

4 Conclusions and Next Steps

Presented below are some of the more important conclusions that can be taken from the Environmental Scan.

- 1) External demands will continue to drive the majority of initiatives in the STW. That is, agencies outside of the STW (Federal, State, and County) will largely drive internal programming. This does not diminish the importance of short or long-range planning; however, it does mean that planning for discretionary programming will be made more difficult.
- 2) Fairfax County's existing tax base is not likely to increase appreciably in the short term. It is unclear how a shift from new development to infill/redevelopment will ultimately affect the County's revenue generating capacity. Therefore competition with other County programs will remain high, unless new sources of funding are identified.
- 3) There will always be more work/programs than can be accomplished by the STW. Therefore the STW will need to think strategically about which projects or programs it will undertake in order to maintain acceptable standards of quality.
- 4) The STW's human resources have become overstressed due to taking on additional regulatory and planning functions (TMDLs, Chesapeake Bay, Regional Ponds, etc.) as well as maintaining an increasing facilities inventory without a corresponding increase in staff. The STW needs to benchmark the optimal staff necessary to achieve STW goals and find ways to increase and decrease staffing without jeopardizing programming.
- 5) Inconsistent public outreach efforts have led to misinterpretation or a lack of understanding of the STW mission and successes. A consistent program highlighting achievements and progress will bring the public to a better understanding of the need for stormwater programs.
- 6) Despite recent organizational and leadership changes in the STW and DPWES, it will be a long-term endeavor to shed old perceptions about how business is done. As a result, there will be continued confusion as to the STW's direction and mission. A consistent internal communications process within the STW is key to gaining staff-level trust in the organization's leadership.
- 7) Momentum caused by high-profile STW-related regulatory mandates, recent reports by the STW demonstrating the impacts of growth on water and ecological resources, and a generally friendly political environment towards stormwater issues can be used by the STW to enhance existing programming.

The next step for the STW is to utilize the information gained through the Environmental Scan, the SWOT process, and the results of the staff/external questionnaire in its Strategic Planning process.