

The following are the raw answers to the comment card questions completed by participants in the 1/27/20 kickoff meeting at New Kent Elementary School. The four questions were aimed at learning participant's thought on New Kent County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

### What makes New Kent County a great community? (As a place to live, to work, to operate a business, to visit, or to enjoy?)

- History
- Well-planned communities
- Low taxes
- Access to the Richmond MSA and Norfolk/Hampton Roads MSA
- Wonderful public school system
- Family-friendly activities
- Greenspace, riverways
- Caring community
- Wineries
- Good schools, wineries, golf courses, Colonial Downs
- Great schools
- Convenient access to metro areas
- Low cost of living
- Sense of community
- Rural nature of community with amenities close by
- Rural character
- Historical heritage
- Suburb of Richmond/Williamsburg
- Quality schools
- True sense of community, rural character
- Pleasant location, convenience to developed areas
- Historical significance
- Established families blending with newcomers effortlessly
- Rural setting, close to developed areas (Richmond, Mechanicsville, Williamsburg, etc.), but not too close
- Rural character must be preserved
- Friendly, hospitable
- County & School boards work well together
- Board of supervisors have the good of the county in mind
- We're close to anything we could want - between Richmond & Williamsburg so it's not necessary to have everything located within the county boundaries
- To live - trees, forest, wildlife, quiet. To visit - history, wineries
- Peaceful, no-stress, friendly community
- Family values
- People care. Family community
- To visit: wineries, trails for birding, walking. To work: businesses. To enjoy: Friendly
- Surprised no one mentioned its spirit of volunteering within the community to help those in need. There are so many little non-profits. Word to describe NKC: Heart
- Country Living - don't want to be a city
- Don't want Route 60 or 249 turned into a Broad Street or Mechanicsville Turnpike
- Rural, peaceful, no overdevelopment
- Low crime rate & great police force
- No casino or combat ranges
- 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment sanctuary. Protecting our constitutional rights
- "Small town" feel - which allows us to respond quickly
- Close to City of Richmond & Williamsburg
- Low taxes
- Good schools
- Great community pride in things like County Fair & Christmas Parade
- Rural/open space/ family farms
- Quiet
- The rural aspects, a relaxed environ, open spaces where citizens have a sense of belonging to a community and at the same time a sense of independence
- Distance from urban areas
- Rural & quiet
- Great place
- Rural nature of the county
- Low crime rate
- Easy access to Richmond & Williamsburg
- New Kent is not a great community today, but rather an attractive one in which the potential for greatness exists. It is an undeveloped canvas of many scenic possibilities located between two growing metropolitan centers. Its fate is either to be swallowed up in endless suburban development or to originate a lifestyle of its own. Rural in appearance with considerable green space, intelligent and attractive commercial enterprises, discrete signage & zoning, or endless suburban sprawl.
- Quiet
- Friendly
- Close to City/Towns
- Friendliness
- Location between Richmond & Williamsburg with quick access to Norfolk & Virginia Beach
- Small, close knit community
- Great school system
- Ability for people to make an impact
- Calm area
- Friendly
- Rural

## What are some areas where New Kent County is currently lacking or needs improvement?

- Broadband is needed throughout the county
- Hotel & overnight accommodations are virtually non-existent
- Public boat launches are needs along any of our 3 rivers
- Need enhanced marketing and outreach beyond Virginia Borders
- We have extremely poor long-term planning
- Lack of purchase of county property
- Unattractive roadways/ community space - looking like the next Mechanicsville Turnpike
- Not protecting our green spaces. EX - Providence Forge - Bottoms Bridge is becoming sidewalks, signs, junk, no green space.
- If Loudoun & NK are fast growing counties, take a look at Loudoun's long-term planning & green space requirements. We must aspire to look inviting. Our roadways are an embarrassment
- Better/expanded broadband coverage
- More affordable housing for young adults
- Need better high-speed internet options
- More restaurants and accommodations for tax base
- Broader coverage of major utility infrastructure (water, sewer, electrical, gas, broadband)
- Not known for outstanding events, history, big annual events, etc. to draw visitors
- High tax rate
- Senior day center
- Infrastructure
- Water/sewer is lacking in Providence Forge area
- Widening of interstate route 64
- Health & human services
- Assisted living
- Continuing care/memory care
- Interaction between NKC BOS & NKC School Board
- Medial rehab (cardiac, orthopedic, etc.)
- Infrastructure - broadband, financial strength, utilities
- Specific planning for growth
- Water source other than groundwater
- Cable tv/internet alternatives to Cox or satellite
- Could use more business tax base. County has been working on this and has made great strides
- Services for seniors
- Medical doctors
- Hospital
- Clinics
- Street lighting at exits and entrances to Route 64
- Physical fitness centers
- Retail opportunities (Target, Harris Teeter, Panera Bread)
- Internet
- Local businesses
- Infrastructure
- Affordable housing
- Senior facilities
- Medical offices
- Future school needs
- Financial plan for growth
- Infrastructure needs to be updated including county building and court buildings
- Absent a competitive bond rating, New Kent County lacks the ability and opportunity to attract commerce. The several contiguous counties that have bond ratings (all excellent) are far more attractive to major enterprises seeking to expand
- Internet services
- Business - keep retail \$ in county
- Cohesive support for multiple volunteer organizations & non-profits - IE point person similar to what county has done for economic development
- A true "center" for economic growth around county government buildings. Need some sort of structure for this
- A different grocery store - Food Lion is horrible
- Internet options other than Cox, broadband
- Let Cracker Barrel come to the county - do not think the fact that they don't have a brick front should stop such an established franchise. Waffle House & Taco Bell might have brick fronts but they are hideous buildings. Use common sense, Cracker Barrel fits our county and country living. If board is unable to decide, put it to a vote! Cracker Barrel would offer a much needed service!!
- Too much upper-end development
- Too many fast food trash
- We need a hotel & non-Food Lion grocery store
- More community volunteer engagement w/ animal shelter, food pantry, Habitat for Humanity, etc.
- We are lacking in every indication of planning for sophisticated development. NK is an opportunity for exploitative home building of the type already evident in the west end of the county or thoughtful zoning and planning

- for a future that mimics path of the eastern shore.
- We are opening too many crappy Family Dollar & Dollar Generals. Do we really need 3 of these stores in our little county? Our zoning needs to be rethought
- No broadband
- Unchecked growth/ growing too fast & too many permits
- Lack of internet
- Communications!
- DSL \$60/month & Hughes \$70/month
- If you Google the “10 best eats in NK”, none are in NK
- Road system - Widening of Route 249 & I-64
- More recreational facilities
- Restaurants
- Entertainment
- Variety of shopping - doesn't have to be big box stores, can be unique stores
- Promote diversity & inclusion
- Jobs that would allow you to live here - jobs should equal the average housing costs
- Consider entire county - not just Bottoms Bridge & middle of county
- Traffic patterns
- Architectural design - most of the buildings are all flat top roofs with little character
- Resort-type draw - lodging & activities for travelers on their way to Williamsburg & beaches
- Sports complex that can be used for community events
- More business development in Bottoms Bridge
- More diversity on steering committee
- Add lanes to 60 in Bottoms Bridge
- Providence Forge (PF). PF has great potential. It needs an infrastructure upgrade. It needs water & sewage, communications infrastructure upgrade, office space & small businesses, Amtrak stop
- Countywide internet
- Fire service/medical response needs to continue to grow
- Need more business locations

### What are some opportunities for New Kent County to capitalize on?

- Raw, undeveloped land
- Tourism assets - golf courses, wineries, campgrounds, horse track, rivers
- Growing population
- Potential to expand community college/ Bridging Communities education and training programs
- Four interstate interchanges with public utilities available for development
- Stay with our leisure theme - golf, fishing, water sports
- History
- Wineries
- Traffic volume on 64 - get those people to stop and spend money
- Proximity to Richmond and Williamsburg
- Top performing schools
- Access to water on north and south borders
- Natural resources
- Wineries
- Colonial Downs
- Accessibility to Richmond, Williamsburg, Hampton Roads
- Close proximity to Richmond & Williamsburg
- 2nd fastest growing county in Virginia
- Corporate entities seeking to locate non-industrial operations here
- Similar for low-impact industrial operations that with within local character
- Interstate access - business/industrial growth should be near interstate
- Pamunkey River - water source?
- Located between two larger entities - Richmond & Williamsburg
- Last rural stretch or Route 64 between VA Beach & Richmond
- I-64 interchanges and Route 33 corridor = prime business/commercial property
- Rural lands - rivers & parks
- The Strategic Plan is the most important opportunity whereby the county might capitalize upon. Adherence to the plan through execution is of tantamount import. A comprehensive review of where our county might be in the next few decades is critical to careful growth making certain that the nature of our county remains one that speaks to what makes NKC a great community
- Good planning to retain beauty of KNKC
- There are not enough businesses where residents can spend \$ in the county. We leave the county for better food, variety, coffee shops, shopping.
- Tourism
- 55+ communities
- Interstate exchanges need better planned development
- Excellent location between Richmond & Williamsburg
- Strong Sheriff's department and Fire/Rescue - each with its own dedicated leader

- Connecting the tax revenues of the race track to civic development of physical assets such as parkways, riverfront residential and commercial investment that support attractive private development, and the enhancement of assets that attract travelers and tourists. Other business revenues (tax revenues) should have the same expenditure plan
- Close to Richmond. Close to Williamsburg
- Interstate access
- Great schools
- History
- Fishing
- Family community
- Broadband for business
- Less housing development
- We need a militia for protection
- Explore how we can better help our businesses instead of just asking them to give to the county. For example, how do we support the wineries, bed/breakfasts and local restaurants
- Engage the churches to strengthen connections
- Leverage things that exist, that are currently underutilized, i.e. the library, civic groups, waterfronts, etc.
- Farm preservation grants
- Outdoor recreation
- Agritourism & working farms
- Keep the rural nature
- Land & resources
- Proper planning - consider how the county will look before approving building expansion - i.e. Tractor Supply, the NK Dentistry, etc. - not eye appealing
- Make the county unique - create our own look & feel - not the typical rural county - building that has a specific look, unique
- Our central location in Virginia as well as the East Coast. New Kent is well positioned to be a critical logistics hub, manufacturing center, high-tech center, great school system
- Location between two major cities

### What could prevent New Kent County from reaching its vision?

- The vision of any future decision makers (IE future boards of supervisors)
- Changes enacted by the General Assembly/Governor of Virginia
- Staff/administration departure
- People with closed minds who do not want to consider options that differ from their own opinion
- Poor planning - poor leadership
- Conflicts of interest
- Racial discrimination
- Greed
- If we do not enhance & commit to the quality of our roadways and infrastructure, our growth will be blue-collar, cheap, helter-skelter development. AKA - Dollar Generals, cheap grocery stores
- "Good Old Boy" county government & backroom deals
- Lack of infrastructure
- Fear of any growth at all
- Narrow-mindedness
- No follow through
- Inertia - don't like change
- Infrastructure is paramount to effective growth
- No consensus or compromise between New Kent "been here's" and "come here's" (new arrivals to NK)
- Lack of viable strategic plan
- Lack of up-to-date comprehensive plan
- Lack of zoning ordinances formulated from comprehensive plan
- Lack of viable economic development (residential & commercial)
- Lack of broadband internet
- Short-sighted leadership - failure to define the vision accurately
- Failure to provide attractive infrastructure/environment for business
- Failure to adequately plan for growth and development which is coming
- Strategic planning is off to a good start. It must be followed by similar efforts in comprehensive land use planning and ordinances. Failure to do so will result in uncontrolled and undesirable methods of development.
- Lack of water source
- Belief that any growth is better than no growth
- Allowing/seeking the wrong types of development
- Political Action Committee – i.e. PNK2030 - I believe the survey mentioned by an audience member was issued by this PAC and was answered by a limited hand-picked audience.
- Economic issues
- Lack of community buy-in

- Resistance to change from longer-term residents. Powerful hostility towards newcomers expressed on Facebook
- Limited roadways
- Financial support without raising taxes
- Short-sightedness
- People stuck in their ways- unwilling to compromise long-term
- Board of Supervisors failure to communicate
- BOS lacking technology to help communication & data driven outcomes
- Lack of accountability with regard to publicizing how county is doing strategic benchmarks & if missing/not meeting benchmarks - Why & what will be done to correct deviation
- Poor decisions - Remember New Kent is country living
- Making taxes too high
- County spends a lot of money on its staff taking expansive "training" trips. Not needed for people from New Kent to go to training on the West Coast. Training should be done locally and stop covering expensive trips!
- Prefer cluster developing for businesses at a few major intersections but not all up and down the major highways
- Governor Northam bringing in illegals & disarming citizens
- Infighting caused by poor communication
- Lack of commitment to the Strategic Plan and specifically, ignoring the importance of an excellent credit rating. Also, if too much of the tax burden is borne by residents and not with revenues from commercial enterprises would make living here far too expensive. Let's get some clean, responsible businesses here to further employ our talented workforce and to share in the growing expenditures of our county
- Crazy laws set by state governments. For example, raising taxes on Colonial Downs, requiring extra items from county, forcing issues for sheriff (like gun control)
- Growth the causes infrastructure needs the we can't support (water, sewer, internet, schools)
- Outsiders
- Liberals
- Unregulated development & expansion
- Being steamrolled by Richmond/ Williamsburg - not becoming a bedroom community
- Only reverting to mediocre public leadership in the nature that ??? with other counties that do not plan ahead.
- McMansions & haphazard growth
- Building too fast like James City County
- Inadequate infrastructure
- Lack of community support
- Narrow thinking
- Not having plans for implementation, review & evaluate
- Lack of housing for recent high school & college graduates
- Lack of entry level positions and career progression opportunities
- Lack of diverse ideas and opportunities for input of diverse ideas
- Lack of comprehensive high-speed access to internet
- Not having an open mind