

# Buy a more affordable, beautiful place

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SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

**T**he most sought-after housing markets in the Washington region historically have been Montgomery and Fairfax counties and certain neighborhoods in the District of Columbia. Hoping to change that is Prince George's County Executive Jack B. Johnson as he launches his new Livable Communities Initiative.

Housing is less expensive in Prince George's County, which borders the District on the east. Less expensive does not mean less in any other way, officials say. Estate homes are on the rise.

"Prince George's County is one of the most beautiful places in the nation," Mr. Johnson says. "We have beautiful rural green spaces with an abundance of trees and rolling hills."

It also is facing growth-related issues similar to those in other Washington suburbs. In the 1990s, Prince George's County increased in population by 73,000 to an estimated 801,515 residents, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. It has a population larger than that of five states. The county's Hispanic population nearly doubled to 57,057 in the past 10 years.

"I made a campaign promise to the people of Prince George's County when I was elected county executive that I would put together an initiative to make all of our communities a better place to live," Mr. Johnson says. The initiative is based on a task force of subcommittees, aiming to address code enforcement; the county's infrastructure; cleanup; education



Patriot Homes is offering its Abraham Clarke III model in Fairwood starting at \$405,900. The home has 3,110 square feet of space.

and public relations; citizen, business, and municipality involvement; and beautification projects.

The initiative also incorporates a new county slogan, "Gorgeous Prince George's," which will appear on posters and street signs.

The slogan might be new, but its

claim is not news to the people who have been moving in or the builders who have been busy in Prince George's County for some time.

Ryan Homes, for instance, has several developments in process.

In New Carrollton, Coopers Landing is at Route 450 and Coopers

Lane inside the Beltway, near the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. There, Ryan is building 169 town houses, the last 92 of which are now available. The average town house in Coopers Landing has 2,000 square feet on three finished levels. Coopers Landing has

tot lots and a variety of play areas. Prices start in the upper \$160,000s.

"Another major project is a classic community of single-family homes with upscale features," says Ryan sales manager

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Doug McIltron of Dunbarton Hill. "It's one of our best-selling communities in Prince George's County."

Dunbarton Hill is in Mitchellville, near Route 202 and Lottsford Road. Of 82 homes planned, Ryan has about 33 still available. Prices start at \$380,000.

"Our classic series includes brick fronts as standard, upgraded siding and nine-foot ceilings, as well as fireplaces," Mr. McIltron says.

Washington Homes also is building at Dunbarton Hill.

**Fairwood,**  
formerly the  
Fairwood Turf Farm,  
is located between  
Annapolis and  
Washington on  
1,000 acres with a  
variety of home  
styles and amenities.

Ryan Homes and NVHomes are the building about 500 homes at Cross Creek, a golf community located off Briggs Chaney Road between Old Gun Powder Road and Route 29. The community development, slated for completion in five years, is about half finished.

Cross Creek offers single-family homes grouped in sections of wooded lots, many on cul-de-sacs. Cross Creek is close to Interstate 95, the Capital Beltway and MARC train commuter service. Amenities include a clubhouse, swimming pool, tennis courts and walking trails. Model homes are available for view at the sales office. Prices range from \$390,000 to \$490,000.

Woodmore South, off Woodbridge Court, is another fast-growing development in the county. "Woodmore South has consistently appreciated for 10 years in a row," says Realtor Desiree Solomon-Callender. "New construction is going for \$650,000 and better."

Washington Homes purchased 36 lots in Woodmore South's third section.

"In Prince George's County, high-end homes once struggled," Ms. Solomon-Callender says, "but Woodmore South never dropped in value."

There are several sections to the Woodmore area. In addition to Woodmore South, there is a new development called the Woods at Woodmore, and a development called Woodmore Estates is about to break ground. Woodmore Estates is off Central Avenue and Church Road and offers single-family homes from \$500,000. Mid-



Atlantic Homes has been selling there. Washington Homes recently opened a sales office there.

Washington Homes is working on nine developments in Prince George's County and is breaking ground on a town-home community at Oxon Run on Branch Avenue and Iverson Street. The town homes start at about \$170,000.

One of the major developments in Prince George's County — a 10-year project — is the Fairwood Community of Bowie (www.fairwoodcommunity.com). Fairwood is about six miles from the Baltimore-Washington Parkway on Route 450. Fairwood's first section is sold out, but about 1,000 homes will be completed before the development is finished.

The Fairwood model home park comprises seven single-family model homes by Allan Homes, Goodier Builders, Mid-Atlantic

Builders, Patriot Homes, Nu-Homes, Ryland Homes and the Williamsburg Group.

Nu-Homes began building in Fairwood last summer. The firm plans to build about 40 new homes per year for the next 10 years. Nu-Homes shows its Cambridge II model, which has a first-floor master-bedroom suite, at the Fairwood model park. Features in some of the Nu-Homes models include 9-foot ceilings on the first floor, with 42-inch kitchen cabinets, a gas fireplace and field-fabricated hand-finished oak railings in the foyer. The firm also installs two-piece crown molding in the living room and dining room and seamless aluminum gutters and downspouts.

Patriot Homes has been building longer at Fairwood. The firm has sold out for now, but plans to start building on new lots in Fairwood later this spring.

Fairwood is owned by the Rouse Co. It was formerly the Fairwood Turf Farm and is between Annapolis and Washington on 1,000 acres with a variety of home styles, recreational amenities and plans for retail and commercial components.

The project includes 7.5 miles of paths in a parklike setting. Each new homeowner becomes a member of the Sycamore Club at Fairwood, which includes access to exclusive recreational activities, a clubhouse, swimming and tennis.

Another Patriot Homes project, Melwood Springs in Upper Marlboro, already has sold 60 homes but will have about 25 new lots available in the next month. The furnished model available for view is the James Monroe. The homes feature hardwood floors and two-story foyers. Prices start in the high \$274,000s.