citizens to share their life experiences and art skills.

**Arts Partnerships** – Robust support by businesses and corporations, including financial and volunteer resources, enhances the local arts scene.

## **Museums**

**Tourism Attractions** – Prince William County’s unique museums draw millions of visitors annually. The Marine Corps Heritage Museum, SciencePort at Belmont Bay and the National Museum of Americans at War attract citizens, students and tourists. In addition, a Museum of Natural History includes an interactive discovery section, a butterfly conservatory and an annex on Bull Run Mountain for a state-of-the-art planetarium and observatory.

**Historic Resources** – Small museums devoted to local history flourish in Occoquan, Dumfries, Brentsville, Haymarket, Buckland and Manassas.

In addition, collections and programs at the new Prince William History Museum recount local history, from the lives of Native Americans to the present, with ample space for future expansion.

**Educational Resources** – All of the local school systems take full advantage of the educational resources, hands-on activities and teaching moments that are collaboratively available from local cultural institutions.

## HOUSING

Prince William County is a desirable place to live with attractive, well-maintained housing available in all price ranges. Neighborhood maintenance programs involve partnerships between the County government, homeowners' and neighborhood associations, businesses and individual homeowners.



**Redeveloped Neighborhoods** – Neighborhoods and residential areas are attractive places to live, with interesting architecture and integrated services. Neighborhoods that are unable to meet or maintain the community's appearance standards are revitalized and contribute to the County's overall prosperity. The County government plays an active role in ensuring that property values are maintained.

**Affordable Housing** – Affordable housing is integrated into all neighborhoods. Public servants and minimum wage workers who provide services to Prince William residents can afford to live in the community where they work.

**Access to Improved Work-Life** – Since many residents work virtually and are relieved of long commutes, they have more free time for leisure activities and civic participation.

## HUMAN SERVICES

In 2030, the community provides help and opportunity for all residents who need assistance, ranging from prevention programs to emergency care and residential services. The County government evaluates the delivery of human services, through both public sector and non-profit support, to ensure that priorities reflect current needs and that necessary initiatives are funded. Human services are specifically tailored to each age group and each category of need.

**Public/Private Services** – Human services are monitored, coordinated and delivered effectively through a robust partnership between the County government, non-profit agencies and for-profit providers. This comprehensive system, which is a model for the Commonwealth, includes the timely delivery of services for mental health, mental retardation, substance abuse, public assistance and child/adult abuse prevention.

**Spectrum of Health Care** – The community's medical care is the best in the area, featuring a system of interconnected services so medical expertise is accessible to those who need it. Specialty services are available through the local health care system, including a trauma center and a cardiac center. Home telemetry services are available for those who need monitoring outside a hospital setting. Wellness care is available and widely known.

**Hospital Services** – Because of their expertise and location, hospitals within the County are the first choice for residents needing medical care. Our hospitals are considered the best in the Commonwealth. Residents can quickly and easily access a hospital facility.

**Senior Services** – Seniors are a respected and valued part of the County community. The community provides resources to accommodate 'aging-in-place,' including senior centers accessible throughout the County, adult day care facilities and leading geriatric care services. Business supports seniors by providing on-site adult day care facilities and sponsoring programs to connect experienced seniors with the younger workforce.

**Assisted Living** – Ample assisted living is available within the County for seniors and for residents with mental and physical disabilities. Assisted living facilities are not isolated from the community but have easy access to shopping, training and development services, and other amenities. The transition to assisted living for seniors is made easy.



**Homeless Services** – The County is known for taking care of all of its residents, including those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Homeless shelters offer a variety of services, prevention programs minimize homelessness, and housing transition programs help homeless families and individuals return to independence. Churches are leaders in sheltering, feeding and assisting the homeless. Low- or no-cost public transportation services ensure access to services.

**Youth Services** – Teens can access additional resources and activities beyond school hours. Youth centers are available throughout the County; some are private or non-profit facilities like Boys & Girls Clubs while others are located in school facilities. In all of these locations, teen-specific help is available.

## LIBRARIES

The Prince William County Public Library System is state-of-the-art and nationally recognized. Libraries are gathering places within our communities and are not just warehouses for books. As such, they require a physical space. The public library system is integrated with the school system, County government and local businesses. All citizens have access to any library through a variety of physical and virtual means.

**Adequate Facilities** – The County government plans and constructs public libraries as residential density develops.

**Community Centers** – Community meeting places within libraries encourage the organization of citizen groups for various purposes such as homeowners' association meetings, hobby groups and intellectual discussions.

**Fully Accessible** – All library materials and services are accessible from home, using electronic readers, voice technology or other current technologies.

**Globally Connected** – Our public libraries make the resources of other regional, national and international libraries available to all users. Whatever its original location or format, information is accessible without constraint.

**Countywide Bookmobiles** – Bookmobiles, an enhancement to the traditional service, will deliver reserved books to local residents. Books can be returned to the bookmobile or to a library. Patrons can reserve books by computer, and the bookmobiles deliver materials to those who are homebound or are physically disabled.

## LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Prince William County is a national model for citizen participation, local governance and regional leadership. Citizen participation is the foundation of the Prince William County Government and its decision making. With the highest percentage of citizens participating in any County government, Prince William leads the way for other communities.

The local governance structure is nimble, taking the residents' pulse on community issues, then developing and implementing thoughtful actions to resolve their concerns. Prince William County is a leader in regional organizations and initiatives, recognizing the benefits to our citizens and our neighbors. The County government coordinates with other localities in the region to resolve common issues and develop innovative solutions.

We have a diverse yet strong sense of community. This results from smaller areas of the County having their own identities while still being integrated into the larger community.

## **Government Management**

### **Governance Authority** –

The County government has the necessary legislative authority to implement the community’s vision and the tools to conduct business for the benefit of its residents.



### **Coordinated Planning** –

The County closely coordinates and fully implements all of its visioning and planning processes, from the Future Report through the Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Plan and Annual Fiscal Plan. Citizens are actively involved in developing all of these documents and ensuring their implementation.

**Quality Fiscal Management** – Building on fiscal and management policies established in preceding decades, Prince William County maintains the highest possible bond rating, substantial debt capacity to fund public facilities and an award-winning performance measurement system to ensure the accountability of local government.

**Regional Focus** – While maintaining control of our own destiny, we have strong regional ties to help the region move forward together. Active participation in regional boards and commissions allows the County to shape efforts that are more likely to succeed through regional coordination.

**Citizen Participation** – A higher percentage of residents serve on boards, commissions and government advisory groups than in any other Virginia locality. Citizens are active participants in planning, zoning and redevelopment processes. Many residents take advantage of opportunities to provide input to the Board of County Supervisors both in person and online. Voter turnout leads the Commonwealth.

**Full-time Elected Service** – Serving on the Board of County Supervisors is a full-time job, and the Supervisors are paid accordingly. As a result, each Supervisor has enough time to conduct all needed government business.

**Responsive Elected Officials** – Each member of the Board of County Supervisors is fully engaged with and accessible to their constituents. They leverage technology to engage in regular communication with constituents. Residents, in turn, have confidence that their voices are wanted, heard and acted upon while also understanding that choices must be made with the entire community’s benefit in mind.

**Planning and Zoning** – Planning and zoning are carefully deliberated and implemented. The Comprehensive Plan serves as the foundation for all land use decisions, and the Zoning Ordinance is strictly enforced in order to benefit the entire community. The County government, Service Authority and other public agencies plan and develop infrastructure in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan and local land use actions. Local communities play a large role in developing land use plans and assist in zoning enforcement.

## **Service Delivery**

**Efficient Government** – The County is at the forefront of efficient and effective government. More services are available within Prince William than in other counties yet, because of government efficiency, the tax burden is the lowest in the Commonwealth.

**Service Alignment** – County government and public services are aligned with the population and location of residents. Each resident can access needed County services and information, whether in person or online. The County government provides multiple sites for services requiring a physical location, reducing residents’ travel time.

**Electronic Connection** – Every resident can fully participate in the activities and discussions of County government from home. Residents and businesses can obtain and search records, obtain required forms, submit applications, pay fees and taxes, influence the decision-making process and vote electronically.

**Animal Services** – The County Animal Shelter is rated the best in the Commonwealth. The County supports and protects pets and other animals.

**Public Service** – Prince William County Government employees are well-satisfied with their jobs and compensation. The County is rated highly for job satisfaction by its employees, including public school employees.

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## PHYSICAL & NATURAL RESOURCES

From the edge of the Potomac River at Leesylvania State Park – through the County center near Brentsville – to Chapman’s Mill at the Fauquier County line; from Prince William Forest Park to the Occoquan River; from sea level to an elevation of 1,280 feet on Bull Run Mountain, Prince William County offers myriad ways to connect with the varied and beautiful landscape.

### Trails

**Interconnected Trail System** – We have a large, interconnected system of multi-use trails traversing varied settings. Trails run along the Potomac and Occoquan Rivers. Passing through preserved mountains, woodlands, grasslands and wetlands, trails provide spectacular views and offer a unique experience of natural settings. Well marked and maintained, our trails are used as a recreation resource for walking, hiking, running, biking and horseback riding.

**Accessible Trails** – Many people in the County use a trail every day as trails and sidewalks connect homes, businesses, schools, stores, parks, recreation centers, art centers, historic sites and wildlife refuges.

### Open Space and Rural Areas

**Open and Green Spaces** – We have both large and small areas of open space and forested lands. Undeveloped places exist throughout the community: grasslands, wetlands, forests, streams, and shorelines provide habitat for indigenous

species. Some of this space is open to the public; some is in private hands. These areas not only provide respite from the bustle of more densely developed regions but also protect our watersheds, which supply drinking water to our households.



**The Rural Crescent** – Rural areas and farmland in the Rural Crescent are preserved and protected, providing a contiguous stretch of land that supports flora and fauna as well as agricultural enterprises.

**Agricultural Experience** – Lands used for farming and agriculture are easily accessible from cities and urbanized areas. Children of all ages can visit a working farm where visitors can help milk cows, herd goats and gather some hay.

**Open Space Preserves** – Areas such as Bull Run Mountain and North Forks Wetland Bank have thrived and are accessible.

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## PUBLIC SAFETY

The Police Department, Sheriff’s Office, and Fire and Rescue Department are considered the best in their profession. While working day-to-day on a small, local level, public safety personnel work inside the County and in neighboring localities, via mutual aid agreements and regional emergency response, to ensure the region has the best protection possible. Fire and rescue stations and police substations are integral to the communities where they are located.

## Safe Community

**Crime Rate** – The County has the lowest crime rate in the Commonwealth. The County ensures that its children are safe at school and safe from predators. There is little or no gang activity in our community.

**Adequate Funding** – Public safety agencies are fully staffed and equipped to meet the County’s needs.

They have the necessary funds to upgrade their facilities, vehicles and equipment as technology advances.



**Fire and Rescue Management** – Other communities have adopted our hybrid fire and rescue system as a model for public-private partnerships. Both career and volunteer opportunities are available in the County’s fire and rescue service. The career department and volunteer companies have standardized equipment, facilities and training to ensure seamless service to residents.

**Partnerships** – The Police Department partners with the FBI Academy at Quantico and the FBI facility at INNOVATION to enhance the training, skills and experience of local officers.

## Emergency Response

**Rapid Response** – Police and fire and rescue can arrive quickly at any location within the County. Public safety response times are better than average response times in the Commonwealth.

**Emergency Response Technology** – Emergency responders are able to link electronically to information about a location where a fire, crime or other emergency is underway. First responders and other field personnel have access to electronic diagnostics, which are linked to local hospitals and other medical personnel. Public safety personnel have access to robotic technologies to respond to emergencies and increase the safety of responders.

**Equipment Staging** – Emergency units are at locations that allow for quick arrival. Individual fire stations have limited equipment as specialized firefighting equipment is pre-positioned at high-risk facilities. Fire and rescue facilities are not necessarily located together as their missions have separated, and locations are more dependent on the type of emergency most likely to occur.

**Safe Construction** – Building codes and construction increase the safety of structures and decrease the risk to emergency responders. In general, structures are constructed with fire-resistant materials. All new residential units have automatic sprinklers while older units have been retrofitted. High-risk facilities have yard sprinklers with monitoring capability to detect fires and direct sprinklers toward the heat source.

## Planning and Prevention

**Crime Prevention** – Citizens assist the Police Department with crime prevention and are actively involved in reporting crimes. Personal safety courses are widely available for citizens of all ages and abilities. Crime alerts and information about crime patterns is available electronically on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis.

**Community Preparedness** – Residents are well prepared for disasters and know what to do when the emergency plan is activated. Teams of citizens are trained in basic disaster response skills and are located near high-density communities. We have a county-wide emergency notification system accessible to all residents.

**Regional Coordination** – As with other public services, public safety agencies participate in regional organizations, training opportunities and disaster preparedness, ensuring coordination among the metro area’s emergency responders during major incidents. Public safety agencies periodically test regional emergency plans.

**Health Care Support** – Fire and rescue stations are a focal point for community health care. As actual emergency calls decrease through better awareness and safety, the stations provide safety education and preventive health activities in

support of community-wide health goals. Rescue services provide more pre-hospital care and carry x-ray devices to help reduce the time a patient stays in the hospital.

**Fire Prevention and Education** – Residents understand the importance of fire prevention and know how they can prevent fires. Our schools have a coordinated role in fire prevention and education. Fire education prepares residents for fire and rescue careers and emergency preparedness.

## RECREATION

Wide-ranging and varied options characterize local recreation in 2030. Residents living in all areas of the community and residents of all ages, abilities and incomes can access recreation facilities and programs. Our parks offer many places and opportunities for families, friends, neighbors and communities to meet, congregate and enjoy their leisure time.

### Recreation Opportunities

**Recreation Centers Countywide** – Residents enjoy affordable, comprehensive fitness centers and active recreation opportunities, creating a strong sense of community. Recreation centers are dispersed throughout the community and encourage active participation via low fees and diverse programs tailored to residents’ interests. Recreation centers and leisure programs offer something for everyone, including age-appropriate programs and seamless participation for persons with disabilities. Recreation centers and athletic fields are available for use 24 hours a day.

**Vibrant Waterfront** – The waterfront is accessible to citizens in an environmentally



friendly way that allows for appropriate commercial uses. Through blueways and other mechanisms, residents enjoy additional access points to the Occoquan and Potomac Rivers, Lake Manassas, Lake Jackson, Lake Montclair, Silver Lake and other waterways.

### Parks

**Accessible Parks** – Many beautiful, well-maintained parks are located throughout the County. Every neighborhood in high-density areas is within walking distance of a park; every house within rural areas is within a 15-minute drive of a park.

**Multi-faceted Uses** – The varied parks offer a balance of passive and active recreation areas: from wildlife refuges to playgrounds, dog parks, community gardens, public gardens and nature centers.

**Public/Private Support** – The County, regional, state and federal entities; community partners; and a well-organized system of volunteers provide sufficient funding and support for our park system. Volunteer organizations, established in all of our magisterial districts, help run educational programs and assist with regular maintenance, clean-up and improvement of local parks, with logistical support from the County government.

**Community-Based Activities** – Schools, community groups and families frequently take advantage of the connective nature of our park system by sponsoring and attending classes and activities that educate and enrich. One local organization operates a clearinghouse to connect interested citizens with relevant volunteer activities. These activities also foster increased citizen participation in the community and encourage the development of a strong community identity.

## TOURISM

Prince William County is a thriving tourist destination, attracting visitors for day-trips and overnight stays. Our convention center draws groups looking for an affordable, attractive location to host conferences, reunions and other large-scale events. Tourism provides revenue to local businesses, creates jobs for residents and diversifies the County's tax base.

**Amenities for Tourists** – The community preserves, develops and promotes the historical and cultural opportunities in Prince William County and provides world-class accommodations, services and amenities.

**Heritage Tourism** – With a national reputation for protecting and preserving our history, Prince William County is a heritage tourism destination. The community leverages the presence of battlefields, museums and preserved historic properties.

**Sports Center** – We have a world-class sports center easily accessible by residents and visitors.

**Convention Center** – We have a convention center that attracts conferences, special events and large groups to our area. Through partnerships with cultural attractions like the National Museum of the Marine Corps, the convention center is a premier location for military reunions, veterans' associations and historical organizations.

## TRANSPORTATION

The County is the regional leader for multi-modal transportation options. Residents rely on public transportation more than any other form of transportation, with a majority of commuters using some form of mass transit. Our use of multiple alternative fuel choices results in the lowest fuel prices in the region. Despite these low fuel prices, residents and visitors do not depend on personal automobiles for every local trip made due to our integrated transportation system. This system

provides walking, biking, public transportation, car sharing and connectivity unsurpassed by any other jurisdiction in Northern Virginia.

### Accessible Transportation

**Integrated Transportation** – A comprehensive, integrated multi-modal transportation system reduces travel time to recreation centers, cultural events, outdoor activities and other major attractions. This transportation system is affordable, easy to use and accessible at transportation hubs located within neighborhoods. A countywide transportation service for seniors and citizens with disabilities provides mobility equivalent to the efficiency and freedom of using their own vehicle. A uniform, regulated taxi system also accommodates these customers' special needs.

**Regional Connectivity** – The intra-county transportation system connects with regional systems to provide access to all major points within the metropolitan area. This reduces reliance on automobiles for trips within the County and to destinations outside the County.

**Improved Commuting** – The majority of commuters travel less than 20 minutes from home to work. Commuters have access to expanded commuter parking lots at key transportation hubs. Commuter traffic is manageable because we lead the region in telecommuting centers and work-at-home initiatives.

### Public Transportation

**Comprehensive Public Transportation** – Regional transportation entities provide a comprehensive public transportation system with affordable, accessible services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, providing cross-county connectivity and access to all major points within the metropolitan area.



**Multimodal System** – The public transportation system combines several modes, including bus, para transit, light rail and ferries. Bus service is accessible from all neighborhoods to business hubs, shopping centers and schools, reducing reliance on the yellow school bus service. The first segment of an intra-county light rail system connects Manassas, Dale City, VRE and Metro stations. VRE’s frequent, high-speed, reliable service meets the needs of commuters and tourists and includes the Gainesville/Haymarket corridor. Recognizing ‘slugging’ as a viable commuting option, the transit agency maintains an organized system to ensure the flexibility associated with slugging.

**Metro Service** – The County has Metrorail service on both ends of the County including stops in Woodbridge, Quantico, Manassas and Gainesville.

## Roads

**Road Network** – An extensive road network is part of the County’s integrated transportation system, allowing traffic to flow smoothly, connecting major thoroughfares with neighborhood streets and providing access to all areas of the County. In 2030, the County has largely completed building the roads in its Comprehensive Plan, and major thoroughfares are wide enough handle the traffic. All roads are paved and a systematic, well-funded program ensures road maintenance.

**Road Connectivity** – Another north/south artery provides a connection across the Occoquan. Residents and visitors travel along another cross-county artery that provides an east/west connection. Efficient and cost-effective high-occupancy lanes provide travel along our north/south and east/west corridors. A new bridge crosses the Potomac River and provides access to Maryland.

**Safety** – Local roads have the highest safety standards, minimizing the number of accidents and ensuring that motorists, pedestrians and cyclists have a safe travel environment. The County requires all driving schools to incorporate “driver etiquette” toward pedestrian and cyclists into first-

time driver training programs. A traffic management center provides 24-hour oversight of roadways and uses technology to maintain an uninterrupted traffic flow. As a result, traffic is manageable on weekdays and moves smoothly on weekends.

**Attractive Roadways** – Construction standards for all roads require trees and additional landscaping, aesthetically pleasing lights and pedestrian/bicycle access.



Silas Sullivan,  
Nokesville Elementary

## Bicycles and Pedestrians

**Alternative Transportation** – A network of trails, sidewalks and paths connecting neighborhoods, shopping and other major amenities allows for walking, biking and other means of low-speed transportation. Bicycles and other personal transportation vehicles are common means of transportation. Trails have replaced roads in many areas for non-vehicular traffic; the County also has alternate “roads” for small, alternative off-road vehicles that are popular among residents and tourists.

**Pedestrian-Friendly Community** – A concerted effort ensures that walking is a safe mode of transportation. Amenities include a network of

sidewalks with curbs, street lighting, crosswalks and walking signs at major intersections. Moving sidewalks accommodate seniors and citizens with disabilities. Pedestrian-only zones provide access to shopping, services, parks and schools.



**Helicopter Transportation** – Heliports now offer affordable, regularly scheduled transportation to Washington, D.C., Richmond and Baltimore from Prince William County.

**Air Travel Research** – The County is known for premier flying car technology, jetpack and personal air travel research funded through grants for joint

research by local businesses, higher education facilities, airports and research institutes.

## **Air and Water Travel**

**Manassas Airport** – An enhanced Manassas Regional Airport offers a variety of services, including commuter airline schedules and commercial flights. The County, through a partnership with the City of Manassas, encourages use of the airport and its environs. The airport is a transportation hub with regular flights to support business and personal travel. Planning is underway to study the feasibility of providing some international air connections.

**Water Ferry/Taxi** – Water ferry/taxi provides transportation to Washington, D.C., and Maryland along the Potomac River using hovercraft, hydrofoil and other propulsion technologies. These services are used for commuting, as a regular means of transportation, and for residents and tourists to reach historic towns and sites along the County’s shoreline.

# Appendix 1: Future Commission 2030 Methodology

The Board of County Supervisors established the *Future Commission 2030* in July 2006, and the group held its first meeting a month later. During the course of the next 16 months, the 16 Commission members designed and implemented a process to fulfill its mission from the BOCS: “focusing a community effort to envision the physical and aesthetic characteristics of life as well as the amenities and opportunities” that should exist in our community in 2030.

During the fall of 2006, the *Future Commission 2030* laid the foundation for its community visioning process. The group received multiple briefings from County government agencies on key topics such as demographics, transportation and land use. Members agreed on a charter defining their mission, scope of work, timeline, roles and responsibilities and deliverables. The group selected a Chairman and Vice Chairman to oversee its efforts and serve as a liaison to the Board of County Supervisors and the news media. As work progressed, the Commission members selected major topics for additional research and discussion with the community.

In preparation for several dozen community meetings, the *Future Commission 2030* participated in a facilitation training session, learning and practicing techniques for effective meeting facilitation. To ensure a consistent focus and approach during all community sessions, the group approved and beta tested a standard framework for the community meetings.

Beginning in January 2007, the *Future Commission 2030* hosted or participated in meetings across the County, giving residents an opportunity to define what they want our community to be like in the year 2030. The goal was to reach the broadest possible audience, with individuals and groups representing diverse interests, experiences and ideas. A full list of participating groups is shown in *Appendix 2*.

During each community meeting, the Commission followed the same process. They established a scenario for the year 2030 and asked a series of questions. The community meeting scenario follows:

“It is the year 2030 and Prince William County, Virginia, has been selected by a major publication as America’s Most Livable Community. It is a distinct honor for a distinctive community, and County residents consider the title a well-deserved achievement.

Reporters have come to Prince William County to understand what makes Prince William County a great place to live, work and play in the year 2030. The reporters ask ordinary Prince William County residents of all ages, experiences and demographics to talk about what it is like to live in Prince William County, with one of the best qualities of life in the nation.

The news reporters focus on the activities, facilities, amenities and opportunities. They have four questions to ask the Prince William County residents they meet:

*Continued on page A-2*

- What can residents do in Prince William County in 2030?
- What does Prince William County look like in 2030?
- What sets Prince William County apart from other communities in 2030?
- What unique opportunities are available to Prince William County residents in 2030?”

In addition to 40 community meetings, the Prince William County Public Schools’ administration and instructional support team adapted the Future Commission process for second graders, eighth graders and high school seniors. The students in 18 classrooms responded enthusiastically to the opportunity to provide input into their community’s future quality of life.

The *Future Commission 2030* also had the opportunity to include two questions in the 2007 Citizen Satisfaction Survey administered by the University of Virginia’s Center for Survey Research. Seven hundred twenty-six survey respondents answered the following: “What is the one thing about Prince William County you hope is different in 20 to 25 years?” and “What is the one thing you hope stays the same in Prince William County in 20 to 25 years?”

Finally, several dozen residents took the opportunity to provide feedback to the Future Commission 2030 online at [www.pwcgov.org/futurecommission](http://www.pwcgov.org/futurecommission).

Through these varied mechanisms, the *Future Commission 2030* collected thousands of ideas for the future of Prince William County. Some ideas were mentioned dozens of times; others were unique concepts; and all were discussed as part of a community-driven process. The ideas submitted by the community formed the basis for the *Future Commission 2030’s* report.

# Appendix 2:

## Future Commission Community Meetings

The *Future Commission 2030* offers its gratitude to the many Prince William County organizations which enthusiastically agreed to participate in the community visioning process. Their willingness to participate actively in the process led to the far-reaching vision which is included in this report.

- ACTS
- American Association of Retired Persons, Manassas Chapter
- Commission on Aging/Area Agency on Aging
- Committee of 100
- Community Leadership Institute graduates
- Cooperative Council of Ministries
- Disability Services Board
- Friends of the Battlefield
- George Mason University Campus Advisory Board and staff
- Historic Preservation Foundation (hosting numerous historic organizations)
- Homeowners associations
- Lake Ridge-Occoquan-Coles Civic Association
- Lake Ridge Parks and Recreation Association
- Neighborhood Watch, Western and Eastern District
- Northern Virginia Community College, Manassas Campus
- Park Authority Board
- Potomac Hospital
- Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission
- Prince William County Arts Council
- Prince William Conservation Alliance
- Prince William County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Prince William County Government boards, committees and commissions
- Prince William County Government Management Team, departments and employees
- Prince William County/Greater Manassas Chamber of Commerce
- Prince William County Public Schools
  - Battlefield High School
  - Benton Middle School
  - Bull Run Middle School
  - Coles Elementary
  - Forest Park High School
  - Fred Lynn Middle School
  - Graham Park Middle School
  - Hylton High School
  - Marsteller Middle School
  - Mountain View Elementary

*Continued on page B-2*

- Nokesville Elementary
- Occoquan Elementary
- Potomac High School
- Rosa Parks Elementary
- Saunders Middle School
- Stonewall Jackson HS
- Swans Creek Elementary
- Woodbridge High School
- Prince William County Sports League Council
- Prince William County Service Authority
- Prince William Education Association
- Prince William Hospital
- Prince William Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Prince William Wildflower Society
- Tourism Marketing Group
- Trails and Streams Coalition
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Virginia Railway Express

# Appendix 3: Acknowledgements

The Future Commission 2030 appreciates the contributions of many people who assisted us and contributed to the community visioning process during the past year. We particularly wish to thank the following:

- More than 1,800 citizens who participated in community meetings or submitted written comments.
- The Board of County Supervisors who gave us the opportunity to lead this community visioning process.
- The Prince William County Government and the many employees who participated in or assisted with this process, specifically:
  - Craig Gerhart, County Executive
  - Melissa Peacor, Assistant County Executive
  - Sandy Blanks, Office of Executive Management
  - Tracey Hormuth, Office of Executive Management
- The Prince William County Public Schools, including the following individuals:
  - Keith Imon, Associate Superintendent for Communications and Technology Services
  - Ken Bassett, Supervisor of Social Studies
  - Sue Austen, Instructional Support Team
  - Robin Meyering, Instructional Support Team
  - Regina Anderson, Instructional Support Team