



# Power, Privilege, and Peril: Governing in Prince George's County – a Regional Perspective



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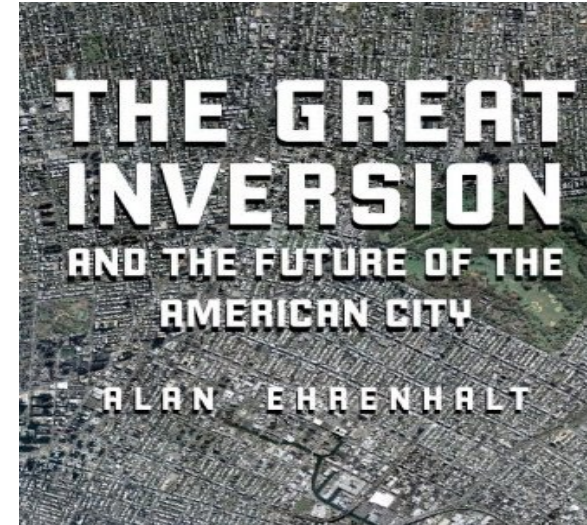
# Presentation Overview

- Project Framing
- Research Questions
- Methods
- Findings
- Q & A



# Contemporary Social Processes

- Uneven 2007-2009 Great Recession damage and recovery across neighborhoods and racial groups
- Socio-economic inequality increasing nationwide
- **Regional fragmentation and “inversion”**
  - Dozens of local jurisdictions within regions
  - Wealthy Whites moving back to cities
  - Suburbs increasingly ethno-racially diverse
    - All groups majority suburban
    - Immigrant gateway communities more prevalent
  - Poverty suburbanizing
- **Government retrenching**
  - Capacity reduced
  - Social service provision reconfigured



# Research Questions

1. To what degree does the Black middle class in a majority Black suburban county realize the same returns to its class status as the White middle class?
2. What unique policy or budget constraints, if any, do decisionmakers in a majority Black and middle class county face?
3. How do racial residential segregation patterns within a region affect a majority-Black county's capacity to thrive, given the increasing shift to market-based solutions for the provision of public goods and services?

# Research Method: Ethnography

## Site Overview— Prince George's County (PGC), Maryland

- Suburb of Washington, D.C.
- About 1 million residents
- 65% Black—largest concentration of middle-class African Americans in a local jurisdiction
- 18% Latino—2<sup>nd</sup> largest ethno-racial group in PGC
- Has elected Black county executives since mid-1990s





# Research Method: Ethnographic Study

## Research Activities

- **2 years of observation of political processes (2017-2018)**
  - Hearings on policy and budget development
  - Elected-official-sponsored community events
  - Resident-led community meetings
- **58 interviews**
  - County, state, and local political officials
  - Civic leaders
  - Black middle class residents



## Respondent Demographics: PGC Leaders



- All Prince George's County (PGC) Council members
- Majority of PGC school board members
- Former and current representatives to Congress
- Former and current representatives to Maryland legislature
- Business, civic, and religious leaders

# Respondent Demographics: 28 PGC Residents

**Race:** All are African American

**Gender**

- 20 women
- 8 men

**Age (in years)**

- 25-40 = 9 people
- 41-60 = 10 people
- 61+ = 9 people

**Education level**

- Bachelor's degree or more = 18 people
- Less than bachelor's = 10 people

**Income (in thousands)**

- \$41-60 = 3 people
- \$61-80 = 5 people
- \$81-100 = 5 people
- \$100+ = 15 people

**Homeowner/renter**

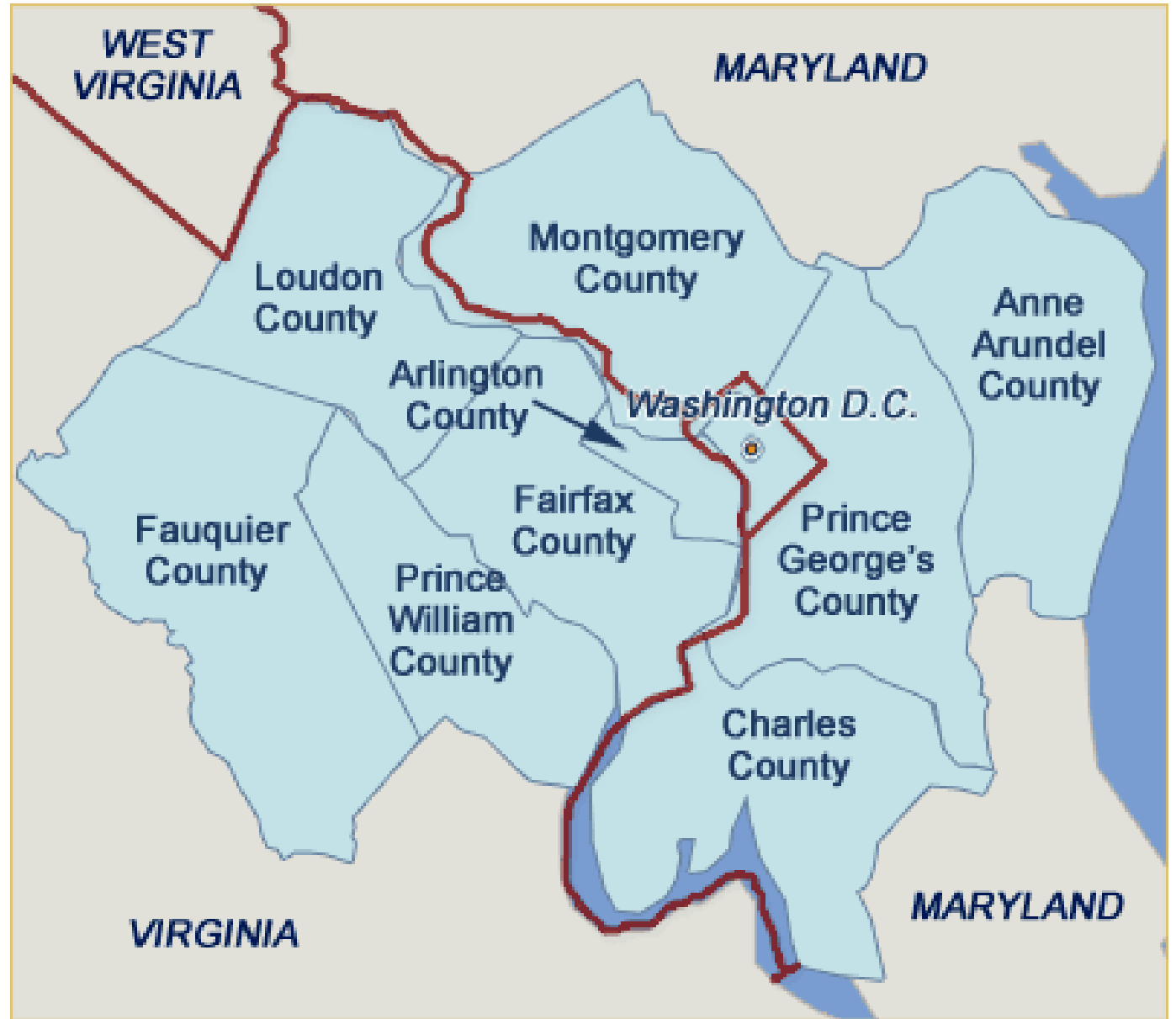
- Owners = 20 people
- Renters = 8 people





# D.C. Metropolitan Area County Jurisdictions

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**PGC in  
Context:  
United States  
and Maryland**

**Demographic Comparison between the United States, Maryland, and Prince George's County in 2018**

	<u>Prince George's County</u>	<u>Maryland</u>	<u>United States</u>
<b>Total Population</b>	909,308	6,042,718	327,167,434
<b>Race and Ethnicity (%)</b>			
Black	64.6	30.8	13.4
White	26.8	59.0	76.6
Latino (Black or White Race)	18.5	10.1	18.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.8	6.8	6.0
American Indian	1.1	0.6	1.3
Two or More Races	2.7	2.8	2.7
<b>Income and Wealth (\$)</b>			
Median Household Income	78,607	78,916	57,652
Median Home Value (Owner Occupied)	272,900	296,500	193,500
Median Rent	1,385	1,311	982
<b>Percent Below Poverty Line</b>	8.6	9.3	12.3
<b>Educational Attainment (%)</b>			
College Degree or Higher	31.9	39.0	30.9
High School Diploma or GED	86.1	89.8	87.3

**Source: United States Census Bureau, "QuickFacts," as follows:**

Prince George's: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/princegeorgescountymaryland/IPE120217#IPE120217>

Maryland: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/md>

United States: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/INC110217>

PGC in  
Context:  
D.C. Region

**Demographic Comparison between Prince George's, Montgomery, and Fairfax Counties in 2018**

	<u>Prince George's</u>	<u>Montgomery</u>	<u>Fairfax</u>
<b>Total Population</b>	909,308	1,052,567	1,150,795
<b>Race and Ethnicity (%)</b>			
Black	64.6	19.7	10.4
White	26.8	60.4	65.2
Latino (Black or White Race)	18.5	19.6	16.2
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.8	15.7	20.1
American Indian	1.1	0.7	0.6
Two or More Races	2.7	3.4	3.8
<b>Income and Wealth (\$)</b>			
Median Household Income	78,607	103,178	117,515
Median Home Value (Owner Occupied)	272,900	467,500	534,800
Median Rent	1,385	1,693	1,823
<b>Percent Below Poverty Line</b>	8.6	7.0	6.7
<b>Educational Attainment (%)</b>			
College Degree or Higher	31.9	58.3	60.7
High School Diploma or GED	86.1	91.1	92.0

Sources: United States Census Bureau, "QuickFacts," accessed April 29, 2019:

Prince George's: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/princegeorgescountymaryland/IPE120217#IPE120217>

Montgomery: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/montgomerycountymaryland>

Fairfax: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/fairfaxcountyvirginia/PST045217>

# Market and Government Constraints Most Counties Experience

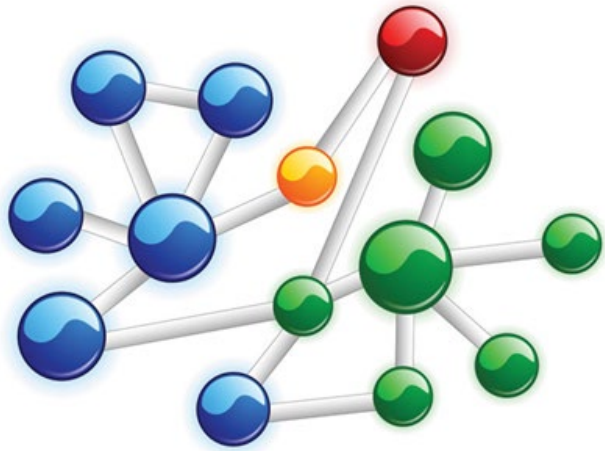
- Competition with other jurisdictions for:
  - State and federal funds transfers
  - Private investment
- Unfunded state mandates
- Uneven development across neighborhoods
- Increasing reliance on (1) private investment and (2) growing middle class/upper-middle-class population to increase tax revenue



## PGC's Unique Constraints

- Disproportionate responsibility for moderate- and low-income residents in D.C. region
- Regional racial and economic segregation
- Insufficient and uneven development due to racism
- Market predation in Black neighborhoods

# Structural Precarity and Peril— Resource *Inflow*



- **PGC garners less tax revenue from property taxes than neighbors**
  - Tax base undermined by racial residential segregation
- **Gentrification in D.C. area intense, relative to elsewhere in U.S.**
  - Many displaced households come to PGC
- **PGC receives and retains disproportionate share of region's low-income residents**
  - Increases social services demand
  - Moderate- and low-income residents contribute less in taxes than those with high-incomes
- **Consequently**, PGC “the sink” for negative effects of development processes

# Structural Precarity and Peril—Resource *Inflow*

## 2018 Operating Budget, Per Capita Spending, Median Home Value, and Poverty Rate Cross-County Comparison

	<u>Prince George's</u>	<u>Montgomery</u>	<u>Fairfax</u>
Operating Budget, All Sources (in Billions)	\$3.9	\$5.4	\$8.0
Per Capita Spending	\$4,273	\$5,100	\$6,966
Median Home Value	\$272,000	\$468,000	\$535,000
Percent Population Below Poverty	8.6	7.0	6.7

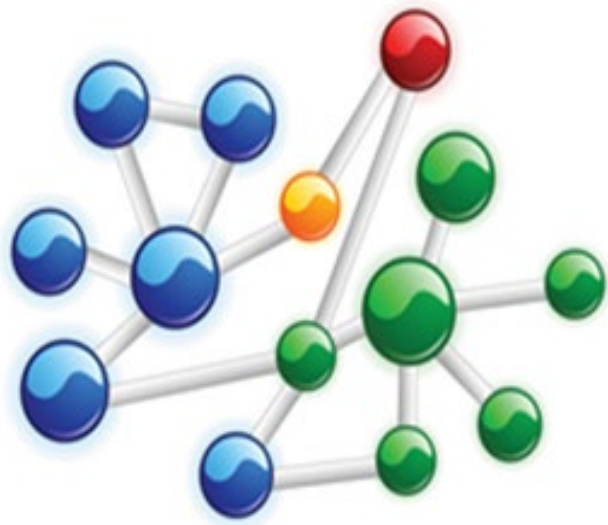
Sources: County Revenue Offices, as follows:

Fairfax: [https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/sites/budget/files/assets/documents/fy2018/adopted/overview/07\\_executive\\_summary.pdf](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/sites/budget/files/assets/documents/fy2018/adopted/overview/07_executive_summary.pdf)

Prince George's: <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/17965/Budget-OverviewPDF>

Montgomery: [https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgportalapps/Press\\_Detail.aspx?Item\\_ID=21126](https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgportalapps/Press_Detail.aspx?Item_ID=21126)

# Structural Precarity and Peril— Resource *Inflow*

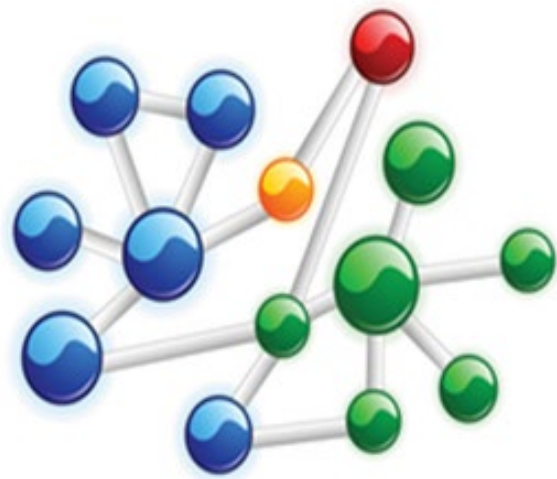


## **PGC more vulnerable to national economic shocks**

- **Example:** protracted Great Recession recovery—  
foreclosure crisis erodes neighborhood stability

**PGC councilmember regarding foreclosure crisis:** “It took us longer than anyone in the region to dig out...We're still digging out and it affected our African American middle class in the worst way...There's a consequence to that that I think we're still trying to figure out.”





# Structural Precarity and Peril— Resource *Inflow*

PGC an outlier in Maryland for number and severity of revenue-generation restrictions

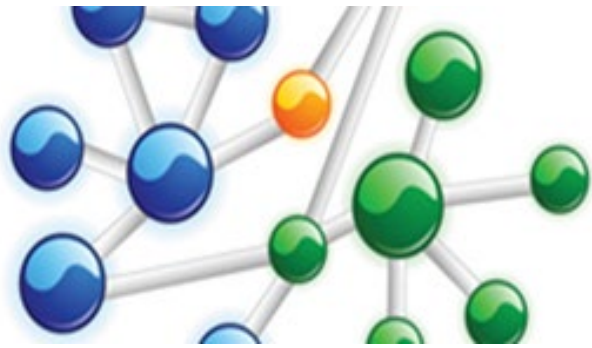
Constraints imposed as PGC transitions from majority-White to majority-Black in 1990s

Tax Reform Initiative by Marylanders (TRIM)

Question I

Homestead Tax Credit

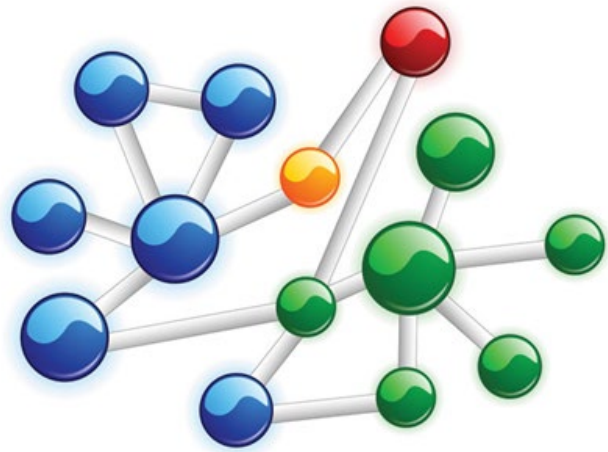
Voter referendum required to overturn measures



## Structural Precarity and Peril— Resource *Outflow*

- **PGC Total Budget for Fiscal Year 2018**
  - \$3.9 billion
- **Budget Allocations**
  - Schools: 65%
  - Police: 25%
  - All Other Programs: 10%

# Structural Precarity and Peril— Resource *Outflow*



Revenue scarcity leads to hard budget tradeoffs between vital public services

**Example 1:** Minimum wage increase has unintended consequences

**Example 2:** Thinning services—such as reduced trash collection frequency

**Councilmember on public response to trash collection changes:** “They [PGC residents] perceive it, usually correctly...If you're giving me...once a week trash service instead of twice a week trash service but not reducing my taxes, that's the same as a tax increase...”

# Structural Precarity and Peril— Resource *Outflow*

Resource Scarcity → Class and Ethno-racial Tensions

## Class

PGC leaders seek to satisfy Black middle class (BMC) interests and mitigate poverty *without* increasing funding

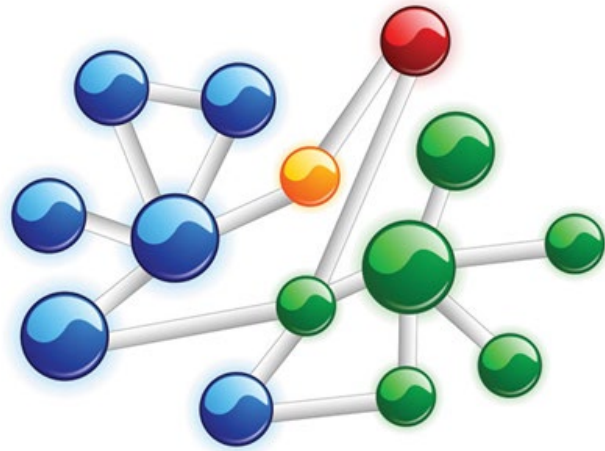
**Poverty-targeted Policy:** Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative

**BMC-targeted Policies:** specialty schools; pursue development geared toward elite consumption

## Ethno-racial

Latinos move into distressed BMC communities

**Councilmember regarding BMC response to Latino newcomers:** “Overcrowding, parking, litter—that is predominantly the concerns of the old guard African American community. They would like their area to remain nice and neat and without the influx of these newcomers who don't know the laws or don't respect general upkeep because they're not just familiar with whatever the process is, or they don't necessarily assimilate. But for the new incomers...they're main priority is education...We have incredibly overcrowded schools...the older generation, their kids have already graduated, they're already out of the system...”





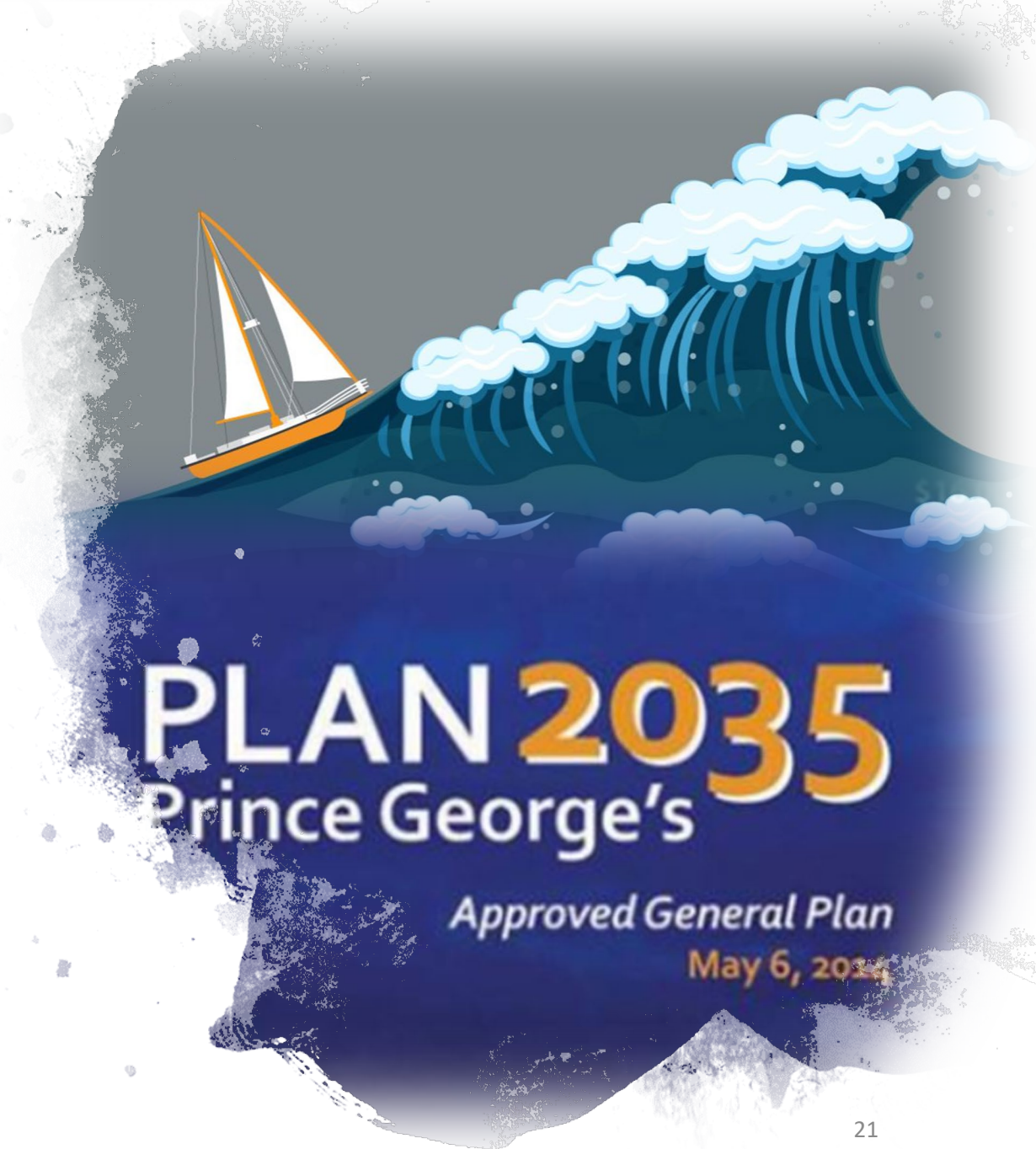
# Development— A Rising Tide to Lift All Boats?

## Charting a Course

**Councilmember: “Land use...it has so many tentacles...but it's ultimately one of the most important things to the viability of any jurisdiction...”**

**Plan 2035, PGC’s development vision, emphasizes:**

- Transit-oriented
- Mixed-use
- **New zoning law enacted in 2018 to facilitate masterplan**
- **Development incentives**
  - Strategic infrastructure placement and upgrades
  - Loans
  - Tax abatements



# Development—A Rising Tide to Lift All Boats?

## Leveraging Advantages

### “The Land of Milk and Honey”

- M-NCPPC Commission official on Wayne Curry’s PGC vision

- Large Black middle class
- Contiguous with D.C.
- Un/underdeveloped land
- Un/underdeveloped mass transit stations and new mass transit





# Development— A Rising Tide to Lift All Boats?

## Waves of Success in Past 10 Years

- Woodmore Towne Centre
- National Harbor
- MGM Casino
- College Park technology corridor
- Regional hospital
- Towne Square at Suitland Federal Center



# Development— A Rising Tide to Lift All Boats?

## Navigating Headwinds

- **Racial Stigmatization and Developer Discrimination—**  
**PGC agency director on combatting negative perceptions:** “Many people still think it’s crime ridden...difficult to do business with...undereducated work force...I really have to sell hard to show them [developers and other private investors] the facts on it because I think some of that is just...the 65% African-American...”
- **Managing needs and interests of wide range of class statuses—**  
**Retired federal government civil servant, Black woman, 70s:** “I moved into this house 40 years ago—my husband and I raised our two children here. I see a lot of development lately—some of it’s good...it’s getting more expensive, but I can’t afford to move...and I don’t want to move—this is my neighborhood.”

# Development— A Rising Tide to Lift All Boats?

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## Navigating Headwinds

- Ensuring PGC businesses receive developer contracts

Councilmember: “We should not be spectators in our own county”

- Competition with neighboring counties
- Retail reducing brick-and-mortar footprint

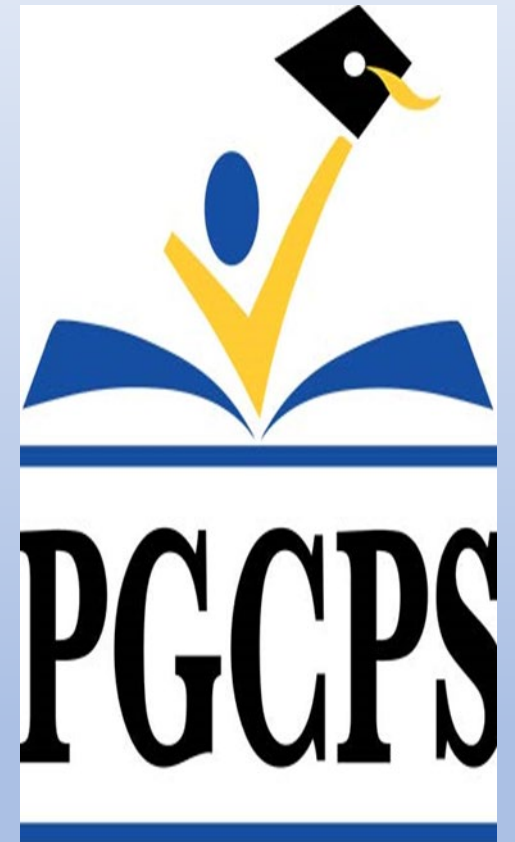




# Public Schools— Overcoming Regional Racial and Economic Segregation Constraints

## Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) Overview

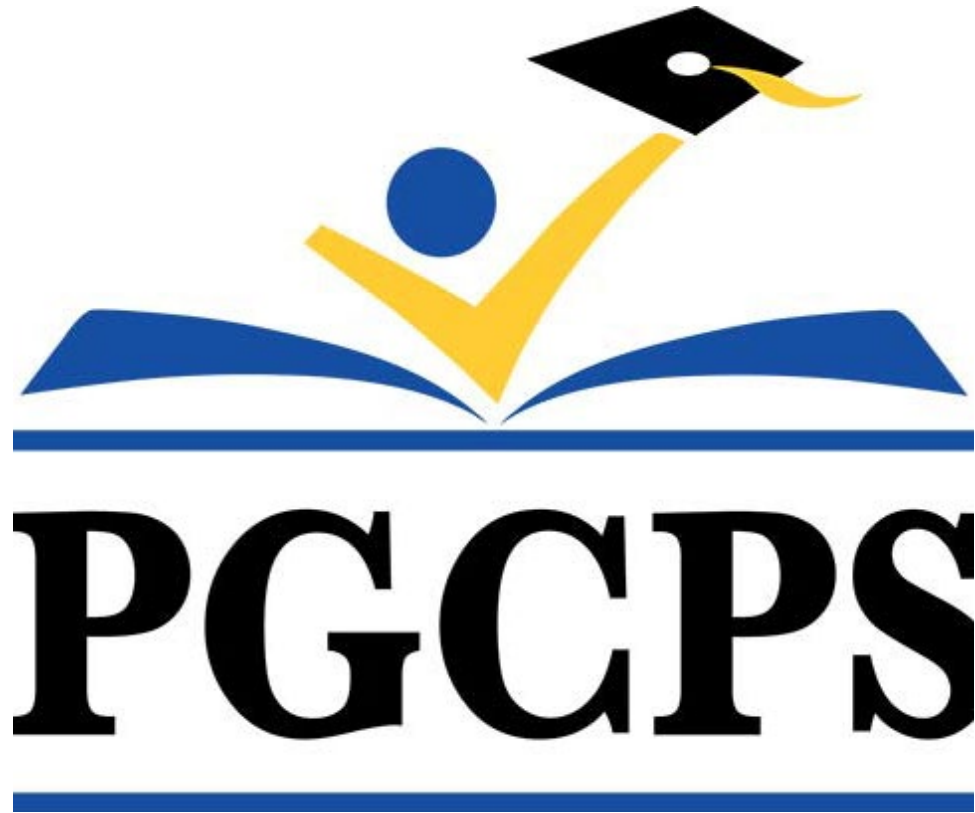
- **Total Budget:** \$2.04 billion
- **Student Population:** 132,667
- **Racial Composition:**
  - Black 57%
  - Latino 34%
  - White 4%
  - Asian 3%
  - Other Groups 2%
- **Percent from Low-income Households:** 60%
- **Percent English Language Learners:** 20%
- **Percent in Special Education Programs:** 11.5%
- **Number of Schools and Centers:** 204
- **Number of Employees:** 19,000





# Public Schools—Overcoming Regional Racial and Economic Segregation Constraints

- Receives disproportionate share of D.C. region's low-income students
- Decades of severe underfunding related to integration process
  - Inadequate maintenance of school infrastructure
  - Insufficient number of schools in fastest growing parts of county
- Maryland funding formula provides additional resources to PGC to support high-needs learners, but need outpaces state investment
- PGC cannot invest more in schools without cutting other vital public services



# School Funding in Regional Perspective

## Fiscal Year 2018 Public School Spending in Prince George's, Montgomery, and Fairfax Counties

	<u>Prince George's</u>	<u>Montgomery</u>	<u>Fairfax</u>
<b>Total Student Enrollment</b>	132,667	161,302	189,000
<b>Total Spending*</b>	\$1.9 billion	\$2.5 billion	\$2.8 billion
County Contribution	\$739 million	\$1.67 billion	\$1.97 billion
State Contribution	\$1.1 billion	\$680 million	\$636 million
<b>Per Pupil Allocation</b>	\$14,300	\$15,498	\$14,815
<b>Percent Low-income Students**</b>	61	33	31

\* Does not add; remainder is federal and other contributions

\*\* Those qualifying for reduced-price meals

### Sources: County boards of education, as follows:

Prince George's: <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/18010/Board-of-EducationPDF>

Montgomery: [https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/budget/fy2018/FY2018\\_OperatingBudgetSummary\\_FINALforWeb.pdf](https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/budget/fy2018/FY2018_OperatingBudgetSummary_FINALforWeb.pdf)

Fairfax: <https://www.fcps.edu/sites/default/files/media/pdf/FY18Approved%20Budget.pdf>

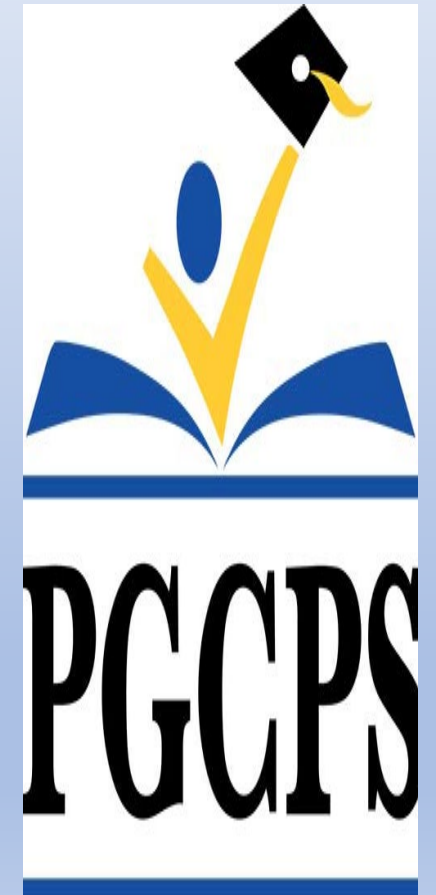
# Public Schools—Overcoming Regional Racial and Economic Segregation Constraints

## Class Tension

- PGCPS offers resources to its majority low-income student body, while also offering cutting edge academic opportunities, such as STEM
- Many in Black middle class opt out of PGCPS

### **Schoolboard member on Black middle-class parents who opt out:**

“But the hardest kind of one that we've been trying to address is the overall ...broader issue of trusting the system..”





## Policy Implications: “From Respecting the Game” to “Changing the Game”

- Resource sharing agreements among regions’ jurisdictions to support low-income residents
- Increased tax authority/flexibility for PGC
- Increase in federal and state funding for social services, schools, and public infrastructure
- Hold financial actors accountable for household and community-level harms
- Black equity fund/reparations for households and communities

## **Final Thought: Racial and Economic Justice**

What do socio-historically informed policies promoting equity look like?

