



Virginia Cooperative Extension

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Situation Analysis Report

Loudoun County

2013

Loudoun County Extension Staff

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Currently in transition.

Introduction

Virginia Cooperative Extension – Loudoun Office is restructuring and reorganizing to meet the emerging needs of its Loudoun County constituency. Near term changes include integrating previously separate state and county administrative duties into one employee position and hiring a Loudoun-focused Food Safety Agent. An example mid-term change proposed is aligning the unit with the Loudoun County Government offices that support local commerce and rural economic development. This change will simplify staff planning intra-department coordination. A long-term goal for our unit is developing into a model, cooperative extension office anticipating and meeting the unique needs of a rural-suburban interface county. Success for our unit means expecting change, remaining flexible, and evaluating our performance to maintain continuing improvement.

Unit Profile

Loudoun County, located 25 miles west of Washington, D.C., is approximately 520 square miles in size. It is considered part of the Northern Virginia area and the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The Washington D.C. MSA includes the Virginia Counties of Arlington, Clarke, Fairfax, Fauquier, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford and Warren; the Virginia Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas and Manassas Park; along with multiple jurisdictions in Maryland and West Virginia. Since the opening of Dulles International Airport in 1962, new business and residential development has transformed the County's historically agricultural economy; particularly in the eastern portion. Loudoun County was the 5th fastest growing county in the nation between 2000 and 2010, with its population increasing 84 percent. Between 2010 and 2012, Loudoun County was ranked the 17th fastest growing County. The County currently estimates the 2013 population to be 339,123, an increase of 8.6% since 2010. The eastern portion of the County is developing rapidly as a result of its proximity to Dulles Airport and Washington D.C. The western portion of the County, bordered by the Blue Ridge Mountains to the west and the Potomac River to the north, maintains a rural and historical environment.

Per Capita and Median Household Income

Income data provides a picture of the general economic conditions of an area. Per Capita income is defined as the average income per person. In other words, it is the total income of an area divided by the total population of the area. Loudoun County's per capita income in 2011 was \$44,732, ranking twelfth in the nation for jurisdictions with a population of 65,000 or more. According to the 2007 to 2011 ACS five-year estimates, which covers all jurisdictions in the nation, Loudoun's per capita income over this period was \$46,493 (2011 inflation-adjusted dollars), ranking 21st in the nation. Median household income is a measure of income where half of households are below the median household income and half of households are above the median household income. Loudoun County's median household income has been ranked number one since 2007 for jurisdictions with a population of 65,000 or more. Loudoun County's median household income in 2011 was \$119,134. Loudoun's median household income for the five-year period of 2007 to 2011 was \$120,096 (2011 inflation-adjusted dollars). This 2007 to 2011 five-year income estimate ranks the second highest in the nation.

Loudoun's high median household income is largely due to the County's highly-educated workforce, the availability of high-wage jobs in the region, a high labor force participation rate, a high percentage of working-age persons, and low unemployment rate. The high median income also relates to the high cost of housing. Median household income is typically thought of as an indicator of how well-off a household is financially. However, it is also an indicator of the amount of income needed in a household in order to afford to live in a place. In Loudoun, the high cost of housing has limited in-migration over recent years mainly to higher income households. Loudoun County's per capita income, in 2011, was 67% higher than the national per capita income of \$26,708, 39% higher than Virginia's \$32,123, and 7% higher than the Washington D.C Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) \$41,965. Loudoun's County's median household income, in 2011, was more than twice the national median of \$50,502, and nearly twice Virginia's median of \$61,882. Compared to the Washington, D.C. MSA median of \$86,680, Loudoun was 37% higher.

Per Capita Income: Trend

The per capita income of Loudoun County, the D.C. MSA, Virginia, and the nation all dropped between 1% and 8% from 1999 to 2011. The decline was partly due to the national recession that began in 2007 and ended in 2009. The nation was in its second year of economic "recovery" in 2011, while the income continued to drop. During the "recovery" periods of the 1990-91 and 2001 recessions the nation's households also experienced declines in per capita income. Loudoun County's per capita income was stable from 2007 to 2009 during the national recession. It declined from \$47,219 in 2009 (in 2011 dollars) to \$44,732 in 2011, a 5.3% drop. This drop during a period of economic recovery mirrors current and past national trends. Like the nation, Loudoun's drop in income may be a temporary post-recession lag.

Median Household Income: Trend

The median household income of Loudoun County increased by 5% between 1999 and 2011, whereas the D.C. MSA, Virginia, and the nation declined by 1%, 2%, and 11% respectively. During and after the national recession of 2007 to 2009, the nation's median household income declined. The nation was in its second year of "recovery" in 2011. During the "recovery" periods of the 1990-91 and 2001 recessions the nation's households also experienced declines in household income. Loudoun County's median household income trended upward from 2007 to 2010, in spite of the national recession. The County's income declined from 2010 to 2011. In 2010, the County's median household income had been \$123,538 (in 2011 dollars) and it declined to \$119,134 in 2011. This drop during a period of economic recovery mirrors current and past national trends. Like the nation, Loudoun's drop in income may be a temporary post-recession lag. Even with the decline, the County continued to be ranked number one in the nation.

Cost of Housing

Cost of housing data provides an additional picture of the general economic conditions of an area. A household that has housing costs that exceed 30 percent of their household income generally indicates a housing affordability problem. A household is considered "burdened" if

the household spends more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. This housing burdened standard evolved from the United States National Housing Act of 1937. The act created the public housing program to serve low income families. Income limits were established for families to be eligible to live in publicly funded rental housing. Over time there have been amendments to this original act that changed the measures used for eligibility. However, in 1981 the use of the 30 percent threshold for rental housing programs was reenacted and remains the standard for most housing programs today. This standard has also carried over to owner-occupied housing for use as a general guideline for mortgage lending practices. The U.S. Census Bureau's data on housing costs is presented throughout this section of the report. The U.S. Census Bureau's data on monthly costs for owner-occupied housing includes: mortgage, second mortgage and/or home equity loan, real estate taxes, home owners insurance, condo or Home Owners Association (HOA) fees, and utilities. The data on monthly costs for renter-occupied housing includes contract rent and utilities. The housing choices made by individual households are constrained by each household's income and preferences, as well as by the housing available in the community. Renters are consistently more burdened than owners. In the early and mid-2000s up through 2006 or 2007, Loudoun County's home owners and renters faced increasing challenges in meeting their monthly housing costs. Many new households to the County have struggled to find affordable housing. Due to the housing market crash that started in 2007, the rate of housing burdened has declined since 2007, though it is still high compared to other places, as shown on the charts throughout this section. The decline in the rate of housing burdened is largely due to many highly burdened homeowners facing foreclosure and housing prices becoming more affordable as a result of the housing market crash.

Poverty: Percent of Population in Poverty

Loudoun County has a low percentage of its population in poverty, 4.3 percent. Many low wage earners in Loudoun earn too much to qualify for assistance from poverty programs, but not enough for self-sufficiency due to the high cost of living in Loudoun County and the region.

Poverty: Trend

The nation's poverty rate in 2011, according to the ACS, was 15.9%. The nation's poverty rate has generally been on the increase since 1999, with the largest increase being between 2007 and 2011, when it increased by 2.9 percentage points. In 2007 is when the nation entered into a deep recession. Similar to the nation, the poverty rate of Loudoun, the Washington, D.C. MSA, and Virginia have been trending upward. Loudoun's poverty rate in 2011 was estimated to be 4.3% according to the ACS, compared to 2.8% in 1999 and 3.1% in 2007. In 1999 there were 4,637 Loudoun residents living in poverty. There are now approximately 14,000 residents currently living in poverty, triple the amount in 1999. The rate of increase since 1999 for Loudoun has been much greater than the region, Virginia, and United States.

Land Use

Current land use in Loudoun County varies between suburban commercial and residential developments, small villages, and rural areas. The vast majority of land in the county is

devoted to rural type uses. The eastern portion of Loudoun County is characterized by typical suburban developments, with higher densities along major corridors. Development in this area is centered on four communities, including Dulles, Sterling, Potomac, and Ashburn. The western portion of the county is rural in nature and encompasses over two-thirds of the county's area. These areas contain mostly farms and rural residential development. The county also contains seven towns (four of which have a population of less than 1,000) and 13 even smaller villages.

Planned Land Use

Most of the continued growth in Loudoun County is planned to occur in the Suburban Policy Area where infrastructure and services are available. Route 28 is the major north-south business corridor that intersects with the five east-west business corridors (Route 7, Route 625, Route 606, the Dulles Greenway, and Route 50). The new Metrorail stations are expected to attract significant amount of activity, including mixed use, transit-oriented development. Due to the infrastructure already available there, the Route 606 station, the current location of the Dulles North Transit Center, and Dulles Town Center are likely to become important hubs in the region.

The Transition Policy Area to the west is intended to serve as a visual and spatial transition between the Suburban Policy Area and the Rural Policy Area to the west. Densities range from one dwelling unit per ten acres to two dwelling units per acre within Countryside Villages. The Rural Policy Area the largest of the three policy areas, is planned for rural residential uses and rural economy uses. Joint Land Management Areas serve as urban growth boundaries around four of the seven incorporated towns. Most of the continued growth in Loudoun County is planned to occur in the Suburban Policy Area.

Community and Resident Perspectives

The community has changed over the past ten years in the following ways:

- More Urban/transitioning from rural to urban
- Longtime residents/families leaving the county
- Development unchecked/ overwhelming
- Population growth/increase in needs for schools and tax dollars
- Diverse languages and cultures
- Increasing taxes
- Increasing difficulty in finding affordable housing
- Lower to middle income families are becoming displaced
- Traffic Congestion – Commuting difficulties/road rage
- Loudoun workers commute from other areas
- Loss of close knit community – lots of smaller communities/or individualism
- Family time decreasing/activities/bonding/quality meals
- Crime – gangs on the increase
- Loss of Rural scenery/views

- Reduction from large agricultural farms to smaller mini farms
- Increases in tourism based agriculture

Strengths of the Community

- School System
- Proximity to DC/Hi-Technology/cultural locations
- Variety of Retail Dining/shopping choices
- History
- Community involvement and support/volunteers particularly in the schools
- Rural Aspect/Ag venues: innovative community members
- Airport
- WAGE Radio
- Highly educated and affluent Population
- Cultural Melting Pot
- Ag District and Land Use Taxation
- Wealthy county with strong economy and low unemployment

Weaknesses of the Community

- Uncontrolled Growth/Development/Population
- Lack of affordable housing
- Gangs – new concerns in public safety
- Language barriers
- School Overcrowding
- Loss of practical use of land
 - Fragmentation
 - Defragmentation/habitat loss
 - Deforestation/habitat loss
 - Paving over
- Loss of animals (balance of nature)
- Environmental disregard
- Water Resource management – over intensive use of ground water; lack of water infrastructure
- Lack of Support for ESL residents
- Poor Transportation infrastructure
- Low paying service jobs are underemployed
- Lack of affordable housing
- Health Care resources / affordability
- Loss of open space
- Loss of Ag business infrastructure (SS leaving Leesburg)
- Lack of Public Transportation

Major Issues Facing the Youth of the Community

- Need for organized programs that appeal to all
- Summer employment
- Children are over committed/involved
- Too much technology – kids would rather “IM” than speak face to face
- Lack of volunteerism in youth
- Gangs/Drugs/Violence
- Latch key youth
- Materialism or the need for more “stuff”
- Expectations of affluence
- Few outdoor opportunities for kids
- Peer Pressure
- Two income parents and a lack of time for them to share meaningful experiences with their kids
- Loss of agricultural & Natural Resource education courses
- Youth Programs for At Risk – intervention level
- Transportation of youth to activities – public transportation

Major Issues Facing Homeowners in our Community

Taxes

- Home maintenance and getting associated services: plumbers, electricians etc.
- Spam/Junk Mail/solicitors
- Ground Water availability
- Services from Government
- Group Housing – overcrowding
- Lack of Historical knowledge
- Lack of Agricultural knowledge
- Pollutants
- Traffic
- Affordable housing

Issues Facing Agriculture on our Community

- Zoning structure needs to be focused on the preservation and benefit of the rural area
- Expansion of suburban development to the rural areas
- Increase of farmers as a second career
- Cannot make a living farming alone
- Farm Labor hard to find, language barrier and restricted law regulations
- Lack of affordable housing
- Community understanding of Agriculture
- Land disappearing and reduction in available land for lease
- Tax structure

- Loss and or lack of Ag business infrastructure; need of a Distribution Center
- Traditional farmers are getting a bad rap from new residents
- Increase on traffic, roads and congestion
- Need for Extension help to transition to new way of farming
- Requirements for land use
- Economic Viability
- Marketing
- Issues affecting the Environment
- Water Quality Air Quality Erosion and Sediment Control
- Nutrient management
- Wildlife habitats shrinking
- Overpopulation of non-native invasive plants
- Increase in impervious surfaces/runoff
- Need of more native trees and plants
- Lack of regulation for homeowner chemical use education
- Increase on population and traffic
- Failing Septic
- Urbanization
- Lack of education on environmental impacts and their relationship with health issues.
- Development
- Tax structure
- Loss/lack of Ag business infrastructure
- Traditional farmers are getting a bad rap from new residents
- Traffic, roads, congestion
- Need for Extension help to transition to new way of farming
- Requirements for land use
- Economic Viability
- Marketing

Major Issues Affecting the Environment of our Community

- Water Quality
- Air Quality
- Erosion and Sediment Control
- Nutrient management
- Wildlife habitats shrinking
- Increase in impervious surfaces/runoff
- Need more trees
- Lack of regulation for homeowner chemical use education
- Traffic
- Failing Septic
- Urbanization
- Lack of understanding by community of total environmental impacts

Major Issues Facing the Workforce of the Community

- Commuting times
- Lack of Public Transportation
- Lack of Skills
- Low income for wage workers
- Stigma against blue collar workers
- No FFA or FHA in Schools in future
- Large need for quality child care

Issues Facing Parents/Families in the Community

- Time-Both Parents work
- Value Conflicts - new residents versus "locals"
- Single parents
- East versus West mentality
- Need for better parenting skills parenting classes
- Blended Families
- Housing for Seniors
- No public Transportation – Can't live here without a car
- Drugs
- Fixed Incomes
- Child Care
- Same Sex Families
- Parents unwilling to take responsibility for children's actions
- Financial problems – High Debt/credit cards/bankruptcies
- Expensive food costs
- Lack of time for family togetherness
- Grandparents raising kids
- No more small town "Everyone knows everyone"
- Affordable Housing
- Parents expect Teachers to raise their children
- Kids moving back in with parents after college

Issues Facing the Aging Population of the Community

- Affordable Housing
 - Senior Day Care
 - Health Care
 - Transportation / fear of driving
 - Fixed Income versus Rising expenses
 - Cost of Health care and drugs
 - Population that grew up rural aging in an urban environment
 - Lack of respect for elders
- Summary of Focus Group Interviews – Agriculture

Horse Industry

Components of Industry

- Thoroughbred and pony breeding farms
- Horse Training Farms
- Rider Instruction Farms
- Horse boarding Farms
- Horse Medical Recuperation Farms
- Personal Pleasure Horse Farms

Other Components of the Industry

- Recreational Trail Riding
- Guided Trail Rides
- Competition/Show/Three Day Event Farms
- Fox Hunting Events
- Steeplechase Meets
- Carriage Driving Events
- Polo pony Farms and matches
- Horse Auction Services
- Equine Medical Center
- Publications

Service related components to the Industry

- Farriers
- Veterinarians
- Farm & Feed Supply Stores
- Trailer Dealers
- Tack Stores
- Hay Dealers
- Horse Transportation companies
- Medicine and Pharmaceuticals
- Insurance Companies
- Lodging

Industry strengths

- Hunt Country Tradition
- Open Space
- General Public Support
- Widespread Horse Expertise
- Medical Facilities
- Expanding local market
- High Income Population
- Land Use Tax System
- Lots of small acreage lots

Weaknesses of Industry

- Urbanization/Development pressure
- Disjointed subdivisions lead to disjointed open space areas
- Liability issues
- No top flight public Equestrian Facility
- No Horse Auction Facility
- Lack of Open trails
- Traffic and inability to transport easily from one location to another
- High Property Taxes
- Lots to small = too many horses per acres
- Development reducing large acreage farms
- Expensive labor
- Service Industry Housing
- Lack of communication among all sectors of Industry "Association"
- Needs
- Organization or Association
- Horse trails with connectivity
- Open space /conservation easements
- Renowned Public Equine Facility
- Strong local Hay supply system
- Segment Dialogue and Education

Cattle Industry

Components of the Industry

- Seed stock Production
 - Purebred
 - Commercial
- Feeder Cattle Sales
- Limited Direct to Consumer Sales
- Strong Youth Component
- Support Services
- Veterinarians
- Farm & Feed Supply Stores
- Fertilizer Suppliers
- Trailer Dealers
- Hay Dealers
- Livestock Transportation companies
- Medicine and Pharmaceuticals
- Insurance Companies
- Lodging
- Consultation

- Fencing and barn construction

Industry Strengths

- Plentiful Grass
- Location
- Quality Professional Help
 - Breed Associations
 - Paid Consultants
- High Quality animals
- Market Infrastructure
- Three local auction markets
- Good Roads
- Multiple major converging highways
- Commercial Packing Facilities in PA
- Land Use Tax System

Industry Weaknesses

- No Local Cattle Association
- Development
- New Residents with little understanding of agriculture or the cattle industry
- Fence Laws (Loudoun is a no fence county)
- Local Sign ordinance
- Lack of ability to finish cattle economically
- Support Businesses leaving the area
- Local residents cannot handle buying a side of beef
- Federal Cheap Food policy
- Price fluctuations
- Local Industry needs to do more retail
- Taxes are too high
- Labor is hard to find and expensive
- Cash Flow

Major Constraints

- Ag businesses are failing
- Spray services not readily available
- Large Animal Vet resources are in short supply
- Lack of local processing capacity
- Local direct marketing needs to be developed
- Needs
 - More local retail opportunities
- Local legislation to promote new fence construction
- Locker/slaughter capacity

Small Ruminant Industry - Including: Sheep, Goats, Llama, and Alpaca

Components of the Industry

- Seed stock Production
 - Purebred
 - Commercial
- Feeder and Finished Lamb Sales
- Limited Direct to Consumer Sales
- Strong Youth Component
- Wool and Meat industry
- “Lamb Sausage”
- LVSPA (Loudoun Valley Sheep Producers Association)
- ODLPA (Old Dominion Livestock Producers Association)
- Support Services
- Veterinarians
- Farm & Feed Supply Stores
- Fertilizer Suppliers
- Trailer Dealers
- Hay Dealers
- Livestock Transportation companies
- Medicine and Pharmaceuticals
- Insurance Companies
- Lodging
- Consultation
- Fencing and barn construction
- Industry Strengths
- Plentiful Grass
- Location
- Quality Professional Help
 - Breed Associations
 - Paid Consultants
- High Quality animals
- Market Infrastructure
- Three local auction markets
- Close proximity to ethnic populations
- Good Roads
- Multiple major converging highways
- Land Use Tax System

Industry Weaknesses

- Development
- New Producers have little Ag Background
- Majority of producers are “hobbyist”

- Fencing
- Predator control
- Support Businesses leaving the area
- Price fluctuations
- Local Industry needs to do more retail
- Taxes are too high
- Labor is hard to find and expensive
- Cash Flow

Major Constraints

- Ag businesses are failing
- Spray services not readily available
- Large Animal Vet resources are in short supply
- Lack of local processing capacity
- Local direct marketing needs to be developed

Needs

- More local retail opportunities
- Locker/slaughter capacity
- Production Education

Agronomic Industry

Components of Industry

- Forages
 - Horse Hay
 - Livestock Hay
- Mulch Hay
- Corn
- Soybean
- Wheat/Barley
- Sunflowers
- Support Services
- Farm & Feed Supply Stores
- Fertilizer Suppliers
- Equipment Dealers
- Grain Transportation companies
- Insurance Companies
- Consultation

Industry Strengths

- Soils
- Quality Professional Help

- Farm Service Personnel
- Paid Consultants
- Market Infrastructure
- Close proximity to Horse populations that need straw and hay
- Multiple major converging highways
- Land Use Tax System

Industry Weaknesses

- Development
- New Producers have little Ag Background
- Support Businesses leaving the area
- Price fluctuations
- Cost of Equipment
- Taxes are too high
- Labor is hard to find and expensive
- Cash Flow

Major Constraints

- Ag businesses are failing
- Spray services not readily available

Horticulture

Components

- Master Gardener Volunteer program Private residents/consumers of goods and services
- Landscape Maintenance Companies
- Commercial Pesticide Applicators
- Associated Agencies
- Loudoun Parks & Recreation
- Leesburg Parks & Recreation
- Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority
- VA State Arboretum/Blandy Experimental Farm
- Audubon Society – Rust Center
- Agriculture Economic Development – Agritourism – Farm Tours Virginia Department of Forestry Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District
- Loudoun Building and Development
- Monroe Technology Center – Horticulture Program
- Northern Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association
- Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association
- Loudoun Health Department

Related Services

- Nurseries

- Garden Centers
- Other retail business selling plants, tools, and gardening related supplies
- Loudoun Farmer's Markets

Existing Strengths/Resources

- Extension personnel with technical expertise
- Master Gardener volunteers are providing education on CASA programs about Good Horticultural Practices.
- Master Gardeners Volunteers are advising Loudoun County Public Schools to create rain water gardens, native gardens, butterfly gardens, vegetable gardens, etc.
- Master Gardeners Volunteers are advising the Building and Develop Department on issues related to the watershed.
- Extension publications
- Associated agencies

Issues/Problems Seen in the County

- Lack of education on environmental impacts and its relationship with health issues
- Overbuilding/overcrowding – loss of open space
- Trash and air, water, noise, and light pollution.
- Soil erosion from development
- Increased pressure on water table will negatively affect those with wells.
- Loss of native wildlife and habitat
- Lack of knowledge of environment of new homeowners with overuse/abuse of fertilizers and pesticides. Home owners from the suburban area don't clearly understand or know how to interact with or protect ecosystems.

Suggestions for Addressing Issues/Problems

- Regain the position for a new Urban Horticulture Agent.
- Development of a "smart-growth" program by the Board of Supervisors for the County
- Increase community awareness of Urban Horticulture programs through newspaper county and extension website, social media, radio, etc. Provide more outreach educational programs to the general public addressing environmental and health issues.
- With the help of the County develop Master Gardener Volunteer teams for home-site visits in the community to provide proper instruction on native plants, plant selection, fertilizer and pesticide use.
- Conduct workshops/lectures in all parts of the County about environment and health, garden to table, eat fresh buy local.
- Take "Reality Store" concept and design a program that addresses the effects the decisions made by developers and homeowners have on the environment
- Work with teachers to provide environmental education to students and through them their parents
- Provide information to homeowner associations and town councils by attending meetings and/or making educational presentations.

COMMERCIAL HORTICULTURE

The Commercial Horticulture in Loudoun is an innovative system that combines the County's suburban and rural area, where citizens benefit from the proximity of the horticultural based activities and services and the rural and suburban enterprises benefit from the markets for goods and services.

Components

- Vineyards and Wineries
- Breweries
- Nurseries
- Greenhouses
- Christmas Tree Farms
- Fruits (small fruit primarily & some tree fruit)
- Vegetables
- Flowers and herbs
- Hops, Mushrooms, Ginseng and other Specialty crops
- Wreaths etc. at Christmas
- Garden Centers
- Agritourism & Agritainment
- Farmers Markets

Related Services

- Suppliers: seeds, chemicals, fertilizers
- Custom operators & farm services
- Labor groups
- Retail operations

Strengths

- Support Programs: Virginia Tech and Virginia State University count with an array of specialist that support the agents and general public.
- Technical Assistance: Direct contact with VCE agent – on-farm and off-farm, and specialist support.
- Availability of Resources: VCE with knowledge of local environment, production practices, marketing.
- On-Farm events as education and networking
- Agritourism been fueled by an increasing population interested in a healthy lifestyle.
- Population/Market Base: population size, diversity, proximity to consumers, affluence of consumers
- Marketing support: farmers markets sites, management, promotion
- Good land for many crops
- Some private support services
- Weaknesses
- Loudoun Extension Office underfunded

- Not enough growers of every sector of the horticulture to keep up and compete with the demand. .
- Increasing urban development
- Bigger mammal (deer, raccoon, mouse chipmunk, voles, moles, shrews, etc.) pressure due to an unbalance of the ecosystem
- Zoning regulations impairing the ability to establish agribusiness and other rural entrepreneurs
- Signage regulations
- Expense of land, housing and taxes
- Not enough trained laborers to help in the farm and hard immigration policies.
- Lack of grants that specifically target small farmers
- Lack of understanding of laws that can affect agribusiness and other rural entrepreneurs by the local government and its departments

Needs

- Investigative procedures for farmers markets (for complaints: e.g. non-production of products).
- Increased presence of local products in retail outlets (visibility & presence)
- Vigorous county Agritourism promotional efforts during the whole year (brochures, maps, etc. – in retail locations)
- Economic impact studies for commercial horticulture in Loudoun (benefits compared to housing etc.)
- Educate the community on Ag land preservation which consequently will increase the consensus on strategies (like cluster and tax programs, etc.)
- Reduced taxes for ‘true agricultural practices’ and less tax relief for ‘aesthetics’ like open space
- Further tax relief for ‘active (versus passive) farming (e.g. grapes versus hay) and small acreage
- County staff to understand their own zoning regulations (and not hinder agricultural pursuits that are allowed such as greenhouses, breweries, etc.)
- PDR if funding exists, otherwise pursuit of Ag tax relief.
- Find and educate skilled labor, especially for small specialized activities at a time; yet frequent (interface with schools, home school programs, senior citizens, detention centers, etc.).
- Further educational programs: weeds, high tunnels, plasticulture, cover crops, container production)
- Housing for migrant, seasonal, or low income labor
- Affordable liability & health insurance
- More horticulture growers, to effectively match consumer base and encourage more younger farmers to farm in Loudoun through programs like The Student Citizen Project, Master Gardener Children’s Programs (CASA), and 4-H programs.
- More ornamentals production (including diversification of existing farms to include more ornamentals)

- Farmer to Farmer networking opportunities (broad across commodities to 'give & take' opportunities, so small farmers can support one another and save resources, money and time.
- Cooperative purchasing
- Maintain and/or expand staffing in Extension office
- Continuation of the Loudoun County extension agent focused on horticulture is imperative.
- Funding should be provided for this agent to attend formal classes on the different sectors of Loudoun horticulture, intended to provide all the educational support to the farmer and improve and increase the production and sustainability of our land.
- Increase the number of nurseries in our County that can supply the needs of horticultural growers.
- Improve signage regulations.

4-H Youth Development

Issues Facing Today's Youth

- Over commitment/Time Management
- Lack of After School Programs
- Especially for Middle & High Schoolers
- Financial commitment for Rec League sports
- Transportation Issues
- More needed within the school building
- Transportation Issues
- Violence & Bullying in school situations
- Issues Facing Parents and Families
- Time Management
- Traveling to/from activities – leaving lack of quality family time
- Gang Activity on increase in Urban area
- Character Development and Education
- Currently Meeting Needs
- Youth Athletics
- Not always accessible to working families
- Sometimes cost prohibitive
- PRCS After school
- Limited space
- Available in all Elementary Schools
- YMCA After school
- Limited space
- Limited locations (7 schools)
- 4-H Programs
- Usually held in the evenings
- No cost involved

What Additional Resources are Needed

- To combat gang violence – more law enforcement, esp. in West
- New ideas for activities
- Commitment from individual groups and organizations to work together
- More choices for after school
- Transportation for after school opportunities
- More parks in the Western Area for sports
- Not really sure we can address the over commitment issue – comes down to personal/family choice

Summary of Community Scan - Family & Consumer Sciences

- Basic Human Needs: Health Care, Housing, Food and Clothing
- Community Infrastructure: Transportation, Housing, Linguistic Barriers
- Social Services/Support : Mental Health Care and Counseling
- Individual/Financial Needs
- Educational/Training Services: Prenatal & Parenting Education, Financial Literacy Training, Child Care Education
- Senior Services: Friendly Visiting for Isolated Seniors, Information & Referral for Aging Issues, Licensed Adult Day Care
- Self-Sufficiency/Independence: Supportive Services, Assisted Living for Seniors
- Dependent Care: Child Care and Licensed Adult Day Care
- Immigrant Services: Linguistic Barriers, Basic English Skills
- Information and Referral Services: Referral Links to Community Services, Specialized Information & Referrals
- Crisis Assistance: Emergency Assistance, Domestic Abuse
- Employment/Careers: Job Preservation, Starting A Family Child Care Business
- Legal Aid: Court Assistance, Legal Services

Priority Issues

Based on the unit profile and resident perspectives data from above, the following top priority issues were identified for Loudoun County.

Issue 1: Educating the Public and Elected Officials about Agriculture

Producers are affected by decisions made at local, state, and national levels, and farmers stated a need for continued education of others about their chosen profession. Officials and community residents who have a greater understanding of agricultural issues will be able to make better decisions based on information and facts, not opinions or mere perceptions.

The Loudoun unit conducts several annual programs that are effectively addressing this issue. Ag Day is a field trip for 4th and 5th grade students that feature learning stations from various community partners about Loudoun's past and present involvement in Agriculture. The staff at

the Loudoun Unit work together with a local park, in addition to several other local agencies, in presenting this even. Agricultural agents write news articles and disseminate educational information through local media sources as available and continue to work with local and state elected officials on agriculture related issues. In addition, there is a tentative plan for Dr. Jones, the director of Extension, to do a presentation to the current board of supervisors. VCE Loudoun's plan is to become the leading example in the nation of rural-urban agricultural education. Lastly, the Loudoun office is working closely with the Rural Economic Development Council in Loudoun to ensure a future for agricultural education in the county.

Issue 2: Natural Resource and Environmental Education

Environmental Education regarding the management of Natural Resources, Water and Air quality, saving or developing Wildlife habitat and reducing Soil Erosion have become important to local residents as development pressures continue to cause a reduction in open space, forested and agricultural land each year. Acreage devoted to urban landscapes is increasing each year and thousands of new homeowners are asked to care for 1-5 acre tracts of land. Loss of open space reduces wildlife habitat, so wildlife related problems also increase. New or first time homeowners often overuse/abuse fertilizers and pesticides on their properties. Often they see common, ordinary "country" occurrences such as insects or wildlife as being a major problem that must be dealt with.

This issue is currently being addressed with current VCE unit resources. Based on the situation analysis, efforts to increase collaboration with the local Parks and Recreation Department, School system, local Environmental Advocacy Groups, and the Soil and Water District need to be explored to better address this issue. We can also provide recommendations of ways to conserve water resources and for addressing wildlife related problems in an urban setting.

Issue 3: Food Safety and Security Education

This issue relates to the need for educational programs that help ensure a safe and secure food supply, producer/handler safety and Homeland Security. Issues include food sanitation training for restaurant food managers and personnel from other food establishments. It also relates to "Good Agricultural Practices" training for agricultural producers who intend to produce food for human consumption or direct to consumer sales, and the homeowner who is growing produce for home use. Food Safety is an issue that impacts restaurants, direct market agricultural vendors, child care centers, hospitals, catering services, temporary food mobile units, occasional quantity cooks in churches and other food establishments. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports that the majority of foodborne disease outbreaks are caused by poor hygienic practices by food handlers, contaminated raw products consumption, inadequate cooking and improper holding temperature of food. Virginia health code requires that a person is on site during all hours of operation who can demonstrate knowledge of proper food handling in restaurants and other production facilities. Since this legislation was passed, the Loudoun Extension Office has experienced escalating demand for food sanitation training.

VCE is hiring a Food Safety FCS Agent in FY 2014 to address this issue.

Issue 4: Rural Business Profitability/Sustainability

Loudoun's producers have the opportunity to expand beyond their current scope and meet the demands of a growing educated population, with more interest in produce locally grown in an environmentally responsible manner. Loudoun's producers make business decisions daily, whether trying to increase receipts, reduce expenses, or manage daily operations. They indicated needs for education in business principles as well as basic management information and profitable solutions to problems. Rural land is being lost to development and many mid-size farmers are quitting the business due to low or no profitability. Some producer's family income is based solely on operation profitability while others rely on the rural business for additional income.

VCE currently has limited resources to address these issues but can partner with other local and state agencies to make a positive impact. Each producer's situation varies and assistance with decisions such as expansion, efficiency, and continuation require one-on-one assistance from agents. VCE agents can and do currently provide generalized educational programs about farm management techniques, financial matters, and forms of alternative agriculture.

Issue 5: Youth Leadership along with Character and Moral Development

Development of leadership and character have become very important to youth and parents of Loudoun County. Responsibility and respect for others and self were cited as two important character traits that our youth should develop.

These issues are currently being addressed by VCE with the 4-H Youth Development program through club participation and CHARACTER COUNTS!. Character development is also being addressed through the Loudoun County Public Schools in the elementary grades. 4-H is able to provide leadership development to youth, starting as early as 5 years old. 4-H clubs and its other programs have many opportunities for youth to find their niche and excel as a leader and as a citizen.

Issue 6: Financial Illiteracy

This issue relates to families' high debt loads and financial illiteracy. Many individuals and families are experiencing financial crisis because of inadequate savings, too much debt, and poor planning for major life events. Loudoun's families are impacted by high cost of housing which consumes a large percentage of their salaries. The recent recession and economic woes have demonstrated that good financial management practices are a must. However, many young adults today enter the workforce with no knowledge of cost of living expenses or how to budget for the expenses of everyday life. Financial literacy training will help people to acquire the knowledge and skills to improve financial security. Youth financial illiteracy is also a major issue facing our community as well as the nation.

In 2012, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors eliminated funding to support the VCE financial counseling program, so addressing the needs of those over the age of 18 is outside

the scope of VCE. However, The Reality Store Program, a simulation for high school students, is offered to high school students in Loudoun County Public Schools. A local non-profit, the Loudoun Volunteer Financial Council, has stepped in to provide funding and additional support in order to continue the program.

