

BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

THE ASIAN AMERICAN CONTEXT



Prepared by
Megan Lee, Aniya Kittles, Sacha
Llanto, Michelle Leibowitz

Reporting Period
Feb 1 - May 2026



Partnership for
Action Learning
in Sustainability



M-NCPPC
Prince George's County
Planning Department

COURSE

PHSC490: Public Health in Action: Applied Health Solutions

PALS

An initiative of the National Center for Smart Growth

Kathryn Howell, NCSG Executive Director

Michelle Kokolis, PALS Director

AUTHORS

Aniya Kittles, Megan Lee, Michelle Leibowitz, and Sacha Llanto

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

Shannon Edward and Felicia Low

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following staff members from the Prince George's County Planning Department participated in and provided guidance for this project:

Amelia Chisholm, Planner II, Point of Contact, Historic Preservation Section

Maha Tariq, Planner II, PALS Manager, Neighborhood Revitalization Section

Josephine Selvakumar, Supervisor, Neighborhood Revitalization Section

Andrea Gilles, Division Chief, Community Planning Division

ABOUT PALS

The Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability (PALS) is administered by the National Center for Smart Growth at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD). It is a campus-wide initiative that harnesses the expertise of UMD faculty and the energy and ingenuity of UMD students to help Maryland communities become more environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable. PALS is designed to provide innovative, low-cost assistance to local governments while creating real-world problem-solving experiences for University of Maryland graduate and undergraduate students.

DISCLAIMER

This report was prepared by students as part of the University of Maryland's Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability (PALS) program. The findings are based on exploratory research, including limited qualitative data, and are not intended to be statistically representative. The content reflects the analysis and perspectives of the student authors and does not necessarily represent the views, policies, or official positions of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Prince George's County, or the University of Maryland. This report is provided for informational and educational purposes only and should not be relied upon as official planning guidance or policy.

Table of Contents



03

Introduction

04

Method &
Approach

06

Findings

08

Analysis

09

Process Insights
& Considerations

10

Recommendations

12

Recommended Project
Timeline

13

Conclusions

14

Appendix

Executive Summary

The Asian American community in Prince George’s County remains understudied, especially in relation to culture, the built environment, and public health. This lack of study has resulted in a shortage of culturally relevant data needed to guide effective planning and health programs for this community. Our findings highlight that Asian-owned businesses and community spaces serve as important landmarks for cultural preservation and social support. However, the community faces challenges such as language barriers, limited access to culturally appropriate healthcare, the rising rate of chronic disease risks, and lack of shared cultural spaces. To explore these issues, our consulting team conducted qualitative research through semi-structured interviews with students, residents, and establishment owners recruited through online and in-person outreach at community locations, including the Unity Gala at the University of Maryland. This report recommends preserving culturally significant sites, improving access to culturally and language-appropriate healthcare, and involving community members in planning decisions in Prince George’s County.

Introduction:



Giacson Temple, Laurel MD

Overview:

This project supports Prince George's County in developing a cultural and historical context study focused on Asian American Communities. In this study, we use critical historical analysis of the built environment through a public health lens to investigate the following themes: Religion, Health and Well-Being, Education, Language, and Environment. Local interviews with residents, college students, and business owners are the main method of data collection to deeply understand culture and history through the eyes of the people who have lived in Prince George's county for generations. By collecting this valuable data, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of how Asian Americans in this area navigate healthcare spaces and healthcare access, as cultural identity and community well-being are understudied in this population's public health practices.

Objectives:

- Synthesize demographic, historical, and socioeconomic data, including key public health indicators like access to care and social determinants.
- Assess historically significant sites and how they relate to community health and place-based disparities.
- Create specific, actionable steps for Prince George's County to improve Asian American representation and support future health-supportive initiatives.

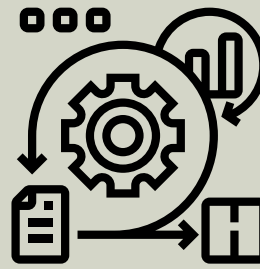
Issue:

There is a lack of culturally specific data and community input on Asian American populations in Prince George's County, which makes it harder to create effective plans and programs. This is an important issue because without this data, decisions may not meet the needs of the community.

Background:

Prince George's County has a small but diverse Asian American population, making up only 4.33% of the population in Prince George's county. The Black population makes up 59% of the population, the White population makes up 12% of the population, and the Hispanic population makes up 21.24% of the population (Prince George's County Planning Department, 2022). Thus, the Asian American community is often not well represented in data, planning processes, and historical documentation. Previous work by the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy established a foundation for understanding these issues, but further research is needed to deepen this analysis. This project has our team analyzing existing materials, reviewing examples of recent context studies, and conducting qualitative outreach with key community partners.

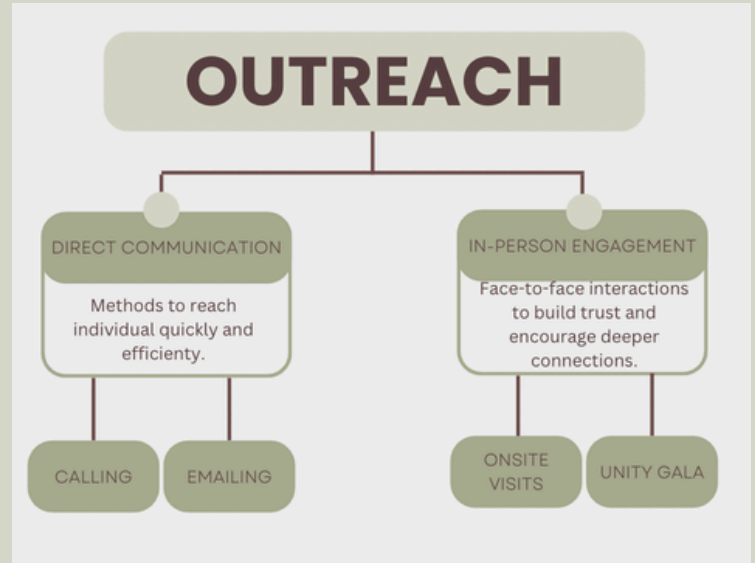
Methodology



Outreach and Interviews

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with a diverse group of participants, including students, residents of Prince George’s County, and establishment owners. These interviews were designed to gather information about historical perspectives and representation for the Asian American community.

Participant recruitment was conducted through targeted, online and in-person outreach at various community locations. Additional recruitment was carried out at the Unity Gala, an event hosted at UMD that celebrates the Asian American student population



Analysis

A SWOT analysis was conducted to guide the overall direction of the project and support the brainstorming process. During this stage, key strengths and weaknesses, emerging opportunities, and challenges or threats were identified and documented. This stage informed the development of research priorities and helped shape interpretation of the project.

SWOT Analysis	
<h3>Strengths</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to research in depth • Able to keep documents organized through Google Drive and Notion • Able to communicate respectfully and professionally. • Team Diversity: Team B comes from a large range of backgrounds, with two coming from an Asian American background. 	<h3>Weaknesses</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited experience working with this community. • Lack of time/time management • Scope: Our population is the Asian American population of Prince George’s county. This is a very large scope to cover and centralize.
<h3>Opportunities</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing community programs/organizations can be used as models. • UMD Resources- Libraries, PALS • Gaining fieldwork experience • Untapped niche: Asian American health is a sector of public health that has not been a focus of the management and development departments of PG county. This project could progress this niche. 	<h3>Threats</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of time • Lack of existing resources • Political climate: We currently live in a very troubling environment for immigrants. As a general statement, many Asian Americans and/or their families are immigrants. Constituents may be unwilling to work with government bodies because of this.

Methodology

Research

Research was conducted to provide contextual background and support the analysis. Sources included existing contextual studies, demographic profiles, and reports all provided by the Prince George’s County Planning Department. These materials were used as a foundation and a source of inspiration for the project, guiding the development of it.

Resources

Digital tools were used to support project organization, collaboration, and workflow management. Notion, Canva, and Google Drive were specifically used to organize research materials, coordinate team efforts, and develop project deliverables.



Map of Prince George’s County showing the locations of interview sites included in this study.

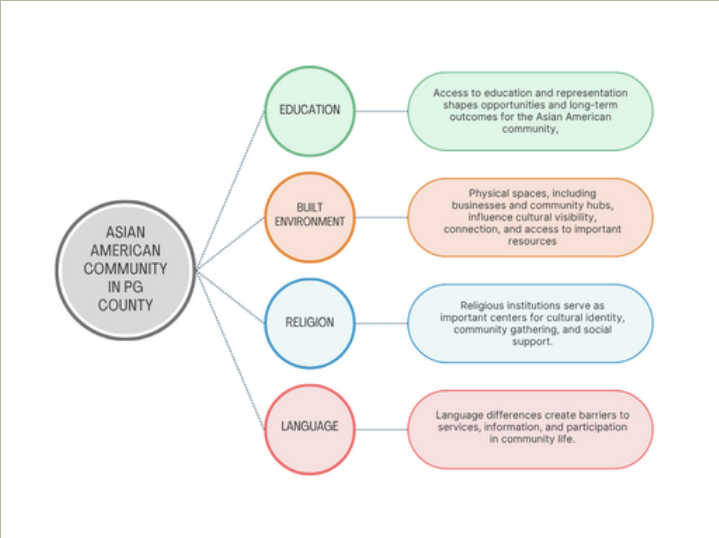


Figure of a flowchart explaining the themes of the project.

Surveys

4 different surveys were developed through Google Forms to address key thematic areas: religion, language, built environment, and education. The surveys consisted of a mixture of 12-13 Likert-scale and open ended questions. These surveys were distributed via social media platforms, targeted email outreach, and in-person engagement to a range of participants, including community organizations and individual respondents.

Findings

Our interviewees are organized by ethnicity.

Chinese

Name	Affiliation
Nigel Chai Chong	Black Belt Academy
Abby	UMD & Moge Tee

Korean

Name	Affiliation
Tae	Da Rae Won
Rachel Kim	UMD & Honey Pig
Employee A	Da Rae Won
Employee B	Myoung Dong
Hannah Kim	UMD

Findings

Our interviewees are organized by ethnicity.

Filipino

Name	Affiliation
Carmela Raymundo	Kabataan Alliance
Florence Moreno	Port Towns Elementary School
Daniel Jeronilla	Elementary Filipino Asian American Choir
Elmer Decimal	Singles for Christ, Towson
Cyrill Moreno	Filipino Cultural Association at UMCP
Audrey Tanpiengco	Unknown Catholic youth group

Vietnamese

Name	Affiliation
Kelly Tran	Giacson Temple
Employee C	Pho Tham

Analysis

INSIGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS

“CHANGE”

Interviewees noted how the Asian American community changed significantly overtime across the study's multiple themes. Common areas of change include population growth/decline and business direction. The sources of this change are better employment and educational opportunities in other counties as well as cheaper cost of living.

“Because of Kpop and Instagram, this restaurant (Da Rae Won) is getting more popular. The customer demographic went from predominantly Asian to 50-60% being non-Korean.” - Tae

“Yeah, people in the community moved, they got out of here. They wanted better schools, grocery stores, etc.” - Nigel Chai Chong

“...Ebisu opening up, Peter Chang, mostly food. NW Chinese food area Pho Tham is being relocated, Kung Fu Tea due to an apartment complex.” - Rachel Kim

“[How have you seen the Asian American community in this area change over time?]: Lot of Chinese people increased, [incoming] Exchange students, Korean community increase[d].” - Employee A

“BARRIERS”

Language is a significant barrier. Many Asian Americans, elders in particular, face difficulty in communicating to the larger Prince George's community due to English proficiency. So much so that personal experiences that these Asian Americans face are often overshadowed and ignored by the government and fellow community members. Some community solutions to this barrier include interpreter access and accessible English language classes.

“...I am a community organizer advocating for issues impacting Filipinos here in the U.S. and in the Philippines. Speaking Tagalog allows me to communicate well with elder Filipino migrants because they feel more comfortable to share their experiences and their thoughts in Tagalog to me.” - Carmela Raymundo

“I would say they're welcoming to newcomers, but only to a certain extent, because of the language barrier. They'll welcome any race and background, but if you don't speak Vietnamese it'll be hard to connect with you and welcome you the way they want to.” - Kelly Tran

“In PG County, schools are among the most responsive institutions in terms of language access, particularly through ESOL/ELD programs that support multilingual learners and their families. Healthcare institutions also provide interpreter services, which are essential for clear communication. [...] While I am comfortable using English, I have observed particularly through my husband's experience that having access to an interpreter significantly improves comprehension, comfort, and confidence during medical visits.” - Florence Moreno

Process Insights & Considerations

This section outlines key challenges and observations encountered during the project. It is intended to provide transparency into the research process, highlight barriers that may have influenced findings, and identify opportunities for improvement in future phases. Understanding these insights is critical so that outreach strategies, data collection methods, and participant engagement can be refined to increase inclusivity, response rates, and overall data quality moving forward.

1

Language Barriers

Language barriers impacted the data collection process. Given the diversity within the Asian American communities in Prince George's County, individuals were not fluent in English, making the outreach and data collection difficult; it limited the ability to fully engage with participants and affected the depth and clarity of responses. Efforts were made to communicate as clearly as possible; however, language remained a constraint on comprehension and inclusivity. The language barriers often led to hesitation to participate due to lack of familiarity and skepticism. Recommendations to combat this are suggested on the next page.

2

Participant Response

Obtaining timely responses from individuals proved to be an obstacle. Surveys and interview requests distributed through email were not yielding immediate engagement, with many not responding. In response, methods of approach were adjusted to onsite visits and phone calls, which increased participant responses. However, a number of individuals still declined or required follow-up communication delaying data collection.

3

Recruiting Participants from Prince George's County

Recruiting participants who are residents of Prince George's County presented an initial challenge. While outreach efforts were conducted across multiple locations and platforms, it was often difficult to find individuals that met the geographic criteria of the study. Many individuals encountered during in-person engagement did not actually reside in Prince George's County. Instead, they were commuting into the area for work, school, or services. This suggests that Prince George's County functions as an area for employment and community activity, attracting a diverse population that is not necessarily reflective of its residential demographics.

Recommendations ↘



➤ Improving Language Access

Having staff or volunteers who speak the community's languages is also important. In our case, the most difficulty we had was with the Korean and Vietnamese languages. When people can talk to someone in their own language, they're more likely to answer more questions and feel comfortable. This makes it easier to reach more people and build trust within the community.

➤ Simplifying Surveys

Surveys should be shorter and easier to complete to encourage higher participation. Long or complicated surveys can feel overwhelming, especially for individuals who may already face language barriers. Keeping surveys concise and clear makes it more likely that people will complete them fully and accurately.

- To maximize Google Form responses specifically, aim for completion in less than 6 minutes. This keeps questions clear and easy to answer.

➤ Offering Surveys in multiple Languages

In addition to simplifying surveys, providing surveys in different languages allows more people to understand and respond comfortably. Language should not be a barrier to participation, and offering translations ensures that a wider range of community members can share their input.

- Tools like Forms Translator allow surveys to be translated into multiple languages, while all responses are still collected in one shared spreadsheet. This makes it easier to compare data across language groups and reduces confusion, improving overall data quality.
- Translateform is an add-on feature that allows the creator to input questions in multiple languages, and give the responder to select a language to respond to.

➤ Getting People Connected in the Community

Strengthening community connections is important for increasing awareness and participation. Creating more outreach opportunities, such as partnerships with local groups, can help people feel more involved. This also helps build trust.

- Partner with local cultural organizations, churches, and community centers along with trusted local leaders.

Asian American LEAD (AALEAD), Korean Community Service Center (KCSC), Vietnamese American Services (VAS), Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS).

- Hire bilingual community ambassadors who can assist with interviews and outreach in the specific communities.
- Build ongoing relationships by sharing results back to the community, not just collecting for input.



➤ Timing Improvements

For a project like this, of course time will be a key factor. Making sure each stage is given enough time for planning, implementation, and review is important for success. A realistic timeline helps ensure that changes are thoughtful, properly tested, and adjusted based on feedback from the community.

Recommended Project Timeline for Interviewing and Surveys

PLANNING AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

- Identify community partners
- Define target groups & languages
- Build survey and interview guides

SURVEY AND INTERVIEW TESTING

- Finalize multilingual surveys
- Develop interview questions
- Test with small community samples
- Revise based on feedback

OUTREACH & DATA COLLECTION

- Distribute surveys through partners and/or ambassadors
- Conduct in-person interviews with community members
- Track responses, adjust if needed

DATA ANALYSIS

- Organize survey and interview data
- Compare the themes across each group and language
- Identify the key challenges and patterns

REPORTING AND COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Present findings to stakeholders and community partners
- Refine recommendations based on feedback

Conclusion & Key Takeaways ↘



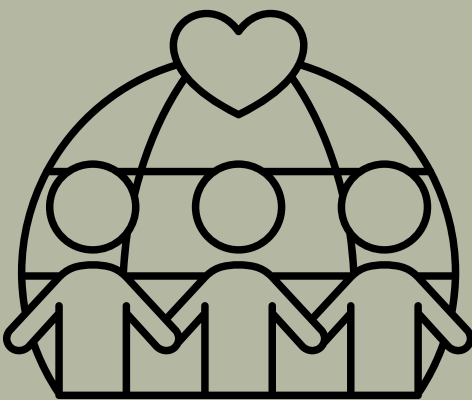
This project shows how culture, history, and the built environment all connect to shape health and well-being in Asian American communities in Prince George's County. Looking at the community through a public health lens helped connect real outcomes in people's daily lives.



A key takeaway is that demographics, history, environment, and social factors all shape how people experience and access resources. Another important point is that hearing from the community is really valuable because it brings in lived experiences and perspectives that numbers alone can't show.



This project brings together public health, planning, and historic context to create a more complete picture of the community. The findings can help guide future planning and support more inclusive, community-focused decisions in Prince George's County.



References

Cargill, C., Tannir, J., Pogue, D., & Nasta, P. J. (n.d.). Cultural landscape report Langley Park and Adelphi, Maryland. <https://api.drum.lib.umd.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/69160ac0-d499-4371-a949-8c051000deb8/content>

Coote, A., Forest, H., & Ng, T. (2024). Providing Representation: A Context Study for the M-NCPPC Department of Planning DOI:<https://doi.org/10.13016/jwjh-liza>.

Postel, Hannah M. 2026. "Asian Immigration to the United States in Historical Perspective." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 40 (1): 191–214.
DOI: 10.1257/jep.20251453

Sullivan, M., Opstal, L. van, & Diehlmann, N. A. (2023). Asian American Historical and Cultural Context of Montgomery County [Review of Asian American Historical and Cultural Context of Montgomery County].

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. (n.d.). Demographic Profile by County Council District. Prince George's County Planning Department.
https://pgplanning.org/resource_library/demographic-profile-by-county-council-district/

Appendix A

The following chart lists people that were reached out to for interviews, the establishment connects, contact information, and dates of when interviews or outreach was conducted.

Information for the people that were contacted is available from upon request from the PALS Program

Appendix B

The following is an interview of Carmela Raymundo by Sacha Llanto

How has language impacted your lifestyle here in Beltsville/Prince George's County? Has this changed over time?

Raymundo: When I first moved to PG County from the Philippines, I primarily spoke Tagalog and wasn't as fluent in English and had an accent so I was shy in talking to my American peers. In elementary school, I spent most of my time hanging out with my Filipino community in PG County. As I became more fluent in English, I was able to make friends with my American peers and I expanded my connections beyond my Filipino community. After living in PG County for more than a decade, being fluent in English has allowed me to assimilate into American culture and navigate life in PG County. I was able to learn how to drive and get my license, internships, jobs, attend schools, and make connections with all kinds of people in PG County. I was no longer just tied to just my Filipino community because I was able to communicate with others in English. At first, I identified as a Filipino immigrant but over time I had become Filipino American because of the English language became my primary language and I also started to lose a little bit of my fluency in Tagalog. Being bilingual has helped me keep in touch with my Filipino culture and connect with other Filipinos especially now that I am a community organizer advocating for issues impacting Filipinos here in the U.S. and in the Philippines. Speaking Tagalog allows me to communicate well with elder Filipino migrants because they feel more comfortable to share their experiences and their thoughts in Tagalog to me.

What is language acquisition like in your family?

Raymundo: In my family, I learned Tagalog when I was growing up because my family members would talk to me in Tagalog and I would watch the Tagalog shows and movies that my family watched at home. I also learned English from my family because it was also commonly spoken in the house and many Filipino shows also incorporated English.

What are institutions/organizations that have provided you services in your language/in English that is understandable to you? Ex: Health clinics, schools, etc.

Raymundo: I grew up fluent in English so most institutions and organizations like schools, health clinics, recreation centers, and etc. provided services to me in English which I could understand.

How has language impacted your navigation through healthcare and health services?

Raymundo: Being fluent in English allowed me to navigate healthcare and health services relative easily in the U.S.

Appendix B

**What can/should be done to better language access in your everyday life?
What would change?**

Raymundo: I think that having Tagalog as a language taught in school would've allowed me to retain my fluency in the language growing up. I would speak Tagalog as comfortably as English if I had continued to learn the language growing up rather than relying on just conversations with my family members and consuming Filipino media.

Do you observe any personal changes when you switch from your native language and English, for example, coming home from work?

Raymundo: I usually only speak Tagalog when I'm with my family at home or if I meet other Filipino elders, but most of the time I speak English. I noticed that I'm more comfortable speaking English now and sometimes when I'm speaking Tagalog to my family or other Filipinos that I forget some of the words or pronounce it incorrectly.

Appendix C

The following is an interview of Florence Moreno by Sacha Llanto

1. How has language impacted your lifestyle here in Beltsville/PG County?

As an English Language Development/ ESOL teacher in Prince George's County, language is central to both my professional and personal life. Working in a highly diverse community where approximately 98% of my students are Hispanic has required me to be intentional in how I use language to build relationships, deliver instruction, and support families. I primarily use English for instruction and professional communication, but I also incorporate basic Spanish to communicate effectively with my students and their parents. This linguistic flexibility has allowed me to be more responsive and culturally connected to the community I serve.

Has this changed over time?

Yes, significantly. When I first began teaching in the U.S., I relied heavily on English. Over time, I recognized the importance of meeting families where they are linguistically, which led me to develop functional Spanish skills. This shift has strengthened trust and engagement with my students and their families.

What is language acquisition like in your family?

In my family, language use is dynamic and layered. I speak Tagalog with my husband, Taglish with my sons, and Pangasinan when communicating with my parents and siblings. English is also used regularly, especially in academic contexts with my children. This multilingual environment reflects both cultural preservation and adaptation, where each language serves a specific relational and functional purpose.

2. What are institutions/organizations that have provided you services in your language/in English that is understandable to you?

In PG County, schools are among the most responsive institutions in terms of language access, particularly through ESOL/ELD programs that support multilingual learners and their families. Healthcare institutions also provide interpreter services, which are essential for clear communication. For example, my husband prefers to use interpreters during his medical appointments to ensure full understanding of medical information. Additionally, local government agencies and community organizations often provide translated materials and multilingual support, which enhances accessibility and inclusivity.

3. How has language impacted your navigation through healthcare and health services?

Language plays a critical role in healthcare navigation. While I am comfortable using English, I have observed particularly through my husband's experience that having access to an interpreter significantly improves comprehension, comfort, and confidence during medical visits. It ensures that important health information is accurately conveyed and understood. Without such support, there is a risk of miscommunication, which can impact health outcomes.

Appendix C

4. What can/should be done to better language access in your everyday life? What would change?

To improve language access, there should be a more consistent and proactive provision of interpreter services and translated materials across all sectors not only in schools and healthcare but also in legal, financial, and community services. Increasing the number of bilingual professionals would also make a meaningful difference. From an educational perspective, continued investment in family engagement initiatives that honor home languages is essential. These improvements would foster greater equity, empower multilingual families, and strengthen community connections.

5. Do you observe any personal changes when you switch from your native language and English, for example, coming home from work?

Yes, I experience noticeable shifts depending on the language I use. In the workplace, when I speak English, I tend to be more formal, structured, and academically focused. When I switch to Tagalog with my husband, I feel more relaxed and culturally grounded. Using Taglish with my sons allows for a balance between cultural identity and their lived experience in the U.S. When I speak Pangasinan with my parents and siblings, it evokes a deeper sense of heritage and emotional connection. These transitions reflect the different roles I navigate daily as an educator, a mother, a spouse, and a daughter and highlight how language is deeply tied to identity and relationships.

Appendix D

The following is an interview of Nigel Chai Chong by Megan Lee

What is your name and connection to the establishment?

"My name is Nigel Chai Chong and I am the owner and a Master at the Black Belt Academy."

How long have you been open in Prince George's County?

Since 1999, I've had a few different locations before I moved to this specific location, but I've been here almost 20 years in Beltsville. Honestly, when I started off, a Korean friend from the same school asked if I wanted to partner with him to open an academy, however I realised I wanted to open up my own school. I got an opportunity to open a school in an apartment complex called Seven Springs.

How have you seen the Asian American community in this area change over time?

Yeah, people in the community moved, they got out of here. They wanted better schools, grocery stores, etc.

What challenges has the community faced here (past or present?)

One challenge is that compared to other places, I charge less due to the area I'm in. My academy consists of some Asian kids, but mostly Hispanic kids. I would say over 80% of students are Hispanic.

Appendix E

The following is an interview of Tae translated from Korean to English by Megan Lee

What is your name and connection to the establishment?

Current owner/manager since 3 years ago, Yeon [is the] previous owner.

How long have you been open in Prince George's County?

Originally opened in 2003 and the previous owner retired a couple of years ago. We have been here 23 years.

What brought you to Prince George's County?

The original owner worked at another Korean restaurant, but quit and started Da Rae Won.

How do you think the Asian American community in this area has changed over time?

Because of Kpop and Instagram, this restaurant is getting more popular. The customer demographic went from predominantly Asian to 50-60% being non-Korean.

What challenges has the community in this area faced (past or present)?

The area is dangerous, there were issues with car robberies. It has somewhat improved though. The price of everything is increasing, so our prices have to increase as well. We have a lot of employees to pay.

Appendix F

The following is an interview Rachel Kim by Megan Lee

1. Can you walk us through a typical week and the specific places you visit, like grocery stores, community centers, and parks? Which feel welcoming to your community, and which don't?

Classes, VSA or TASA event, Trader Joe's, Honey Pig, UMMC health center. I like work environment at Honey Pig, because I'm serving my culture through Korean food to others.

2. Have you noticed changes in signage, storefronts, or public spaces that reflect or erase Asian American presence? Can you give a specific example?

Ebisu opening up, Peter Chang, mostly food. NW Chinese food area Pho Tham is being relocated, Kung Fu Tea due to an apartment complex.

3. Are there places in the county where you feel a strong sense of belonging, and places where you feel like an outsider? What makes the difference?

At University there are many Asian Americans. There is a lack of Asian American presence in Prince George's Shopping center/mall.

4. Are there spaces that used to exist, like businesses or gathering places, that are now gone? What was lost when they disappeared?

NW Chinese Food Block

5. Can you describe a time when a school affirmed your cultural identity, or made you feel like you had to suppress it to fit in?

During Middle School, there weren't many Asian Americans, so I felt suppressed, or I had to change to fit in.

Appendix F

The following is an interview Kelly Tran by Megan Lee

What is your name and how long have you lived in Prince George's County?

My name Kelly Tran and I have lived in PG for 20 years, basically all my life. My parents moved maybe from 2000-2005 to PG county, because of political tension in Vietnam, they're communist. They chose to move because of a lack of freedom of speech and it's hard to make money so my dad immigrated first to look for a job. They moved straight from Vietnam to PG County, and they chose it because it was cheaper compared to MOCO or HOCO.

What Asian American communities do you serve?

I serve my Buddhist Temple in Laurel, it's called Giacson Temple. It looks like a regular house but they decorated it and operate as a temple. There's a small Asian American community in PG County, regardless of that, it's a very close knit community and everyone is connected.

Are there places in the county where you feel a strong sense of belonging, and places where you feel like an outsider? What makes the difference?

I feel a strong sense of belonging at my temple, because there's a lot of people that I relate to and have a lot in common with. Especially because of Buddhism and Vietnamese culture with food, language, and hobbies. I would say definitely at public school, I felt like I didn't fit in just because there were such few Asian people, not that I only fit in with Asian people, but there's a lot less people that I can relate to in terms of culture, family, and interests.

How do younger generations in your community use public spaces differently than older generations?

The younger generations use online spaces and environments much more than the older ones. So the younger kids at my temple, including myself, will make group chats or use Discord and play games together online. The older generation prefer, like face to face communication.

In terms of public spaces in PG County, the younger generation definitely goes to boba places, especially younger Asian people. In Bowie there's a volleyball club and it's mostly Asian people.

Do you think that either the younger or older generation is more involved in your community?

The older generations are definitely more involved in the temples, but honestly I would say it's a mix. Most of the kids at the temple grew up there and are very passionate about Buddhism so some have already chosen to become monks at the age of 12 and became vegetarian, but it depends. The older generation have more knowledge about Buddhism and the practices, but are trying to teach the younger generations.

Are there spaces that used to exist, like businesses or gathering places, that are now gone? What was lost when they disappeared?

I don't think so.

Appendix F

The following is an interview Kelly Tran by Megan Lee

How does the physical environment affect your sense of safety, especially for elderly community members or recent immigrants?

I never really thought about that, but the Buddhist temple feels safe, like I would leave my grandma and immigrant family there. But in a plaza or like a mall I would be concerned because they don't know English as well and directions. At the temple, everyone is Vietnamese and my family is Vietnamese so I would feel the most safe there.

How does your institution navigate tensions between preserving traditional religious and cultural practices versus adapting to life in America?

They try to accommodate both cultures and practices. In traditional Buddhism, monks don't indulge in technology for example, or they shouldn't because there are Buddhist values. But in America, you can't survive without a phone, so they compromise. They use phones, cars, etc while practicing their practices. In Vietnam, there would be less of a need for technology because it's easier to navigate and the communities are closer. In terms of teaching kids of Buddhist values, they compromise and mix both traditional and cultural practices with the American lifestyle.

Do you feel your institution is visible and recognized in the broader Prince George's County community, or does it operate somewhat invisibly?

Specifically my Buddhist community operates more invisibly, because unless you are Vietnamese you wouldn't know about it. It's hard to get into it or know anything about it unless you're Asian, because it's based on family connections and friends in the Vietnamese community. I would say they're welcoming to newcomers, but only to a certain extent, because of the language barrier. They'll welcome any race and background, but if you don't speak Vietnamese it'll be hard to connect with you and welcome you the way they want to.

Have you seen language access in Prince George's County improve, stay the same, or get worse over the years you've been here?

No, I have never seen any Vietnamese translation or any Asian language translation out and about in PG. In terms of people learning English, it has improved because technology improved and the accessibility to the necessary apps.

Can you describe a time when a school affirmed your cultural identity, or made you feel like you had to suppress it to fit in?

I feel like every Asian kid has had the experience of bringing their home cooked food and getting judged and insulted. I feel like that happened a lot in middle school and people would say that my food was stinky or gross. So in a way I would suppress myself and stop bringing that food to school. In elementary school, lots of kids were racist and would make fun of me. But in high school it got better because Kpop was on the rise, and more people liked Asian things as I grew older. I don't think the school knew anything about it, so they wouldn't do anything.

Appendix F

The following is an interview Kelly Tran by Megan Lee

How do parents in your community typically engage with schools? Do they feel welcomed and able to advocate for their children, or do barriers exist?

Barriers exist, not because it's the school's fault, but because a lot of parents don't know how to email the school or use the technology, or enough English to express their concerns. Even in person it's hard to communicate their concerns, and it's also hard to get parents to go to school in the first place. And if there are papers we bring home, they need translations because my parents wouldn't know what it said. All this made my parents less involved in my education.

How do schools here handle cultural celebrations, heritage months, or Asian American history in the curriculum? Does it feel meaningful or performative?

In grade school, there was always something to celebrate Asian American Month, and Chinese New Year. It didn't feel performative because each community was represented. I was appreciative.

Appendix G

The following is an interview of Daniel Jeronilla by Megan Lee

What is your name and how long have you lived in Prince George's County?

Daniel Jeronilla and 15 years. My parents chose PG county because my mom got a job offer at a therapy nursing home.

What Asian American communities do you serve?

Elementary Filipino Asian American choir church.

Are there places in the county where you feel a strong sense of belonging, and places where you feel like an outsider? What makes the difference?

At this point no, but when I first came here there weren't a lot of Asian Americans.

Are there spaces that used to exist, like businesses or gathering places, that are now gone? What was lost when they disappeared?

No.

Have you seen language access in Prince George's County improve, stay the same, or get worse over the years you've been here?

I would say it improved, for school, for example, they offer more language classes in recent years.

How do parents in your community typically engage with schools? Do they feel welcomed and able to advocate for their children, or do barriers exist?

My parents weren't involved in school because they were working. But they probably were barriers because there were not a lot of Asians in PG County, we were the minority. I would say parents were able to advocate, especially in high school. I had a lot of teachers who were Asian American, all my math teachers were Filipino. I went to the Academy of Health Sciences.

How do schools here handle cultural celebrations, heritage months, or Asian American history in the curriculum? Does it feel meaningful or performative?

When I was in school, there weren't many, but now schools are more involved in Asian Cultural stuff, like they provide Chinese traditional dance. The high school I went to has more Asian organizations now.

Appendix H

The following is an interview of Abby by Megan Lee

Does your family live in Prince George's County?

Yes

What brought you and your family to live here?

There are a lot of educational opportunities and employment opportunities. It is also pretty safe here

What Asian American communities are you a part of?

I am a part of KCM and I checked out the other organizations but I do not go to them regularly.

How have you seen the Asian American community change over time here?

Asian community is very tight knit and everyone looks out for each other. There are different groups within the community but everyone is pretty close to one another. There is a lot of overlap in interests and everyone does things together.

What places in this county are important to the community or to you?

I go to the Chinese church in college park and UMD.

What challenges has the community faced?

I feel like I always stay within the community so I don't really face challenges from outside of the community. Sometimes there are places that I won't go to because there is not as much representation there.

Do you feel that the Asian American voices are represented here?

Yes I think so.

How do parents in your community typically engage with schools, do they feel welcomed and able to advocate for their children and do barriers exist?

It is pretty easy for parents to implement themselves in schools and education.

Have you seen Asian American students steered towards certain subjects or career tracks by teachers, families, or counselors and how does it affect them?

There is a lot of STEM in Asian American communities and a lot of people go toward prestigious majors because their parents pressure them to be good in STEM subjects especially computer science.

Appendix H

The following is an interview of Abby by Megan Lee

What is your name and how long have you lived in Prince George's County?

Audrey Tanpiengco and since 2012, my grandmother lived in PG county. Many Filipinos moved to DMV for teaching jobs higher salaries.

What Asian American communities do you serve?

Filipino American and Vietnamese American. No but I used to be in a Catholic youth group before.

Are there places in the county where you feel a strong sense of belonging, and places where you feel like an outsider? What makes the difference?

I like Bowie and Kettiering, because I'm familiar with the area. No outsider

Are there spaces that used to exist, like businesses or gathering places, that are now gone? What was lost when they disappeared?

No I don't, there aren't a lot in general.

1.- Have you seen language access in PG County improve, stay the same, or get worse over the years you've been here?

Pretty consistent, no change for better or for worse. I think it wouldn't be too hard, but asking for help would be difficult.

1.How do parents in your community typically engage with schools? Do they feel welcomed and able to advocate for their children, or do barriers exist?

There are no barriers, parents normally try to advocate for children. I haven't heard of any difficulties.

1.How do schools here handle cultural celebrations, heritage months, or Asian American history in the curriculum? Does it feel meaningful or performative?

In my four years of high school, I never touched up on Asian American history, one day to ourselves. Not many Asian American students. Representation was never there.

1.How do younger generations in your community use public spaces differently than older generations?

I think a lot of Asian Americans try to involve themselves in cultures. Stores, celebrations. Other generations don't care about representation, they don't have a need to care. Younger generations tend to notice when.

1.Do you feel your institution is visible and recognized in the broader PG County community, or does it operate somewhat invisibly?

It operated more in the community, through friends. Never tried to outreach to other communities.

1.Growing up middle to high school was a big change. Middle school was only Asian but in high school was more diverse. High school was more appreciative of my Filipino Americaness, because of friends who shared the same culture.

2.PG county doesn't do a good job because there aren't many, they tend to not care.



Thank you!



Thank you for taking the time to read this report. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our findings further, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.