

2015 Achievement Awards Virginia Association of Counties

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2015.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Locality: Loudoun County, Virginia
Program Title: Dulles Community Outreach Program
Program Category: Community and Economic Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Tim Hemstreet
Title: County Administrator
Signature: 

Dulles Community Outreach Program

Abstract

The purpose of the project, directed by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, is to conduct a dialogue with citizens of the Dulles Community to identify neighborhood and community-wide priorities and to develop recommended strategies to aid in future planning and programmatic activities. The project includes both a comprehensive and inclusive process utilizing multiple platforms and media to reach and hear from the widest range of voices.

Combining traditional engagement strategies (surveys, community meetings, focus groups) with innovative new technologies (social media, web based forum Mind Mixer, crowdsourced mapping), the project aims to engage people where they are, be that in a community center or in front of their laptop or handheld device. This multifaceted approach maintains the dialogue throughout the project, even on weekends, rather than limiting it to meetings or questionnaires.

Perhaps the most exciting outreach strategy is crowdsourced mapping through the County's ArcGIS Online platform. An important step in the planning process is identifying a community's key characteristics. Using an interactive map on the project's website, stakeholders highlight areas that they would like to celebrate and accentuate (assets) and areas that they believe should be remedied (needs) using points, photos, and short descriptions, thus allowing stakeholders to communicate spatially and directly to the project team at any time. The final map will be used as an input to the community work sessions and the larger Dulles Community Outreach Project.

The Problem or Need for the Program

Through meetings, workshops, surveys and other participatory methods, the Loudoun County Department of Planning and Zoning provides opportunities for active citizen engagement and input regarding community and specific area planning and other strategic planning initiatives. The Department also conducts public outreach to increase the community's awareness and understanding of the County's land use planning and growth management policies, its administration of historic districts, and efforts to preserve and manage county heritage resources.

Public outreach is typically accomplished through community meetings. This requires the public to travel to a central location at a specific time. Often they cannot attend because of work or family commitments and they are, therefore, excluded from the process and denied an opportunity to voice their concerns.

Description of the Program

The context for the project illuminates its need and timing. The study area for the Dulles Community Outreach Project is the suburban policy portion of the larger Dulles Planning Subarea (see linked map), and the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors initiated the effort through its strategic plan. Engagement in this community follows on the heels of successful outreach projects completed over the last few years in the County's other suburban policy areas of Potomac/Sterling and Ashburn. The explosive growth in the suburban sections of Loudoun since the turn of the millennium precipitated the need for the County to approach the planning process proactively and with the wishes of citizens at the forefront of discussion. In the short term these projects engage a typically young and rapidly growing citizenry to think about the direction in which they would like their community to go. In the long term, the results of

all three outreach efforts will be used as inputs to a countywide comprehensive plan update, expected in the next few years.

Planning for the outreach effort began in the early autumn of 2014, with the establishment of a Planning and Zoning project committee. This group comprised staff members from the Community Information and Outreach and Community Planning Divisions. Building upon the successful approaches of previous projects and researching new avenues for enhanced engagement, this project committee laid the groundwork for the active outreach process set to begin in early 2015. In collaboration with other County departments such as Mapping and Geographic Information, Transportation and Capital Infrastructure, Loudoun County Public Schools, and multiple others, the team developed a multilayered structure guiding project execution. A foundational premise for the project is that, while it will be directed by the Department of Planning and Zoning, crucial guidance must be provided by other County departments throughout the process, as the recommendations arising from the effort will necessitate interdepartmental implementation. It was also during this period that the project team established a progressive process for outreach including traditional methods such as surveys, focus groups, and community work sessions combined with innovative methods including web based forums and crowdsourced mapping. Ultimately the intent is to provide as many avenues for stakeholders to provide input; input that builds upon itself in a refining process, producing thoroughly vetted and detailed community recommendations.

The final aspect of the planning process, and perhaps the most crucial, was developing networks of community partners who would support and spread the project outside of the walls of Loudoun County Government. Outreach is only as successful as the depth and diversity of your partnerships. Connecting with influential community stakeholders such as district supervisors, property managers, business leaders, the Dulles South Alliance, and Homeowners Associations (HOAs), the project team promoted

the purpose and potential of the effort in one on one interviews, HOA presentations, community meetings, business lunches, video, and social media. From November 2014 through January 2015, project team representatives attended 10 meetings of community organizations in the study area, including Homeowners Associations, Interfaith Groups, and non-profits. Presentations at these events informed the public about the project and built excitement for the kick-off event in late January 2015.

The active outreach phase of the project began on Thursday, January 22. That morning, project team members launched the Mind Mixer web-based forum, both the resident and business internet surveys, and crowdsourced mapping through Loudoun's ArcGIS Online platform. The day culminated in a Kick-Off Event at a cherished community facility, The Dulles South Multipurpose Center. Over 80 guests attended and celebrated the start of the process with a community map gallery, demonstrations of the electronic outreach methods, an existing conditions briefing, and a moving keynote address from Kevin Days, Associate Director of Operations for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The event sparked an enthusiastic response online, as stakeholders completed surveys in droves, Mind Mixer participants registered accounts and responded to topic questions, and community residents began expressing themselves spatially by adding assets and needs on the project's crowdsourced map.

Over the next two months, the project team maintained the energy established at the Kick-Off event. The very next week business leaders met to discuss the project and the community. Out of this meeting arose the desire for a transportation information session preceding the community work sessions. In partnership with the Dulles South Alliance, the project team conducted this meeting on March 12 at the Stone Ridge Clubhouse. That evening laid bare the community's concern over transportation, as the room quickly ran out of seats. Interested stakeholders stood along the walls listening to presentations from County, regional, and state transportation experts. Staff pounded the pavement as well,

disseminating flyers in person to businesses in the community, setting up informational tables at the Gum Spring Library and at a local grocery store, attending Chamber of Commerce breakfasts, and reaching out to non-profits and service agencies in the community. During this period, the partnership with Loudoun County Public Schools also yielded extremely valuable feedback. LCPS staff in the study area spread word of the surveys, and the three high schools serving the community supported the project by setting up focus groups with local youth, thus providing the project team with insight from the stakeholders who will inherit Dulles. And throughout these two months, the dialogue overcame traditional restraints, as ideas presented online bolstered face to face communications, and vice versa.

This dialogue laid the foundation for the community work sessions, which began in late March 2015 and continued through the end of April. At these sessions, project staff presented the results of the surveys, focus groups, and the web based forum, synthesizing themes that served as conversation starters for small break out groups. In these groups, County experts from Planning and Zoning, Transportation, and Schools facilitated detailed discussions about the future of the Dulles Community. Using resources such as the existing conditions report, planned transportation improvements, a retail development map, the Community Needs Assessment, and a printed version of the crowdsourced assets and needs map, groups developed their long range vision for the community. Through a four session process, participants designed detailed spatial recommendations on study area maps, which will be combined for a final work shop map to be included in the consensus report.

As the project progressed into its later phases, the conversation did not stop. Ideas developed during the work sessions became Mind Mixer topics. Assets and needs indicated during the break out groups were added to the crowdsourced map. In partnership with the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services, Staff conducted a senior focus group at the Dulles South Multipurpose Center in late April. In between work sessions two and three, an interdepartmental staff team met to discuss the

survey, focus group, electronic outreach, and community work session results in a continuous loop of refinement and reinforcement meant to deepen the dialogue towards the realization of community recommendations built upon consensus. The last meeting witnessed the business leadership group coming together at a study area restaurant to analyze the business survey results and develop recommendations for economic development in Dulles

Finally, upon the conclusion of the active outreach phase of the project, The Dulles Community Outreach planning team will use the partnerships, electronic communications, and analytical data arising from the eight month effort to galvanize an actionable recommendations report. They will then elicit feedback from stakeholders, again utilizing a varied approach through traditional and electronic modes of communication. Rough drafts will be improved, and an excitement for implementation cultivated online and in the friendly interactions between neighbors. In the end, it will be the partnerships and networks of internal and external community advocates ensuring the success of the recommendations. The innovative methodology, while significant for project efficacy, is only a tool for facilitating the most profound method of community change and development; open minds, open ears, and creative expression.

Use of Technology

The County used ArcGIS Online to store and display the mapped features. The mobile application is a free download from Esri's web site. County staff created a custom web service with a simple pick list of assets or needs, and also created a GeoForm which the public could use to enter points and comments from their home computers. The underlying base map was created using County data served through Esri's Community Base Map. However, significant use of technology was not limited to the County. By

harnessing the technology of mobile devices and home computers, the project accessed information that it could not gathered on its own.

Cost of the Program

The cost of the program is minimal; the only costs came from staff time. The ArcGIS licenses are bundled with the licenses for the County's GIS software and do not add any additional cost. The Community base map takes about two hours to pre-process before sending to Esri. This is a once a year event that costs approximately \$131. The base map use is spread out over many different applications, however, and the cost to this program is \$5.25. The public uses their personal smart phones and computers to participate at no cost to the County.

There were one- time costs associated with setting up the web page of \$161, and post processing the data of \$600.

The Results/Success of the Program

It is too early to say what the true results/success of the program have been, as they will not be realized until if and when the Loudoun Board of Supervisors approves community recommendations through the comprehensive planning process. However, if one measures success through the level of engagement itself, the program has exceeded expectations. While only a portion of the story, the numbers below highlight the magnitude and breadth of the outreach effort. They will only continue to rise, as the active outreach phase of the project extends into the spring for another month and a half.

Completed Surveys: 825

Community Meeting Attendance: Approximately 225

Youth Focus Group Participants: 23

Senior Focus Group Participants: 11

Mind Mixer Participants: 67

Crowdsourced Map Attributes: 88

Facebook Likes: 160

Twitter Followers: 68

Stakeholders on Email Distribution List (emails gained from sign in sheets at meeting and presentations and through an open ended response of the resident survey): 385

YouTube Video Views: 728 views

Media Articles: 4 (Washington Post, Ashburn rising, Leesburg Today, Viva Loudoun)

Radio Interviews: WTOP on April 23

The success of this program is exemplified by the energy it has sparked in the Dulles Community.

Staff cultivates this energy through a persistent dedication and open lines of communication.

Stakeholders contact the project team on a regular basis and we provide weekly updates via email and

Mind Mixer. From the staff's perspective, the relationships we establish and maintain with community stakeholders, ranging from the new homeowner to the major developer, reinforce why we even reach out in the first place. Their persistent "thank you" and "oh that is interesting" comments remind us that our research and efforts are appreciated. In an outreach effort, relationships are everything, and these relationships will make implementation of the final recommendations more likely and the project more successful.

This project will also foster benefits internal to Loudoun County Government. The interdepartmental relationships strengthen not only the project, but also the larger structure and cohesion of the County. Experts representing the spectrum of departments have met and will continue to meet to discuss not only the project study area, but also improved processes and larger strategic goals. The result will be that greater communication leads to greater communication. This effort will also serve as a prototype for future Loudoun County engagement. The Dulles Community Outreach Project is the first one in the County to utilize such a broad spectrum of innovative technological methods to reach and communicate with the community. It is serving as a model for potential further integration of internet based outreach strategies. County staff will build upon what worked, and modify what lacked. What is not in question is that this project has changed how Loudoun County perceives outreach, both as a strategy and a mindset.

Worthiness of Award

The project is worthy of this award because of its low cost, easy accessibility for both County Staff and public stakeholders, and inclusiveness (allows the entire community to participate). The technology produces results that are immediately viewable by everyone, satisfying the common need for recognition and encouraging participants to visit the site again. Ultimately, the methods and technology used create a community dialogue that overcomes traditional barriers to communication. Because of its low cost, it could easily be implemented by other localities to likewise engage their communities.

Supplemental Materials

Dulles Community Outreach Map Viewer

<http://loudoungis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/SimpleViewer/index.html?appid=3df453aabd76459b9b8da19a249a25ab>

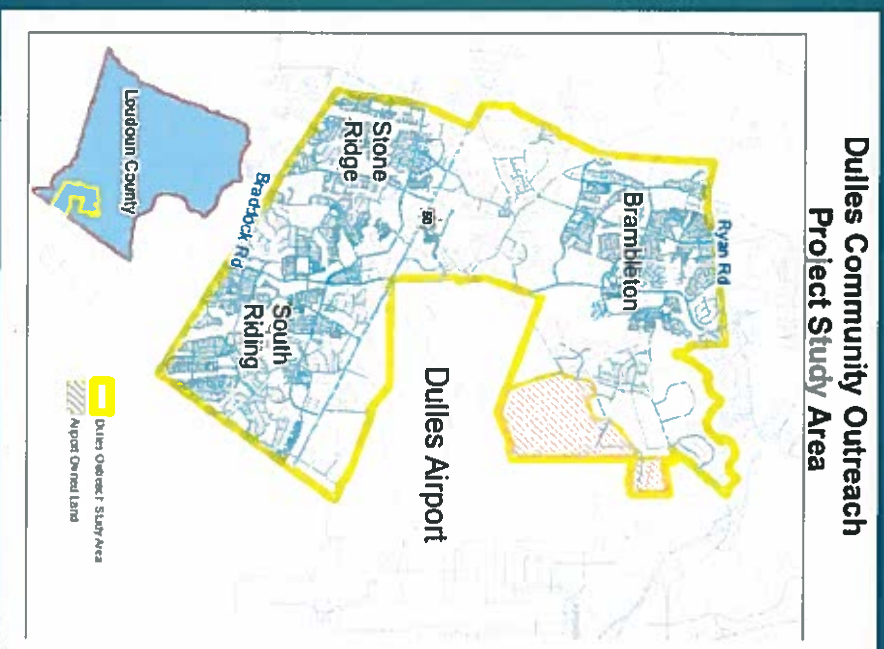
Photo of community meeting

Dulles Community Outreach Presentation



Dulles Community Outreach Project

WORK SESSION
MARCH 26, 2015
STONE HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL



Agenda

6:00 – 6:10 p.m. Welcome and Project Background

6:10 – 6:30 p.m. Outreach Results Presentation

Clicker Activity

Breakout Instructions

**6:30 – 7:20 p.m. Breakout Session
Group Discussions**

7:30 – 7:50 p.m. Report Back

7:50 – 8:00 p.m. Wrap-Up and Next Steps





Examine the survey, focus group, and electronic outreach results

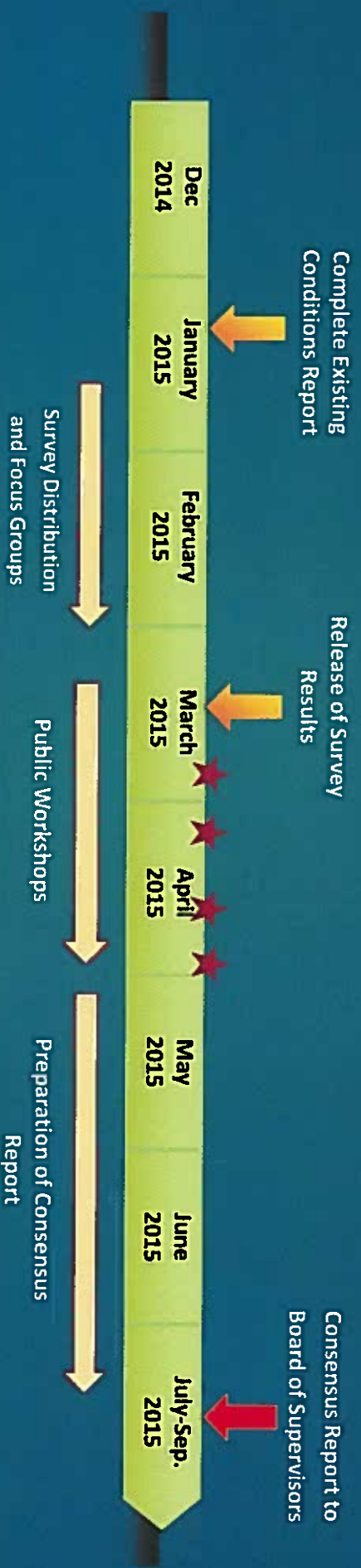
Session Objectives

Get feedback on project progress

Respond to survey themes and begin designing a vision of the future Dulles Community



Dulles Community Outreach Project: Timeline



★ Community Work Sessions

Methods of gathering information will include resident and business surveys, public workshops, online engagement, and targeted focus groups

Methods of communicating will include the project's web page, social media outlets, interactive events, flyers, advertisements, and public access television.

Work Session Structure



All are on *Thursday* evenings from 6-8 PM

ROUND 1

1. March 26: Stone Hill Middle School 23415 Evergreen Ridge Dr. Ashburn, Va 20148
2. **April 9: Mercer Middle School 42149 Greenstone Dr. Aldie, Va 20105**

ROUND 2

1. April 23: Stone Hill Middle School (Follow up to March 26 Meeting)
2. April 30: Mercer Middle School (Follow up to April 9 Meeting)

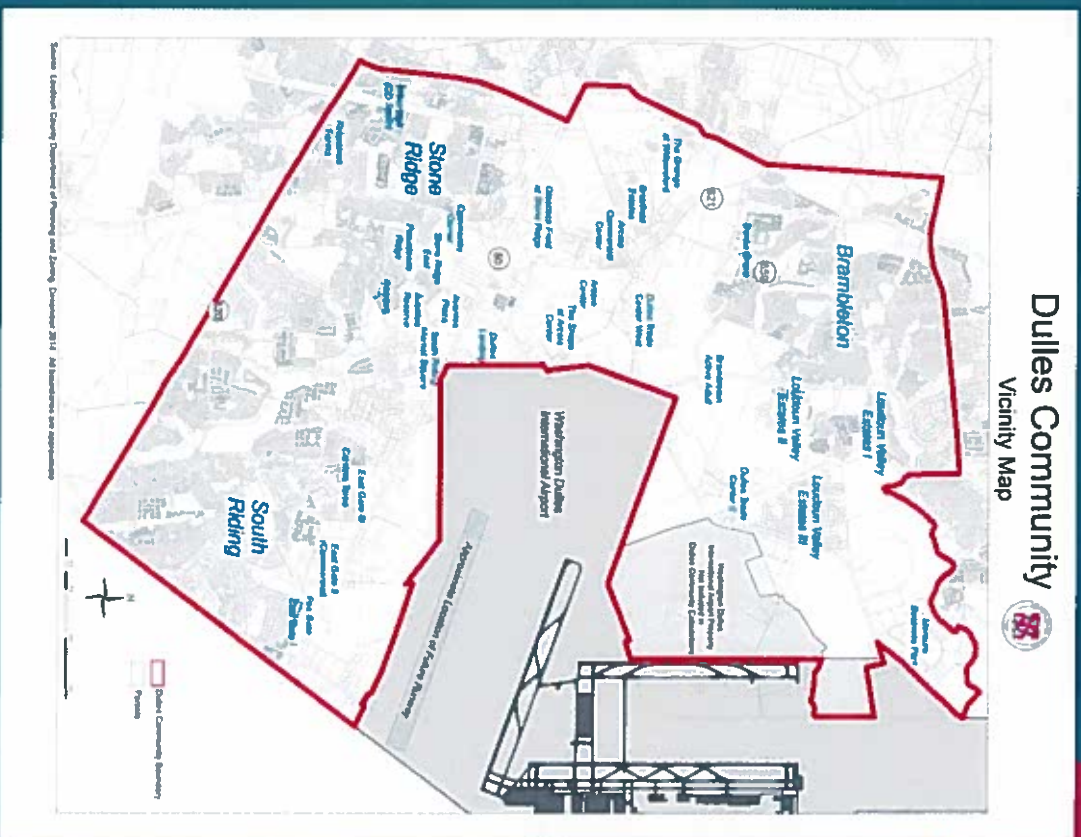
Community Boundary Map

North: Broad Run & Ryan Road

East: Dulles Airport & Fairfax County

South: Braddock Road

West: Relocated Route 659 & Powerlines



Survey Respondent Demographics



Resident Responses: 776

- ▶ 35-44 years old
- ▶ Households
 - ▶ Median size: 4
 - ▶ Median number of LCPS students: 2
- ▶ Homeowners for 5-10 years
- ▶ 70% have a household income \geq \$100,000

Business Responses: 49

- ▶ Typical Businesses: Retail (20%), Health Care (14%), Educational (12%)
- ▶ Most own their business
- ▶ Median number of employees = 7



Survey Results



Themes



High quality of life



Schools, neighborhoods, parks and open space



Transportation !?!



Cost of living and rapidly growing community



Neighborhood interconnectivity



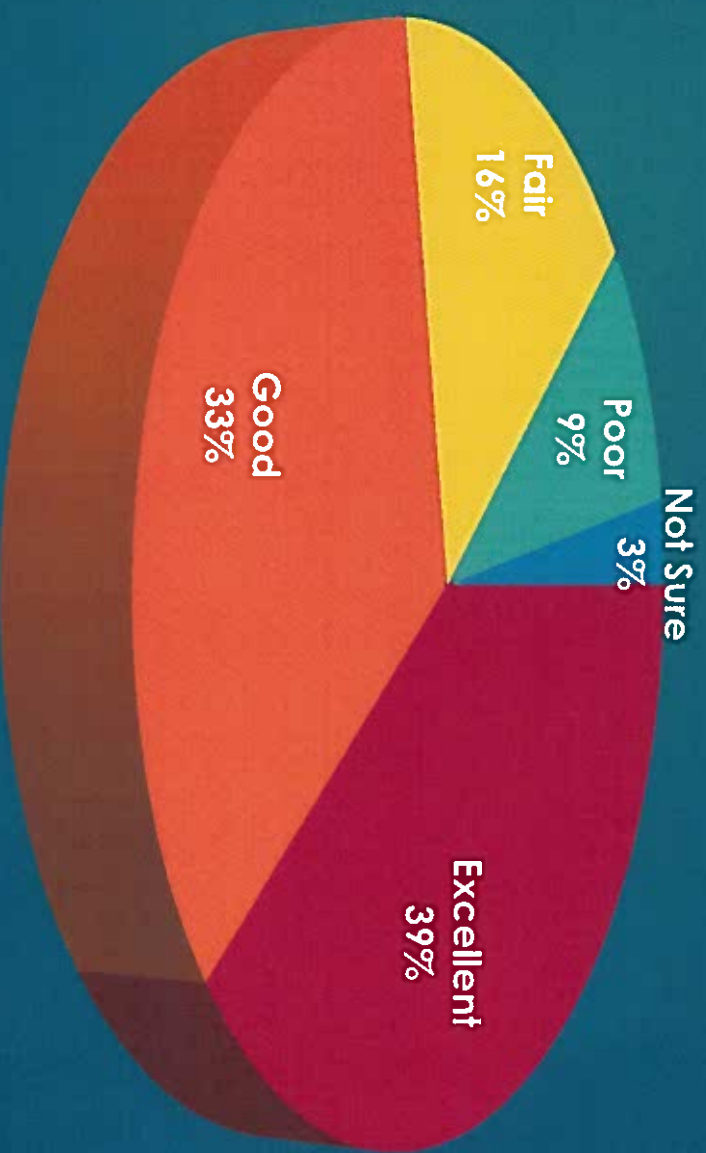
Business opportunity



Quality of Life

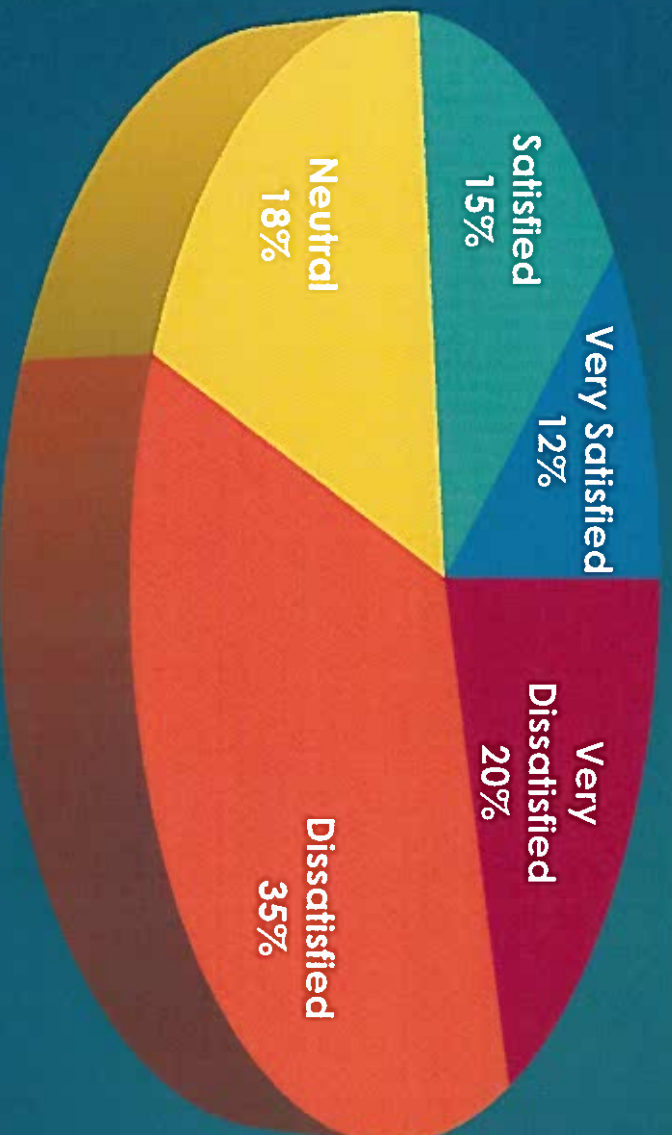
- High quality of life
- Significant satisfaction with
 - Safety/Lack of Crime
 - Schools
 - Quality of Neighborhoods
 - Available open space/nature
- Significant dissatisfaction with
 - Traffic congestion
 - Housing affordability
 - Rate of development/growth
 - Inadequate retail and dining

What are your chances of living in the Dulles Community five years from now?



Transportation

How satisfied are you with the overall road network within the Dulles Community?



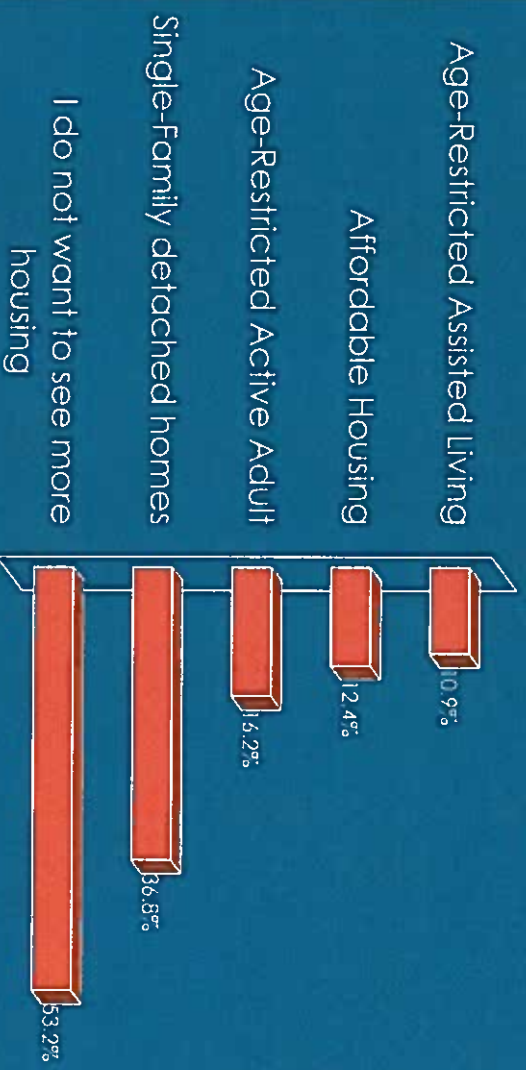
- Number 1 concern expressed in the survey
- 71% of respondents work in Fairfax, Loudoun, or Washington DC
 - 74% use a personal car
- Taking bus or rail to work
 - Reduced commute
 - Less time/more efficient
 - Less expensive than driving
 - Closer to destinations/home



Housing

- ▶ Variety of available housing
 - ▶ 80% either agreed or strongly agreed
- ▶ Desire for limited residential development
- ▶ More Age-Restricted housing

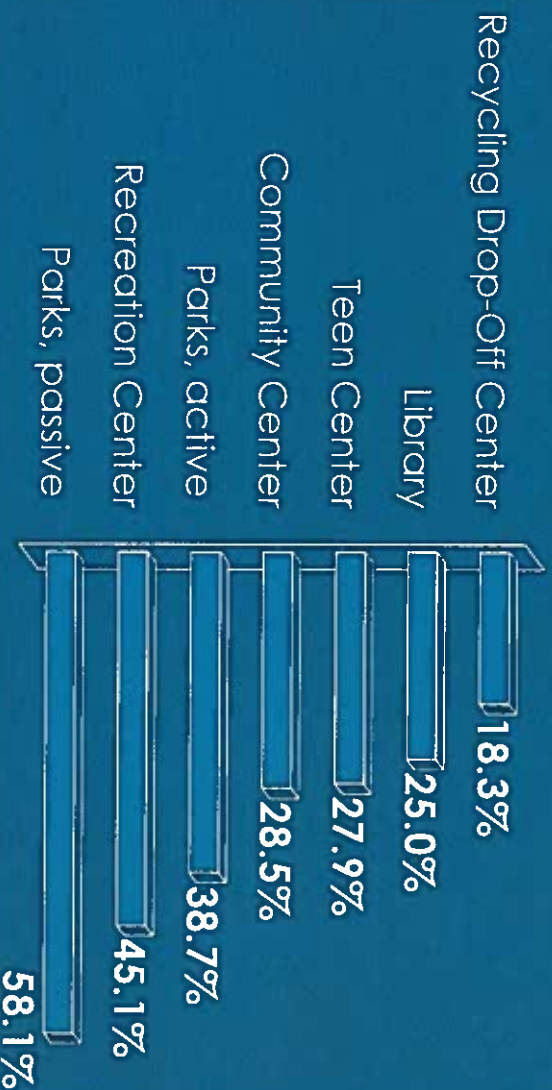
What type of housing would you like to see more of in the Dulles Community (Top Five)



County Facilities



Which facility would you like to see more of in Dulles? (Top Seven)

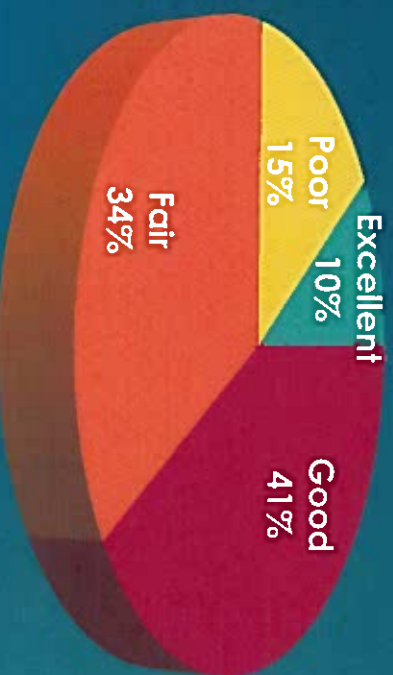


- ▶ Overall satisfaction with existing County facilities
 - ▶ 75% satisfied or very satisfied
- ▶ Most frequented
 - ▶ Library: 66%
 - ▶ Parks (Passive): 44%
 - ▶ Parks (Active): 44%
 - ▶ Recreation Center: 17%
- ▶ Also the most desired

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities



Walking



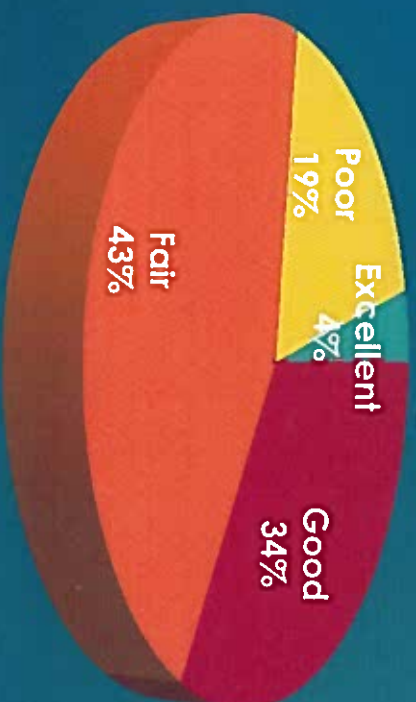
- ▶ Favorable, but not excellent for walking and cycling

- ▶ Reasons for cycling and walking

- ▶ Primary destinations

- ▶ Parks and Trails

Cycling



- ▶ Difficulty factors (For both)

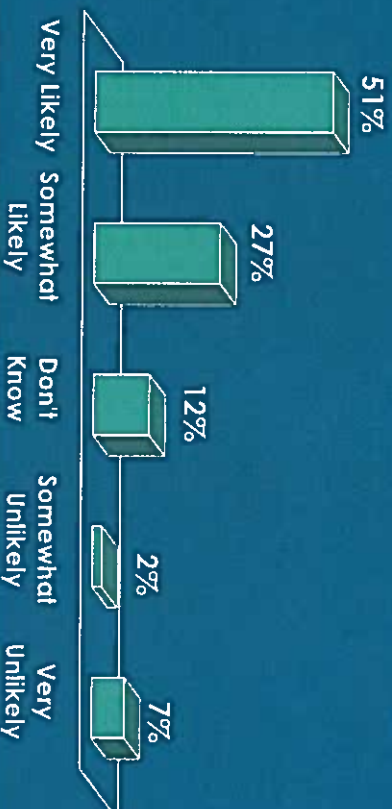
- ▶ Lack of safe crossings and bicycle lanes

- ▶ Excessive and speeding traffic

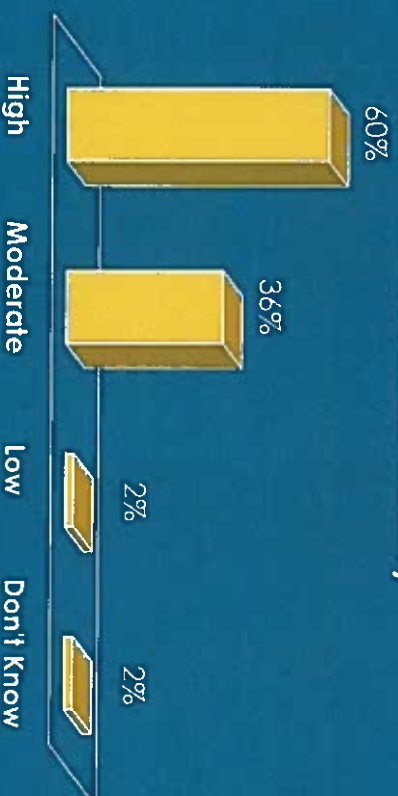
Business Activity

- ▶ Home-based businesses
 - ▶ 27%
- ▶ Relatively newer businesses
- ▶ Expansion in next 5 years
 - ▶ Employees: 40%
 - ▶ Space in Dulles: 36%
 - ▶ Space in Loudoun: 26%
- ▶ County business development
 - ▶ Transportation: 64%
 - ▶ Lower taxes: 50%
- ▶ Concern over the cost of living for employees

Likelihood of starting a business in Dulles Community today



Overall confidence in economic future of Loudoun County



Youth Focus Groups

FREEDOM (2/11)

JOHN CHAMPE (3/4)

ROCK RIDGE (3/18)



Focus Group Feedback



- ▶ Enjoy the attractiveness, diversity, walking trails, and sense of safety of the community
- ▶ Newer vs. more established neighborhoods
- ▶ Not much for young people to do
- ▶ Have to drive everywhere, not good for 12-16 year olds
- ▶ More amenities needed (restaurants, shopping, sports complex, pedestrian connections)
- ▶ "Mom-Centric"

Returning to Dulles After College



- ▶ More jobs in community/shorter commutes
- ▶ Metro
- ▶ Development of a culture/vibe
- ▶ Affordable housing
- ▶ Better neighborhood interconnectivity
- ▶ Live, work, play in the same place



Mind Mixer Ideas



Defining the Dulles Community



- ▶ **Vibrant, multicultural**, family-oriented
- ▶ Living between the beauty of Virginia's natural landscape with mountains and farmland coupled with a growing, **vibrant** suburban community filled with a **diversity** of people
- ▶ A great place. It is the great people, the **variety** of businesses, and the excellent location. The area is on track to become even better



Why we Live Here

- ▶ Moved here for the country style living, but **rapid development** is undermining that
- ▶ To create a community where our kids can grow safer in a global village, with **diversity**, respect, and acceptance of each other



Economic Development

- ▶ Land use laws need to allow for a **true mix** of uses
- ▶ Work with developers and industries to ensure a truly diverse economy and **mix** of employment sectors
- ▶ I hope we see the same kind of health-related development occur around the StoneSprings Hospital Center that we are seeing in Lansdowne



Dulles Landing



StoneSprings Hospital Center



Dulles in the 21st Century



- ▶ The area's **transportation** needs to be improved, perhaps better shuttle and bus service
- ▶ There was a song in Girl Scouts, one is silver and the other gold, same with Dulles. Put up the silver (new) and keep the gold (history). **Renovate the old and incorporate into the new to keep some of the home town feel.**
- ▶ Wayfinding signs can help guide residents and visitors to popular destinations in the community



Dulles in the 21st Century

- ▶ Need to focus on **public spaces**, where people mingle and interact. Need to plan for open spaces when developing newer sections of the community
- ▶ Improve the high tech infrastructure of the community



Community Vision

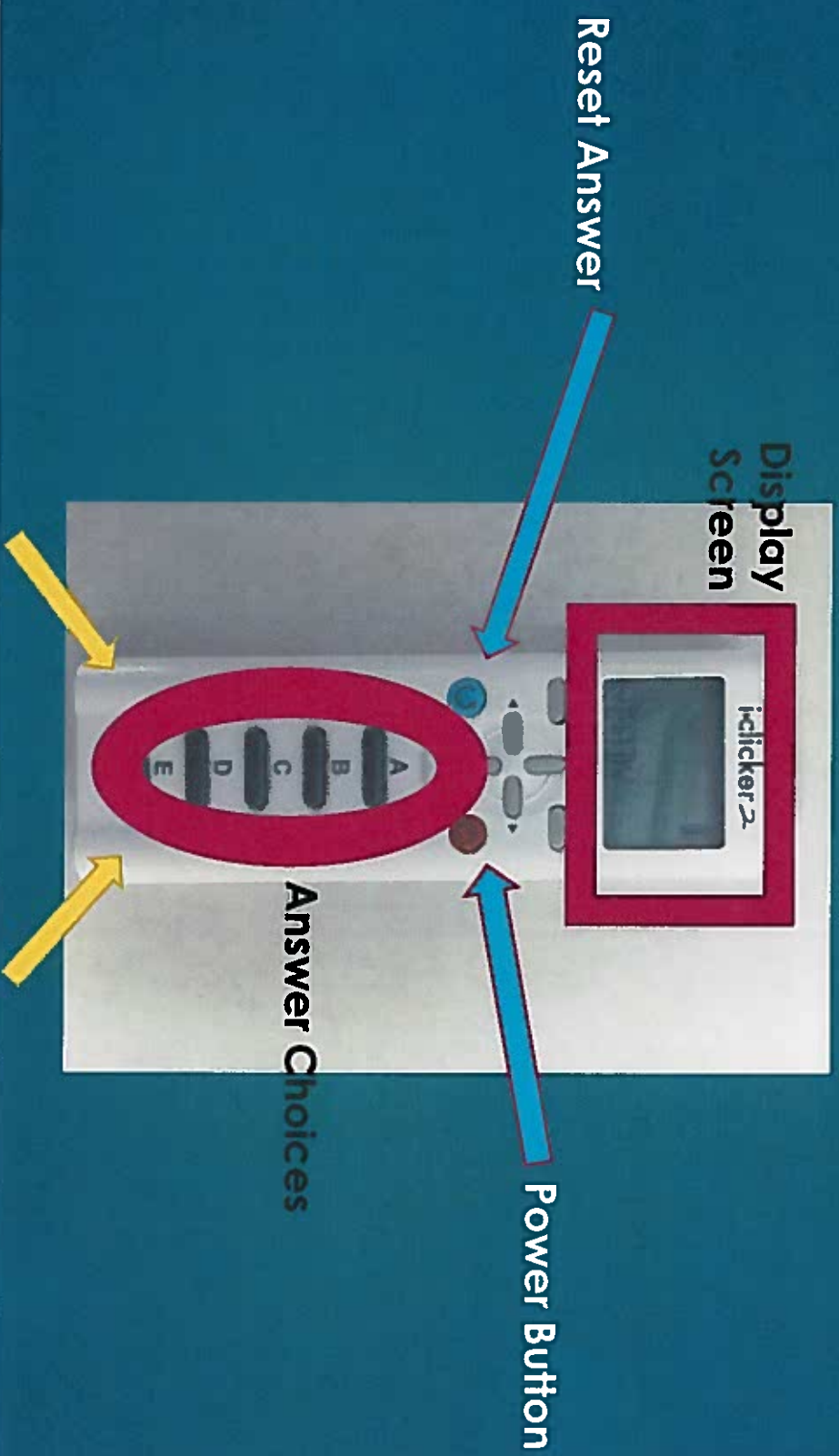


- ▶ **Networked communities** each supporting the other. Eliminate the “my clubhouse, my community center” mentality
- ▶ More bike trails and bike access is needed
- ▶ I envision a Dulles Community in which residents, businesses, and employees **work together** to craft a community that guarantees a high quality of life

Clicker Activity



Get to know your clicker



Clicker Instructions

- ▶ Only one answer is accepted per question
- ▶ Wait until prompted to choose your answer
- ▶ If you make a mistake in your selection, click the reset button
- ▶ You do not need to reset in between questions
- ▶ First slide will be a question, next slide will have responses





Question 1

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE PROJECT?

Question 1

▶ How did you hear about the project?

- A. Newspaper/Newsletter
- B. Loudoun County Website
- C. Flyer/Advertisement
- D. Community Meeting/Word of Mouth
- E. Other





Question 2

WHICH PLANNING TOPIC INTERESTS OR CONCERNS YOU THE MOST?

Question 2

▶ Which planning topic interests or concerns you the most?

- A. Housing
- B. Transportation
- C. Business/Economic Development
- D. Land Use
- E. Other





Question 3

WHAT IS YOUR COMMUTE TIME?

Question 3

▶ What is your commute time?

- A. Under 15 Minutes
- B. 15-30 Minutes
- C. 30-45 Minutes
- D. 45 Minutes – 1 Hour
- E. Over 1 Hour





Question 4

WHICH IMAGE APPEALS TO YOU THE MOST?

Question 4

▶ Which image appeals to you the most?

A



B



C



D





Question 5

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF IN DULLES?

Question 5

▶ What would you like to see more of in Dulles?

A



B



C



D



E



Breakout Session

- ▶ Gather input /feedback on issues identified in the survey results
- ▶ Small group discussions
- ▶ Each group determines in what order topics are discussed and for how long
- ▶ Staff resources and reference material available to assist discussions
- ▶ When possible, address input towards the provided maps (please use tracing paper)
- ▶ Looking for new ideas that go beyond what is already planned
- ▶ 50 minutes
- ▶ We will be taking pictures, please let me know if you prefer we did not take pictures of your table



Next Steps

- ▶ Continue the conversation online at: www.loudoun.gov/dullescommunityoutreach
 - ▶ Mind Mixer
 - ▶ Photo Share question about parks
 - ▶ Maturing Dulles
 - ▶ Transportation Budget Allocation
- ▶ Crowdsourced Mapping
 - ▶ 52 stars, lets get to 100 by May
- ▶ Attend the April 23 meeting right back here at Stone Hill MS
- ▶ Encourage others to get engaged!



Contact Information

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Crowdsourced Mapping