

Results from the Future Calvert Survey: Strengthening Economic Vitality

Introduction

A series of surveys have been conducted to correspond with topics presented in the winter and spring 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update workshops. For the fifth workshop, Strengthening Economic Vitality, a survey was released which was comprised of three open ended questions, as well as two demographic questions. There were 15 respondents to the survey. Not all respondents answered each question. The results are below.

Overview

There were many suggestions for what types of businesses to attract and how to attract them, as well as potential concerns about the amount of potential growth in the county. Some respondents noted that attracting jobs relating to software, technology, and federal government agencies could be helpful to the economic vitality of the county. There was also an emphasis on retaining or increasing local businesses, tourism, agriculture, local food, and fishing and boating. Many advocated against traditional retail stores and national chains. The main suggestion for keeping and expanding high-paying jobs was to increase the accessibility to high-speed, secure, wireless networks throughout the county. There were conflicting concerns with some respondents advocating for additional growth and others advocating against additional growth both in retail and real estate. While there was not a consensus on how much growth should be had to maintain the rural character of Calvert while strengthening economic vitality, most respondents found importance in attracting businesses that could leverage the natural and cultural resources of the area.

Survey Questions, Summaries, and Responses

Question #1

What are the three to five best actions Calvert County could take to increase the number of well-paying jobs in the county?

Summary of responses: There were many suggestions for both what types of businesses to attract and how to attract them. Suggestions for types of businesses to attract included “green” businesses, career based jobs as opposed to retail, federal government offices, and technical and software jobs. It was also suggested to focus on the small businesses that already exist in the county, as well as invest in tourism, agriculture, local food, and the fishing/boating industry. Suggestions for attracting or increasing these types of jobs included utilizing industrial parks, increasing support for the environment and recreation, utilizing master plans to “make each

Town Center unique to local businesses,” advancing infrastructure, promoting social and cultural activities, focusing housing growth at the entry points of the county, providing affordable housing, developing a transportation plan, and making the process of building and licensing less difficult. One of the most frequent suggestions was to increase the telecommuting opportunities by providing high-speed, secure, wireless networks throughout the county.

Responses:

- Attract "green" businesses that do not have environmental impact and offer career ladders for our residents. Utilize industrial parks for attracting career based NOT RETAIL businesses. Utilize Master Plans to make each town center unique to local businesses. No chains.
- 1. Increase support for environment /recreation so Calvert can attract more tourism.
2. Develop a sound strategic transportation plan that would prevent gridlock & lobby our US and state reps to give us the same treatment they have for PG CTY but smaller scale than massive Westphalia.
3. Advance infrastructure in town centers through funding and regulations to provide low cost energy, high speed secure networks and wireless communications.
- Make building, licensing easier. Don't cater to the good old boys network.
- Invest in tourism. Invest in agriculture. Invest in promoting local food!! The wonderful feature about Calvert County is that we have some amazing assets that, with proper investment and protection, can serve as our stable and enduring economic base in the form of tourism and (potentially high end) food production. We are surrounded by water, we have amazing trails, incredible farmland, investing in agri-tourism, ecotourism and heritage tourism will not only provide an economic base but will also meet the arms of the Comprehensive plan improve the overall quality of life for all citizens of Calvert County by promoting sustainable development, providing for safety, health and education and preserving the natural, cultural and historic assets of Calvert County.
- 1. Ensure that there is adequate affordable housing and social/cultural activities
2. Promote living wages
3. Think outside the box--less service-based business, more entrepreneurial
- * solicit technical/software firms to locate in Calvert. Should not be difficult with our proximity to Washington, Pax River and Andrews.
* partner with CSM (as CCNPP did) to develop programs to fill high-paying/technical jobs so that companies wishing to locate here know there is a labor force to fill their positions
* increase the telecommuting capabilities in the county"
- Stop listening to people that want to hold Calvert County back from advancement. Start allowing relaxed zoning to encourage economic development. Prevent naysayers from allowing development.

- Make it attractive for the federal government to build offices here. Montgomery county has attracted a considerable number of government agencies. The Census Bureau is housed in Prince Georges County. Drawing a single federal agency to this county would expand government jobs, along with contracting opportunities.
- 1. Technology/broadband access across the county- can't progress without being able to compete with others and technology is necessary
- 2. Focus housing and growth at entry points- Owings is prime due to access to both Annapolis and D.C. Plus several bases.
- 3. Target larger businesses than the 8 person office we typically go after- have a special team whether it's volunteer from edc and use the elected officials to be part of this recruitment to help
- 1. Take advantage of our beautiful natural resources (the Bay, River, farms & forests) and base our economy primarily on that by encouraging tourism businesses and helping farmers to preserve and diversify their farms, promote the fishing/boating industry, etc.
- 2. We need retail, but not on a large scale because commuters are going to shop on their way to and from work, and we'll always be a commuter County (unless we build a telecommuter office park). So focus on small, locally owned or franchised businesses.
- 3. The public (and the Commissioners) need to be educated about all that Calvert has to offer and residents need to start frequenting local businesses, agri-tourism sites, parks, etc. We are sitting on a gold mine here, and most residents spend so much time in their cars that they don't realize what's available.
- 4. Find a way to capture some of the commuter traffic by building and/or leasing existing vacant space for use by telecommuters and/or use the space to incubate hi-tech businesses. "
- 1. Facilitate tele-commuting. More and more people are finding well-paying jobs that can be conducted from home.
- 2. Establish a top quality trade school. Include degrees in construction related trades but also tourism/hospitality and local agriculture related trades.
- 3. Prevent traffic congestion so people can get to and from work easily ad safely.
- - make high speed internet accessible to the entire county.
- - lure businesses that offer good paying jobs that are careers.
- I've lived in Calvert all my life and worked in Washington DC for 40 years. Urban areas are where well- paying jobs are located. Get more doctors at CMH. Support raising the minimum wage.
- Well paying jobs are not as critical as the quality of life. Politicians and Americans in general need to look at quality of life. You can have the best job in the world, but if you have no clean water or no access to the beauties of nature, what is your quality of life?

Certainly, one should be able to support oneself, but we need a whole new way of looking at jobs and quality of life.

Question #2

What concerns you most about proposals to expand Calvert's economy?

Summary of responses: The two main concerns were in conflict with each other. Some were concerned about too much growth while others were concerned about not enough growth in Calvert. Specifically, the concerns over growth dealt with retail, real estate, and the rural setting of Calvert. While many advocated for a growth in local businesses, there were many who were concerned about national chains and additional housing having a negative impact on the rural character of Calvert. Some were concerned about any new businesses in the Town Centers as they explained that they saw a transition into online shopping. Those who noted the rise in online shopping suggested that new stores be focused on food and services that would not typically be bought online.

Responses:

- No traffic/transportation studies, no environmental impact studies, no infrastructure studies. This plan revision is being rushed two years early.
- That people want to recover the past. Normal retail is dead and is being replaced by Amazon, FEDEX and UPS. 2. That the BOCC already has formed its strategy and the past meetings have been nothing but a marketing exercise to make voters feel good!
- More housing, especially apartments and townhouses. Besides a lower class, section 8, the traffic is already horrible. Widen Route 4, put in overpasses and bypass prince frederick.
- I keep hearing rumors of bricks and mortar RETAIL establishments. See question 3 for why I think that is a mistake.
- The focus on national chains over local ownership--local businesses are better able to provide meaningful economic incentives that value the local community's history, talents, and resources
- The fact that it relies heavily on retail and real estate is very concerning. STOP building new houses! Fix the houses we already have. We don't need any more developments. We certainly don't need any high rise buildings. If we need new buildings in which to live, build villages with minimum impact to open space. Transportation has to be considered before building any new homes
- Nothing, except for a minority of people who want to live in the last century.
- That old school Calvert Countians will fight to maintain the status quo, and prohibit growth.

- o 1. The anti-growth movement in Calvert is more vocal than the citizens who would enjoy the tax benefits of a commercial base- county needs to activate the citizens who want to see tax breaks, better schools and craft the message to quiet the few anti folks
- o 1. Stop catering to ""National Chains""! The County has exempted chains from architectural review, and they're the ones who should comply the most! And they have the resources to comply! The admin. variances for signs that allow national chains to increase their height but not local businesses is ridiculous! We need to retain the uniqueness of the County, especially in the Town Centers, and this action is counter-intuitive.
 - 2. We're going to become ""Generica America"" just like every other County you drive through, and that is wrong. Calvert County is unique and we need to focus on that uniqueness to grow our economy.
 - 3. The County is relying on the ""Fore Report"" which is full of holes and should be pitched!
 - 4. Consolidating Town Center plans and regulations is a BIG MISTAKE. We will definitely look like every other County if that happens, because the Town Centers (and areas within each) will lose their uniqueness. If we want to grow our Town Centers, each plan should be kept up-to-date to address changing needs.
 - 5. Prince Frederick and Solomons should be our main focus for developing the Town Centers, and the PF charrette should be implemented (and NOT how the Commissioners are currently proposing!). Along those lines, we need strong appearance codes and architectural review committees to enforce them, and the County has weakened them to a point that they cannot be effective, especially since they exempted the national chains.
- o Current BOCC proposals to promote retail by reducing or eliminating current regulations, including regulations governing appearance, are taking us in the wrong direction.
- o Developing apartments and stores.
- o Overcrowding and negatively changing Calvert from a quiet rural area.
- o The County officials have stood behind Cove Point Natural Liquefied Gas, but I do not see any indication in the accompanying charts that Cove Point is a major contributor to jobs, and it is certainly not a contributor to a better quality of life.
- o Loss of rural setting. We all moved to Calvert because of its rural charm and because there was not a strip mall on every corner. More traffic on Route 4.

Question #3

Would you like to share any additional thoughts on strengthening Calvert County's economy?

Summary of responses: There was a variety of responses. Many responses advocated for preserving the rural character of Calvert and taking advantage of the natural and cultural

resources offered in Calvert. Others mentioned how the rise in online shopping may have a negative effect on businesses, and advocated for any new businesses to be focused on goods and services that are not typically bought online, such as food. Another suggested that paying teachers a higher salary could lead to retaining high quality teachers, which then could be positive for Calvert County. Another respondent suggested for the County to stop raising property taxes.

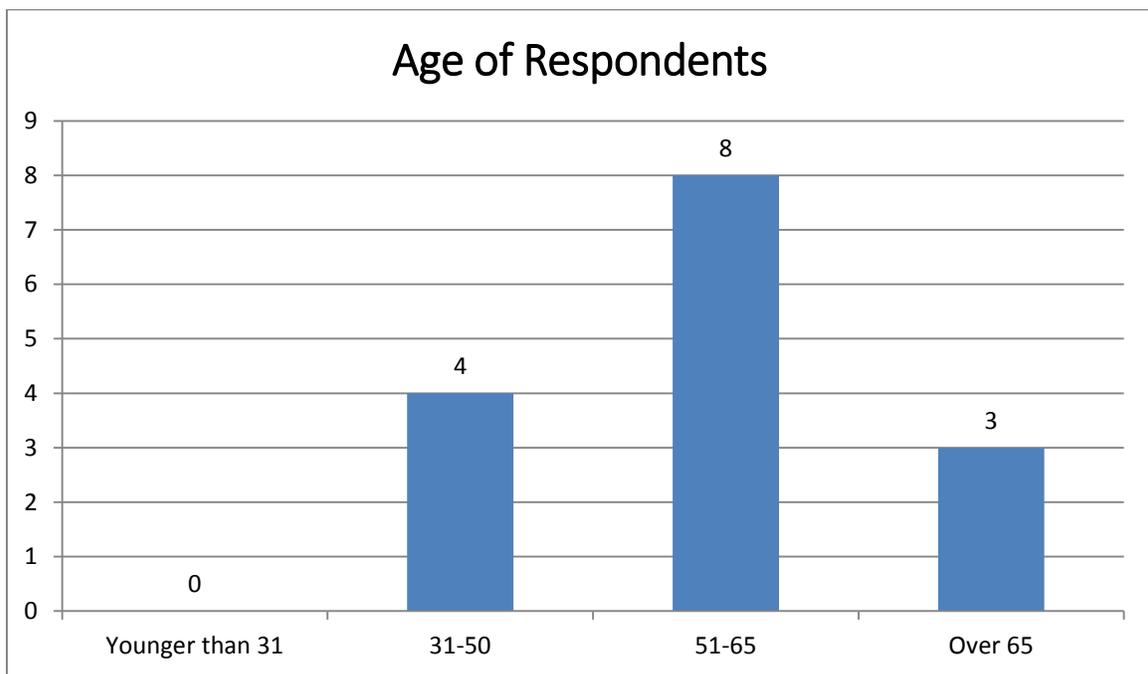
Responses:

- The big picture for Calvert County does not lend well to Big Box or tract housing development. Attention needs to be paid to keep Calvert rural, green, and gorgeous. It is time for the elected officials to do what is right for the long term, not just what they want right now.
- Diversity on the agricultural front is needed. We can't sustain the economy by just switching from Tobacco to Vineyards!
- The lost revenues table is interesting to me because even if (and maybe especially if) I lived in an urban area where all this was conveniently located, I would still purchase all but the foodservice/drinking places online. And even that, I use an online service for 2 meals a week now. I'm not alone in this shift to online shopping. It's quick and convenient. It's easy to comparison shop and read reviews. I am not at all sure that a bricks and mortar building selling any of these items has any hopes of being sustainable possibly not even able to get off the ground. I feel sure that more and more people are moving to online purchasing and investing in bricks and mortar for retail is big mistake. Services are possibly different people do like to develop a relationship with people who are going to be serving them but even then, many count on online reviews before selecting a service provider so it depends on the service as to whether it needs to be nearby or not. I think the focus of commercial development needs to be on the service industry food, entertainment, beauty and health services. Steer clear of retail.
- What role does the Community College play in placing students into internships, entry-level positions, and co-op/volunteer positions
- Put development \$\$ into helping the environment - using gray water for flushing toilets, alternative energies, scientific lab facilities, etc. Pay teachers more to retain quality educators
- Yes, the commercial market drive the county's success.
- Use citizens experiences- we want to help and have come to these meetings on ed, with masters and a careers or decades of experiences- no follow up, feedback or have gotten messages that were pushback on any ideas. Ed staff is not approachable.
- The County needs to focus on building an economy based on its strengths - its natural and cultural resources.

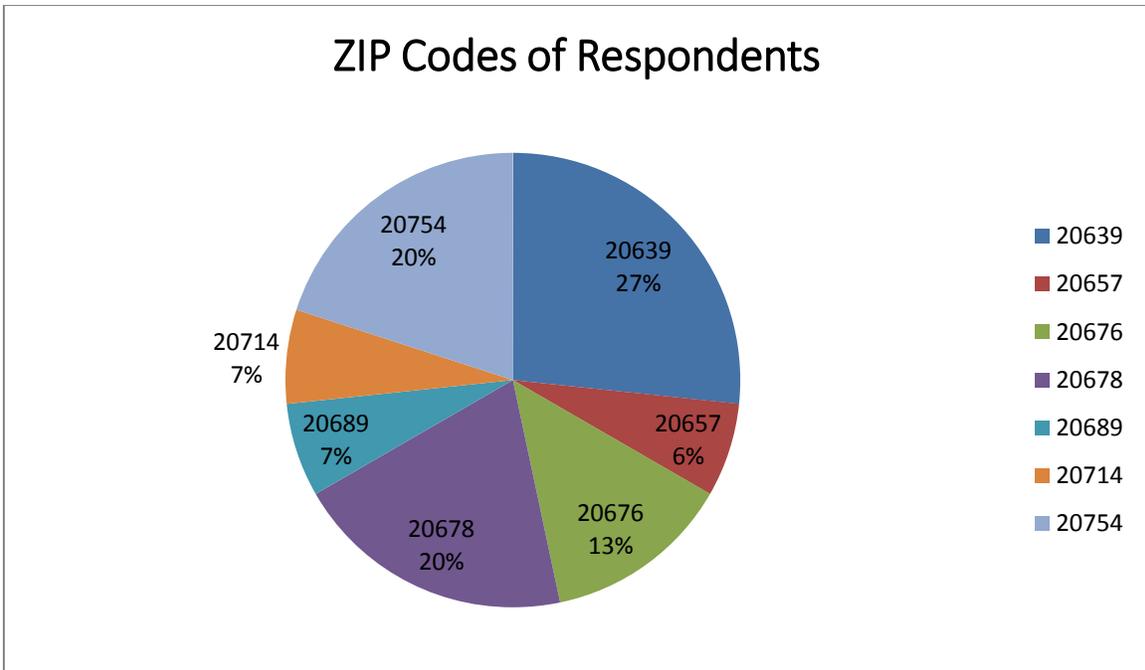
- Stop raising property taxes so residents can spend their money in Calvert.
- Calvert County provides a natural peaceful setting which is critical to the mental health of people, both residents and non residents. Calvert County should build on that. If you want something different, go to another county that provides shopping malls and casinos. Calvert County has an opportunity to contribute to a better quality of life for both its residents and the people of Maryland. We have a gift and we should use it wisely.

Demographics

Number of respondents: 15



The majority of respondents were between the ages of 51-65, with eight respondents falling into that age category. Four respondents were between the ages of 31-50, three respondents were over the age of 65, and no respondents were younger than the age of 31.



The majority of respondents were from 20639 (Huntingtown), with four respondents being from that ZIP code. Three respondents each were from 20678 (Prince Frederick) and 20754 (Dunkirk). Two respondents were from 20676 (Port Republic), and one respondent each was from 20657 (Lusby), 20689 (Sunderland), and 20714 (North Beach).

Zip Code Reference Chart

ZIP Code	Town	Frequency
20639	Huntingtown	4
20657	Lusby	1
20676	Port Republic	2
20678	Prince Frederick	3
20689	Sunderland	1
20714	North Beach	1
20754	Dunkirk	3

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