



Virginia Cooperative Extension

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Situation Analysis Report

Prince George

2018

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Introduction

Virginia Cooperative Extension Prince George County conducted a situation analysis during the last year. The work involved the development of a Prince George County Unit Profile as well as gathering community and resident perspectives on issues and problems in the county. Data and information from these two activities were analyzed and priority issues identified.

The ELC met two times during the situation analysis process. At the first meeting, an overview of the situation analysis process was covered. At a second meeting of the ELC, data from the unit profile and potential survey questions were reviewed. A number of issues were identified from this look at the county.

Unit Profile

Prince George County is located in the central part of Virginia. It is approximately 25 miles Southeast of Richmond nestled into a geographic area southeast of Hopewell, east of Petersburg and the large military installation, Ft. Lee, and bordered by the James River on the north.

Population, Age, Gender, and Ethnicity:

The data indicated that from 1981 – 1991 the population of Prince George County remained relatively stable between 25,000 and 26,000 residents. As of the 2002 census, population stood at 34,135 residents, a 31% increase over the base period. In 2007 the population was estimated at 36,080 residents, a 5% increase over 2002. The 2011 population estimate was 35,520 residents, a 2% decrease over the 4 year period. The July 2017 population was estimated at 37,809 residents or 6% greater than 2011.

The 10-44 year old age ranges had the most population decrease. The 0-9 and 54-85+ age ranges increased in population between 2007 and 2011. Youth (0-17 years of age) make up 22% of the population.

Approximately 54% of the total population of Prince George County is male while 46% is female.

Caucasian population is 61% while the African American population is 33%. Asian and Hispanic populations represent 2.1% and 8% respectively of the total population. Native American, Pacific Islander, and multiple race groups constitute 4.6% of the entire population.

Housing & Health:

The data showed that from 2011 to 2017, the total number of housing units remained nearly constant with 12,015 to 12,479, respectively. Owner occupied housing units were at 68.2% in 2017.

In overall health rankings, Prince George ranks 32 out of 133 localities in the state. Household health data showed that the teenage birth rate changed positively, 24 per 1000 teens to 15 per 1000, from 2013 to 2017 respectively. Adult obesity rates have changed little at 33% compared to 35% obesity among adults in 2013 rankings.

Education:

Educational data from 2010 to 2017 showed that high school graduation rates have increased 7.6% from 82 to 89.6%. Persons pursuing some level of college education increased from 16% to 46% over the same time period.

Agriculture:

Agricultural data indicate that the number of farms in Prince George County has fallen 10% from 2007 to 2012 (186 vs 167). Total farmland acres have decreased 18% from 44,805 acres to 36,659 acres. The numbers of farms from 1 acre to 9 acres have remained relatively stable while farms from 10 to 49 acres, 50 to 179 acres, 180 to 499 acres, and 500 to 999 acres have fallen 14%, 12%, 41%, and 17% respectively. However, there was a slight increase in farms over 1000+ acres at 11%. The majority of farms (84%) have farm sales of less than \$50,000. Most farms are small, part time operations.

For the period, 2007 to 2012, market value of agricultural products sold increased 96% from \$5.488 million to \$10.763 million and market value of products sold per farm increased 118% from \$29,504 per farm to \$64,447 per farm. Corn, soybeans, and wheat all reached record high prices in 2012 which greatly boosted farm income. Crop and vegetable production accounted for 92% of farm gross sales with the remainder from livestock production which is primarily beef cattle. The data showed that farm operators listing farming as their principle occupation was 99 of the 167 operations.

Community and Resident Perspectives

Issues were surfaced through discussions with the local ELC and key informants throughout the year. Major themes are summarized here:

- County government
 - Planned economic development with increased businesses and job opportunities
 - Less residential development
 - Low cost public transportation
 - Public safety and enhanced fire & EMS coverage

- School system
 - Technology advancement for teachers and students
 - Vocational and technical training in mechanics, plumbing, electricity, agriculture
 - Funding for afterschool programs
 - Behavior – disobedience and bullying

- Agriculture
 - Preservation of working farms
 - Public education/awareness of agriculture importance
 - Training for public in horticulture practices

- Youth
 - Additional activities for youth to participate in
 - Career awareness and business opportunities to develop skills
 - Camp and teen activities related to 4-H

Priority Issues

Based on the unit profile and resident perspectives data from above, the following priority issues were identified for Prince George County. These issues are not ranked in any specific order.

Issue 1:

Preservation of working farms

DESCRIPTION:

Preservation of working farms is slightly different than farmland preservation. Preserving farmland from housing development does not necessarily keep the farm in a productive working state. Working farms contribute to the local economy by buying and selling goods and may offer employment opportunities.

Preservation of working farms is partially addressed with VCE resources. Current agriculture programs focus on production and profitability to sustain farm operations. Additional resources geared toward beginning or new farmers, farm succession to the next generation, and agriculture awareness could be developed to broaden the programs offered to the community.

Issue 2:

Increase opportunities for youth to become productive citizens

DESCRIPTION:

Numerous comments were received that youth have limited opportunities for “things” to do. There were no specific suggestions for youth activities other than 4-H related camp and teen

programs. An issue that did emerge was to reinforce vocational/technical training along with advanced technology such as computers.

Youth opportunities are partially addressed with VCE resources. Current youth programs in camping, teen leadership, digital media production, and agriculture are fulfilling some of these needs. VCE cannot meet needs such as part-time employment, business internships, or formal courses in technical fields. Partnerships with local businesses, Prince George schools, and VCE may be able to enhance these opportunities.

Issue 3:

Economic development of businesses to supply good paying jobs

DESCRIPTION:

Numerous responses called for additional business opportunity and good jobs which increases the county tax base. This issue is outside the scope to VCE resources to address.

Issue 4:

Safety in communities and schools

DESCRIPTION:

This issue is mostly outside the scope of VCE to address with the exception of some VCE programs that focus on bullying, leadership, and character for youth. Most comments focused on core services provided by local government.