



## County of Prince George, Virginia

*“A welcoming community • Embracing its rural character • Focusing on its prosperous future”*

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: Tammy Anderson, Chair  
Alex W. Bresko, Jr., Vice-Chair  
R. Steven Brockwell  
Jennifer D. Canepa  
Imogene S. Elder  
V. Clarence Joyner, Jr.  
M. Brian Waymack

FROM: Tim Graves, Planner II

RE: Special Work Session on Comprehensive Plan (September)

DATE: September 27, 2024

CC: Jeff Stoke, County Administrator\*  
Kristen Pudlow, Deputy County Administrator\*  
Andrea Erard, County Attorney\*  
Robert Baldwin, Director of Planning  
Jack Greenstein, Planner I

*\* (Receiving digital copy only)*

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The Planning Commission’s Special Work Session on the Comprehensive Plan (September) will occur Monday, September 30, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Board Room.

Please contact me at (804)722–8678 or via e-mail at [tgraves@princegeorgecountyva.gov](mailto:tgraves@princegeorgecountyva.gov) with any questions.

1	Meeting Agenda
2	Berkley Group Presentation Agenda
3	Draft Chapter 3 "Prince George 2045" Comp Plan
4	Draft Chapter 4 "Prince George 2045" Comp Plan
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**TAB 1**

## **AGENDA - WORK SESSION**

Planning Commission of Prince George County, Virginia

**Monday, September 30, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.**

County Administration Bldg., Board Room (Third Floor)

6602 Courts Drive, Prince George, Virginia

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**CALL TO ORDER** – Madam Chair Anderson

Roll Call – Clerk

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE WORK SESSION** - Tim Graves and Berkley Group [2]

**W-1.** Prince George 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update – Review of Draft Chapters 3 and 4 [3][4]

**COMMUNICATIONS** – Tim Graves

**ADJOURNMENT** – Madam Chair Anderson

Begin

**TAB 2**

# PRINCE GEORGE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

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## PC WORK SESSION # 2 | SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

The Comprehensive Plan provides a guiding vision for the physical development of a locality. How and where a community grows is the result of interconnected physical, social, and economic features. In drafting the Comprehensive Plan, we must look at each of these topics individually so that we can craft a more effective growth management and future land use plan.

This workshop will review drafts of the **Community Asset Chapters** of the Plan: Chapter 3, Natural & Cultural Resources and Chapter 4, Community Resources.

### AGENDA

#### Part I: Schedule & Progress Update

#### Part II: Review of Draft Chapters

- 1) Review Natural & Cultural Resources Goal, Objectives, and Strategies  
*OUTCOME: Finalized Goal Statement, Objectives, and Strategies*
- 2) Review Community Resources Goal, Objectives, and Strategies  
*OUTCOME: Finalized Goal Statement, Objectives, and Strategies*

### NEXT STEPS

- 1) Submit Additional Comments by October 7, 2024 [County]
- 2) Incorporate Edits [BG]
- 3) Post Drafts on Project Webpage [County]
- 4) Draft Transportation & Connectivity chapter and Economic Development chapter [BG]
- 5) Next Work session: November 18, 2024

### ATTACHED MATERIALS

- DRAFT Natural & Cultural Resources Chapter
- DRAFT Community Resources Chapter

Begin

**TAB 3**

# 3 Natural & Cultural Resources

A scenic view of a calm lake or river, framed by lush green foliage on the left and right. The water reflects the sky and surrounding trees. In the foreground, the tip of a yellow kayak is visible at the bottom center.



# Prince George 2045

## IN THIS CHAPTER

- **PROTECTING SENSITIVE RESOURCES**
- **PLANNING FOR RESILIENCE**
- **PROTECTING RURAL CHARACTER & CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Prince George County is renowned for its rich natural beauty and historical significance, with diverse ecosystems like forests, farmlands, and waterways playing a vital role in supporting wildlife, the local economy, and recreation. These environmental resources connect the community to its past and shape its identity. This chapter highlights the importance of evaluating factors such as soil, slope, floodplains, wetlands, and water quality when planning future development, ensuring that growth aligns with the county's environmental suitability.

The chapter also outlines goals and strategies to protect habitats, promote sustainable agriculture, preserve historic landmarks, and strengthen resilience. It reflects a commitment to preserving Prince George County natural and cultural treasures while balancing growth with environmental stewardship. By safeguarding these resources, the county honors its heritage and fosters a future that promotes sustainability and cultural preservation.

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

## Protecting Sensitive Resources

The natural resources of Prince George County are deeply valued by its residents, with a strong commitment to their responsible management and protection. Emphasis is placed on sustainable practices to preserve the county's diverse ecosystems—forests, waterways, and agricultural lands—while also enhancing resilience against environmental challenges. Proactive measures should be undertaken to maintain the health and integrity of these sensitive resources, ensuring that growth and development are balanced with the conservation of the county's unique environmental character for future generations.

## Planning for Resilience

Prince George County aims to strengthen its natural landscapes, infrastructure, economy, and community to ensure long-term prosperity and protection from future risks. By implementing strategies like flood resilience, economic diversification, and community building, the County will create a strong, adaptable, and thriving community which can adapt to environmental and economic challenges.

## Protecting Rural Character & Cultural Resources

Residents of Prince George County deeply value the preservation of its rural landscapes, agricultural heritage, and cultural resources. In the face of growing development pressures. Protecting the county's open spaces, farmland, and historic sites is key to maintaining rural identity and ensuring that the County's rich agricultural traditions continue to thrive. This chapter will explore various options the County can consider using to safeguard its scenic vistas and cultural assets. A balanced approach will help ensure that rural character, farming, and cultural heritage are preserved for future generations.



### *NEED MORE INFORMATION?*

A complete Engagement Summary and Community Profile, detailing engagement results, demographics, and additional information on natural and cultural resources is available in the appendix of this document.

This chapter highlights the key issues and opportunities that inform the targeted strategies included in this Plan.

### Section Sources

Prince George County Planning & Zoning



# PROTECTING SENSITIVE RESOURCES

Prince George County is located in Tidewater Virginia and is one of many localities within the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (CBPA) Area. The County must act as steward to the many sensitive ecological resources located within its borders. Prince George contains 10 miles of Appomattox River shoreline, 35 miles of James River shoreline, 20 miles of the Blackwater River and swamp, and 36,000 acres of wetland. As the County grows, it must balance growth with the protection of these sensitive

resources. Compliance with the (CBPA) water protection and resilience mandates requires the County to enact regulations and other strategies to protect surface water, groundwater, wetlands, ecological cores, and forest landscapes.



## Protecting Surface Waters

Prince George County is situated within two major river basins: the James River Basin and the Chowan River Basin. The James River Basin encompasses a total drainage area of 10,102 square miles. Surface water from the northern part of the County is directed into the James and Appomattox Rivers via major streams and creeks, including Harrison Creek, Bailey's Creek, Walls Run, Wards Creek, Powell Creek, and Upper Chippokes Creek. The James River ultimately flows into the southern end of the Chesapeake Bay. Approximately 48 percent of the County's land area is drained by the Appomattox and James Rivers, which ultimately flow into the Chesapeake Bay. At their confluence, these rivers have a combined flow exceeding 5,000 cubic feet per second. The protection of this watershed is governed by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act.

The remaining portion of the County is located in the Nottoway River and Blackwater River watersheds. Tributaries in this area include Rowanty Creek, Jones Hole Swamp, Warwick Swamp, and Cypress Swamp. The Nottoway and Blackwater Rivers drain into the Chowan River, which then discharges into the Albemarle-Pamlico Sound in North Carolina.

## Critical Environment Areas

Critical Environmental Areas are legislatively defined as "areas of natural, scenic, and historic value, including, but not limited to, wetlands, marshlands, shorelands and floodplains of rivers, lakes, and streams, wilderness and wildlife habitats, historic buildings and areas." In Prince George County, three areas have been identified and delineated by the Commonwealth as Virginia's critical environmental areas. These are:

- Appomattox River Area: Designated as critical watershed and wildlife habitat, with portions remaining in a relatively undisturbed condition.
- James River Area (including the James River National Wildlife Refuge): Efforts will be continued by Prince George to enhance water quality on individual redevelopment and renovation projects. This area is recognized

for its critical watershed and fish habitat, as well as its scenic and natural qualities offering immense recreational value. Critical wetland areas are located along Powell Creek, Wards Creek, and Chippokes Creek.

- Blackwater River and Bottomlands Area: The Cypress Swamp is noted for its critical watershed, scenic, and wildlife areas and is deemed unsuitable for intense development.

The County needs to enhance protection of its critical environmental areas from degradation and inappropriate development. While the James River National Wildlife Refuge is federally protected, other important areas, such as those within the James River Watershed and Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas, remain at risk.

### Section Sources

Prince George County Planning & Zoning



## Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act & Regulations

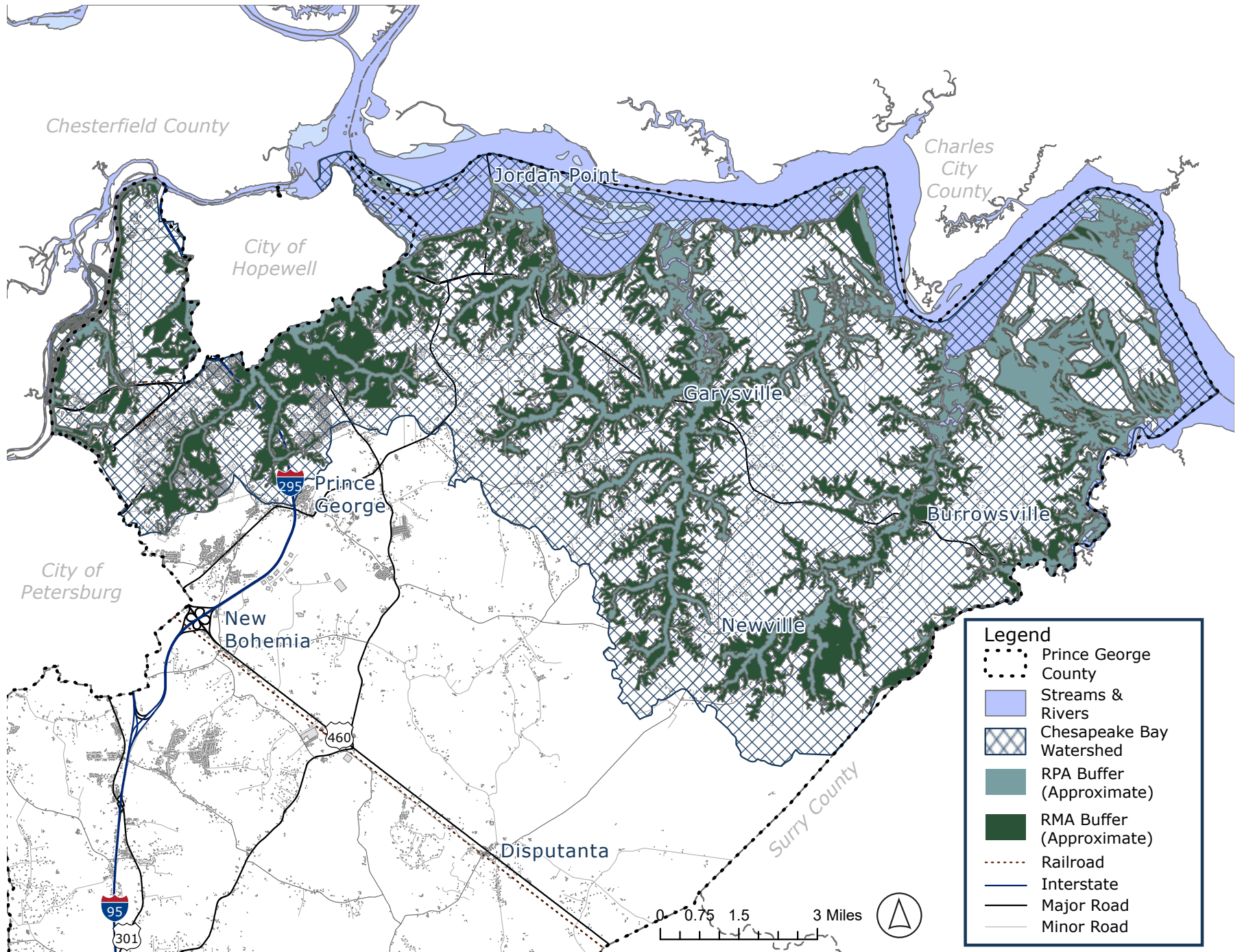
In 1988, the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (CBPA) was passed by the Virginia General Assembly, establishing Virginia's commitment to protecting the health of the Chesapeake Bay, the James River, and its tributaries. This Act requires Prince George County, like other Tidewater localities, to adopt regulations that protect water quality by designating Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas (CBPAs) and incorporating performance criteria into the County's Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Subdivision Ordinance. These regulations specifically govern land use in environmentally sensitive areas, with the County identifying two key components within CBPAs: Resource Protection Areas (RPAs) and Resource Management Areas (RMAs).

The RPA consists of critical shoreline areas containing natural features, such as tidal wetlands and buffer areas, that play a vital role in protecting water quality by filtering sediments and pollutants from runoff. Development in RPAs is highly regulated, with exceptions limited to water-dependent uses, redevelopment, or lots recorded prior to the Bay Act's effective date. Adjacent to RPAs, RMAs act as buffer zones, further protecting these sensitive areas from improper development that could contribute to erosion and water degradation.

In alignment with the new legislative requirements from the 2020 and 2022 General Assembly sessions, the County's shoreline management practices also prioritize climate resilience, including sea level rise and living shorelines as a preferred

method for erosion control. Living shorelines help stabilize eroding shorelines while preserving natural habitats and enhancing flood protection. Prince George County is committed to adopting policies and strategies that integrate these approaches into its zoning and land use plans, ensuring long-term sustainability. Additionally, the County will continue to encourage tree preservation efforts, which provide natural stormwater management and reduce the impacts of climate change.

Further information regarding zoning regulations and coastal management policies, including guidance on low-impact development (LID) and best management practices (BMPs), can be found in the County's Zoning Ordinance, as it provides specific requirements for land use decisions in these sensitive areas. By incorporating these practices and adhering to updated state laws, the County can continue to protect its natural resources while promoting responsible development.



Map 3-1: Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Resource Management Areas



## Coastal Resource Management Policy Statement & Recommendation

In 2011, legislation was passed by the Virginia Assembly to amend §28.2-1100 and §28.2-104.1 of the Code of Virginia, and to add section §15.2-2223.2. This amendment established a new directive for shoreline management in Tidewater Virginia. Under section §15.2-2223.2, it is required that all local governments include, in their next comprehensive plan revision starting in 2013, guidance provided by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) regarding coastal resource management and, more specifically, guidance for the selection of living shoreline management practices. The policy established by the legislation favors living shorelines as the preferred method for stabilizing eroding shorelines.

The guidance, referred to as Comprehensive Coastal Resource Management Guidance, is being prepared by VIMS for localities within the Tidewater region of Virginia and is made available through the Comprehensive Coastal Resources Management Portal (CCRMP). This guidance explicitly outlines where and what new shoreline best management practices should be considered when coastal modifications are necessary to reduce shoreline erosion and protect fragile coastal ecosystems. It will include a full spectrum of appropriate management options that can be applied by local governments for site-specific needs and consideration of cumulative shoreline impacts. A decision-tree method, based on a resource mapping database that will be periodically updated and a digital Geographic Information System (GIS) model created by VIMS, is employed in the guidance.

Incorporating the Coastal Resource Management Policy into Prince George County's comprehensive plan is vital for meeting state mandates and ensuring shoreline resilience. Virginia law requires Tidewater localities, including Prince George County, to adopt guidance from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) prioritizing living shorelines for erosion control and ecosystem protection. Given the county's proximity to the James and Appomattox Rivers, this guidance is particularly

relevant. VIMS provides best management practices (BMPs) and decision tools for site-specific shoreline erosion, helping mitigate environmental impacts. Aligning county policies with VIMS recommendations and statewide permits will streamline the process and promote sustainable shoreline development. Public outreach and staff training will further equip the community to implement living shorelines, enhancing resilience to sea-level rise and preserving open spaces near marshlands for inland retreat. Steps to implementing the Guidance:

- Refer to the Comprehensive Coastal Resource Management Portal (CCRMP) by VIMS for policies on shoreline erosion control.
- Use VIMS Decision Trees for on-site erosion control recommendations: <http://ccrm.vims.edu/decisiontree/index.html>.
- Apply Shoreline Best Management Practices (BMPs) from VIMS for all tidal shorelines.
- Make Shoreline BMPs the go-to strategy for erosion control and require justification for any departures.
- Encourage staff training on VIMS decision-making tools.
- Keep track of the state-wide General Permit by VMRC and ensure local policies align.
- Consider a locality-wide permit to streamline shoreline applications that follow VIMS recommendations.
- Boost public outreach to educate on new shoreline strategies like Living Shorelines.
- Follow VMRC's integrated shoreline guidance.
- Evaluate a regulatory structure that promotes an integrated shoreline management approach.
- Preserve open spaces near marshlands for inland retreat under rising sea levels.
- Look into cost-share opportunities for constructing living shorelines.



## Water Access

Prince George County encompasses over 45 linear miles of shoreline. Shoreline physiography varies from low to high shore, with 73% classified as low or moderately low shore. Flooding is not a significant threat to most shoreline areas, as elevations typically exceed 10 feet, with only a few isolated structures at risk from floodwater.

Shoreline areas provide access to waterways, but the ownership of adjacent land is not governed by local jurisdiction. The shoreline along the Appomattox River includes federal properties such as Fort Gregg-Adams and the Federal Correctional Institute, along with industrial sand and gravel operations, railroad lines, recreational, and agricultural uses.

In the Jordan Point area, near the Benjamin Harrison Bridge and a major route between Hopewell and Williamsburg, a marina, country club, and residential development are present. The remaining shoreline is primarily

controlled by large estates, including Brandon, Flowerdew Hundred, Willow Hill, and Upper Brandon. These historic estates, dating back to the 1800s, significantly influence shoreline use. From Jordan Point to Upper Chippokes Creek, 96% of the shoreline is either wooded or agricultural, with the remaining 4% divided among commercial, industrial, recreational, and residential uses.

Access to waterways is primarily provided through privately owned land, including marinas, docks, and piers. There are currently no plans for additional marinas in the County, though there is a need to find more ways to provide more public river access points is needed. When future waterfront access points are established, they will be evaluated based on the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's criteria for marina and community boat mooring facilities. Currently, 57 docks and 14 private ramps exist in the County. Individuals wishing to construct private docks and piers must comply with regulations from the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, Army Corps. of Engineers, and Prince George County ordinances.

Marinas and recreational boating are popular uses of coastal waters. Increased recreational boating and coastal development have heightened awareness of the need to protect environmental quality. Marinas, situated at the water's edge, are at risk of pollution from activities such as boat cleaning, fueling operations, and stormwater runoff from parking lots and maintenance areas.

While commercial fisheries are not present in the County, recreational fishing is permitted by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

### Section Sources

Prince George County Planning & Zoning



## Shoreline Erosion

Shoreline erosion is influenced by the combined impacts of waves, sea level rise, tidal currents, and, in some cases, boat wakes and shoreline hardening. Overall, erosion is minimal in most sections of Prince George County. Slight increases in erosion rates are observed along the James River toward Upper Chippokes Creek, with the highest erosion rates recorded in Upper Chippokes Creek due to the rapid erosion of several marsh areas.

A particular area of concern for shoreline erosion includes regions with agricultural and grassy land within 100 feet of the shoreline. These areas are identified as having the highest potential for nutrient runoff due to fertilizer applications. High sediment loads are also associated with agricultural lands, as adjacent banks are seldom restored when erosion problems persist. The Prince George County Shoreline Management Plan indicates that shoreline management can be effectively achieved without the use of traditional erosion control structures (such as riprap or bulkheads). Instead, management can be accomplished through the enhancement of riparian buffers or existing marsh areas.

Tidal marshes, which make up 80 percent of the County's shoreline, are recognized for their importance in flood and erosion control, as well as their value as wildlife habitats. The beaches, constituting eighteen percent of the shoreline, are characterized as narrow, thin strips, often interspersed with vegetation. It is estimated that only two percent of the shoreline is artificially stabilized, although the true figure may be slightly higher due to the stabilization efforts in the Jordan Point area.

Typically, shoreline erosion has been addressed by property owners through the hardening of shorelines, which has been the most common management approach. There is growing concern that the preservation of the natural character of the shoreline may not be feasible if shoreline management practices do not evolve.



## *Shoreline Management Plan*

The Prince George County Shoreline Management Plan, Shoreline Best Management Practices, and information on the shoreline evolution of Prince George County are available through the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) at [http://www.vims.edu/ccrm/ccrmp/portals/prince\\_george/index.php](http://www.vims.edu/ccrm/ccrmp/portals/prince_george/index.php)



## Wetlands

Wetlands, once considered unproductive, are now recognized for their critical ecological and economic roles. They serve as vital habitats for a variety of wildlife, including fish, shellfish, birds, and mammals, while also offering food sources for both humans and animals. Acting as natural sponges, wetlands absorb floodwaters, protect properties from flood damage, and help maintain water quality by filtering nutrients, waste, and sediment. They also recharge groundwater and support stream flow, especially during droughts.

In Prince George County, about 1,500 acres of wetlands are mapped on the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), representing less than 1% of the county's total area. Most are located along rivers and in floodplain areas, although the NWI maps are limited in precision, making them suitable mainly for general planning.

### Section Sources

Prince George County Planning & Zoning



## *Coastal Ecosystem Restoration & Protection*

Coastal ecosystems, situated between land and water, provide essential services like shoreline stabilization, improved water quality, and habitats for fish, benefiting humans both directly and indirectly. However, traditional management practices have hindered these ecosystems' ability to perform these functions, particularly in Virginia, where development and erosion control measures have led to diminishing beaches, submerged wetlands, and barriers to inland migration. Concerns are growing over the long-term sustainability of these ecosystems due to continued shoreline armoring and sea level rise.

Since the 1980s, interest in using planted wetlands and other "living shoreline" techniques for erosion control has grown. Today, a range of these techniques, from marsh plantings to rock sills, are used to address various erosion challenges while minimizing harm to ecosystems. Research supports the effectiveness of these methods, emphasizing the need for integrated shoreline management to sustain coastal resources. New guidance and best practices are necessary to preserve coastal ecosystem functions and the benefits they provide to humans.



## Protecting Groundwater Quality

Groundwater is generally available in substantial quantities throughout the County. The Appomattox River Water Authority is the main supplier of the County's public water source.

Lack of capacity in the municipal water system within the County's Planning Area, and the associated costs of required connections, coupled with relatively small minimum lot sizes and generally available groundwater in the Rural Conservation Area, are encouraging low density suburban residential development in areas that were intended to remain rural. This is leading to a reduction in large open spaces, farmland, and natural landscapes, which are essential components of rural areas.

Future development proposals that rely on groundwater should be evaluated based on groundwater availability. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality has designated all land areas within the County east of I-95 as a Groundwater Management Area, thereby limiting the potential for major future

withdrawals. This designation aims to conserve groundwater use and protect its quality. To support the County's growth strategies, the Board of Supervisors amended the County Code in the summer of 2006 to prohibit the establishment of independent community (public) water systems within the County.

Potential threats to groundwater include contamination from various sources such as underground storage tanks, improperly managed septic systems, uncontrolled hazardous waste, chemicals, road salts, and atmospheric pollutants. Additionally, groundwater depletion can occur if groundwater is extracted faster than it is replenished. This depletion can lead to a lowering of the water table, increased water extraction costs, reduced surface water supplies, land subsidence, and deteriorated water quality.

## Relationship Between Surface & Ground Water

Historically, surface water and groundwater have been managed separately, but it is now clear that they are interconnected. Development of one affects the other's quantity and quality. Surface-water bodies can gain or lose water from groundwater systems, while groundwater pumping can deplete surface water. Pollution of either system can also affect the other. Effective management requires understanding these linkages.

### Section Sources

Prince George County Planning & Zoning  
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

## Point Source Pollution

Water quality in the Appomattox River and James River, flowing through Prince George County, is generally considered good. Nevertheless, impairments have been identified in portions of these rivers, as well as various streams and swamps in the County, based on Federal Clean Water Act standards. Impairments were documented by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) in 2016, including *Escherichia coli*, PCB, and mercury in fish tissue within the James River Basin and the Chowan River Basin. An inventory of potential pollution sources that could affect groundwater and surface waters is essential for identifying areas in need of monitoring. Pollution sources are categorized into point sources and nonpoint sources. Point sources are defined as those originating from well-defined locations.

## NonPoint Source Pollution

Unlike point source pollution, the exact origins of nonpoint source pollution are challenging to pinpoint. This type of pollution occurs throughout an entire watershed and can result from various human activities, including construction,

runoff from impervious surfaces, agriculture, and forestry. Nonpoint pollutants encompass fertilizers, pesticides, oil, sediment, and metals. The DEQ is responsible for assessing nonpoint source pollution statewide, categorized by hydrologic units and sub-watersheds. Farming remains a land use and economic component in Prince George County. The County will continue collaboration with the James River Soil and Water Conservation District to review and promote the use of soil conservation, water quality plans, and nutrient management plans among farmland owners, especially within Resource Management Areas (RMA) and Resource Protection Areas (RPA). Through the site plan review process, efforts will be made to minimize land disturbance and encourage vegetation preservation in the CBPA.

### Section Sources

Prince George County Planning & Zoning  
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality



### Current efforts by the County to ensure safe water supplies and to protect the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay:

- **Public System Connections:** Subdivisions in the Planning Area must connect to public water and sewage systems.
- **Lot Size Regulations:** In the Rural Conservation Area, a five-acre minimum lot size effectively limits water drawdown and protects runoff filtering areas, though it is leading to suburban land patterns. One-acre lot sizes are allowed by the Code of Virginia for Family Subdivisions.
- **Septic Field Reserve:** A policy requires a 100% septic field reserve to reduce system failures in the CBPA.
- **Indoor Plumbing Program:** Active since 1989, this program ensures indoor plumbing through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.
- **Septic Tank Pump-Out Program:** A five-year phased program ensures proper septic system maintenance in the CBPA.



## Ecological Cores & Forests

Ecological Cores and forests play a critical role in water quality protection in Prince George County. Ecological cores are large, unfragmented patches of natural land with at least 100 acres of interior cover. Cores provide habitats for a wide range of flora and fauna and significantly contribute to the County's forest cover and serve as important natural resources for conservation and recreation. Development should be directed away from these areas whenever possible. Where development is necessary, green infrastructure concepts and cluster developments can help maintain cores and connections between them.

Approximately 74% of the County's land is forested. Forests provide more than just wildlife habitats and timber; they play a critical role in preventing soil erosion along streams by stabilizing the soil with their roots and enhancing the soil's capacity to absorb rainwater. During storms, trees slow down and temporarily store rainwater, thereby reducing the risk of flooding. Additionally, forests act as natural filters, absorbing

pollutants through their roots and transforming them into less harmful substances. Forested areas near water bodies are particularly significant for improving water quality by filtering runoff, preventing erosion, and providing habitats for various wildlife species.

Effective forest management is essential to maintaining and improving the quality of the county's forestland while supporting sustainable timbering practices to prevent unnecessary fragmentation of contiguous forest resources. Forest fire prevention is also critical, not only for public safety but also to safeguard landowner investments. Policies and regulations promoting sustainable forest management enable property owners to maintain their forested areas, which in turn provide the broader community with ecosystem benefits such as clean water, clean air, and wildlife habitat preservation.

While Prince George County does not contain major state or national forests, it is home to significant forested areas and natural preserves that contribute to its overall forest cover and regional ecosystem.

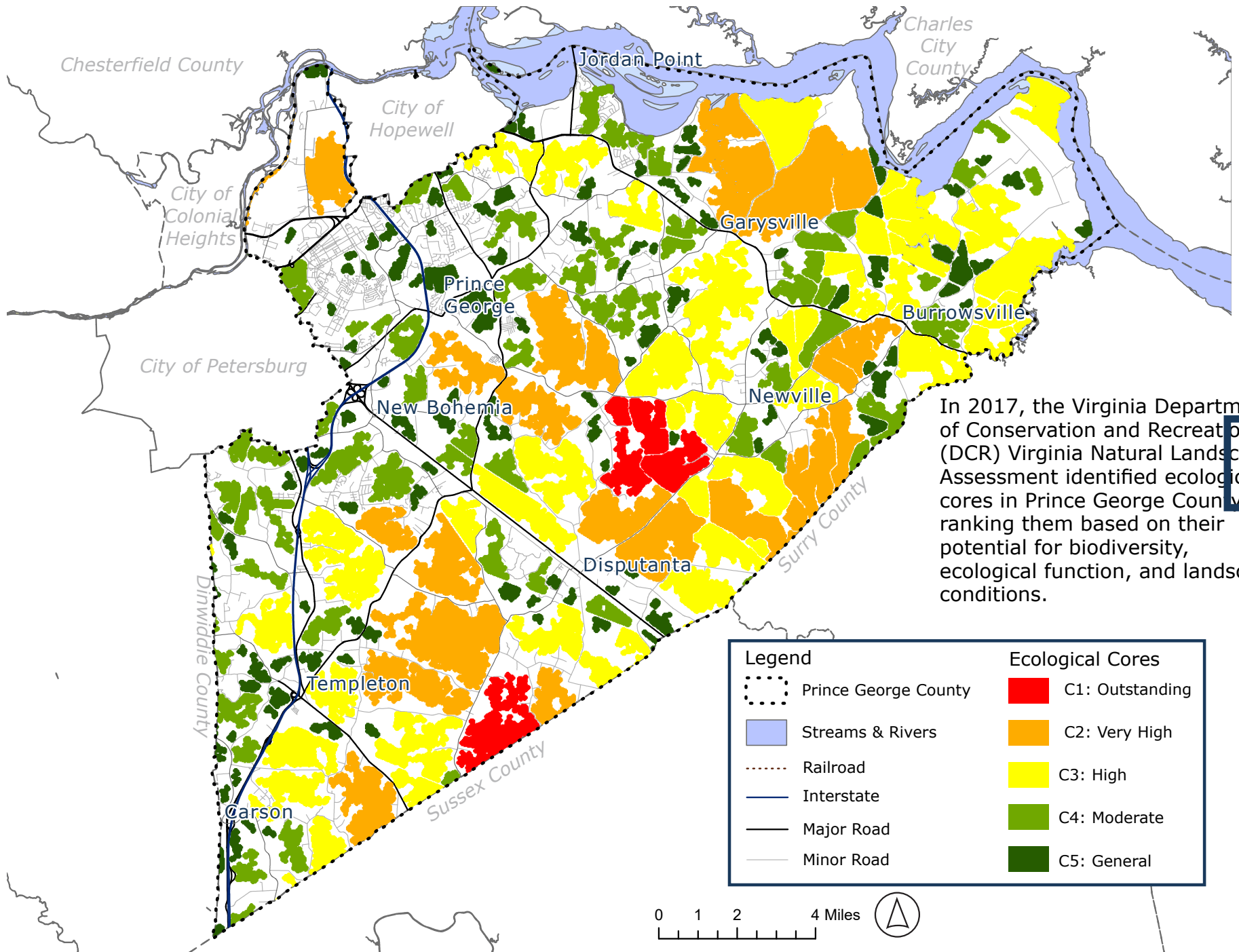
Notable areas include:

- **James River National Wildlife Refuge:** Located within the county, this refuge protects various habitats, including crucial forested areas for wildlife, particularly bald eagles. Managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the refuge plays a vital role in conserving the region's natural resources.
- **Petersburg National Battlefield:** Although primarily recognized for its historical significance, this site in Prince George County also includes preserved forested areas as part of the park's natural landscape.

Forests and ecological cores constitute an integral part of Prince George County's natural landscape and economy. They provide essential habitats for numerous plant and wildlife species, resources for outdoor recreation, protection from erosion and sedimentation, groundwater recharge areas, and visual buffers between different land uses.

### Section Sources

Prince George County Planning & Zoning



In 2017, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Virginia Natural Landscape Assessment identified ecological cores in Prince George County, ranking them based on their potential for biodiversity, ecological function, and landscape conditions.

Legend		Ecological Cores	
	Prince George County		C1: Outstanding
	Streams & Rivers		C2: Very High
	Railroad		C3: High
	Interstate		C4: Moderate
	Major Road		C5: General
	Minor Road		

Map 3-2: Ecological Cores



## PLANNING FOR RESILIENCE

A resilient community proactively plans for disasters and takes steps to mitigate them. Increased storm intensity, rising temperatures, and prolonged droughts are all issues faced by localities that can severely affect community wellbeing and operational stability. Coastal regions facing rising sea levels are experiencing climate migration, with residents moving inland to avoid climate-related challenges.

Prince George County can address both the impacts of a changing climate and the trend of climate migration by

collaborating with neighboring regions on hazard mitigation planning. Development policies should direct growth towards areas capable of accommodating new development and away from environmentally sensitive zones. Enhancing local infrastructure and planning for future water resources will enable Prince George County to attract new residents while effectively managing potential emergencies.

### Section Sources

Prince George County Planning & Zoning



## Hazard Mitigation & Flooding

Natural hazards such as severe storms, tornadoes, wildfires, and flooding can strike with little warning. Climate change may be exacerbating these hazards by increasing temperatures, intensifying storms, and altering weather patterns. Without proper preparation, the effects on safety, property, the economy, and quality of life can be overwhelming.

Hazard mitigation is coordinated regionally through the Crater Planning District Commission (Crater PDC). Partnering with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), and local emergency managers, the Crater PDC develops and updates the Multi-Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan every five years. This plan details how localities can prepare for and mitigate the impacts of natural disasters.

Floodplains are low-lying areas near waterways that manage

stormwater and support wetlands. In Prince George County, floodplain management is governed by Article XV of the Zoning Ordinance, which was last updated in December 2022 to meet FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards. Participation in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) could reduce local flood insurance premiums.

Key floodplains in the county include areas along the James, Appomattox, and Blackwater Rivers, as well as various swamps and creeks. These areas are critical for stormwater management, wildlife habitats, and recreation. Construction in floodplains is restricted to prevent flood damage and avoid disrupting natural water flow.

The County updated its Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) in 2023 to improve floodplain management. The maps, integrated with GIS, reflect updated flood elevation references and aim to enhance protection for residents, with significant changes affecting areas near Hopewell and



**Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) aims to enhance disaster preparedness, resilience, and recovery in Prince George County. The plan outlines seven key goals to minimize disruptions from disasters:**

1. Reduce Risk Exposure: Focus on regional and local mitigation actions for hazards ranked "medium" and "high."
2. Prepare and Protect the Community: Engage in all-hazards planning, outreach, and training for staff, volunteers, and the public.
3. Strengthen Response Coordination: Enhance interoperability through planning, equipment, and training for all stakeholders.
4. Support Public Health and Human Services: Improve sheltering capabilities, client needs tracking, family reunification, and public health response.
5. Post-Incident Restoration: Plan for restoring services, long-term housing, and economic revitalization, considering health, social, cultural, and environmental factors.
6. Enhance Safety and Incident Management: Maintain capabilities to respond to all hazards, including terrorism.
7. Protect Critical Infrastructure: Strengthen efforts to counter criminal and terrorist threats through effective intelligence gathering and planning.



# PROTECTING RURAL CHARACTER & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Prince George County has a rich heritage rooted in the productivity of the land. The preservation of rural areas has been identified as a critical priority for the County's future. As growth continues and the development pressure pushes into rural areas, maintaining a balance between development and preservation will become increasingly

challenging and essential. Acknowledging and protecting the County's rural character includes preserving prime farmland, leveraging tools for land conservation, and cataloging the County's diverse historic resources.

## Section Sources

Prince George County Planning & Zoning  
Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)



## Prime Farmland

Historically, land along the Appomattox and James Rivers was developed for agricultural uses, first by native people of the region and later when early plantations produced crops that were transported west by river to markets in Petersburg. Today, agriculture continues to be an important component of the County's economic profile. Prime farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is characterized by the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops.

## Importance of Prime Farmland

The preservation of prime farmland supports several critical objectives:

- **Food Security:** A robust agricultural base is maintained, ensuring local food sources.
- **Economic Stability:** Agriculture remains a significant sector in Prince George, contributing to the

local economy through farming activities, agribusinesses, and related industries.

- **Environmental Health:** Ecological benefits such as biodiversity, soil health, and water management are often provided by prime farmland. These areas act as natural buffers and help mitigate the impacts of urbanization, maintaining ecological balance.

## Challenges and Pressures

The County faces challenges to preserving prime farmland, including:

- **Urban Expansion:** The encroachment of development, aided by a relatively small minimum lot size allowed in the Rural Conservation Area, reduces the availability of prime farmland.
- **Market Pressures:** Economic factors, including land value and market demand, can incentivize landowners to sell or convert prime farmland for higher-value developments.

## Future Considerations

It is essential for Prince George County to balance growth with agricultural preservation. The comprehensive plan should reflect a commitment to protecting prime farmland while accommodating reasonable development. Ongoing evaluation and adaptation of strategies will be required to respond to changing conditions and ensure that prime farmland remains a vital part of the County's landscape.

By prioritizing the protection of prime farmland, the agricultural heritage of Prince George can be preserved, local farmers can be supported, and the overall sustainability and resilience of the region can be contributed to.



*Find Prime Farmland in Prince George County*

To view areas of prime farmland in Prince George County, visit the Virginia Natural Heritage Data Explorer at [vanhde.org](http://vanhde.org). This online tool allows users to explore prime agricultural lands and other natural resources.



## Tools for Land Conservation

To manage land use and protect rural areas, Prince George County can use various conservation tools to direct growth into the County's designated Planning Area.

### Conservation Easements

Conservation easements, legal agreements that restrict future development, preserve rural character and allow landowners to retain ownership while gaining tax benefits. Various managed conservation areas in Prince George County are owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF), and the County. In 2021, the ConserveVirginia initiative became law, guiding state investments in land conservation for optimal results. Landowners can work with conservation organizations to protect their land in exchange for tax incentives.

### Agricultural & Forestal Districts

Agricultural and Forestal Districts (AFDs) are rural preservation districts designated for the production of agricultural products, timber, and the maintenance of open space, serving as critical economic and environmental resources. Establishing an AFD is voluntary and initiated by a landowner or a group of landowners in collaboration with

local government. By creating such a district, property owners commit to maintaining their farm, forestland, and other open spaces without converting them to more intense commercial, industrial, or residential uses for a period of four to ten years. In return, the County and the Commonwealth agree not to implement actions or infrastructure investments that would pressure landowners to convert their land to more intensive uses during the district term.

Given the challenges the County faces in providing utility water and sewer infrastructure, establishing AFDs could be a beneficial strategy. This approach could help preserve rural character and prevent over-development, while also potentially offering financial and environmental advantages. For the County, AFDs could serve as a practical solution for maintaining open space and managing land use without the need for extensive infrastructure investments. This could be a valuable opportunity for rural preservation and managing growth in a way that aligns with the County's capabilities and goals.

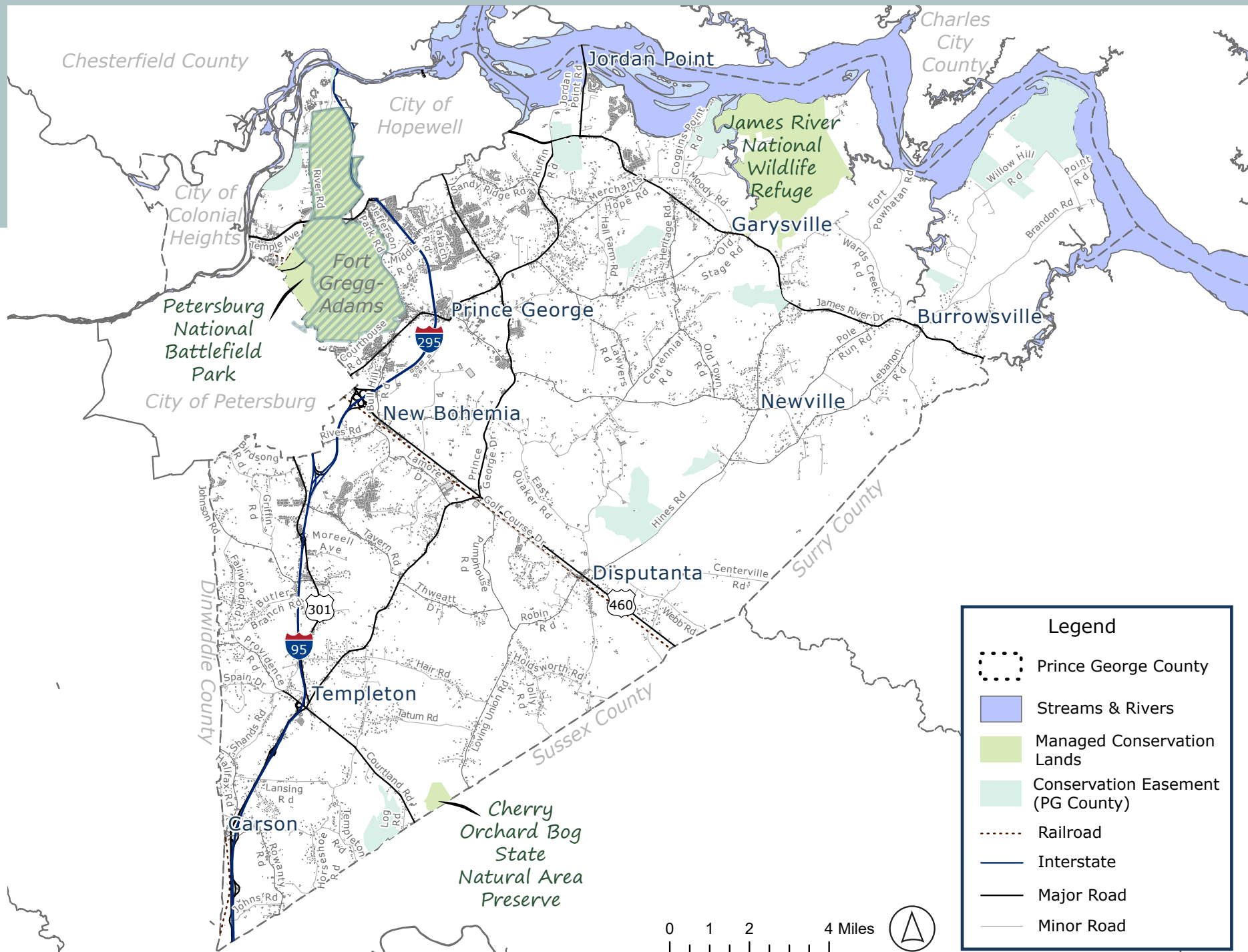
It is important to note that if an AFD program is enacted in the County, it would need to be regulated outside of the Zoning Ordinance, and the County would need to dedicate adequate staffing resources to effectively implement and administer the program.

## Use-Value Taxation Assessment

Land used for agricultural or forestry operations can be assessed and taxed based on its actual use rather than its fair market value. If minimum acreage requirements are met for certain uses (e.g., agriculture, horticulture, forestry, or open space), the land may qualify for use-value taxation. While this may lead to reduced revenue due to lower real estate tax assessments, the County can seek reimbursement through the Virginia Department of Forestry's Forest Sustainability Fund for Local Government to offset the lost revenue.

## Purchase of Development Rights Program

A Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program is a land conservation strategy available to localities that protects land from development while compensating landowners for the development rights associated with their property. Purchasing development rights equates to acquiring conservation easements or the portion of the "bundle of rights" that permits landowners to construct dwellings or non-farm commercial structures on the property. When development rights are purchased by a locality from a landowner, the right to develop the land is acquired and then retired by placing a permanent conservation easement on the property, thereby restricting further development. These easements are typically perpetual. Prince George County could consider establishing a PDR program or working with local non-profits such as Land Trusts to establish a program.



Map 3-3: Managed Conservation Lands and Conservation Easements



## Historic Resources

Prince George County, Virginia, is steeped in history dating back to the early colonial period. Established in 1703 from Charles City County and named in honor of Prince George of Denmark, the region holds a deep connection to its past, from its Native American heritage—primarily the Appomattox tribe, part of the Powhatan Confederacy—to its colonial and Civil War-era significance.

Despite this rich history, many of the County's historic sites are not fully recognized or protected locally. Although 56 sites have been identified by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), including 11 listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register or the National Register of Historic Places, there remains an opportunity to expand and diversify the historical narrative of the county through a more targeted inventory and recognition program. Since no comprehensive historic resources survey of the County has ever been undertaken, conducting a survey could reveal overlooked or underrepresented aspects of the County's history and provide better local protection for these valuable cultural assets. The DHR Cost Share program could assist with the costs of this survey, making it a viable option for enhancing the county's historical preservation efforts.



**Martin's Brandon Church (1850):** An example of Renaissance-Revival architecture, one of the oldest parishes in Virginia.

**Evergreen Plantation (1850s):** Associated with the Ruffin family, one of the principal plantations along the James River.

**Flowerdew Hundred Plantation (1621):** One of the oldest and most historic plantations on the James River, site of the first windmill in the United States.

**Hatch Archaeological Site (8000 B.C. – 1700 A.D.):** Contains deposits from the Archaic, Woodland, and early colonial periods.

**Merchant's Hope Church (1655):** A well-preserved example of colonial brickwork.

**Upper Brandon Plantation (1617):** One of Virginia's largest and most significant plantation houses with consistent land cultivation since the 1650s.

**Aberdeen Farm:** A late 18th to early 19th-century plantation house on a 378-acre farm.

**Chester Plantation:** A Greek Revival style plantation house constructed by Williamson Simmons.

**County Courthouse Complex:** Contains eleven historically significant contributing structures dating back to the 1870s.

**Church of the Sacred Heart Parish (1906):** Built for the Czech and Slovak immigrant population.

An aerial photograph of a river winding through a dense forest. The trees are in various stages of autumn, showing shades of green, yellow, orange, and red. The sky is overcast with soft, diffused light. The text is overlaid on the image.

## NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL

Prince George County  
**WILL** steward ITS NATURAL  
& CULTURAL RESOURCES  
for future generations by  
protecting the natural  
environment, preserving  
rural and historic assets, and

# Strategies

## **Preserve environmental quality, protect ecological systems, and reduce impacts on sensitive areas.**

- 1** Use zoning regulations, conservation easements, and environmental impact assessments to steer development away from ecological cores, migration corridors, and sensitive areas. Green infrastructure, public education, and conservation incentives further support this effort.
- 2** Promote green infrastructure to preserve and connect natural habitats, supporting wildlife. This includes creating greenways, wildlife corridors, living shorelines, integrating green roofs, permeable pavements, and encouraging native plant landscaping.
- 3** The County should actively promote and support landowner collaboration with local organizations to access cost-share opportunities for implementing Low Impact Development (LID) and Best Management Practices (BMPs). By providing resources, technical assistance, and information on funding, the county can help landowners apply LID and stormwater BMPs tailored to their sites. These practices will reduce nonpoint source pollution in local waterways and contribute to overall environmental sustainability. The County can also serve as a liaison between landowners and relevant organizations to ensure effective implementation of these strategies.
- 4** Maintain an outdoor lighting ordinance with design and performance standards to enhance safety and protect dark skies, in line with recommendations from the International Dark Sky Association.
- 5** Strengthen performance standards for ground-mounted solar energy systems, by implementing measures to protect landscapes, limit clear-cutting, specify native vegetation, and increase buffer widths.

# STRATEGIES

## **Enhance community resilience to hazards and promote sustainability.**

- 6** Work with regional partners to update and implement the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan strategies for Prince George County.
- 7** Update the floodplain management ordinance to reflect new flood maps and incorporate the latest best practices, ensuring development and infrastructure are better protected from flood risks.
- 8** Amend existing ordinances and policies to encourage the installation of solar panels on existing impervious surfaces, such as rooftops and parking lots, and discourage solar development as a land use in wooded or agricultural areas.
- 9** Consider participating in FEMA's Community Rating System to enhance flood resiliency, reduce flood insurance premiums for property owners, and promote sound floodplain management practices across the County.
- 10** Promote and incentivize green building certifications, energy efficiency, and renewable energy sources for new developments and existing retrofits.

# STRATEGIES

## Preserve agricultural lands, rural character, and cultural resources.

- 11** Consider increasing the minimum lot size in the Rural Conservation Area to reduce suburbanization and better preserve the area's rural districts.
- 12** Consider establishing a local Agricultural and Forestal District program specifically within the Rural Conservation Area to preserve valuable agricultural and silvicultural lands, ensuring that development is directed away from these critical areas.
- 13** Maintain use-value taxation criteria in the Rural Conservation Area to support the long-term viability of agricultural, horticultural, and forestal operations, helping to sustain rural economies and landscapes.
- 14** Utilize the Virginia Department of Forestry's Forest Sustainability Fund to compensate for reduced tax revenue resulting from forestland use taxation in the Rural Conservation Area.
- 15** Consider creating a Purchase of Development Rights program targeted at permanently protecting rural lands in the Rural Conservation Area, safeguarding them from future development pressures.
- 16** Discourage development on prime farmland.
- 17** Conduct a survey of unlisted historic sites to assess their eligibility for inclusion on the Virginia Landmarks Register and/or National Register of Historic Places.

Begin

**TAB 4**

# 4 COMMUNITY RESOURCES





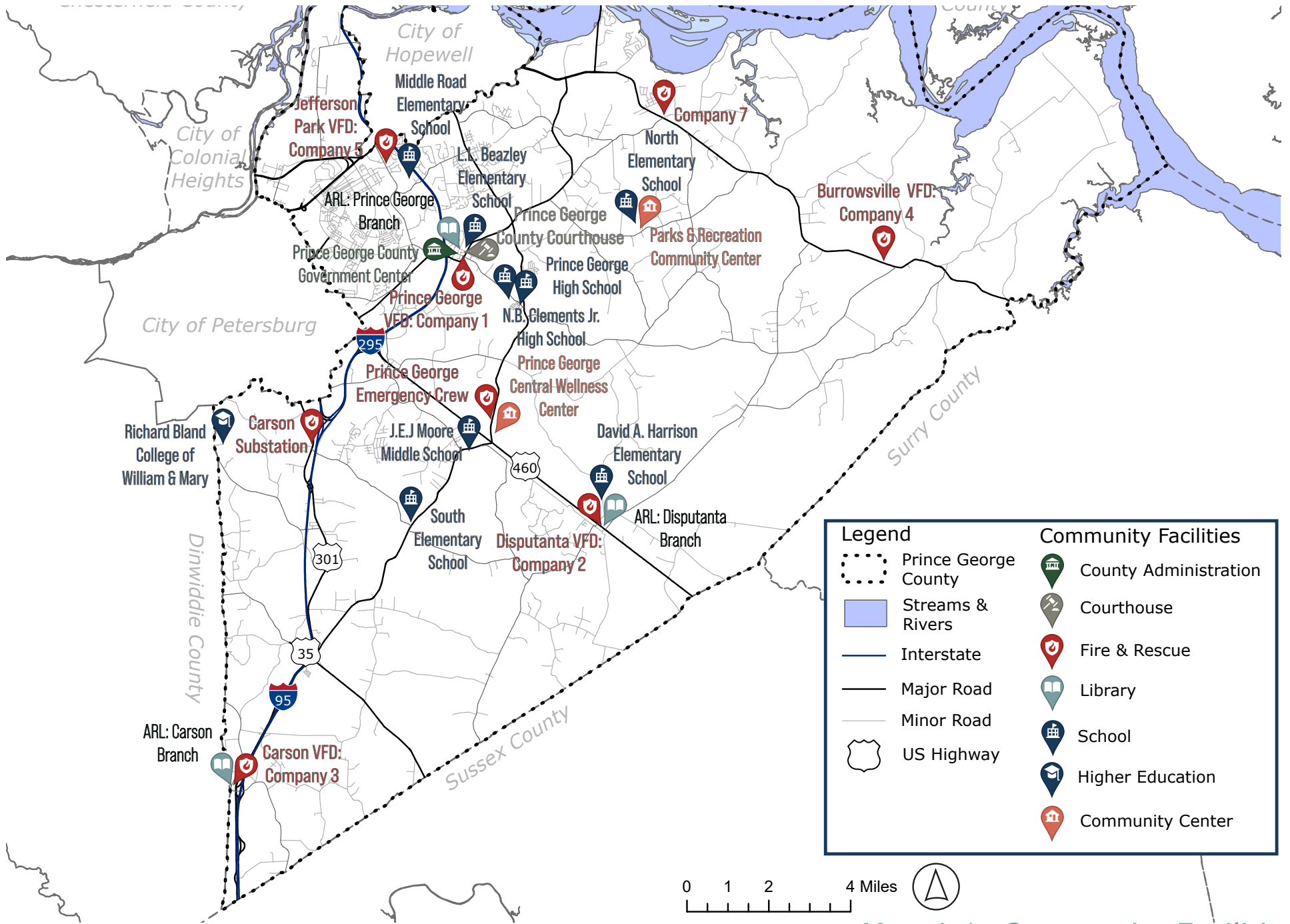
# PRINCE GEORGE 2045

## IN THIS CHAPTER

- PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY & EMERGENCY RESPONSE
- EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES
- PARKS & RECREATION
- GOVERNANCE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The primary function of any local government is to provide its citizens with the services needed for their community to thrive. Resources such as physical facilities (parks, schools, libraries) give people places to meet and recreate, infrastructure (utilities, broadband) connect people and places, and service networks (fire, EMS, social services) provide the community with vital and life saving assistance. The investment that local governments and regional partners make in these community resources is a direct reflection of the community's values.

Public engagement and data collection, conducted as part of Plan development, identified key issues and opportunities regarding community resources in Prince George. As the County continues to grow, additional investment in these resources is needed to ensure a high quality of service to the community. This Chapter of the Plan details how the County will continue to improve upon its services and resources to address community needs. The strategies in this chapter provide actionable steps to meet growing service demand, improve upon existing infrastructure, and capitalize upon unique opportunities that bolster the health, safety, and quality of life of the Prince George community.



Map 4-1: Community Facilities

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

## Improve Public, Health, Safety & Emergency Response

The County provides emergency response services through a Fire and Emergency Medical Response Department, as well as two law enforcement departments. Aging equipment and facilities, an overall decline in volunteerism, and an increase in the overall emergency call volume must be addressed to continue effective operations of these services.

## Ensure Education Opportunities Meet the Needs of a Growing Population

Education for Prince George students begins in a fully accredited public school system with secondary education opportunities available through Richard Bland College of William and Mary. Demographic data from the last Census shows a decrease in the average age of Prince George County residents, indicating that more young people and families are living in the County. This demographic shift could lead to additional strain upon the education system. Continued investment in the education system, including early education, should meet the needs of this growing and shifting population.

## Better Connect the Community to Recreation Opportunities

Prince George County is uniquely situated along the Appomattox and James Rivers, offering the community exceptional access to the natural environment and recreation amenities. Currently, access to these natural resources is limited. Increasing access to the County's waterways, adding parks, and connecting recreation sites with trails will benefit the health and quality of life of the Prince George community.

## Improve Governance & Modernize Community Facilities

As the County continues to grow, improving government efficiency and upgrading facilities are essential for enhancing the overall effectiveness of public services, ensuring that government meets the needs of its citizens in a timely, cost-effective, and transparent manner.



### *NEED MORE INFORMATION?*

A complete Community Profile, detailing Prince George County's demographics, community amenities, and infrastructure, is available in the appendix of this document.

This chapter highlights the key issues and opportunities that inform the targeted strategies included in this Plan.



## IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY & EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Investing in community health, safety, and emergency response is critical for building resilient communities that can effectively protect and support their citizens. Proactive investments in public health and safety help prevent large-scale crises, aid in disaster recovery, and can promote economic development. Additionally, a healthy, safe, and well-protected community is more likely to attract businesses and residents.

Prince George County is growing and the need for improved and expanded public safety to meet demand is crucial. Data and public engagement responses highlight a critical need for additional healthcare facilities and emergency response capability in the community. Key areas of focus for community health, safety, and emergency response include Fire & EMS, Public Safety & Law Enforcement, and Health & Wellness Services.

### Section Sources

Prince George County, United States Census Bureau 2020 Census, FBI Crime Data Explorer



## Fire & EMS

In a growing locality, the need for adequate emergency response becomes increasingly critical. Without adequate expansion of emergency services, existing resources become strained, leading to longer response times, overworked personnel, and less effective outcomes. Call volume in Prince George continues to increase on an annual basis. This increase has fluctuated over the years with the highest increase in 2021 of 17% at 5,031 total calls and the smallest increase in 2023 of 1% at 5,105 total calls. As the County grows and call volumes increase, ensuring that funding and resource allocation keep pace with population growth is crucial for maintaining service quality. Prince George Fire & EMS are constantly evaluating the response, facilities, apparatus, and staffing needs for the Department.

## Staffing Needs

Adequate staffing is an urgent need. Most apparatus respond with one to two people - well below the national standard. This impacts service delivery and places first responders and staff at a higher risk of injury. Response times vary per station and staffing model. In general, career stations have a quicker response time compared to volunteer stations. As the community continues to grow in both residential and commercial spaces, more staff will be needed to maintain and improve response times. Adding incentives, such as free training programs, student loan repayment programs, or payment on a per call basis, can help in attracting volunteers and career personnel, and increasing staffing.

## Apparatus Needs

Emergency response apparatus poses daily challenges. Ongoing maintenance and unplanned repairs associated with age, use, and call volume have increased significantly. With the increase of repairs and units out of service, it has been necessary to move units around the County to ensure that each station has the equipment it needs to respond to call. This often leads to unnecessary down time, lack of familiarization with units, or a decrease in services. The current fleet needs immediate replacement to remain operationally ready.



## PRINCE GEORGE COUNTY DISPATCH CENTER

The Prince George County Dispatch Center is located at the Government Center in Prince George. The Center receives, processes, and dispatches all calls for police, fire, EMS, and animal services for Prince George County. The Dispatch Center has been chronically understaffed compared to similar jurisdictions' call volumes and staffing.

Longer call response times in rural portions of the County were identified as an issue during public engagement for this Plan. As the County continues to grow, the volume of 911 and non-emergency request calls increases, with over 5,000 calls per year. Continued investment into the dispatch center is important to maintain a high level of emergency response and coordination to the County.

## Facility Needs

There are currently eight emergency response stations located throughout Prince George County that respond to 911 dispatch calls and provide the community with emergency fire and medical services. These are operated by the Prince George County Fire & EMS Department which staffs full-time paid personnel and volunteer responders. All stations, apart from Station 1 and 2 which only houses fire response, have both fire and EMS response capabilities.

To help meet growth demand, the County recently constructed two new fire and EMS stations, one in the eastern portion of the County near James River Drive in 2022 and another in the village of Prince George in 2023, that replaced existing stations. Plans to build Station 9 have been researched and discussed but not yet planned. Continued expansion and repair of existing and construction of new facilities are needed to keep up with call volumes and improve response times.



## Emergency Response Station Needs

Station	Improvements Needed
1. Courthouse Road, Prince George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger Facilities</li> </ul>
2. County Drive, Disputanta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Staffing &amp; Equipment</li> </ul>
3. Halifax Road, Carson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Staffing &amp; Equipment</li> </ul>
4. James River Drive, Disputanta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Staffing &amp; Equipment</li> </ul>
5. Jefferson Park Road, Prince George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Staffing &amp; Equipment</li> </ul>
6. South Crater Road, South Prince George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent Facilities</li> </ul>
7. Moody Road, North Prince George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Staffing &amp; Equipment</li> </ul>
8. Prince George Drive, Disputanta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Staffing &amp; Equipment</li> </ul>



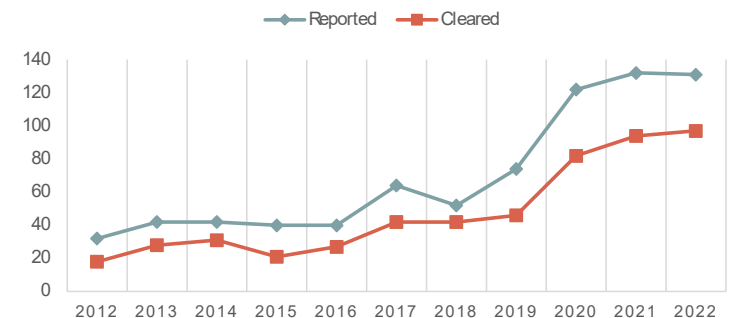
## Public Safety & Law Enforcement

Successful law enforcement is key to ensuring the safety, health, and well-being of a community. Prince George ensures the public safety of the community through both a Police Department and Sheriff's Office, one of only nine counties throughout the Commonwealth to have both. Crime statistics show an increase in violent crime in the County. During public engagement, the Prince George community identified safety as one of its top priorities for the future of the County, second only to the preservation of rural character.

As the County moves forward, investing in its law enforcement services should be a top priority. Strategies for improving community safety and increasing response times to under-served portions of the County include increasing patrols or creating satellite police stations.

Alternative and possibly more cost-effective measures include providing law enforcement officers with better technologies and resources, community policing, education, and preventative measures to help lower the need for additional officers. Through a combination of additional resources and innovative technologies, Prince George can work to ensure the continued safety of residents.

## SUMMARY OF REPORTED CRIME 2012-2022



*Figure 4-1: Violent Crimes Over Time*

\*This chart displays the number of violent crimes that were reported to the Prince George County Police Department from 2012-2022 and does not take into account unreported crimes or instances responded to by another agency (such as the Virginia State Police).



## Health & Wellness Services

Healthcare is vitally important for the community’s quality of life and is a direct component of regional economic development. Healthcare can be an economic engine in itself – it can support the growth of other economic assets, business investment, and residential growth depending on the quality and variety of available services.

Currently there is no hospital located in Prince George County, however Bon Secours in Petersburg and TriCities Hospital in Hopewell are located nearby. In 2021 there was one primary care physician (health providers that cover a range of prevention, wellness, and treatment for common illnesses) per 6,130 people in Prince George. There was one dentist per 2,700 people in the County in 2022, but this trend has shown remarkable improvement since 2010, when it was 9,000:1. However, it is still higher than state and national ratios.

While primary care providers found in nearby localities may be sufficient for some, the lack of primary health

care providers within the County is a challenge for many community members, especially those without a reliable means of long range transportation or those located in the rural areas of the County. Community engagement identified the need for additional healthcare options including primary care, specialists, telehealth, and mental health professionals. Attracting primary and outpatient health care facilities within the County should be a priority to meet the needs of current and future residents.

Clinical Care	Prince George	Virginia	United States
Primary Care (2021)	6130:1	1340:1	1330:1
Dentists (2022)	2700:1	1330:1	1360:1
Mental Health Providers (2023)	810:1	410:1	320:1

*Figure 4-2: Clinical Care Ratios*



## ENSURE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES MEET THE NEEDS OF A GROWING POPULATION

Education is the cornerstone of a thriving community. Investments in education drive improvement and progress in all aspects of society. A well-educated community sees more civic participation, reduced crime, better health outcomes, and increased economic prosperity. Education shapes informed and engaged citizens who contribute to the overall well-being of a community.

Investment in Prince George County's education system is an investment in the community's future. During public engagement, the community identified education as its second highest priority for the County's future. Improving the community's education opportunities includes all stages of education: day care and early education, K through 12, higher education, and career services.

### Section Sources

Prince George County, United States Census Bureau 2020 Census, Appomattox Regional Library System



### Early Education & Community Education Resources

Childcare and early education are essential services that benefit individual children, families, and society as a whole. The benefits of early education programs include cognitive and social development for the child, school readiness and preparation, and economic benefits to working families and area businesses. The availability of childcare is often a deciding factor for families looking to locate to an area. Data related to childhood social outcomes shows that Prince George ranks close to, or better, than the state and nation in all categories except number of childcare centers. Prince George has three childcare centers per 1,000 children under the age of 5, while the state and nation have seven per 1,000. The demand for childcare will track with population growth. Attracting childcare providers will be critical to the future economic success of the County. The County can promote the establishment of childcare centers through public-private partnerships or collaborations with community organizations, providing training and business development support, and public awareness campaigns.

Prince George County hosts three branches of the Appomattox Regional Library (ARLS), one located in the village of Prince George, another in Disputanta, and the third in Carson on the Dinwiddie County border. Libraries often serve as community hubs in rural locations, and Prince George’s libraries are no different. ARLS facilities provide resources, services, educational programming, and meeting spaces for residents of all ages. Continued partnership with ARLS is important to ensuring equitable access to these services and increasing the range of services offered to residents.

Childcare Factors Comparison	Prince George	Virginia	United States
Children in Poverty, Percentage of People Under Age 18	12%	13%	16%
Children in Single-Parent Households	29%	24%	25%
Child Care Centers per 1,000 Population Under Age 5	3	7	7

Figure 4-3: Childcare Factors Comparison



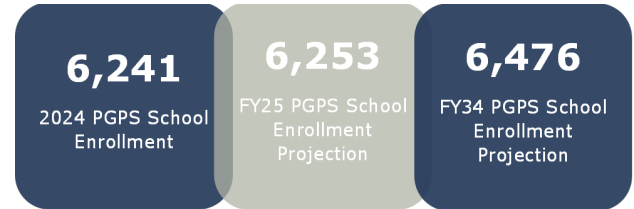
## K-12 Education

The County is proud to have one of the top public school systems in the Commonwealth with full accreditation and a 93.3% on-time graduation rate. Currently, there are two high schools, one middle school, and five elementary schools in the County. The system is also a member of four regional schools that provide unique educational experiences for students through the Appomattox Regional Governor’s School, Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School, CodeRVA Regional High School, and Rowanty Technical Center. While no private schools are currently located within the County, these options are available in nearby localities.

With County population projected to grow, enrollment in these institutions will also likely increase. Indeed, the school system is already feeling the pressure of population growth, with new construction projects planned or needed for most of its facilities. These projects include building a new high

school for grades 9 – 12 and moving grades 6 – 8 into the current high school. L.L. Beazley is at the end of its useful life, while all four elementary schools need larger playgrounds with more equipment. Additional plans include repurposing J.E.J. Moore as an elementary school.

These capital improvements as well as staffing and instructional needs are reflected in The Prince George County Public Schools’ Comprehensive Plan 2022 - 27. The School Comprehensive Plan should be regularly reviewed with the County’s Comprehensive Plan and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for consistency and to ensure education investment are meeting the needs of the community.



### *Prince George Public School System*

- » Prince George High School
- » N.B. Clements Junior High School
- » J.E.J. Moore Middle School
- » David A. Harrison Elementary School
- » L.L. Beazley Elementary School
- » Middle Road Elementary School
- » North Elementary School
- » South Elementary School
- » Prince George Education Center



## Higher & Career Education

Throughout public engagement, community members identified job creation and workforce training as opportunities for additional community investment. The relationship between higher education, career education, and economic development is dynamic and interdependent. Educational institutions prepare workers for employment, whether it be knowledge-based or technical. Communities with robust higher and career education programs are attractive to new businesses due to their ability to supply industries with trained workers.

Prince George students seeking higher education have options in nearby Chester Community and Career College, Virginia State University, in Petersburg, and Richard Bland College of William and Mary located in Prince George. Maintaining a successful partnership with these institutions and the Prince George County Public Schools can

greatly benefit students by offering dual enrollment programs, tuition assistance, scholarship opportunities, and easing the transition for students into higher education. Programs offered in partnership with these institutions should continue to be improved upon and made readily available to students.

Prince George County also offers quality career and technical education through the Rowanty Technical Center, located in Carson, and an alternative education program with the Prince George Education Center. The County should continue to monitor enrollment and evaluate program facilities to ensure programs are meeting the needs of the community. Prince George County should also keep the community informed of training and job placement services offered by the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) to help further community members career development.



## Higher and Alternative Education Opportunities

- » Rowanty Technical Center
- » Prince George Education Center
- » Chester Community and Career College
- » Virginia State University
- » Richard Bland College of William and Mary



## BETTER CONNECT THE COMMUNITY TO RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Access to nature and parks offers a wide range of physical, mental, social, and environmental benefits. Prince George County is blessed with an abundance of open space, natural resources, parks, and recreation areas - locally, state and federally designated. These unique assets occupy a key role in the community's landscape and should be protected and enhanced so they can continue to benefit the community.

Public engagement conducted during the creation of this Plan showed that the Prince George community highly values the rural character and natural environment of the County.

Residents have a desire to protect these resources from further development while increasing connection and access to parks and recreational opportunities afforded by the natural resources of the County. Better connecting the community to recreation opportunities includes looking at structured and passive recreation assets with a focus on creating access to natural areas such as the James and Appomattox Rivers.

### Section Sources

Prince George County, United States Census Bureau 2020 Census



## Parks & Recreation

The Prince George County Parks and Recreation Department maintains all of the County owned parks and facilities, which include three parks, an athletic field, a wellness center, and a community center. The department also provides programs and services to the community including, but not limited to, youth and adult sports, day camps, athletic fields and programs, adult classes, special events, and senior citizen activities.

The County's flagship recreation facility is Scott Memorial Park. A master plan for the park was completed in 2019, with implementation to be determined in 2024. The Plan expands the vision for the park to include sports tourism, outdoor adventure, education, and community amenities. With many acres of undeveloped land, the site will be able to expand its scope to include soccer field improvements, a ball diamond complex, community park amenities such as ball courts, splash

pad, playground, a fishing pond, a ropes adventure course, outdoor classroom and wetlands interpretive area, trails and community access, and space for a future elementary school.

In addition to County maintained facilities, there are several federal and regional park facilities in the County. The James River National Wildlife Refuge and the Petersburg National Battlefield Park are federally owned areas that allow for some recreational opportunity, including hiking and bicycling. The Appomattox River Regional Park, part of the regional Appomattox River Trail, a project of the Friends of the Lower Appomattox River (FOLAR), provides the community with hiking along and access to the Appomattox River.



## *Prince George Parks and Recreation*

- » Scott Memorial Park
- » Moore Athletic Fields
- » Temple Recreation Park
- » Prince George Wellness Center
- » Appomattox River Regional Park
- » Petersburg National Battlefield Park
- » James River National Wildlife Refuge
- » Prince George Community Center
- » Prince George Central Wellness Center

Currently, public access to the James and the Appomattox Rivers is limited, with much of the riverfront property privately owned. Public engagement revealed that the community desires hiking, biking, swimming, and boating access along the rivers as well as trails connecting existing and new recreation amenities. The County should partner with organizations to help create access points and trails through shared-use or recreation easements or direct acquisition.

Continued investment into County recreation services and partnerships with regional facilities is an important part of maintaining the health and well-being of the Prince George community. As the County grows, additional investment in new parks and recreation programs may be warranted, both to serve larger

numbers of residents as well as under-served areas of the County. Current under-served areas include Disputanta, Templeton, and Carson. Prioritizing access to the County's waterways as well as biking and hiking trails will not only benefit current residents, but can draw visitors and increase tourism in the County. All of these opportunities should be thoroughly evaluated in a County-wide Parks and Recreation Master Plan.



Scott Park Master Plan



## IMPROVE GOVERNANCE & MODERNIZE FACILITIES

The ability of Prince George to effectively govern, communicate with, and provide services for County residents is directly tied to adequate staffing and facility conditions. As the County looks to the future, it must proactively plan for modernization and upkeep of facilities and the provision of resources in order for staff to meet the service demands of a growing community. Recent plans and progress reports highlight

the many achievements of the County, but data gathering and engagement during this planning process also revealed shortcomings such as long project review times and deferred maintenance that must be addressed in order to achieve the goals of Prince George 2045.

### Section Sources

Prince George County



## Governance

Prince George County has a board-manager form of government with a five-member Board of Supervisors that hires the County Administrator. The Administrator oversees 17 County departments. The County's mission statement prioritizes providing high-quality and customer-focused public services for a safe, enjoyable, and thriving community. The County's Strategic Plan lists public water and sewer infrastructure as its first priority and sets benchmark service goals to be met by 2028. The Plan also includes benchmarks for high-speed internet and trash disposal. The 2023 Annual Performance Report boasts on-target progress toward these goals.

With the pressure of population growth Department heads are managing a growing number of employees and workload. The County is behind targets for hiring staff in the Departments of Social Services, Police, Fire, and Emergency Services. An Organizational Review and Staffing Level Study was completed in February of 2023. The report recommends structural changes focused on achieving goals in the Prince George County Strategic Plan, meeting individual department goals, meeting the increases in demand for services, and enhancing the ability of the County to communicate effectively and transparently with citizens. Incorporating the report's recommendations is important to meeting the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

## Facilities

As Prince George County looks towards 2045, maintenance and improvements to County-owned facilities should be a priority to protect existing investments and keep pace with regulatory requirements, advancing technologies, and evolving resident needs. This includes:

- Keeping up with recurring maintenance;
- Incorporating preventative maintenance programs for County-owned facilities and equipment;
- Integrating cost-saving water and energy conservation practices;
- Incorporating climate-friendly technologies, such as energy generating technology, green roofs, permeable surfaces, and rain gardens;
- Ensuring emergency preparedness by providing emergency power and communications infrastructure at critical facilities; and
- Providing ADA improvements at facilities to support aging and disabled populations.

These actions will help the County to maintain a high level of services to the community as well as reduce operating maintenance costs and minimize negative impacts to sensitive ecological resources. Partnerships and grants may help offset costs for these improvements.



**COMMUNITY RESOURCES GOAL**

**Prince George County  
provides the highest  
levels of public service  
through investment  
in our community  
facilities, services, and  
people.**

# STRATEGIES

## Improve Public, Health, Safety & Emergency Response

- 1** Create a County-wide Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) strategic plan that can be regularly updated and maintained to address response time, facility, and staffing needs.
- 2** Reduce emergency response times with additional full-time staffed positions, or paid on call support. Incentivize paid staff through free training programs, student loan repayment programs, or payment on a per call basis.
- 3** Pursue the creation of a new Fire & EMS station in the rural areas of the County, such as near Templeton.
- 4** Continue to modernize and expand existing Fire & EMS facilities and resources.
- 5** Renovate and modernize current public safety facilities, including the Prince George Dispatch Center and correction facilities.
- 6** Create and update annually a Public Safety Plan to identify needs for additional staffing, facility maintenance, technology needs, community policing programs, and other resources.
- 7** Work with area providers to establish telehealth programs at community centers, libraries, and other community organization facilities.
- 8** Work with regional organizations to establish recruitment campaigns and incentives for primary care practices to locate in Prince George.

## Improve Governance & Modernize Facilities

- 9** Update the County's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to ensure major expenditures are coordinated with the goals and strategies included in the Comprehensive Plan.
- 10** Increase County staffing levels by recruiting additional full-time or part-time staff, outsourcing through contract staff positions, and providing more remote work positions.

# STRATEGIES

## Ensure Education Opportunities Meet the Needs of a Growing Population

**11** Ensure the public school facilities are properly maintained to provide state-of-the-art education, ensure student safety, and enhance community connections.

**12** Continue to promote, support, and provide ample funding for the Appomattox Regional Library System programs and services.

**13** Identify opportunities to expand programming and services of the Appomattox Regional Library System to better utilize these facilities as community centers.

**14** Increase the number of child care and early education facilities in the County through partnership with area organizations, recruitment campaigns, and incentives.

**15** Create local training and certification programs for childcare services through the public schools and career training programs.

**16** Bolster partnerships with local and regional industry and business leaders to offer job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, and other similar hands on educational opportunities to students and act as career pipelines into the local workforce.

**17** Support educational programs through County schools, community centers, community organizations, and regional community colleges to help prepare the community workforce for employment.

## Better Connect the Community to Recreation Amenities

**18** Create a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that identifies gaps in services and opportunities to expand recreation across the community.

**19** Work with local and regional organizations to create additional hiking and bicycling trails that connect to existing trail systems and parks.

**20** Partner with local and regional organizations, as well as private landowners, to increase access to the James and Appomattox Rivers.

**21** Explore options to provide access to a public swimming pool for the community, either through partnership with organizations or County ownership.