

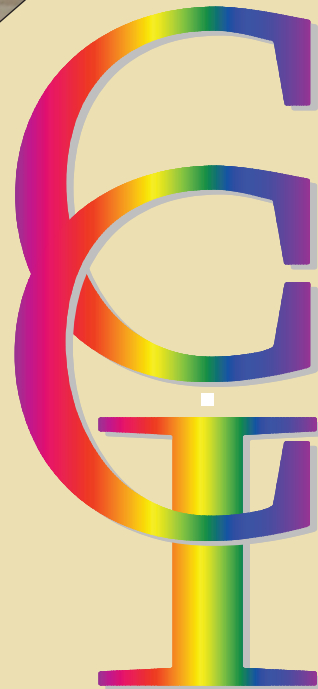


Prince George's County Planning Department

Culture Change Initiative

Annual Report

2009



Culture Change Initiative
Understanding Ourselves
Understanding Others



Culture Change Initiative
Understanding Ourselves
Understanding Others



Bring Your Child to Work Day, 2009.
Planning Board Chairman Samuel J. Parker Jr. and
Planning Director Fern Piret entertain young guests at the
County Administration Building, Upper Marlboro.

July 22, 2009

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Please accept my sincere appreciation and congratulations for your contributions to making 2008 an overwhelmingly successful year for the Prince George's County Planning Department's Culture Change Initiative (CCI). Your dedication to achieving the overall goals of this far-reaching program, and your participation in the many thoughtful and creative projects it has spurred, has been exceptionally gratifying and has resulted in the establishment of the Planning Department's CCI program as a model for the entire M-NCPPC organization.

The CCI program, in conjunction with *Envision Prince George's*, exemplifies the Commission's determination to embrace inclusion as a "core value" of our organization and our community. CCI reinforces our agency's long-standing commitment to respecting and celebrating the rich multicultural character of our workforce and our community, and to applying cultural knowledge to all interactions in the places where we live and work.

Diversity is one of M-NCPPC's strengths. The CCI program helps us to improve upon this diversity and to demonstrate it in all that we do.

Treating colleagues and customers with respect and dignity helps us to meet challenges and to improve our service. Creating community partnerships that combine and capitalize on diverse perspectives, outlooks, and talents results in more inclusive programs and plans that will benefit us all and help us to envision and realize a better Prince George's community.

On behalf of the Prince George's County Planning Board and The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, I commend and thank the members of the CCI Steering Committee for their dedication to the Culture Change Initiative. I also extend my appreciation to Planning Department staff and management for their continuing support of CCI goals and activities, as well as for embracing the broader goals of the *Envision Prince George's* initiative.

Congratulations on another productive year and best wishes for continuing success in the future.

Best regards,



Samuel J. Parker, Jr., AICP
Chairman
Prince George's County Planning Board



Introduction

The Prince George's County Planning Department serves an increasingly diverse population. Census figures show that the county's white population has continued to decline, from 216,729 in 2000 to 182,250 in 2007. The county has become markedly more diverse with the arrival of immigrants from Latin America, Africa, and Asia. This is reflected in the following Census Bureau figures for 2006 and 2007:

- The white population declined from 191,399 in 2006 to 182,250 in 2007.
- The black population declined from 543,079 in 2006 to 531,127 in 2007.
- The Asian population declined from 32,117 in 2006 to 31,295 in 2007.
- The Hispanic population increased from 98,579 in 2006 to 110,769 in 2007.
- The American Indian and Alaska Native population increased from 1,534 in 2006 to 1,965 in 2007.
- Two or more races population increased from 17,773 in 2006 to 19,002 in 2007.
- The number of males declined from 403,773 in 2006 to 396,659 in 2007.
- The number of females declined from 437,542 in 2006 to 432,111 in 2007.

The county's population is also getting older. As of the estimated census of 2005, 26.8 percent of the population was under the age of 18, 10.4 percent was 18–24 years of age, 33.0 percent 25–44 years of age, 22.1 percent 45–64 years of age, and 7.7 percent 65 or older. The median age was 33 years. The 2007 Census Bureau reports that the median age grew from 34.6 years in 2006 to 35.1 years in 2007. This information points us to the ever increasing age of the customers that we are serving.

In February of 2005, the Planning Department undertook a “Culture Change Initiative” (CCI). Culture is inclusive of who we are, how we treat one another, and the communities we serve. It includes how we make decisions, how we attract new employees, how we interact with other agencies, and how we treat residents. Culture change embraces diversity and can provide many benefits, including improved customer services and relationships, enhanced innovation, and creativity. It can also help reduce negative employee perceptions, improve staff morale, and retain valued employees. The intent exceeds any narrow thinking limited to race and gender and involves differences in ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, disabilities, language, and sexual orientation.

As part of the initiative, a *Cultural Climate Assessment* was conducted by Trinity Transition Consultants in 2005. A follow-up assessment was done in 2008. Trinity surveyed all Planning Department employees regarding the treatment of staff by management, opportunities for advancement, communication, and other issues related to diversity and inclusion. The results of the survey provided the context for the development of the Culture Change Initiative.

CCI helped us develop the changes in our organization that are necessary to better serve the residents of Prince George's County—with its wide range of ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds. It has also opened our eyes to the immense value that diversity brings to the workplace. We are evolving into an organization where we all feel more comfortable communicating with each other. The 2009 Annual Report for the Culture Change Initiative looks back on our journey to become a more culturally competent organization.

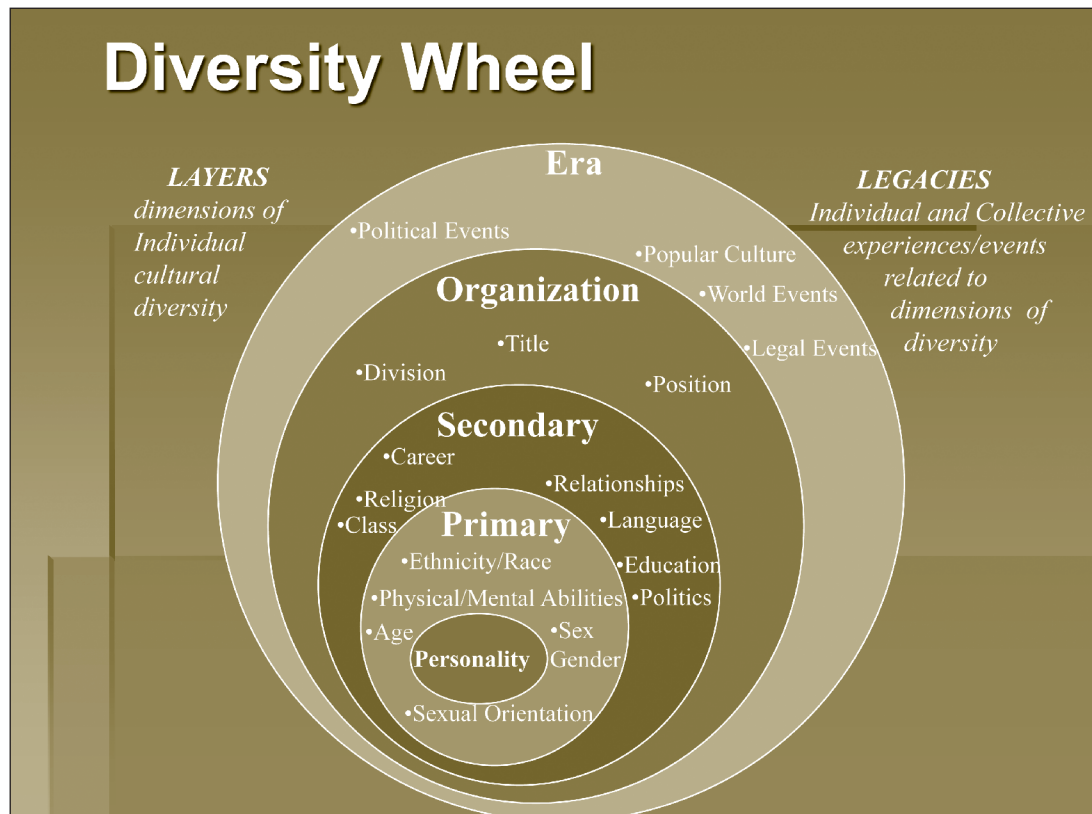
CCI—Vision, Mission and Principles of Cultural Competence

In early 2005, as the Planning Department undertook the Culture Change Initiative, a vision and a mission statement were created. The vision for the Department is to become a more culturally aware and culturally competent organization. The mission statement, which tells us how we fulfill the vision, is the following:

- To improve how we work by better serving and communicating with our communities
- To ensure that our employees are treated fairly, with respect and inclusion
- To value group and individual differences in a changing environment
- To recognize the importance of diversity in these efforts

Our core values are the basis for the way we do business. Together they set our direction and provide a framework for growth and development. Our core values, in particular, are closely tied to the rationale for our Culture Change Initiative. These values are:

- **Striving for excellence:** Continuously improving employees, products, and services in a progressive environment.
- **Relying on facts:** Making informed decisions based on a shared understanding of the facts, context, and research.
- **Meeting customer needs:** Respecting all customers and responding to their needs with integrity, honesty, and dependability.
- **Valuing contributions:** Recognizing each individual effort as important to the success of the Department as a whole.



Principles of Cultural Competence

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

1. Treat others with respect and dignity by recognizing, appreciating, and valuing diversity

- Exhibiting positive and welcoming body language (smile, look in the eye, warm handshake, etc.)
- Greeting everyone
- Working with diverse groups and cultural patterns
- Communicating constructively and in a friendly manner
- Pronouncing names correctly
- Listening to show interest in what the other party is saying

2. Take initiative and motivate others regarding diversity and inclusion

- Talking openly about diversity issues in staff meetings and other appropriate forums and also, informally, in one-on-one interactions
- Modeling a spirit of constructive inquiry
- Team building
- Flexing work styles
- Supporting a work environment free of fear, retribution, and suspicion
- Providing encouragement

3. Engage in ongoing learning to increase personal effectiveness regarding diversity and inclusion

- Reading, attending seminars, participating in discussions regarding diversity and inclusion
- Community relations and/or outreach (working with informed support and helping networks where communities are full partners in decision making)
- Conducting assessments (identifying and understanding needs of individuals, families, and groups)
- Approaches to knowing
- Conversations reflecting a recognition that the managers/leaders are knowledgeable/conscious of diversity issues

4. Understand and effectively communicate the expectations and accomplishments of cultural change within the Commission

- Consistently monitoring Commission policies and spearheading their timely implementation
- Assurance that there is a serious commitment on the part of the Commission to address diversity issues

5. Make decisions genuinely based on equity and fairness

- Discussing with concerned party/parties and taking time to mull over the issue before reaching a decision
- Demonstrating and ensuring the fairness of the administration

6. Encourage others to contribute to their full potential by providing support, training, and a positive work environment

- Ensuring that office facilities, job functions, and training opportunities are assigned fairly and equitably
- Training accessible at all levels
- Recruitment/retention of employees and volunteers
- Better public services and increased productivity

7. Give and receive feedback in ways that are useful for growth and development

- Close interaction with staff, providing explanation when things are not clear to avoid misunderstandings
- Flexible communication styles
- Constant approaches to accountability in completing tasks
- Participatory management
- Solicit staff input prior to finalizing a plan

8. Identify and resolve issues relating to cultural diversity in a sensitive, effective and timely manner

- Paying attention to issues and asking staff verbally or by e-mail if there are sensitive diversity issues floating around. If so, working with staff to take an appropriate and immediate action
- Positive attitudes, conflict resolution, and problem solving
- Constructive attitudes about staff emotional/personal matters
- Ensuring there are no outstanding issues

9. Take appropriate action to eliminate discrimination and harassment

- Timely response to discrimination and harassment issues
- A free, fair, and democratic work environment
- Clear actions and words that demonstrate zero tolerance to discrimination and harassment in the work environment

10. Participate in and contribute to the Commission's cultural events

- Managers playing an active role in organizing and supporting cultural events and encouraging staff participation
- Managers encouraging staff participation in cultural events
- Cultural events providing a forum for staff to appreciate and value each other's impact in creating a better working relationship

Understanding Ourselves + Understanding Others = Cultural Change

The core values are embodied in the ten Principles of Cultural Competence, which were developed by all levels of staff and management:

1. Treat others with respect and dignity, by recognizing, appreciating and valuing diversity.
2. Take initiative and motivate others regarding diversity and inclusion.
3. Engage in ongoing learning to increase personal effectiveness regarding diversity and inclusion.
4. Understand and effectively communicate the expectations and accomplishments of culture change within the Commission.
5. Make decisions genuinely based on equity and fairness.

6. Encourage others to contribute to their full potential by providing support, training and a positive work environment.
7. Give and receive feedback in ways that are useful for growth and development.
8. Identify and resolve issues relating to cultural diversity in a sensitive, effective and timely manner.
9. Take appropriate action to eliminate discrimination and harassment.
10. Participate in and contribute to the Commission's cultural events.

These principles, along with our vision, mission and values, provide the guidance to ensure that we treat each other with respect and dignity. This extends to our relationship with the citizens we serve.

We Are Diverse Beyond Gender and Race

In early 2005, a business case for CCI set a goal to improve how we work with the communities we serve—by becoming more aware of group and individual differences in those communities. It was recognized at the time that our staff demographic was growing less and less like the community we served. While a common demographic is not a guarantee of understanding—

or knowledge of—differences, it is one measure of how we demonstrate business sensitivity towards those differences. Even at that time it was recognized that the statistics obscure real differences in country of origin, language, and cultural background. We have since continued to learn that even within these broader demographic categories there are differences that make each of us unique individuals regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation.

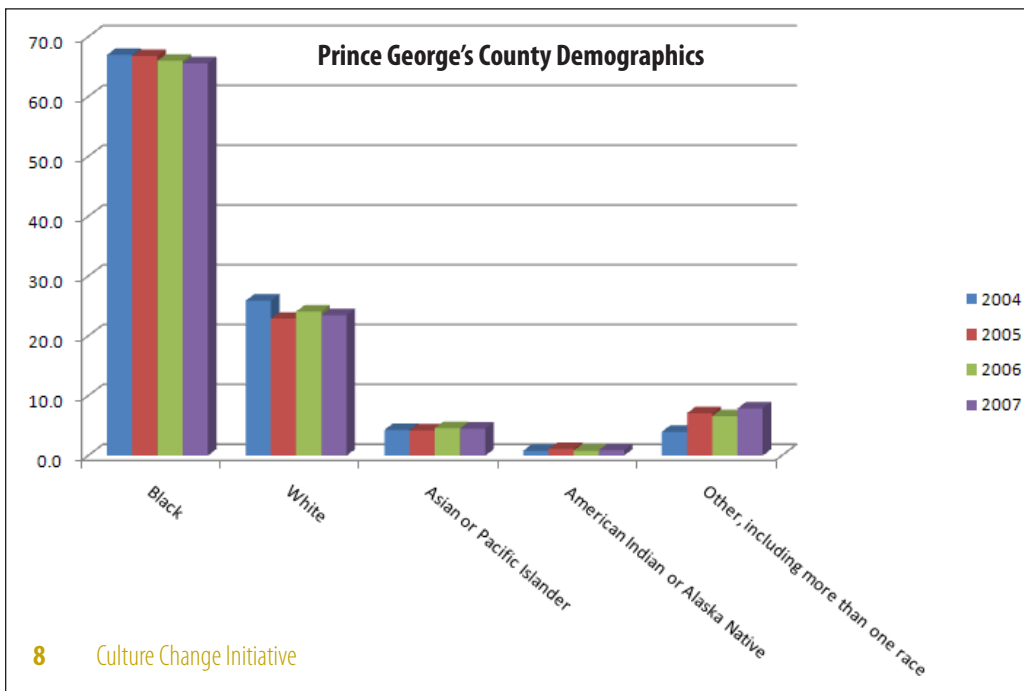
The Planning Department has since changed its demographic profile and is well aligned to serve Prince George’s County residents. We are diverse beyond gender and race; we have employed individuals from Baby Boomers to Generation Y, and persons originating from many countries.

Keeping an eye on these demographic changes is good business, especially since we know the people we all report to, namely the Planning Board and County Council, are watching and care. More importantly, it shows a commitment to aggressively recruit qualified staff from as broad a range of racial and ethnic groups as we can. For the years Census data is available since we began our CCI journey, Prince George’s County has seen slight decreases in both black and white population with corresponding increases among other minority groups and those reporting to be more than one race. A review of the Department’s demographic change shows a gradual increase

Census Data for Prince George’s County	2004	2005	2006	2007
Black	67.0	66.8	66.0	65.6
White	25.9	22.9	24.1	23.5
Asian or Pacific Islander	4.3	4.2	4.6	4.5
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.8	1.1	0.8	0.9
Other, including more than one race	4.0	7.1	6.6	7.9
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	9.8%	10.9%	11.7%	12.2%
Non-Hispanic	90.2%	89.0%	88.2%	87.8%
Gender				
Female	51.1%	52.0%	52.0%	52.1%
Male	48.8%	47.9%	47.9%	47.9%

in black employee population and a corresponding decrease in white employment. Other minority groups continue to make up a much smaller percentage of our staff complement.

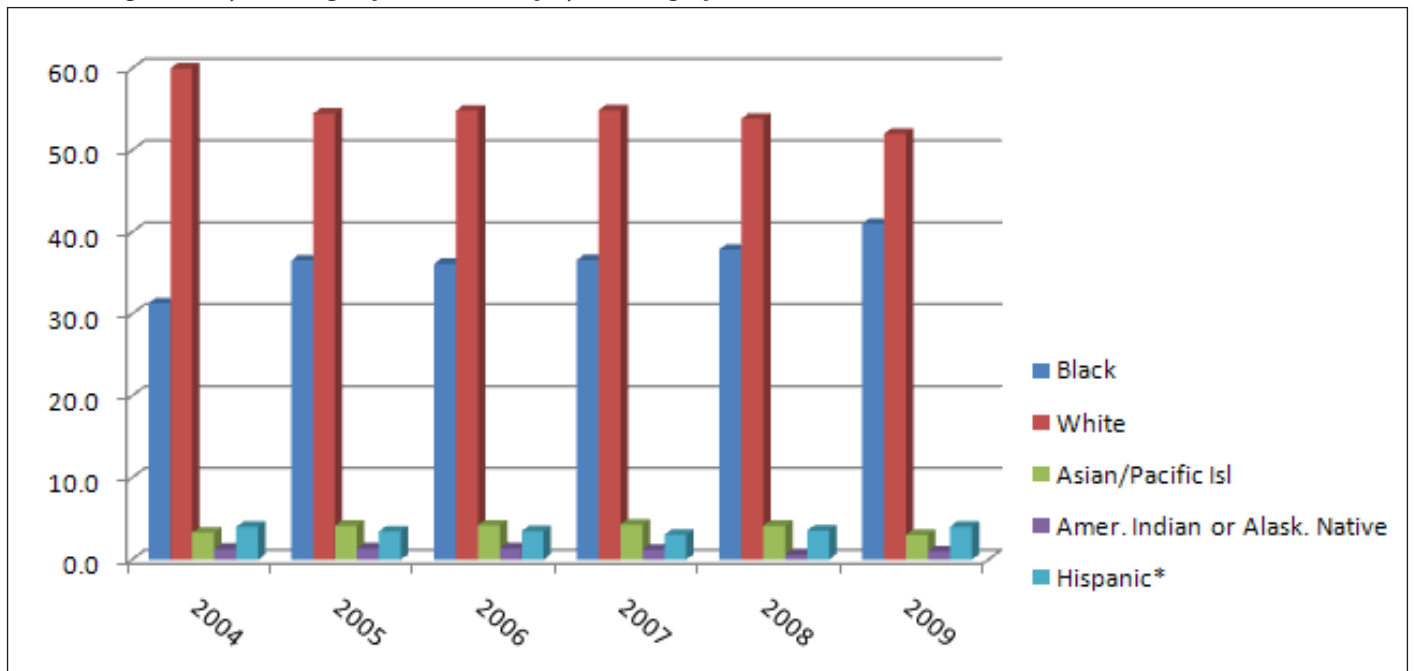
Agencies distinguish minorities from non-minorities for statistical



Data for Prince George's County Planning Department from Annual Personnel Management Reports						
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Black	31.3	36.6	36.1	36.6	37.9	41.0
White	60.0	54.5	54.9	54.9	53.9	52.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.3	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.1	3.0
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.2	0.6	1.0
Hispanic*	4.0	3.5	3.5	3.1	3.6	4.0

*Race/Ethnicity data captures Hispanic employees as a separate category for analysis purposes

Prince George's County Planning Department—Employee Demographics



purposes. The growing number of mixed-race individuals in the world and in our workplace is challenging age-old attempts to “categorize” individuals and is leading toward a broader consideration of inclusiveness. The following racial categories are recognized by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and federal government:

White (not of Hispanic origin):
All persons not classified into one of the four minority categories

that follow, and by definition including all persons descended from the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

Black (not of Hispanic origin):
All persons having origin in any of the black racial groups.

Hispanic: All persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

Asian or Pacific Islanders:
All persons descended from any of the original peoples of the Far East, South East Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands. This includes China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and Samoa.

American Indian or Alaska Native:
Descendants of the original North American peoples who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

Organization

The program comprises three units, including teams on a division level (DARTs) as well as on a Department-wide level (Goal Teams and the Steering Committee).

What are DARTs?

The Division Action Resource Teams, DARTs, represent each of the six divisions of the Planning Department. These teams are responsible for implementing the CCI strategies via activities held at the division level. Team members attend monthly CCI meetings.

What do DARTs do?

The DARTs are the implementation arm of the Culture Change Initiative, focused on their specific divisions. They promote activities that increase respect and diversity awareness among co-workers. DARTs engage in on-going learning events that encourage participation from their co-workers. The DART members brainstorm and coordinate activities and events for their respective divisions. DARTs often coordinate with each other in facilitating events. Through the planning and implementation of these events, the DARTs support the Planning Department's commitment to cultural awareness by creating an atmosphere of inclusion—with a little bit of fun!

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

Becky Nordan,
Christine Osei,
and Ellen Brous,
pictured at the
DART-coordinated
Winter Holiday Party.



How do I become part of my division's DART?

*"Thanks to the DART/
Goal Teams joint
meeting on April 21,
I now have a better
understanding of the
role that DART teams
play in accomplishing
the overall mission and
purpose of CCI...
I now understand
that we have
tremendous flexibility
in orchestrating
initiatives that
identify areas where
cultural competence
is lacking, but also in
brainstorming possible
remedies given our
diverse backgrounds."
—Staff comment*

That is easy! Contact any member from your division. Members are listed on the last page of this report. Be ready to bring your creativity and energy, and become another cultural ally!

What is a Goal Team?

In 2008 the former Strategy Resource Teams were reorganized into the current Goal Teams, which are made up of staff members from across the Planning Department. These seven teams are organized as follows:

- **The Communications Team:** creates and maintains on-going CCI communication across all levels of the organization.
- **The Community Outreach Team:** strengthens partnerships with diverse communities to foster mutual understanding and support and to enhance the provision of excellent service to our diverse customer base.
- **The Employee Development and Training Team:** provides training to the entire workforce, promoting employee growth and development, cultural competence, and an inclusive environment.
- **The Gauging Progress Team:** evaluates and reports on the progress of various CCI efforts throughout the organization; reviews vendor diversity practices to ensure the Department's suppliers and service providers reflect and support the diversity of the overall community.
- **The Management Practices Team:** cultivates leadership by example, and ensures that management demonstrates fair and inclusive practices that support a diverse, cross-cultural staff.
- **The Recruitment and Retention Team:** ensures that recruitment, hiring, and promotion practices are transparent, easily understood, and a reflection of our commitment to diversity; ensures that the workplace is diverse, cross-culturally appealing, and welcoming in order to enhance the retention of talented and productive employees.
- **The Work Environment Team:** promotes and maintains a sustainable, positive, diverse, and flexible work environment that enhances the performance and retention of existing employees; aids in the recruitment of new employees and serves as a model for environmentally- and socially-conscious work environments that are also healthy.

What is the Steering Committee?

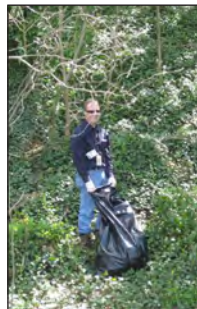
The Steering Committee functions as a "Board of Directors." It includes senior managers, one co-chair from each Goal Team, and one co-chair from each DART. The Steering Committee is responsible for creating and sustaining conditions that enable cultural competence within the Planning Department. The primary function of the committee is to ensure the alignment of efforts between Goal Teams and DARTs.

The Year in Review

During the past year CCI has seen increased participation—in both membership and activities. There have been many opportunities to gather with fellow co-workers, share creative ideas to expand knowledge, and participate in social and cultural activities. The year started with reorganization of the Strategic Resource Teams into the new Goal Teams. These teams worked independently on creating new CCI initiatives and collaboratively in bringing them to life for the benefit of all staff to enjoy. Working together, Goal Teams and DARTs brought back many events that had been staged in earlier years. They also implemented new initiatives, making this year successful for growing the teams and engaging employees.

Goal Team Initiatives

The Go Work Go Green Team was introduced in the fall of 2008. The team kicked off the year with a burst of activity, beginning with a survey and analysis of the Department’s recycling and waste reduction practices and concluding with Green Week 2009. The team also made recommendations to incorporate environmental sustainability into the site and building-selection criteria for the Department’s new office. Its current activities are focused on organizing an Eat and Buy Local event, enhancing the Department’s existing recycling program, and researching incentives to encourage current and future transit use.



Upper Marlboro’s School House Pond underwent a cleanup on Earth Day.

A Non-Monetary Award Program was incorporated into the Department’s Performance Recognition Award Program. The non-monetary awards were devised to provide timely acknowledgment and encouragement for participation in the CCI program.

A Succession Planning Program is being developed to address the expected retirement of many long-term employees. A committee will recommend a program and process to develop and recruit employees to fill key roles and skill sets within the Department.

The Diversity Recruitment Resource List was reintroduced to the Management Team and subsequently updated based on their feedback. A recruitment process flowchart was also completed to show M-NCPPC’s current recruitment process. A committee researched outreach strategies and ways to enhance minority interests in planning. Research has been conducted on best practices as well as the recruitment efforts of local planning agencies.

Anonymous exit interviews have been analyzed to identify areas that need to change in order to improve the Department’s retention of valued employees.

Nationally Recognized Annual Events

Black History Month in February—The Planning Department’s program featured the Oxon Hill High School Choir under the direction of Dr. Emory Andrews in celebration of this year’s National Black History Month theme, “The Quest for Citizenship in the Americas.” The choir gave a stunning presentation of the Black National Anthem, *Lift Every Voice and Sing*. Mr. Samuel J. Parker, Jr., Chairman of the Prince George’s County Planning Board, welcomed Department staff with a statement on the historical importance of the election of the nation’s first African-American President, Barack Obama, and how his election related to the theme of Black History Month. William Washburn told staff that Black History Month should not be viewed in isolation but in the context of its contribution to a more complete American history. A culturally-themed lunch followed the program.

Bring Your Child to Work Day in April—Department staff organized a full day of activities. Employees were encouraged to bring their sons and daughters to work to participate in a day of fun with fellow employees and their children. The day started with introductions and a continental breakfast. Every child was issued a Department photo identification badge. The children enjoyed a pond tour, pizza lunch, and working sessions with mentors before splitting into groups to build a city. The day was topped with certificates and an ice cream social.

“Wow!
What a day!”
—*Staff comment
on Bring Your
Child To Work
Day.*



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
Young city builders at work on Bring Your Child to Work Day.
The Singapore skyline as depicted during a presentation by Jimi Jones.
The Oxon Hill High School Choir, which sang *Lift Every Voice and Sing* at the Department’s Black History event in February.

Green Week in April—Tied in with Earth Day, this included the School House Pond cleanup; a lunch-n-learn on the future of green jobs in the county and M-NCPPC’s role in attracting green businesses; a sustainable pot luck luncheon; and a hands-on exhibit demonstrating ways to green one’s home and workplace by conserving energy, reducing waste, and reusing products. Administrative Professionals Day fell in the same week, so Administrative Assistants were given living green plants in recognition of their valuable work.

Asian-Pacific Month in May—This inaugural event drew a large gathering for an introduction to Asian-Pacific countries from Taslima Alam, whose family origin is Bangladeshi, followed by a presentation on Singapore planning by Jimi Jones, and a delicious lunch of Indian cuisine.

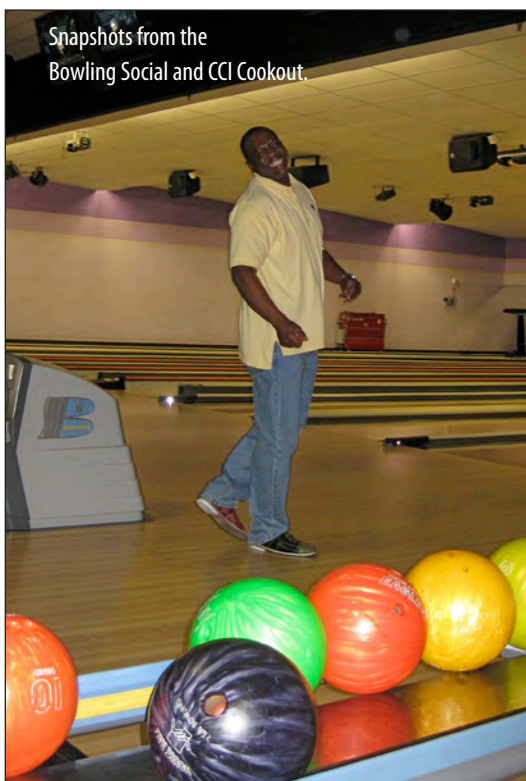
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Pride Month in June—This year staff were urged to learn about the persecution of gays and lesbians by Nazi Germany. Prompted by the killing of a Holocaust Museum guard, this activity took the place of our usual Pride Month Celebration. For more detail go to <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10005261> and <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10005478>.



Hispanic Heritage Month in September/October—Employees from both counties participated in this Commissionwide event to recognize Latino culture and its contributions to the workplace and community. A committee of dedicated, involved employees plans the annual event, which includes food, music, performances, and educational elements.



Activities Back by Popular Demand



Snapshots from the Bowling Social and CCI Cookout.



CCI and New Hire Orientation

Recruitment is the key to any thriving organization. In an effort to keep our CCI program fresh and to encourage new members to join, we have incorporated a segment on CCI into our Department's new-hire orientation session. As a part of the New Employee Welcome Packet, all new hires (there were 29 new hires between July 1, 2008, and June 30, 2009) receive a copy of our CCI Annual Report and hear a brief overview of what our "culture change" is really about. We discuss the history of the initiative and the original goals, as well as past programs and activities. New employees are also introduced to "CCI Tuesday," the different types of teams, and the many opportunities for getting involved. This is just the first step.

Another key component of growing our membership is offering "baseline" training for new employees. At least once a year, this training—titled "CCI Respectful and Inclusive Workplace"—is conducted to familiarize recently hired employees with concepts and tools that are key to effective participation in CCI. This daylong training is designed to:

- Improve how we work by better serving and communicating with our communities
- Ensure that employees are treated fairly and with respect
- Value group and individual differences in a changing environment
- Recognize the importance of diversity in these efforts

A total of 42 employees attended baseline training that was offered on November 17, 2008, and on June 3, 2009. We look forward to their contributions and new perspectives as we continue on our cultural journey.

How To Get Involved

As the CCI program enters its fourth year, it has become much more than an effort to build a better understanding of cultural diversity in the Department and in the communities we serve. While education about race, ethnicity, and gender are still among the core objectives of our journey, these have been richly supplemented by a long list of new initiatives and learning opportunities driven by Department staff at all levels of the organization. Participation in CCI is everyone's opportunity. There are so many different ways to participate that each of us should be able to find something of interest and value.

Seven Goal Teams are tasked with carrying out the objectives of the Department's diversity action plan. Each Division Action Resource Team (DART) helps plan its division CCI activities and supports CCI strategies and activities overall. CANDLE (Cultural Allies Network for Diversity Learning Experience) meetings provide regular opportunities to engage personally with others in the Department and to learn more about how diversity and culture shape our relationships.

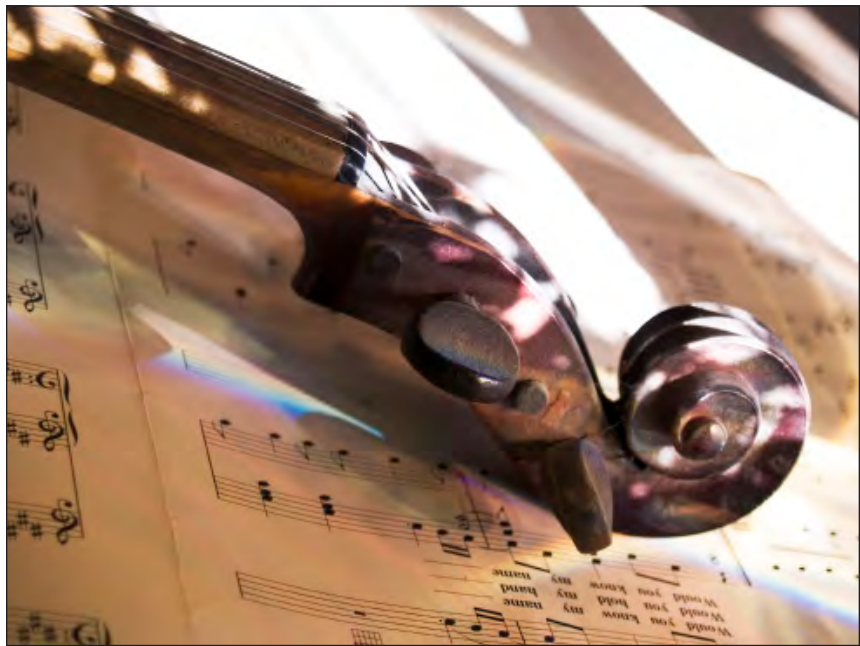
"I have enjoyed CCI debates and related activities such as production of the first CCI Calendar, the Photo Club and the Book Club."
—**Staff comment**

The Department's CCI-related activities, such as the summer Cookout in the Park and Columbus Day, provide opportunities for you to volunteer your time and energy. Clubs, such as the Photography or Book Club initiated as a result of CCI efforts, provide other opportunities to interact around shared interests.

Each of these activities requires different levels of commitment, and each provides a different personal experience. Volunteering to participate on a Goal Team or DART requires a serious commitment but represents a real chance to make tangible input to the CCI action plan and how it is implemented. CANDLE meetings are held regularly, and everyone is welcome, at any time. Regular or new CCI events and club activities provide opportunities to help organize a Departmentwide event or to just drop in.

The greatest benefit from any of these activities is the opportunity to learn a little more about your fellow staff member and maybe to do a little self-assessment along the way. Participating on a Goal Team or DART—or taking the lead in organizing an event—provides excellent opportunities to build or demonstrate your leadership abilities and to make a difference in how we work. Who knows, you might have some fun along the way.

**SOMCHAI
BOONCHAI SRI'S**
winning photo entry for
one of the Photography
Club's quarterly
competitions. A staff
poll selects the top
three photos.



CANDLE—Cultural Allies Network for Diversity Learning Experiences

CANDLE, a trademarked process designed by Trinity Transition Consultants, is built on four tenets:

- Increasing trust
- Supporting self-respect
- Modeling inclusion
- Promoting learning

In the Planning Department, our CANDLE meetings represent a safe and informal environment for staff at all levels to converse about diversity. By participating in these dialogues, we increase our awareness and understanding of ourselves and others. CANDLE participants are challenged to engage in continuous learning that dispels myths and supports inclusion. The conversations that flow from our CANDLE sessions are thought-provoking and inspiring, an effect that is intended to reach far beyond the walls of our meeting rooms and into the workplace.

Building upon our 2008 work on the concepts of trust and respect, this year we explored the elements of age, generation, ethnicity and identifiers. For the remainder of 2009, topics will include class, race, religion, education, gender, sexual orientation, poverty, wealth, disability, ability, body size, appearance, and language.

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month, with the location alternating between the County Administration Building and Lakeside.

“We Care”

In 2008 the Planning Department established the “We Care” program as a way to organize our efforts and reach out to employees who are facing crises in their lives. The concept grew out of a discussion that originated in one of our monthly CANDLE meetings. The program provides a structure for the Department to extend a helping hand in a way that is meaningful to the employee.

Our first fund raising effort, “Support Your Team,” provided the seed money to get the program underway. Later in the year a Department photo contest led to the production of a calendar. Over \$300 was generated through sales of these calendars, featuring photographs taken by our own, very talented employees. Our largest, and perhaps most unexpected contribution, came from an employee who received a cash bonus from the Commission’s Employee Referral program. After referring an applicant who was hired by the Commission, Chris Wilson received his bonus and promptly donated the entire amount (minus taxes) of \$460 to the “We Care” program. Thank you, Chris, for contributing to the Department in so many ways!

In just one year the program has been used seven times to show support for employees in need. It is a perfect example of how one brief conversation can turn into something meaningful. The Division Action Resource Teams (DARTs) will continue to sponsor fundraising activities to keep the fund healthy. If you would like to find out more about the “We Care” program, go to the program description in the Department’s shared J Drive.



Dower House

by DON TOWNSEND,

one of the staff photos
featured in a 2009 CCI calendar.

The project was the outcome of an
in-house photo contest coordinated
by the Publications and Graphics
Section. Department staff entered
114 photos. The winning 24 were
featured in the calendar.

Diversity Council Update

New Diversity Council members started their term in October 2008. Sharon Suarez of the Montgomery County Research and Technology Center and Luanne Bowles from CAS/ Department of Human Resources and Management serve as co-chairs. Rob Meintjes and Betty Carlson-Jameson represent the Planning Department. During the past year, “departmental liaisons” were introduced to serve as representatives of the Diversity Council (DC) to their respective department heads, division chiefs, managers and supervisors. This duty includes providing regular briefings to Department management staff on the work of the Council. Vanessa Akins is the Planning Department’s liaison.

“Diversity is apparent on the surface; the challenge is in creating healthy and effective teamwork out of the diversity.”
—**Staff Comment**

The Diversity Council’s tasks include the development of a strategic plan that embraces *diversity* as a core value of M-NCPPC and the crafting of an integrated, coordinated, and structured approach to diversity and cultural competency within the Commission. The Strategic Plan was updated during the past year and presented to the full commission. It contained the following strategies:

- Seek adoption of diversity as a core value.
- Incorporate the principle of diversity in all core Commission operations.
- Ensure that the selection of program content, specific activities, and opportunities is based upon an understanding of individual differences and the culture of the communities served by the Commission.

In January this year M-NCPPC Executive Director Oscar Rodriguez encouraged the newly formed Diversity Council to develop benchmarks to guide “measurable” diversity initiatives Commissionwide.

At a recent meeting the council decided to reevaluate its role. At the time of printing this report that reevaluation process was still in progress.

The Ice Cream social, one of the activities back by popular demand.





Staff's Halloween outfits were a treat!



Looking Forward

We can be proud, as a Department, of our Culture Change Initiative and its continued success! However, we cannot simply dwell on what we have already accomplished; we must also look to the way forward and where we can improve.

CCI meetings have promoted a sense of unity by enabling staff to get to know colleagues with whom they do not work on a daily basis. Unfortunately, not all in the Department have had this experience. When we asked the CCI teams about their concerns and in what areas we need to improve, we found a recurring theme: How can we improve participation? How do we reach out to those who have not shown an interest in CCI? How can we sustain the interest of those who are currently involved in CCI? How do we maintain consistent attendance at meetings? How do we fully integrate CCI into our work program? How do we continue to make CCI a priority while balancing our current workload? These are the issues for which we have expressed concern.

“We cannot sit back and feel satisfied that we know everything about diversity, because our diversity, like life itself, is infinite.”
—**Staff comment**

Our teams recommend the following to improve CCI participation:

- Establish subcommittees to include members who would like to focus on specific issues rather than be involved in all the activities of a particular team.
- Hold team members accountable.
- Increase management support of and engagement in CCI.
- Manage time better by combining the efforts of the Steering Committee and the Joint DART/Goal Teams at one monthly meeting.
- Promote a better working relationship between DARTs and encourage DARTs to provide support to Goal Teams.
- Interview those not participating in CCI to determine their interests and concerns.
- Find other ways for people to participate. CCI does not have to be a one-size fits all program. For example: one-time contributions could be made to Goal Teams, or staff could participate in annual events instead of attending monthly Goal Team or DART meetings.
- Integrate culture change initiatives into the daily work program.



Megan Reiser at the CCI Cookout.

CCI is an initiative that succeeds because the diverse workforce participates. We as Department staff look forward to a year in which we can continue to embrace the diversity of our workforce through CCI. We encourage all to take a look at plans for the upcoming year! Is there an event or issue on this list in which you would like to get involved?

The DARTs are developing several new and refreshing ideas for future events! Be on the lookout for:

- A bookstore.
- Staff retreats.
- More lunch-n-learns.
- A fruit sale (from native countries).
- Various fundraisers, including a barbecue lunch.
- An interpreted pond walk to include bird watching and the history of the pond.
- A study to determine the level of satisfaction with technological support within the Department; identification of concerns, solutions.

The Goal Teams continue to work on the following projects:

- Regular publication of a CCI Newsletter.
- Planning 101 Workshops for the Community.
- Presentations to homeowners associations.
- Food drives for community food pantries.
- Posting of Planning Department information on the county monitors at CAB.
- Increased community outreach and the identification of citizens' concerns.
- Assessment of staff training needs.

- A review of the recent salary study by a consultant and research into planners' salaries.
- Comparison of the Tuition Reimbursement Program with other area agencies.
- Monitoring of the non-monetary CCI Awards.
- Assessment of current practices regarding evaluation of CCI performance throughout the Department.
- Identification of issues of concern and continued review of management practices.
- Brainstorming ways to improve CCI participation and meeting attendance.
- Developing a departmental succession plan.
- Examining use of the Commission website for recruitment purposes.
- Examining and recommending timeframes for the various steps within the Department's recruitment process.
- Development of recruitment document templates for use by hiring managers.
- Continued research on the recruiting efforts of local planning agencies.
- Identification of potential organizations with which we could develop recruiting partnerships.
- Continued research, recruiting, retention, and exit-interview best practices.
- Increasing of multimodal transportation options available to staff.
- Enhancement of working conditions at the Department.
- Identification, examination, and revision of work-environment related policies.
- Expansion of recycling, conservation of energy, and reduction of departmental waste.
- Transition to green cleaning products, office supplies, and equipment.
- Participation in the Department's Sustainability Policy efforts.
- Implementation of an internet-based public education campaign.
- Organization of an "Eat Local Day."
- Hosting of Green Week 2010.
- Conducting site visits to county and regional recycling facilities and green buildings.

Perhaps you have an idea or concern that is not included in this list! Consider joining a DART or Goal Team. Your contribution is both valued and needed!

"On a personal note, I had a business transaction where the gentleman used [a racially motivated term.] I...made him aware that it was inappropriate. I think CCI has really heightened my awareness of how insensitive...some people can be."

—Staff comment

July 22, 2009

Culture Change Initiators and
Planning Department Staff
County Administration Building/Lakeside Offices
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

Dear Friends:

Another year has passed and we are well into our culture change journey. This is a good time to take stock of our progress and renew our commitment to becoming an inclusive community, welcoming of diversity. I invite you to look back over the past several years and reflect on what has changed in the way we work together and in the communities of the county during that time.

I believe that we have learned to talk to each other in ways that were not possible before. For example, we have shared rather personal and significant experiences through CANDLE and we have examined the whys and why nots of many behaviors and attitudes we often did not even know we exhibited or held. We have learned to think about the audience or community we are engaging and frame our presentations and information in more appropriate ways. We have become somewhat more able to call out others whose words or actions caused us an “ouch” moment, although that still seems hard. We have found many ways to care more about others and to have fun together. We have done much more than this, but the “we” I refer to is well short of all of us.

For the coming year, I commit to explore ways to encourage every member of our department to join in the Culture Change Initiative in a manner of his or her own choosing. That may require more personal interactions with you to find the most acceptable avenues. It may mean more surveys but I promise to keep them short and to the point. I need you to meet me halfway. Let me know where you are in this journey and how we can meet your own needs to change our culture. Join us because what we are doing is moving us in the right direction and we want you to go along with us too.

Sincerely,



Fern Piret
Planning Director

CCI Teams

Outgoing Steering Committee Co-Chair: Ellen Brous

Returning Steering Committee Co-Chair: Nkosi Akinlana

Incoming Steering Committee Co-Chair: Lindsay Smith



The Community Outreach Goal Team has placed donation bins on the lower level and first floors. Donations will be collected every three months, starting in July 2009, and given to local food banks. July's collection will benefit the Salvation Army of Prince George's County. Here team member Maria Spriggs checks the contents of the first-floor bin.

Community Planning DART

Teri Bond
Judelle Campbell
Judy D'Ambrosi
Aldea Douglas
Sonja Ewing
Evelyn Israel
Kierre McCune*
Lindsay Smith
Kevin Waskelis
John Wooden*

Development Review DART

Debbie Gallagher
Alan Hirsch*
Brooke Larman
Lauren Oliphant*
Ivy Thompson

Planning Director's Office DART

Ralph Barrett
Ellen Brous*
Janice Crawford
Al Dobbins
James Johnson
Terry Johnson
Candy Laudemberger*
Nancy Mattingly
Catrell Thomas

Management Practices Goal Team

Toni Abresch*
Vanessa Akins
Asfaw Fanta
Harold Foster
Susan Lareuse
Ivy Lewis
Jackie Philson
Lindsay Smith
Chad Williams

Countywide Planning DART

Ted Kowaluk*
Megan Reiser*
Wil Vines

Information Management DART

Toni Abresch*
Bill Akerley
Michael Aycoth
Somchai Boonchaisri*
Michael Croll
Hossein Rasouli
Phil Taylor

Communications Goal Team

Cynthia Fenton*
Dale Hutchison
Eric Jenkins
Jimi Jones
Mandy Li
Rob Meintjes
Crystal Prater*

Gauging Progress Goal Team

Michael Asante
Eric Foster*
Gul Guleryuz
Dee McChesney
Fern Piret
Terri Plumb*

Community Outreach Goal Team

Ray Dubicki*
Lillian Fairley
Latasha Harrison
Alan Hirsch
Edward Holley
Wendy Irminger
Yvonne Magee
Bob Metzger
Sherri Moseley
Lauren Oliphant*
Crystal Prater
Maria Spriggs
Cheryl Summerlin

Recruitment & Retention Goal Team

M'Balu Abdullah
Steve Adams
Nkosi Akinlana
Mishelle Carson
John Funk
Marcy Gonzales*
Tiffany Williams Jennings*
Terry Johnson
Yvonne Magee
Gail Rothrock
Fred Shaffer
Arie Stouten
Chris Wilson
John Wooden

Employee Development & Training Goal Team

Joe Bovenzi
Karen Buxbaum
Wendy Contee
Mary Goodnow
Fatimah Hasan
Rana Hightower
Susan Kelley
Reyna Kosla
John Linkins
Maria Martin
Pat Middleton
Christine Osei
Craig Rovelstad
Angela Ruppe
Martín Salmon
Ivy Thompson*
Joe Valenza
Kevin Waskelis*

Work Environment Goal Team

Marc Abresch
Betty Carlson-Jameson
Sara Chadwick
Wendy Contee
Michael Cosby
Briana Davis
Theresa Dent
Al Dobbins
Aldea Douglas
Laura Farris
Kate Fritz*
Joanna Glascoe
Ruth Grover
Gul Guleryuz
Jessica Jones
Tamara Jovovic*
CJ Lammers
Michelle Meneely
Brenda Otto
Jackie Philson
Megan Reiser
Claire Schnitzer
Fred Stachura
Yvette Wilson

*Denotes Steering Committee member



Activities back by popular demand include the Bowling and Ice Cream Socials, CCI Cookout, Winter Holiday Party, CANDLE (Cultural Allies' Network for Diversity Learning Experiences), Lunch-n-Learns, Fundraisers, School Supplies Drive, and the CCI Bus Tour depicted on this page.



Culture Change Initiative
Understanding Ourselves
Understanding Others



Prince George's County Planning Department