

# Prince George's County Land Use and Permitting Reform Steering Committee Report



May 2025



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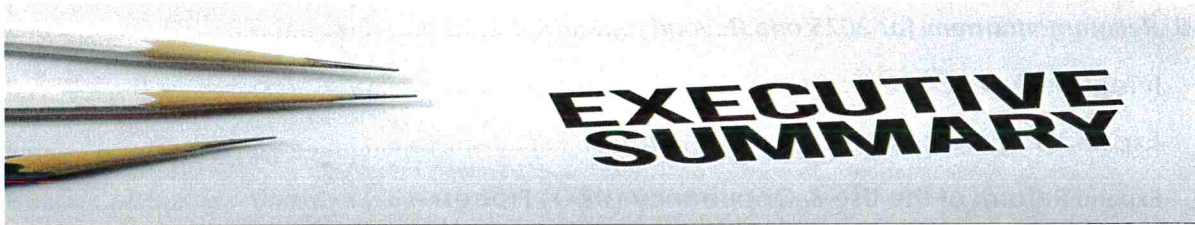
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## 1. Executive Summary

Prince George's County has undertaken significant efforts to improve its land use and permitting functions in response to concerns about efficiency, transparency, and customer satisfaction. ADC, in collaboration with the County's Chief Administrative Officer and the Office of County Stat, worked to implement recommendations made by a panel of stakeholders appointed by County Executive Alsobrooks. These recommendations were aimed at streamlining processes, enhancing customer engagement, and leveraging technology. This report outlines the progress made, challenges encountered, and recommendations for sustaining momentum in the years ahead.

Key accomplishments include:

- DPIE's implementation of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, operational since April 2024, accompanied by a 95% completion rate in staff training for effective communication and customer service.
- Enhanced public perception of DPIE as reflected in a Google rating increase from 1.0 to 4.6, with over 295 reviews, 90% of which are positive.
- Launch of initiatives to improve cross-agency collaboration, including "DPIE University" for joint training, engaging over 200 staff members.
- DPIE development of digital tools such as an Application Tracker and quarterly newsletters reaching over 60,000 recipients, enabling better customer engagement.
- DPIE piloting improvements in permitting efficiency, including same day permits for residential driveways and the introduction of an administrative Use & Occupancy permit process.
- MNCPPC's enhancement of PG Atlas has significantly improved public access to land use data and is fostering inter-agency collaboration, addressing transparency and efficiency goals.
- MNCPPC developed new thresholds for Planning Director approvals, introduced under CB-15, aimed at streamlining the approval process for certain project categories.
- M-NCPPC refreshed its website to make resources more accessible and user-friendly, aimed at enabling applicants to navigate processes more efficiently.

While progress has been significant, challenges remain, including staffing shortages, integration of mobile inspection technology, and implementation of risk-based assessments.



## 2. Introduction

ADC Management Solutions (ADC-MS) is a minority- and woman-owned consulting firm headquartered in the Washington, DC Metropolitan area, with over 21 years of experience delivering comprehensive solutions. ADC specializes in solving complex issues through rapid assessment, benchmarking best practices, and implementing sustainable solutions. Our firm's expertise includes extensive work with government agencies to optimize operational efficiency and enhance customer satisfaction.

In our recent engagement with Prince George's County, ADC conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the County's permitting and land use processes. This assessment involved a five-phase approach, including detailed analysis of existing systems, stakeholder engagement, and benchmarking against regional and national best practices. The findings formed the foundation for actionable recommendations designed to address inefficiencies, enhance transparency, and support economic growth in the County.

The County's leadership, including the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and agency heads, has collaborated closely with ADC to prioritize and implement these recommendations. This partnership was focused on fostering continuous improvement and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the reforms.

This report would not have been possible without the leadership and collaboration of numerous individuals who have driven these initiatives forward. We extend our gratitude to:

- **Tara Jackson**, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), for her visionary leadership and strategic oversight.
- **Jared McCarthy**, Deputy CAO for Government Operations, for his commitment to inter-agency coordination.
- **Peter Shapiro**, Chair of M-NCPPC, for championing regulatory updates and modernization efforts.
- **Lakisha Hull**, Planning Director, for her dedication to improving customer service and advancing land use reforms.
- **Dawit Abraham**, Director of DPIE, for his tireless efforts in streamlining permitting processes and enhancing operational efficiency.
- **Ryan Middleton**, Director of County Stat, for chairing the Steering Committee
- **Brandon Starkes**, Office of County Stat, for his technical expertise and support in performance monitoring.

Their collective efforts have been instrumental in the success of this reform initiative, and we deeply appreciate their contributions.



### 3. Project Scope and Goals

This project was structured around a strategic approach to implementing the recommendations outlined in the Prince George's County Land Use and Regulatory Processes Assessment report.

Key areas of focus included:

- **Framework development:** Establishing a structured approach for managing and coordinating cross-agency recommendations.
- **Technology integration:** Implementing CRM systems and integrating digital platforms for seamless online submissions, tracking, and data sharing.
- **Use & Occupancy (U&O) process revamp:** Redesigning the U&O permitting process to include self-certifications, risk-based assessments, and pre-occupancy inspections.
- **Policy and process reengineering:** Simplifying or eliminating inefficient policies and processes identified as barriers to timely approvals.
- **Stakeholder engagement and communication:** Ensuring continuous input from stakeholders to guide implementation and maintain transparency.

Specific goals of the project included:

- Improving customer service in DPIE and M-NCPPC.
- Improving communication with stakeholders.
- Addressing resource and operational barriers to improve processing times and approval rates.
- Establishing clear accountability measures and performance benchmarks to ensure sustained progress.
- Leveraging technology and best practices to provide innovative solutions for regulatory challenges.

Through these efforts, the County aims to position DPIE and M-NCPPC as models for efficient, transparent, and customer-focused land use and permitting processes.

## 4. Steering Committee



The Prince George's County Land Use and Permitting Reform Implementation Steering Committee played a pivotal role in overseeing and guiding the reform efforts. This committee was composed of representatives from three key County agencies OIT, DPIE and M-NCPPC alongside the Office of County Stat (OCS) and the ADC team. Leadership was provided by the County's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to ensure alignment with the County's strategic objectives.

### Composition and Roles

**Ryan Middleton (Chair):** Provided overall leadership to the committee, ensuring effective oversight and alignment of reform efforts with County priorities.

**Brandon Starkes,** Office of County Stat, provided policy, technical and coordinating support to the Committee and ADC.

**Agency Members:**

Main DPIE representatives: Mary Giles, Deputy Director and Lori Paris, Chief of Staff

Other DPIE participants: Lamont Hinton, Deputy Director; Yvette Gayles, Assistant Director; and Henry Fuller, Performance Management Officer.



Main M-NCPPC representatives: James Hunt, Deputy Planning Director and Natalia Gomez Rojas, Planner IV

Other M-NCPPC participants: James Cannistra, Chief Technology Officer

Main OIT representatives: Wanda Gibson Chief Information Officer, Duane Prophet, Deputy Director.

ADC facilitated the Steering Committee's work, ensuring coordination among agencies towards achieving the project's objectives.

## Objectives and Activities

The committee met bi-weekly to review progress, address challenges, and coordinate efforts.

Key activities included:

- **Progress Monitoring:** County Stat and ADC developed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track and evaluate the implementation of reform initiatives. As of December 2024, over 80% of recommendations have been started, implemented, or are nearing completion.
- **Facilitating Inter-Agency Collaboration:** The Steering Committee provided a forum for cross-agency coordination to resolve issues such as data integration, policy inconsistencies, and resource allocation.
- **Policy and Process Overhaul:** The Steering Committee created a template for DPIE and M-NCPPC to review. Both DPIE and M-NCPPC have cited lack of resource as a challenge preventing the commencement of this activity.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** ADC maintained a group of 5 stakeholders to provide feedback on the impact of the reform efforts and incorporated feedback to gauge the effectiveness of the reform efforts.
- **Reporting:** Count Stat and ADC provided agency heads with progress reports, including graphical summaries and detailed narratives, to maintain transparency and accountability.

The committee was a cornerstone for guiding and sustaining the Prince George's County's land use and permitting reform efforts.



## 5. Implementation Updates

The implementation phase of the Prince George's County Land Use and Permitting Reform was organized to address specific recommendations made by the 2023 Land Use and Regulatory Reform Committee (the Committee) for each agency. The Committee made recommendations for 4 agencies, DPIE, M-NCPPC, SCD, and WSSC. This Steering Committee and ADC's efforts were primarily focused on DPIE and M-NCPPC, where the bulk of the Committee's recommendations were made. The Committee made a few recommendations for WSSC which were quickly addressed very early in the project. ADC and County Stat made the decision to reduce engagement with SCD to focus resources on DPIE and M-NCPPC. This section of the report is structured to provide clarity on recommendations, implemented initiatives, and areas requiring further attention.

### A. DPIE Updates

The Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement (DPIE) has demonstrated substantial progress in executing the recommendations outlined in the Prince George's County Land Use and Regulatory Processes Assessment. DPIE's commitment to streamlining operations and improving customer satisfaction has been consistent and driven by Director Abraham.

#### Key Achievements

- **CRM System Implementation:** DPIE successfully launched a robust Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system in April 2024, enabling efficient management of customer interactions and case tracking.
- **Same-Day Permits:** The introduction of expedited processes for residential driveway permits and an administrative Use & Occupancy permit has set the stage for expanding this model to essential trade permits and select commercial projects.
- **Training and Development:** Over 95% of staff have completed comprehensive customer service training, improving customer engagement. The impact of this training effort has been felt in increasingly positive stakeholder feedback.
- **Digital Tools:** DPIE launched an updated website featuring user-friendly resources for tracking permit statuses, accessing forms, and providing feedback. In addition DPIE is now utilizing social media and other digital communications assets to reach stakeholders.
- **Mobile Inspections:** A contract with Selectron has advanced the development of a mobile inspections application, with increased remote inspections for select categories expected in FY2025.

#### Ongoing Initiatives

- **Data Integration:** Collaboration with OIT, M-NCPPC, and ADC has focused on integrating data-sharing and customer relations platforms. There is still a lot to be done to integrate these platforms, but DPIE is fully committed to implementing this recommendation. This initiative will require the cooperation of M-NCPPC and facilitation of OIT.



- **Inspection Process Overhaul:** DPIE is refining its inspection processes by expanding remote inspection capabilities and setting clear performance metrics.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** DPIE has strengthened its engagement with the public through real-time feedback surveys and quarterly newsletters, ensuring alignment with community needs and expectations.

#### Challenges and Future Focus

- **Staffing Shortages:** Addressing resource gaps remains a priority to sustain progress and meet increased service demands.
- **Risk-Based Assessments:** Further work is required to implement risk-based methods for streamlining permit approvals, such as self-certifications and pre-occupancy inspections.
- **Public Awareness:** While DPIE has made tremendous progress over past year, it could do a better job of selling its successes. Further enhancing its social media campaigns and embedding positive testimonials into its digital presence can better communicate improvements.

DPIE's proactive approach and commitment to innovation has been felt within Prince George's County. With continued focus on efficiency, transparency, and stakeholder engagement, DPIE is set to achieve even greater milestones in the coming year.

#### Committee Recommendations for DPIE

Below is the full list of recommendations made by the Land Use Reform Committee for DPIE

1. Establish a same-day permit review process for specific types of permits.
2. Implement a true One-Stop-Shop for permit applications within DPIE.
3. Establish formal channels of communications and collaboration with other agencies involved in the permitting process.
4. Review agency website to ensure information is accurate, current, and accessible from various platforms
5. Implement a customer relationship management (CRM) system
6. Improve and expand online presence
7. Implement well defined and timely escalation and resolution processes
8. Improve DPIE customer service center
9. Establish a deadline (24-48 hours) for responding to applicant inquiries
10. Continue collaboration with stakeholders
11. Develop a proactive outreach strategy to include newsletters, email updates, or text messages
12. Strengthen collaboration and information sharing among agencies
13. Review agency policies and processes and revise them to make them simpler and easier to understand.
14. Implement mobile inspection technology, such as smart devices, mobile apps, digital forms, and real-time reporting
15. Provide training and professional development opportunities for inspectors.
16. Utilize self-certification and risk-based assessment for certain types of properties or minor changes requiring a U&O permit.



17. Train and educate all customer facing staff in effective communication and customer service skills
18. Invest in mid-level management training and professional development
19. Establish joint training and capacity building for staff of all agencies involved in the permit process
20. Digitize and integrate plan review and permitting systems.
21. Introduce risk-based assessments for inspections and approvals.
22. Reform the U&O Process to include self-certification and pre-occupancy inspections.

#### DPIE Recommendations Implemented

- 1. Establish a same-day permit review process for specific types of permits**
  - DPIE has established a same day permit for Residential Driveways (DW) and is committed to expanding in 2025.
  - DPIE is targeting two additional permits in 2025.
- 2. Establish formal channels of communications and collaboration with other agencies involved in the permitting process.**
  - DPIE is hosting various cross agency meetings aim at improving input, coordination, and problem solving with agency partners.
  - DPIE leads an interagency working group dedicated to approving school building permits and other high profile real estate projects.
- 3. Review agency website to ensure information is accurate, current, and accessible from various platforms.**
  - Agency has updated web pages about the permit process.
  - Website now accessible from various platforms.
  - DPIE added new information for pool and fence permits on their website.
- 4. Implement a new customer relationship management (CRM) system**
  - The system is operational as of April 2024.
  - Ongoing staff training is in place.
- 5. Improve and expand digital presence**
  - New social media templates developed and in use by the agency.
  - DPIE distributed quarterly newsletters to over 60,000 recipients
  - DPIE conducted real-time feedback surveys
  - The agency's google rating improved from 1.0 to 4.6 on a scale of 1-5.
- 6. Improve DPIE customer service center**
  - DPIE hired and trained new customer service staff in FY 2025.
  - DPIE is providing ongoing customer service training for center staff.
  - DPIE hired numerous multi-lingual staff to assist non-English speaking clients.
- 7. Establish a deadline (24-48 hours) for responding to applicant inquiries**
  - DPIE introduced Application Tracker and LookSee and updated its website with clearer links and instructions on how to check permit statuses.



- ProjectDox has been enhanced to send automatic updates to applicants.

#### **8. Continue collaboration with stakeholders**

- DPIE actively participates in regular meetings with the Maryland Building Industry Association (MBIA), developers, builders, etc.
- Stakeholders have reported that the agency outreach has improved significantly over the past year.

#### **9. Develop a proactive outreach strategy to include newsletters, email updates, or text messages**

- DPIE revamped its newsletter and has implemented a digital component to the agency's outreach strategy.
- The effectiveness of this outreach strategy is evidenced in the improved customer service scores.

#### **10. Strengthen collaboration and information sharing among agencies**

- DPIE facilitates a number of meetings with representatives from M-NCPPC, WSSC, SCD, DPW&T, and DOH aimed at making the permitting process more efficient and less frustrating to stakeholders.

#### **11. Implement mobile inspection technology, such as smart devices, mobile apps, digital forms, and real-time reporting**

- In FY24, DPIE successfully conducted 3,138 remote/virtual residential inspections.
- DPIE has contracted Selectron to develop a mobile inspections application.
- DPIE has not committed to expanding the tools being what are currently in use.

#### **12. Provide comprehensive training and ongoing professional development opportunities for inspectors**

- DPIE is providing regular training sessions to inspectors.

#### **13. Train and educate all customer facing staff in effective communication and customer service skills**

- Approximately 95% of all DPIE staff have been trained in effective communication and customer service skills.

#### **14. Invest in mid-level management training and professional development**

- Yearly training modules have been established and identified by the Associate Director.
- Training started September 2024.



**15. Establish joint training and capacity building for staff of all agencies involved in the permit process**

- DPIE launched "DPIE University," a series of in-house training sessions available to all staff involved in the permitting process, regardless of agency.
- Over 200 employees participated already.

**16. Reform the U&O Process to include self-certification and pre-occupancy inspections.**

- DPIE spent a substantial part of 2024 developing and gaining permission for a new Administrative Use & Occupancy permit. The new administrative U&O was created specifically for change of ownership or tenant without construction. This new process will allow DPIE to issue administrative U&O permits without plans review or referral to MNCPPC. No DPIE inspection will be performed.
- DPIE has committed to reviewing other initiatives to be considered in the new fiscal year.

DPIE Recommendations Not Implemented

**1. Implement a true One-Stop-Shop for permit applications within DPIE.**

- This is a goal that the leadership of DPIE and the County are committed to achieving but there are substantial barriers in the way, including the independence of some agencies and the unwillingness of others to give up authority that would be necessary to accomplish this goal.
- Both DPIE and M-NCPPC are working on initiatives, including CRM and data management systems that could lay the foundation for the eventual achievement of this goal.

**2. Implement well defined and timely escalation and resolution processes**

- DPIE is committed to addressing this recommendation soon.

**3. Review agency polices and processes and revise them to make them simpler and easier to understand.**

- While DPIE agrees that implementing this recommendation would substantially improve stakeholders interaction with the agency, they indicated that this recommendation would require an infusion of resources to make it happen.

**4. Use self-certification and risk-based assessment for certain types of properties or minor changes requiring a U&O permit.**

- DPIE is committed exploring further improvements to the U&O process after the administrative U&O approval has been in place for a sufficient period of time to gauge its effectiveness.

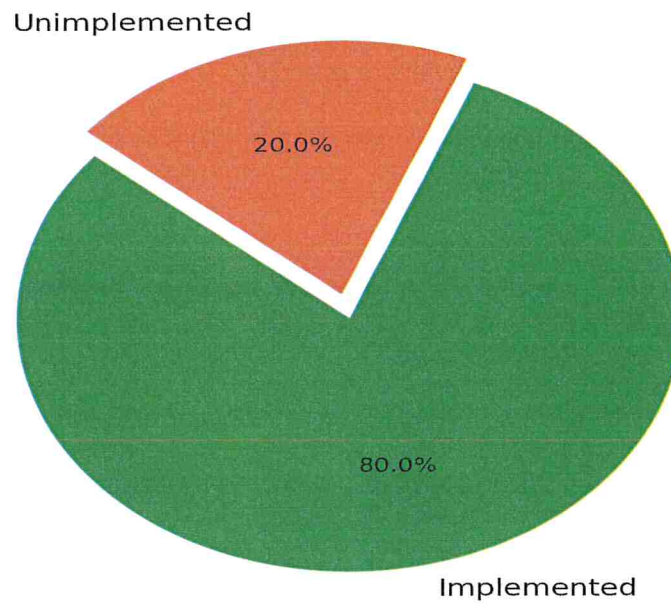
**5. Digitize and integrate DPIE and M-NCPPC's plan review and permitting systems.**

- Both agencies are implementing their own CRM and Data Sharing Systems.



- PG atlas emerged as a solution for bridging public access to system wide data.
- 6. Introduce risk-based assessments for inspections and approvals.**
- DPIE is committed to exploring ways of improving its inspection and other processes.

## DPIE Recommendations: Implemented vs Unimplemented





## B. M-NCPPC's Updates

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) has actively contributed to the implementation of recommendations aimed at improving the County's land use and permitting processes. These efforts included major cultural and organizational changes including leadership transformation. The agency replaced its entire leadership team including a new Planning Director and two Deputy Directors. Additional, staffing reallocations have taken place to align with the agency's renewed strategic priorities. M-NCPPC is requesting 21 new positions to support its evolving needs and ensure that service improvements can be sustained. Below is an overview of M-NCPPC's progress:

### Key Achievements

- **Stakeholder Education About the New Zoning Updates:**  
Throughout 2024 M-NCPPC has provided forum to educate stakeholders about the new zoning ordinances. In the last quarter of 2024, the agency started a series of brown bag sessions with key constituents.
- **Threshold Adjustments for Expedited Approvals:**  
By implementing CB-15, M-NCPPC has empowered the Planning Director to approve certain project categories without requiring lengthy entitlement processes. This initiative should help reduced bottlenecks, allowing faster project initiation and align with the County's economic growth goals.
- **Website Improvements:**  
The agency undertook a significant review of its website and implemented significant improvements. M-NCPPC is committed to continuous review and revamping of the website to ensure it serves constituents better.

### Ongoing Initiatives

- **Digitization of Record Plats:**  
Efforts are underway to digitize record plats, making them accessible online. Collaboration with the courts is critical to align procedural requirements, which will ultimately streamline access for developers and agencies. The project is pivotal for improving historical data access and accelerating project timelines.
- **Customer Feedback Mechanisms:**  
M-NCPPC is drafting a detailed survey to capture real-time feedback from applicants and residents. The insights gathered will guide further service improvements, ensuring that reforms address user concerns effectively. This initiative aligns with broader efforts to enhance customer satisfaction and trust.
- **Development of Step-by-Step Approval Guides:**  
To demystify complex processes, M-NCPPC is committed to creating clear, concise guides outlining approval steps, estimated timelines, and required documentation. However, the initiative's progress hinges on securing additional resources anticipated in FY 2026.



## Challenges and Future Focus Areas

- **Escalation and Resolution Processes:**  
The Committee recommended the implementation of formal escalation pathways for resolving bottlenecks. Applicants often face delays in resolving disputes or receiving clarifications, undermining efficiency and satisfaction. Establishing a centralized resolution mechanism with clear accountability will address this gap, fostering faster issue resolution and stronger relationships with stakeholders. We encourage the agency to focus on this recommendation
- **Expanding Training for Customer-Facing Staff:**  
Limited resources have delayed comprehensive training programs for customer-facing staff. Expanding these initiatives will equip employees with tools to manage complex inquiries effectively and enhance communication, which is vital for maintaining public trust and satisfaction.
- **Integration of Data Sharing Platforms:**  
Full integration of data systems like DARTS (scheduled for a Spring 2025 launch) and PG Atlas remains a priority. While progress has been steady, ensuring seamless interconnectivity between these platforms will require technical expertise and cross-agency coordination. Achieving this will unlock real-time data sharing, further simplifying application tracking and decision-making.

M-NCPPC's leadership is dedicated to innovation and collaboration, understanding that the agency plays a critical role in advancing Prince George's County's land use and permitting objectives. With continued focus on modernization and stakeholder collaboration, the agency is well-positioned to achieve its strategic goals.

## Committee Recommendations for M-NCPPC

Below is the full list of recommendations made by the Land Use Reform Committee for M-NCPPC.

1. Implement a true one-stop-shop within DPIE
2. Establish concurrent reviews rather than sequential reviews
3. Establish pre-application review deadlines
4. Create a clear and concise step-by-step approval process guide
5. Digitize record plats
6. Integrate agency platforms
7. Assign dedicated project managers to complex or large-scale projects
8. Cross train staff and provide them with overlapping authority
9. Establish formal channels of communications and collaboration for the 4 agencies
10. Review agency websites to ensure information is accurate, current, and accessible from various platforms
11. Implement a customer relationship management (CRM) system
12. Improve and expand online presence
13. Train and educate all customer facing staff in effective communication and customer service skills
14. Establish feedback mechanisms to gather customer feedback
15. Implement well defined and timely escalation and resolution processes



16. Establish a deadline for responding to applicant inquiries
17. Review evaluation criteria to ensure they are clear and transparent.
18. Expand the threshold of projects currently exempt from the site plan process
19. Develop a threshold for planning director approval of some projects
20. Train and educate all customer facing staff in effective communication and customer service skills
21. Implement a rigorous performance monitoring program
22. Utilize performance improvement plans for staff
23. Invest in mid-level management training and professional development
24. Establish joint training and capacity building for staff of all agencies involved in the processes
25. Provide ongoing outreach and education about the new code.

#### M-NCPPC Recommendations Implemented

- 1. Establish a deadline for responding to applicant inquiries**
  - MNCPPC attested to this practice currently being implemented
  - Agency plans to include customer satisfaction measures in surveys.
- 2. Invest in mid-level management training and professional development**
  - Agency utilizing Planning, EDU and LinkedIn Learning to train staff.
- 3. Assign dedicated project managers to complex or large-scale projects**
  - Agency confirmed that this practice is in place.
- 4. Cross train staff and provide them with overlapping authority**
  - Agency confirmed that this process is in practice.
  - Supervisors train multiple staff on tasks so there is coverage for all talks.
- 5. Review evaluation criteria to ensure they are clear and transparent.**
  - Various communication improvements are underway, including the use of clear language in new zoning and subdivision ordinances and the development of a proactive outreach strategy with newsletters and updates.
  - Agency has implemented a Brown bag series that will include information about evaluation criteria.
  - Agency is offering ongoing virtual sessions to stakeholders to explain its processes.
- 6. Implement a rigorous performance monitoring program**
  - Agency believes that its annual performance review process has the rigor the Land Use Reform Committee was targeting.
- 7. Provide ongoing outreach and education about the new code**
  - Coordination with the publications team is ongoing to ensure that updates regarding the new code are periodically communicated via the website and bulletins.
  - Website improvements are currently prioritized, after which the specific KPIs related to outreach will be addressed.



#### **8. Establish pre-application review deadlines**

- In accordance with the new Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision regulations, M-NCPPC is required to be compelled to complete pre-application reviews within 15 days. Agency attests to meeting this timeline.

#### **9. Review agency websites to ensure information is accurate, current, and accessible from various platforms**

- Ongoing updates and reviews are planned quarterly, with initial updates completed by May 31, 2024.
- Significant review of the website has occurred, and improvements are being implemented continuously

#### **10. Improve and expand online presence**

- The website had a "soft" launch and is under continuous review for further improvements. Ongoing updates and reviews are planned quarterly, with initial updates completed by May 31, 2024. Significant review of the website has occurred, and improvements are being implemented continuously.

#### **11. Develop a threshold for planning director approval of some projects**

- Agency identifying appropriate thresholds for expedited approvals. It also requires Council action. Recently adopted CB-15 identified new thresholds where certain projects would not require certain entitlement approvals.

#### **12. Establish concurrent reviews rather than sequential reviews**

- Agency affirmed that this is the current practice and that many applicants have not taken advantage of this process.

#### **13. Expand the threshold of projects currently exempt from the site plan process**

- Recently adopted CB-15 identified new thresholds where certain projects would not require certain entitlement approvals.

### M-NCPPC Recommendations Underway

#### **1. Create a clear and concise step-by-step approval process guide**

- Agency stated that additional resources are needed to complete this task and will be requesting in the FY 2026 budget.

#### **2. Integrate agencies platforms**

- DPIE and M-NCPPC are implementing their own CRM and Data Sharing Systems.
- PG atlas is now serving as a solution for bridging public access to system wide data.

#### **3. Establish feedback mechanisms to gather customer feedback**

- A draft survey is in development. Planning Department senior leadership team is awaiting information from ADC to identify best practices on how to implement and address feedback provided by the surveys.



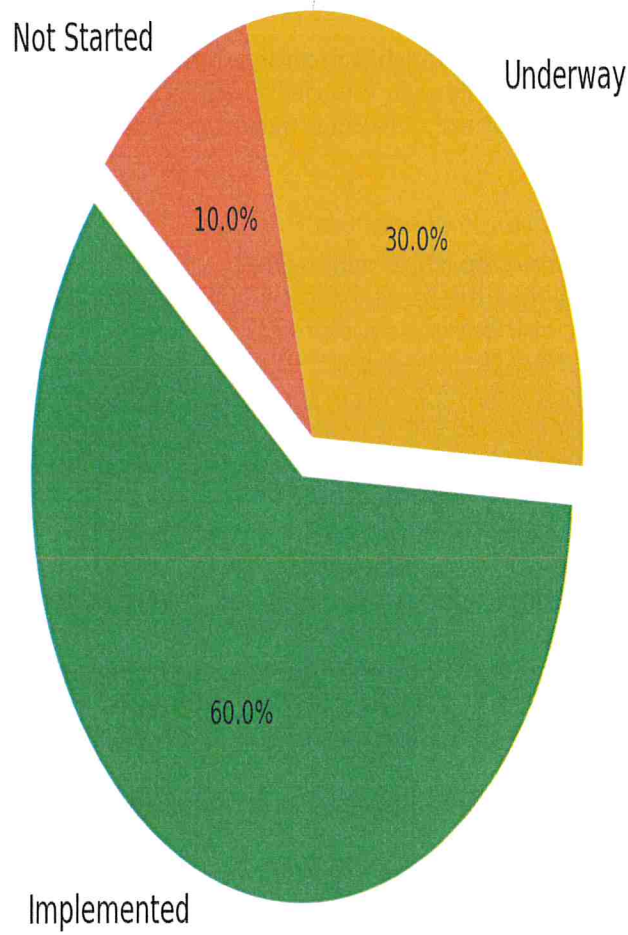
- 4. Establish joint training and capacity building for staff of all agencies involved in the processes**
  - Agency currently developing a resource guide that can be used by both DPIE and 311. In addition DPIE, M-NCPPC, and SCD participate in quarterly meetings. DPIE and M-NCPPC also have separate monthly coordination meetings.
  
- 5. Implement a customer relationship management (CRM) system**
  - M-NCPPC is implementing a new data management software (DARTS) that will have a CRM component. DARTS is expected to be implemented by April 2025.

#### M-NCPPC Recommendations Not Implemented

- 1. Implement a true one-stop-shop within DPIE**
  - This is a goal that the leadership of DPIE and the County are committed to achieving but there are substantial barriers in the way, including the independence of some agencies and the unwillingness of others to give up authority that would be necessary to accomplish this goal.
  - Both DPIE and M-NCPPC are working on initiatives, including CRMs and data management systems that could lay the foundation for the eventual achievement of this goal.
  
- 2. Digitize record plats**
  - Discussions with the courts are needed to implement this recommendation.
  
- 3. Establish formal channels of communications and collaboration for the 4 agencies**
  - DPIE and M-NCPPC meet regularly but they are no formal channels or protocols for communications with SCD and WSSC.
  
- 4. Train and educate all customer facing staff in effective communication and customer service skills**
  - The agency is committed to getting this done but needs additional resources to put this initiative in place.
  
- 5. Implement well defined and timely escalation and resolution processes**
  - No action has been taken on this recommendation yet.
  
- 6. Utilize performance improvement plans for staff**
  - Plans are underway to develop a customer service survey that will inform these improvement plans, with the year-end deadline seen as achievable.



## M-NCPPC Recommendations: Implemented, Underway, and Not Started





## C. SCD Updates

The Soil Conservation District (SCD) plays a vital role in supporting sustainable development and ensuring compliance with environmental standards. To enhance its efficiency, transparency, and alignment with Prince George's County priorities, a series of targeted recommendations were made by the 2023 Land Use Reform Committee have been proposed. These recommendations focus on improving customer service, streamlining internal processes, fostering inter-agency collaboration, and ensuring accountability through performance metrics. The Committee's hope was that by addressing these areas, SCD can better serve stakeholders, reduce redundancies, and contribute more effectively to the County's strategic development goals. Below is a summary of the key recommendations.

### Committee Recommendations for SCD

1. **Enhancing Customer Service:**
  - Implement centralized helpdesks and CRM systems for streamlined communication.
  - Assign dedicated project managers for complex projects.
  - Set clear timelines (24-48 hours) for responding to inquiries and notifying applicants about their application's status.
2. **Improving Processes and Efficiency:**
  - Establish performance metrics and realistic application approval timelines.
  - Align review functions and keep application reviews within SCD's authorized scope.
  - Reduce redundancies by eliminating multiple reviews and collaborating more effectively with other agencies.
3. **Boosting Transparency and Accountability:**
  - Develop feedback mechanisms, including surveys and suggestion boxes, to gather public insights.
  - Publicly share customer service survey results and monitor staff performance through key metrics.
4. **Strengthening Inter-Agency Collaboration:**
  - Enhance collaboration with agencies like DPIE and M-NCPPC to streamline development reviews.
  - Consider transferring development review functions to DPIE or M-NCPPC to optimize resources.
5. **Leadership and Strategic Alignment:**
  - Review the impact of senior leaders on timelines and adapt as necessary.
  - Align agency objectives more closely with County priorities.

The Soil Conservation District (SCD) actively engaged with the reform efforts by participating in two detailed meetings with ADC and the Office of County Stats (OCS) early in 2024. During these discussions, SCD's leadership, led by Director Darcy and Deputy Director John Tarr, provided valuable insights into the agency's current practices, ongoing initiatives, and challenges. The meetings focused on reviewing and clarifying the recommendations outlined in the reform plan and understanding SCD's implementation strategies.



Throughout these 2 sessions, SCD leadership conveyed that many recommendations were either already in progress, fully implemented, or deemed impractical due to existing operational constraints. While this feedback was appreciated, ADC and OCS ultimately decided to prioritize reform implementation efforts with DPIE and M-NCPPC. This decision was guided by the need to allocate resources where the greatest immediate impact could be achieved, aligning with the broader County reform goals. Nevertheless, the input and participation of SCD remain important to the overall success of the initiative, and future collaboration and reform opportunities should continue to be explored.

Below is a summary of Committee recommendations provided to SCD and the agency's responses as of August 10, 2024. The Steering Committee has not verified these implementation efforts but urge the County leadership to do so.

## SCD Initiatives Updates

### 1. **Customer Service Improvements**

- **Implement Well-Defined Customer Complaint Escalation and Resolution Processes**
  - **Response:** SCD has established protocols for escalation through platforms such as the PGSCD/MBIA Development Process Coordination Meeting (bi-monthly) and MBIA Development Process Subcommittee Meeting (monthly). These platforms ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the escalation protocols.
- **Establish a Deadline (24-48 Hours) for Responding to Applicant Inquiries**
  - **Response:** SCD has adopted a policy for responding to phone calls within 24 hours and suggests 24-48 hours for all correspondence.
- **Promptly Notify Customers About the Status of Their Application or Changes in the Process**
  - **Response:** SCD provides same-day notifications (8 AM - 2 PM) for project updates. Updates after 2 PM are communicated the following business day. Technical bulletins and policy documents are also used to notify stakeholders.

### 2. **Process Efficiency**

- **Keep Application Reviews Within SCD's Authorized Scope**
  - **Response:** SCD has recurring planning, educational sessions, and forums with the development industry to clarify its role and ensure reviews remain within scope.
- **Establish and Publish More Realistic Application Approval Timelines**
  - **Response:** SCD has analyzed five years of data, revealing that 98% of submissions are completed within 10 business days. Approval timelines depend heavily on submission quality.
- **Establish a Process and Timeline for Eliminating Multiple Reviews of Applications**
  - **Response:** SCD acknowledges that review timelines depend on submission quality and compliance with federal, state, and local regulations. Strategies include consulting with state agencies and implementing fees for excessive submissions.



### 3. *Performance Metrics and Staff Development*

- **Establish/Revise Key Performance Metrics**
  - **Response:** SCD tracks performance metrics, including application review turnaround times, which show consistent adherence to their 10-business-day target.
- **Train and Educate All Staff in Effective Communication and Customer Service Skills**
  - **Response:** Staff training is conducted in-house, through the County's learning portal, and via external resources. This is a cornerstone of SCD operations.
- **Review the Impact of Key Senior Leaders on Approval Timelines and Take Appropriate Action**
  - **Response:** SCD focuses on empowering staff through training to reduce the need for higher-level involvement in routine reviews while ensuring senior staff remain involved in complex cases.

### 4. *Inter-Agency Collaboration*

- **Strengthen Collaboration and Information Sharing with Other Agencies**
  - **Response:** SCD participates in inter-agency collaborations for specific projects and system-wide process improvements. These engagements are recurring and results driven.
- **Implement a Centralized Customer Service Center/Helpdesk**
  - **Response:** SCD suggests locating the Helpdesk at DPIE with live staff available during business hours. Cross-agency contact sheets could also be developed for improved coordination.
- **Implement a Customer Relations Management (CRM) System**
  - **Response:** SCD supports a CRM system as part of the Helpdesk initiative, allowing for both in-person and online customer management.

### 5. *Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback*

- **Implement Customer Service Surveys and Publish Results**
  - **Response:** Surveys are provided at the end of each phase approval and made available on SCD's website. Feedback is also gathered through engagements with the Maryland Building Industry Association (MBIA).
- **Establish/Expand Feedback Mechanisms**
  - **Response:** SCD is working on an online polling protocol and routinely engages with consulting firms and agencies to solicit feedback. Recent roundtable discussions with stakeholders have provided additional insights.



## D. WSSC Updates

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) plays a pivotal role in delivering critical water and wastewater services while ensuring infrastructure development and maintenance meet high standards of quality and efficiency. In alignment with Committee recommendations aimed at improving customer service, operational transparency, and inter-agency collaboration, WSSC has made significant strides to enhance its processes and address stakeholder concerns. This section outlines WSSC's responses to both cross-agency and agency-specific recommendations, highlighting its efforts to streamline communication, strengthen quality controls, and improve service delivery.

### Summary of WSSC Recommendations and Implementation Responses

#### Cross-Agency Recommendations

- 1. Implement Well-Defined Customer Complaint Escalation and Resolution Processes**  
**Response:** WSSC assigns a Project Manager (PM) to each developer-built project. Issues unresolved at the PM level can be escalated to supervisors or the Division Manager. This process is reviewed and discussed during monthly Maryland Business Industry Association (MBIA) meetings.
- 2. Assign Dedicated Project Managers to Complex or Large-Scale Projects**  
**Response:** A PM is assigned at the earliest stage of the project review process (HPA or design review). The same PM follows the project through all stages to minimize confusion and ensure continuity.
- 3. Establish and Make Pre-Application Meetings Meaningful**  
**Response:** Developers and civil engineers can request meetings with WSSC staff to address concerns and clarify processes. WSSC also provides resources, such as a satellite office, to facilitate client meetings.
- 4. Establish a Deadline (24-48 Hours) for Responding to Applicant Inquiries**  
**Response:** WSSC management emphasizes timely responses during monthly meetings. If inquiries are not addressed within a reasonable time, escalation processes are in place.
- 5. Promptly Notify Customers About Application Status or Changes**  
**Response:** The ePlan and ePermitting systems allow developers to check application status online. Notifications about changes are sent through WSSC's Customer Connect software and shared during MBIA meetings.
- 6. Train and Educate Staff in Effective Communication and Customer Service**  
**Response:** Training is provided through WSSC's Learning Management System to ensure staff deliver professional, courteous, and accurate assistance.
- 7. Strengthen Collaboration and Information Sharing with Other Agencies**  
**Response:** WSSC collaborates with DPIE, MNCPPC, and other stakeholders through its satellite office and participation in MBIA Liaison Committee meetings. Documentation of processes is available online.

#### WSSC-Specific Recommendations

- 1. Improve Accuracy and Timeliness of Notices About Service Disruptions**  
**Response:** WSSC communicates with customers through multiple channels during project lifecycles. Emergency work, however, lacks advanced notification.



2. **Implement Quality Controls for Public Space Infrastructure Restoration**  
**Response:** WSSC tracks restoration requests through its internal system and works with the County's Third-Party Inspection Program (TPIP) to monitor permits and completion.
3. **Improve Billing Transparency**  
**Response:** WSSC follows a 10-step process to redesign billing formats and enhance clarity about charges, addressing concerns about overbilling and unexpected costs.
4. **Increase Customer Support Staff Quality and Quantity**  
**Response:** WSSC added staff to transition from temporary to permanent roles, implemented new technologies (BrightKey and Promise Pay), and plans further expansions in FY25.





## 6. DPIE and M-NCPPC Platform Integration Accomplishments and Gaps

A major recommendation of the Land Use Reform Committee was the integration of DPIE and M-NCPPC technology platforms to improve customer service and efficiency. The Committee recommended the creation of a customer relationship management (CRM) for the County housed within DPIE and accessible to all agencies involved in the permitting process. The Committee also recommended DPIE and M-NCPPC integrate their data-management platforms to facilitate a seamless transfer of information and improve transparency and efficiency within Prince George's County.

To facilitate this initiative ADC and OIT worked with DPIE and M-NCPPC to explore opportunities for new technology within each agency and the integration of those technologies aimed at streamlining operations, enhancing cross-departmental processes, and creating a seamless user experience for both internal stakeholders and the public. While significant accomplishments have been made, key gaps remain that require attention to fully realize the Committee's objectives.

### Accomplishments and Achievements

1. **Requirements Gathering and Scope Alignment**
  - Comprehensive analysis of CRM and platform integration requirements has been completed.
  - Stakeholder needs have been identified through extensive cross-agency meetings, ensuring a clear path forward for integration.
2. **CRM System Advancements**
  - DPIE successfully implemented a new CRM system, improving customer engagement and operational efficiency.
  - M-NCPPC is on track to launch the DARTS platform in 2025, which will further enhance data-sharing capabilities.
3. **Data Integration Initiatives**
  - Integration of "Look-See" with "PG Atlas" is underway, providing a unified, public-facing interface for accessing departmental data.
4. **Public Accessibility and Service Improvements**
  - DPIE's customer service ratings have shown significant improvement, reflecting the success of enhanced user-centric initiatives.

### Key Gaps and Challenges

1. **Technical Requirements and Architecture Finalization**
  - Current gap: Finalized technical requirements and architecture for secure data exchange are still pending.
  - Proposed action: Schedule stakeholder meetings to finalize technical details and establish architectural alignment.
2. **Data Security and Access Control**
  - Current gap: M-NCPPC has concerns about selective data sharing across platforms.
  - Proposed action: Develop and implement robust data security protocols to address these concerns.
3. **Synchronizing Timelines and Implementation**



- Current gap: M-NCPPC's DART rollout delay (2025) affects integration progress.
  - Proposed action: Develop interim methods to synchronize basic CRM functionality in the interim.
- 4. Unified Access for Applicants**
- Current gap: Applicants must navigate multiple systems to check the status of permits and cases.
  - Proposed action: Design a consolidated portal offering unified access to permit and case status information.
- 5. Process Standardization and MOU Development**
- Current gap: Differing terminology and processes create challenges for integration.
  - Proposed action: Draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to standardize cross-departmental terms and processes.
- 6. Performance-Based Permitting and Automation**
- Current gap: Lack of automated, performance-based permitting for efficiency.
  - Proposed action: Pilot a self-certification approach for low risk permits to streamline operations.

### Proposed Next Steps

- Finalize technical requirements and establish architectural alignment for secure data exchange.
- Implement robust data security protocols to address M-NCPPC's concerns.
- Develop interim solutions to synchronize project timelines ahead of the DART rollout in 2025.
- Create a consolidated portal for applicants to access all permit and case-related information.
- Align cross-department processes through a standardized MOU.
- Pilot performance-based permits to introduce automation and efficiency in permitting.

The DPIE and M-NCPPC platforms integration initiative has achieved several milestones, including advancements in CRM systems, data integration, and public service improvements. However, addressing the remaining gaps is essential to ensure efficiency, security, and a seamless user experience. By tackling these challenges, the County will enhance operational alignment across departments and serve as a model for collaborative governance.

## 7. Challenges and Lessons Learned



The reform efforts undertaken by Prince George's County have yielded significant achievements, but the journey has not been without its challenges. From resource constraints to technology integration delays, the process has highlighted both systemic hurdles and opportunities for improvement. This section explores the key challenges encountered during the implementation of the recommendations, as well as the lessons learned that can guide future initiatives. By reflecting on these experiences, the County and its agencies can build on successes, address persistent gaps, and create a more effective and resilient framework for continued progress.

### Challenges

#### 1. Resource Limitations:

- Budget constraints were often sighted by M-NCPPC as obstacles to implementation of some Committee recommendations. Despite DPIE's success in hiring additional personnel, resource gaps remain a barrier to M-NCPPC achieving some long-term goals such as simplifying processes and providing customer service training.

#### 2. Technology Integration Delays:

- Integrating new and existing technologies posed challenges, particularly with the misalignment of timelines between agencies. M-NCPPC's DARTS rollout, scheduled for 2025, has impacted the ability to fully implement the recommended unified platform.



3. **Resistance to Change:**
  - Certain recommendations, such as the establishment of a true one-stop shop and risk-based assessments, faced resistance due to structural and cultural barriers within agencies. The independent authority of some agencies continues to present challenges in consolidating workflows.
4. **Public Awareness and Engagement:**
  - Limited public awareness of the reforms and their benefits hindered stakeholder buy-in. While DPIE and M-NCPPC implemented outreach efforts, there remains a gap in effectively communicating successes and ongoing initiatives.

## Lessons Learned

1. **Importance of Leadership Commitment:**
  - The involvement of high-level leaders including the CAO, Deputy CAO, DPIE Director, and M-NCPPC Director was pivotal in driving progress and aligning agency priorities. Their continued engagement is critical for sustaining momentum.
2. **Need for Centralized Coordination:**
  - The Steering Committee proved instrumental in overseeing and guiding reforms. A similar centralized body with expanded authority and resources could help accelerate implementation and resolve inter-agency conflicts more effectively.
3. **Value of Incremental Improvements:**
  - DPIE demonstrated that incremental steps, such as implementing administrative Use & Occupancy permits and piloting same-day permits, can build momentum and showcase tangible results while working toward larger goals.
4. **Stakeholder Engagement is Key:**
  - Engaging stakeholders through surveys, newsletters, and focus groups provided valuable insights into customer needs. Agencies must continue to leverage these tools to guide and evaluate reforms.
5. **Technology as an Enabler, Not a Solution:**
  - Technology alone cannot address structural inefficiencies. Successful implementation requires parallel process reengineering, staff training, and clear communication protocols to ensure new systems deliver the intended benefits.



## 8. Recommendations for 2025 and Beyond



The Steering Committee proposes a few recommendations to guide Prince George's County's permitting and land use reform efforts for 2025 and beyond. These initiatives focus on enhancing cross-agency collaboration, improving operational efficiency, and increasing transparency and user engagement.

### [Integrate Agency Platforms](#)

Efforts to integrate CRM and data-sharing systems between DPIE and M-NCPPC must remain a priority. With PG Atlas emerging as a viable solution for public access to system-wide data, further collaboration and synchronization of agency platforms will enhance accessibility and improve stakeholder engagement. The rollout of DARTS in Spring 2025 will be a critical milestone.

### [Expand Same-Day and Expedited Permits](#)

Building on the success of same-day residential driveway and Administrative U&O permits, DPIE should expand this program to include essential trade permits (e.g., electrical, plumbing, mechanical). Additionally, expedited permits for select commercial projects, such as demolition and metal stud permits, should be considered to enable earlier commencement of construction activities.



## Expand Reform of the Use & Occupancy (U&O) Process

DPIE's new Administrative U&O permit process has set a strong precedent. Future efforts should focus on adopting initiatives like self-certification for low-risk projects, pre-occupancy inspections, and risk-based approvals. These steps will streamline the process while maintaining safety and compliance standards.

## Improve Inspection Processes and Outcomes

Inspection improvements are essential to sustaining progress in permitting efficiency. Key recommendations include:

- Expanding the scope of inspections qualifying for remote status.
- Removing uniform requirements for inspectors to enable specialized roles.
- Utilizing third-party inspectors to handle demand surges.
- Establishing specific metrics to track inspection performance.

## Enhance Customer Communication and Engagement

To strengthen public trust and satisfaction, agencies should:

- Amplify social media campaigns to highlight successes and key metrics.
- Include testimonials and case studies on websites and social media.
- Expand meetings with stakeholders to address concerns and gather feedback.

## Simplify Processes for Applicants

Streamlining and simplifying the user experience remains a crucial goal:

- Develop printable and online guides detailing permitting steps, timelines, fees, and contacts.
- Introduce virtual assistants (chatbots) to address common queries instantly.
- Implement simplified forms, pre-filled applications, and eliminate redundant data requests.

## Achieve Full Digitization of Record Plats

The digitization of record plats is essential for operational efficiency and data accessibility. M-NCPPC should engage with the courts to align practices and accelerate progress toward this objective.

## Implement a True One-Stop Shop

A unified, cross-agency platform will streamline user interactions and eliminate redundancies. With CRM systems like DARTS and Momentum underway, continued focus on creating a seamless one-stop shop will address a significant user need.



## 9. Conclusion

The comprehensive efforts led by ADC, the Steering Committee, and Prince George's County agencies have set a solid foundation for long-term improvements in land use and permitting processes. The progress achieved to date—such as DPIE's CRM system implementation, enhanced customer engagement initiatives, and M-NCPPC's modernization of zoning processes—underscores the County's commitment to innovation and transparency.

To build on these successes, the County must focus on implementing the recommendations for 2025 and beyond. A phased strategy is critical to ensure sustainable growth and continued stakeholder confidence:

1. **Prioritize Integration and Collaboration:** Establish a unified framework for CRM and data-sharing platforms, ensuring that technical and operational timelines across DPIE and M-NCPPC are synchronized.
2. **Expand Access and Efficiency:** Broaden the scope of expedited permitting processes and introduce more robust automation for inspections, pre-occupancy evaluations, and self-certifications.
3. **Enhance Public Awareness:** Amplify outreach efforts through targeted campaigns, success stories, and proactive engagement to foster trust and encourage broader stakeholder participation.
4. **Maintain Flexibility:** Learn from ongoing feedback and adapt reform initiatives to reflect evolving community and industry needs.

By addressing these goals with a collaborative and iterative approach, Prince George's County can position itself as a model for regulatory efficiency and customer-centric governance. The journey to reform is ongoing, but the partnerships and momentum cultivated so far promise a future where innovation and excellence define the County's land use and permitting systems. This shared vision is not just a benchmark for success—it is a commitment to the residents and businesses that rely on these systems for a thriving community.