

# EMERGING Trends

*The Many Faces of Prince George's County*

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## *Inside this issue:*

### Household Sizes Decline

2

### Population Continues to Mature

3

### Population Becomes More Dispersed

5

### County is Majority Minority

7

### Conclusion

8

**T***his is the first of a series of studies evaluating impacts and identifying implications of emerging trends in Prince George's County. This particular study provides a portrayal of changes in the county's general demographic makeup over time based on information from the decennial censuses. The Planning Department undertakes such studies to provide elected and appointed officials, and the business and residential communities, with useful demographic and socioeconomic information on forces that impact the general makeup and character of the county.*

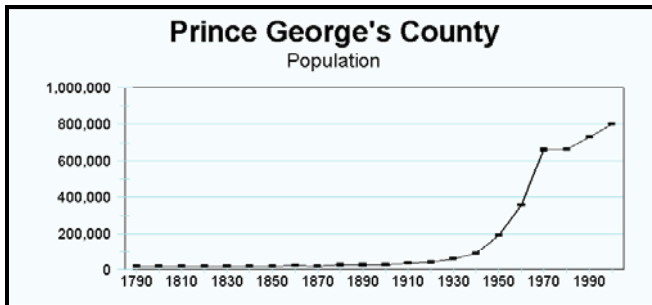


## Moderations in Explosive Population Growth

The 2000 census reported that there were 801,515 people in Prince George's County. This represents a 10 percent increase over the 1990 population of 729,268 and a 20 percent increase over the 1980 figure. In the decades of the 1950s and 1960s, the county's population grew from less than 200,000 to more than

600,000. During this period, the county was rapidly developing as a bedroom community of Washington, D.C. This was followed by relatively little population growth between 1970 and 1980. In 1990 and 2000, the two most recently reported decades, the county experienced population growth at a rate of ten percent each decade.





From the first census in 1790 to 1940, the county's population exhibited very little growth and did not exceed 100,000. During the 1940s, the population more than doubled and approached 200,000. In both the 1950s and the 1960s, the population nearly doubled. These three decades (1940s, 50s, and 60s) in which the population nearly doubled each decade, were followed by a population growth of less than one percent during the 1970s. The pattern of growth exhibited during this period can be interpreted as a standard S-curve with a period of slow growth followed by a period of accelerated growth and then a period of more moderate growth. The anomaly in this pattern is the very slow population growth exhibited during the 1970s. A

sewer moratorium and an accelerated decline in average household size may have contributed to this inconsistent pattern of growth.

The explosive population growth of the 1960s (more than 300,000 people) was led by the construction of more than 62,000 new multifamily units. By 1970, these new multifamily units, mostly garden apartments, accounted for one out of every

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three dwellings in the county. A policy reaction to this large volume of multifamily residential construction and the subsequent change in the county's housing stock took the form of a sewer moratorium. The moratorium effectively shut down multifamily construction. During the 1970s, only 6,000 multifamily units were built, compared to the 62,000 constructed in the 1960s.

## Household Sizes Decline

Average household size in the county, as in the nation and region, exhibited a downward trend between 1960 and 2000. During the

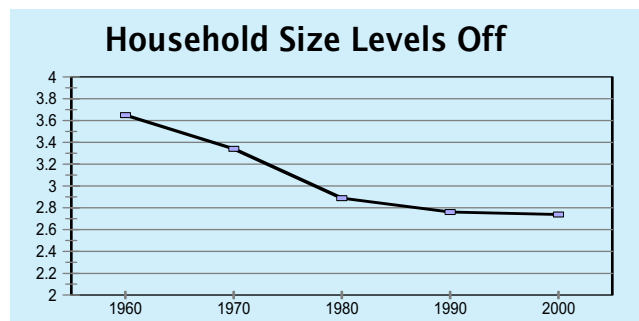
*As that generation began to establish households, a corresponding reduction in household size occurred in the family/parent households the boomers vacated.*

1970s, the rate of decline in average household size was particularly steep. By 1970, the oldest "baby boomers," the generation born between 1946 and 1964, reached 24 years of age. As that generation began to establish households, a corresponding reduction in

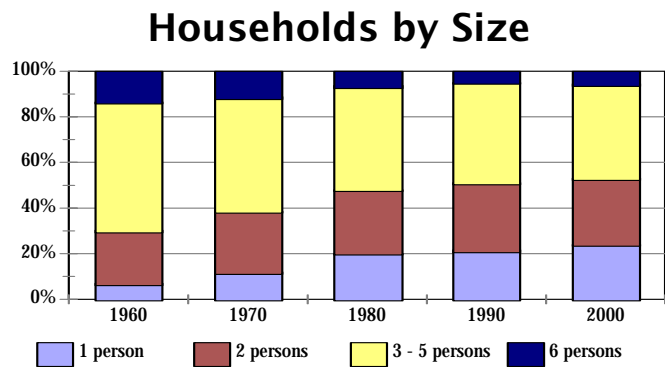
household size occurred in the family/parent households the boomers vacated. In addition, census data revealed that baby boomers tended to marry later in life and establish smaller households than previous generations. Consequently, the boomer households not only began smaller but also remained smaller for longer periods of time. Baby-boomer households were even smaller than the historical trend would have predicted.

Also contributing to the increase in smaller households is the growing elderly population

in the county. In 1960, fewer than 20,000 persons in the county were 65 years of age and over. By the year 2000, there were more than 60,000 persons in that age group, and the median age was 33.3 years, up from 25.2 years of age in 1960. This smaller average household size is reflected in the changing number of persons per household.



In 2000, more than half the households in the county contained only one or two persons. In 1970, one- and two-person households comprised less than a third of all county households. The percentage of one- and two-person households has shown steady growth and represented 53 percent of households in the county in the 2000 census. While the number of smaller households increased, the number of larger households declined. Three- to five- person households accounted for 41 percent of all households in 2000, down from 56 percent in 1960.



## Population Continues to Mature

The age distribution of the county's population reflects chronological change more than any other factor. This suggests that the age of the population that moved into the county is similar to the age of the people who moved out. Despite the large in- and out-migration reported by the Internal Revenue Service over the last two decades, census data portrayed a picture of little net migration and unchanging or static residency. As noted by the age distribution cohort pyramids on page 4, there are no sudden, unexpected bulges due to in-migration of certain age groups or cohorts. Nor are there unexpected shrinkages due to the out-migration of other age groups. Rather, the evolving pattern reflects the aging of a group of people with very little mobility.

From 1960 to 1970, the age cohort pyramid increased in size reflecting the large population increase. By 1970, the county's population cohort pyramid resembled the standard textbook version. The youngest group (under 5 years of age) represents ten percent of the population. In 1970, baby boomers were in the 5- to 14- and 15- to 24- age cohorts, representing 22 percent and 20 percent of the population respectively, the widest bars on the age cohort pyramid.

The aging boomers and the ensuing "baby bust" (the generation born between 1965 and 1983) are reflected in the county's 1980 population cohort pyramid. The bar representing the youngest cohort

narrowed and represented seven percent of the population, down from ten percent in 1970. The 15- to 24- and 25- to 34- cohorts contained the baby boom generation in 1980, the widest bars, representing 21 percent and 19 percent of the population, respectively. At that time there was also an increase in the elderly population. In 1970, about four percent of the county's population was over 65 years of age. By 1980, that percentage had grown to six percent of the total population.

The 1990 age cohort pyramid shows that the youngest group (under 5 years of age) still accounted for seven percent of the population and the baby

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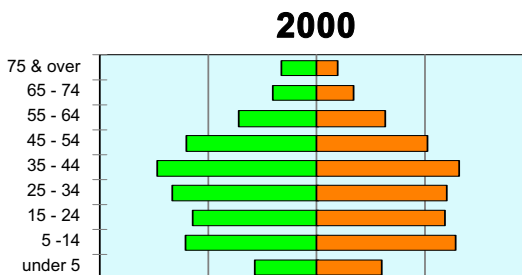
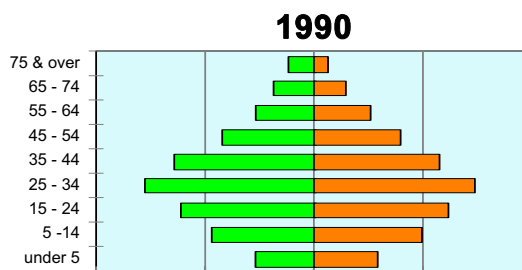
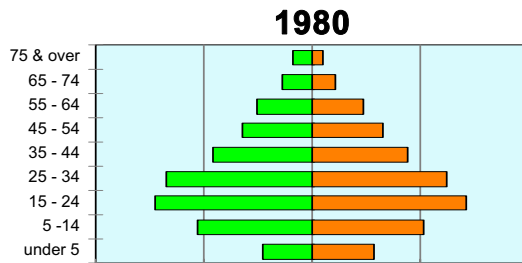
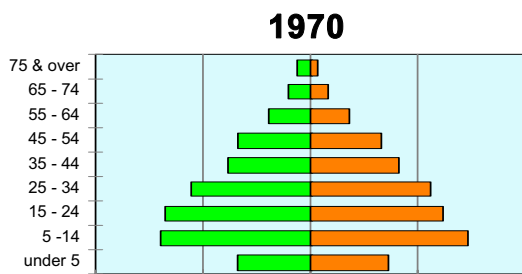
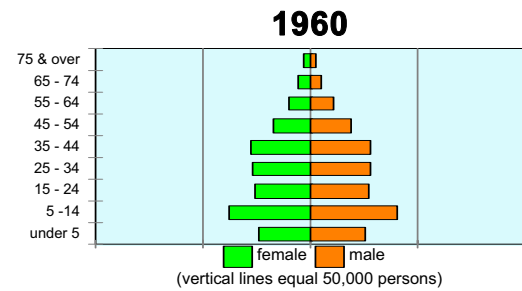
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boomers, those in the 25- to 34- and 35- to 44- cohorts, accounted for 21 percent and 17 percent of the population, respectively. The under-5-years-of-age group grew in absolute numbers from 46,419 to 55,409 and has been referred to as the "baby boomlet." This boomlet is directly attributable to the large number of late childbearing boomers: those baby boomers who delayed marriage and childbirth and had reached the point where childbearing could no longer be postponed.

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### Age Distribution Cohort Pyramids



The 2000 cohort pyramid shows that the youngest group continued to account for seven percent of the county's population. The 5 to 14 cohort, which consisted of school-age children, increased to 15 percent in 2000, up from 13 percent in 1990. This increase was reflected in higher public school enrollment. During the 1990s when total population grew 10 percent, public school enrollment increased 23 percent. Much of this is due to the baby boomers' children. In 2000, the youngest age baby boomers were 36. Typically, boomers married in their late twenties and had their first children several years later. Thus, the births of the last children born to the baby boomers occurred around 1995. As a result, the growth in the cohort comprising school-age children is largely children of the baby boomers.

Another impact on the age structure of the county's population indirectly associated with the baby-boom generation is the population loss in the cohort ages 25 to 34 during the period from 1990 to 2000. In 1990, this age cohort contained more than 151,000 persons. By 2000, the number of persons in this cohort declined by more than 16 percent, falling to 126,000. In previous census years, similar declines were experienced in the cohort that most recently had been occupied by baby boomers. The sheer number of baby boomers makes the cohort that follows appear to have a loss in population. The decline, however, is merely a return to a more normal state. In percentage terms, these cohorts accounted for a fairly fixed share of the county's population except at those times when they contained the baby boomers.

The following table demonstrates a return of the county's population to historic levels. Each cell in the following table contains the percentage of the county's population in the specified age cohort, with the shaded cells closely representing the baby-boom generation. Looking across the rows, the percentages in the cells to the right and/or left of the cells representing baby boomers fall within a narrow range. This means that the smaller percentages following in the wake of the boomers are merely a return to historic levels and not the result of population losses.

One interesting consequence associated with the aging of the population is the change in the male/female composition of the county. Nationally, there are 105 live male births for every 100 live female births. In the county, this has been reflected in the

number of males in the under 5-years-of-age cohort. In 2000, the number of males in this cohort exceeded the number of females by about five percent. At the other

*As the population ages and the share of the population over 65 years increases, the gender composition becomes increasingly female.*

end of the age spectrum, in the 65 years and over cohorts, the number of females has historically exceeded the number of males. Nationally, as in Prince George’s County, the number of females 65 years and over exceeded the number of males in this age group by 43 percent, reflecting the longer life expectancy for females. As the population ages and the share of the population over 65 years increases, the gender composition becomes increasingly female.

### Age Distribution in Prince George’s County

| Age       | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Under 5   | 14%  | 10%  | 8%   | 8%   | 7%   |
| 5 - 14    | 22%  | 22%  | 16%  | 13%  | 15%  |
| 15 - 24   | 15%  | 20%  | 21%  | 17%  | 14%  |
| 25 - 34   | 15%  | 17%  | 19%  | 21%  | 16%  |
| 35 - 44   | 15%  | 12%  | 13%  | 17%  | 17%  |
| 45 - 54   | 10%  | 10%  | 10%  | 11%  | 14%  |
| 55 - 64   | 6%   | 6%   | 7%   | 7%   | 8%   |
| 65 - 74   | 3%   | 3%   | 4%   | 4%   | 5%   |
| 75 & over | 1%   | 1%   | 2%   | 2%   | 3%   |

### Population Becomes More Dispersed

The share of the county’s population living inside the Capital Beltway (I-495) has declined steadily since 1970 with residents inside the Beltway now accounting for just under half of the total population in Prince George’s County. According to the 1970 census, the first census after the Beltway was completed, nearly two-thirds of the county’s population lived in areas located inside the Capital Beltway. The 2000 census reported that more than half the county’s population lived outside the Beltway.

Two factors have contributed to the shift in the percentage of the population living outside as opposed to inside the Beltway. One factor is the amount of residential development that occurred

(and continues to occur) outside the Beltway. In the past 30 years, more than 102,000 housing units were built in the county. Most of this residential

*The 2000 census reported that more than half the county’s population lived outside the Beltway.*

development (84 percent) occurred outside the Beltway because much of the land inside the Beltway was already developed. The other factor contributing to this shift is the declining average household size. The average number of persons per dwelling unit

declined during the 30-year period between 1970 and 2000. With a fairly fixed housing stock, as was the case inside the Beltway, the result has been a population decline. In 1970, nearly 420,000 people lived inside the Beltway. The population living inside the Beltway at the time of the 2000 census—385,000—was still lower than the population living in that area in 1970.

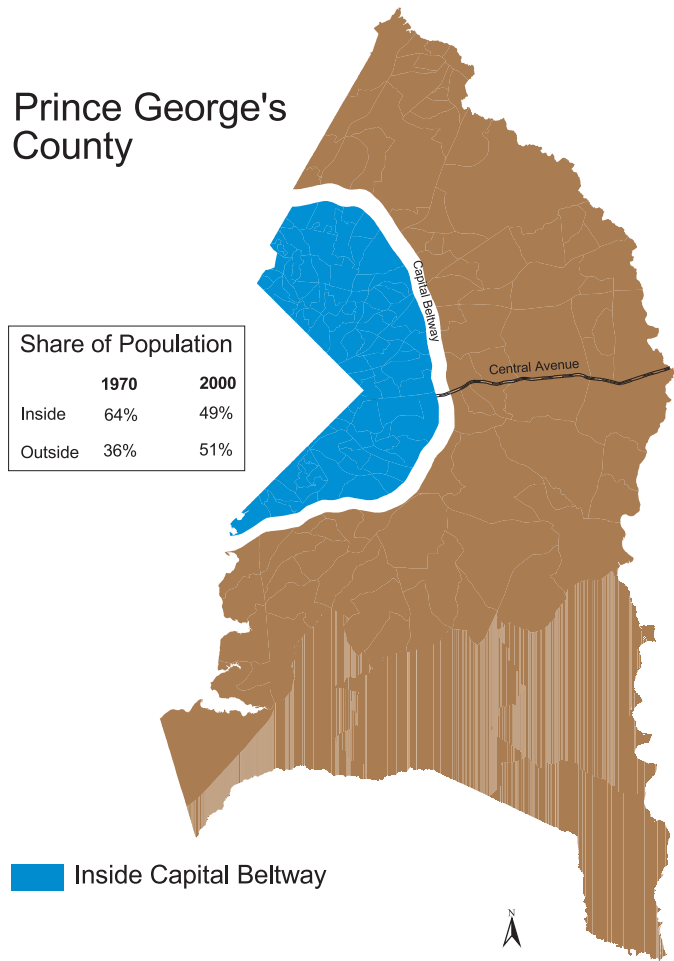
In terms of a north/south split, the shift in the county's population has not been as dramatic. Between 1970 and 1980, the share of population living north of Central Avenue fell from 63 percent to 57 percent and has remained around 57 percent. Basically, population growth north of Central Avenue in incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county such as Laurel, Greenbelt, Glenn Dale and

*The population living inside the Beltway at the time of the 2000 census—385,000—was still lower than the population living in that area in 1970.*

Bowie (although now a small portion of the City of Bowie extends south of Central Avenue) has been matched by the growth in areas such as Largo/Kettering, Upper Marlboro, Marlton/Rosaryville/Clinton, and the Indian Head Highway Corridor.

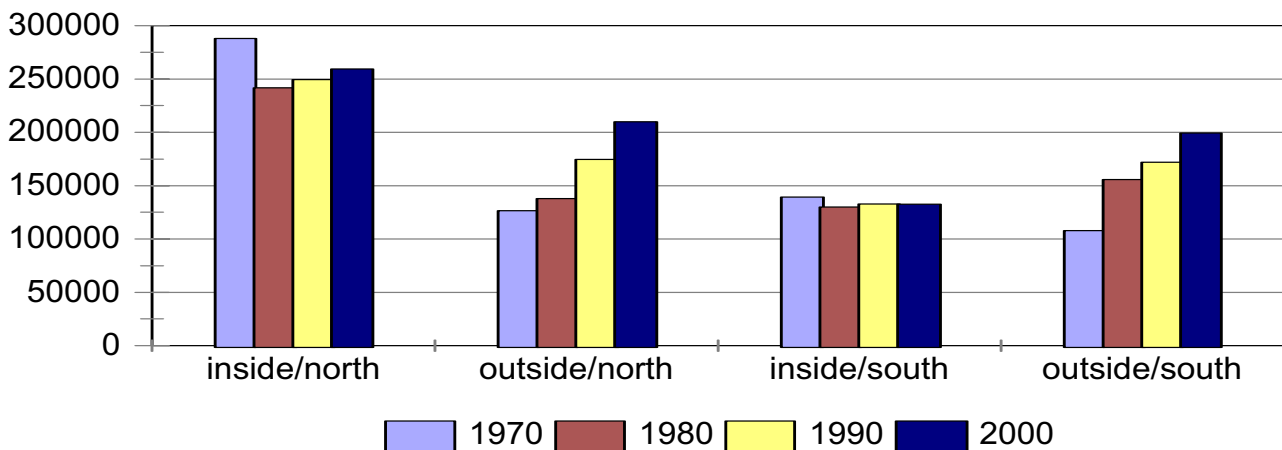
### Prince George's County

|         | 1970 | 2000 |
|---------|------|------|
| Inside  | 64%  | 49%  |
| Outside | 36%  | 51%  |



### Population Shifts

Relative to the Beltway and Central Avenue



## County is Majority Minority

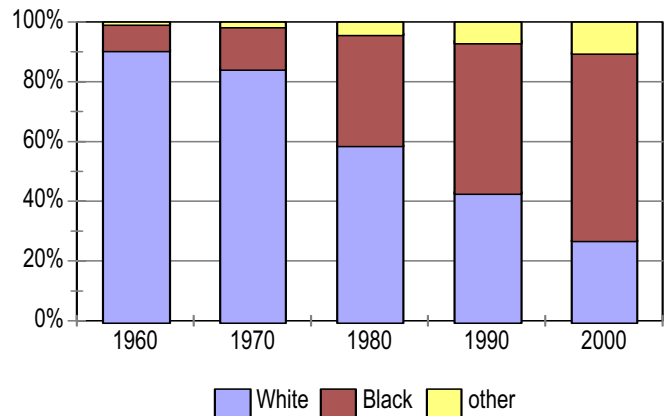
The most frequently documented demographic characteristic of Prince George’s County is its racial composition. The fact that the county became a majority minority suburban jurisdiction was frequently cited when the results of the 1990 census were released. The 2000 census showed that this majority has continued to grow. According to the census, the black or African-American population accounted for 63 percent of the county’s population in the year 2000, up from 51 percent in 1990.

From the time of the first census in 1790 until 1860 just before the start of the Civil War, a majority of the county’s population was black. According to the 1870 census, just under half the population in Prince George’s County was black. That share fell to less than ten percent by 1960. Beginning in 1960, the black population in the county grew in both percentages and absolute numbers. By the year 2000, the number of blacks in Prince George’s County totaled 502,550, up from 31,011 in 1960. During that period, the white population in the county declined by a third, from 324,714 to 216,729.

What is less frequently cited, however, is the growth in the population that is neither black nor white. This group, which includes American Indians, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and others, accounted for less than one percent of the county’s population in 1960. By the time of the 2000 census, this group accounted for a full ten percent of the population in Prince George’s County.

The Asian population, which consists of a number of groups including Chinese, Filipino, and Korean, accounted for about 40 percent of the population that was neither black nor white. In addition to the established Filipino community in the Fort Washington area, the increasing number of churches in the Hyattsville area with Korean letters on their marquees and the Korean signs in the Langley Park storefronts are evidence of this growing population.

## Minority Population Increases



| Year | Total Population | Black Population | Percent Black |
|------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 2000 | 801,515          | 502,550          | 63            |
| 1990 | 729,268          | 369,791          | 51            |
| 1980 | 665,071          | 247,860          | 37            |
| 1970 | 660,567          | 91,808           | 14            |
| 1960 | 357,395          | 31,011           | 8             |
| 1950 | 194,182          | 22,652           | 11            |
| 1940 | 78,490           | 16,224           | 18            |
| 1930 | 60,095           | 14,047           | 23            |
| 1920 | 43,347           | 12,070           | 27            |
| 1910 | 36,147           | 11,504           | 32            |
| 1900 | 29,896           | 11,986           | 40            |
| 1890 | 26,080           | 11,213           | 43            |
| 1880 | 26,451           | 12,486           | 47            |
| 1870 | 21,138           | 9,780            | 46            |
| 1860 | 23,327           | 13,677           | 59            |
| 1850 | 21,549           | 12,648           | 59            |
| 1840 | 19,539           | 11,716           | 60            |
| 1830 | 20,474           | 12,787           | 62            |
| 1820 | 20,216           | 12,281           | 61            |
| 1810 | 20,589           | 14,118           | 68            |
| 1800 | 21,185           | 12,839           | 61            |
| 1790 | 21,344           | 13,340           | 62            |



Prince George's County  
Planning Department  
Information Center  
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive  
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

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## Conclusion

While Prince George's County, Maryland has experienced growth and changes in racial composition, a number of other demographic changes have also occurred. The county's population growth has been accompanied by a geographic shift in where residents live. The percentage of the population living outside the Beltway has never been greater, and the number of people living inside the Beltway is below the 1970 level. Factors contributing to the smaller number of people living inside the Beltway are the declining average household size and fixed housing stock coupled with significant increases in residential construction outside the Beltway.

The declining average household size in the county reflects regional and national trends, which are the result of an aging population and declining birth rates. In addition, the changing household composition in the county has contributed to the declining average household size. While the number of single-parent families has risen, the number of married-couple families has declined. The number of married-couple families reported in the 2000 census was smaller than the number reported in 1970.

These changes reflect a population that is not only larger than it was in previous decades, but also one that is different. These differences extend beyond the well-documented racial change. They include a population that is dispersed over a larger geographic area, is older, and occupies smaller households.