

# **FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

## **Environmental Improvement Program (EIP)**

### **Section A: Introduction**

**Fiscal Year 2009**

**Prepared September, 2007**

## **PREFACE**

On October 1, 2007, the county's Environmental Coordinating Committee (ECC) was pleased to present the award-winning fiscal year (FY) 2009 Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) to the Environment Committee of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (board). The ECC is a collaborative interagency management committee chaired by Deputy County Executive Robert A. Stalzer. Among other responsibilities, this committee was established to ensure an appropriate level of coordination and review of the county's environmental policies and initiatives. This year's EIP is intended to support the consideration of environmental initiatives in the FY 2009 budget process.

EIP FY 2009 represents the third time that the ECC has developed and presented the EIP to the board (for information on previous year EIPs, please see the following link [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/environment/eip/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/environment/eip/)). In June 2006, the county was presented with an achievement award by the National Association of Counties (NACo) for its innovative EIP, which supports environmental goals that enhance and sustain a high quality of life.

Similar to last year's effort, the main goal of this year's EIP is to present recommendations for actions to support the goals and objectives in the board's Environmental Agenda (Environmental Excellence for Fairfax County: *A 20-Year Vision* – please see Historical Background below or [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/environment/eip/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/environment/eip/)). Toward this end, the EIP documents actions that have been completed and that are under way and identifies new actions that can be pursued to support the Environmental Agenda. The EIP also references and provides linkages to other board adopted goals and objectives that support the Environmental Agenda. Through its interdisciplinary and interagency approach to the identification of environmental projects and initiatives, the EIP provides the board and the county executive with a tool to make cross-organizational decisions regarding environmental investment planning and policy needs assessment. The EIP also provides an opportunity for community engagement, ownership and stewardship. County residents can review the actions in the EIP and enter into a dialogue with the board and staff on prioritization of projects and initiatives that they believe will best serve the county.

The ECC believes that good stewardship and prudent management of our natural environment and resources are not merely "add-ons," or afterthoughts, but rather are essential and fundamental responsibilities that must be given fullest consideration at all times. Good stewardship doesn't involve "rescuing" nature from environmental disasters: it involves long-term strategic planning that minimizes any possibilities of such emergencies occurring. Clearly, cooperation between county residents and government leadership and agencies will be required to effect lasting solutions to the environmental challenges we face. The EIP serves as a primary mechanism through which such cooperation can take place.

The ECC recognizes that there are many other projects and initiatives carried out by individuals and groups throughout the county that support the *20-Year Vision*; however, the EIP is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all activities that support the *Vision*. Rather, the EIP includes only those items which are specifically county-funded.

## **What's New to EIP FY 2009?**

Similar to last year's effort, EIP FY 2009 includes actions in thematic areas of: Growth and Land Use; Air Quality and Transportation; Water Quality; Solid Waste; Parks, Trails and Open Space; and Environmental Stewardship. During the development and completion of the first EIP (EIP FY 2007), the ECC recognized that this document did not capture all ongoing and potential environmental areas of interest that support the Environmental Agenda and other board-adopted environmental goals, objectives, policies and initiatives and that future EIPs would need to be broadened in scope to consider these additional areas of interest. In furtherance of the identified need to broaden the scope of the EIP, the ECC had included within EIP FY 2008 specific tree actions with supporting fact sheets that are incorporated within and interspersed throughout the original six thematic areas listed above. For quick reference, the tree actions are summarized in appendix 4 of EIP FY 2009. Similar to the inclusion of trees in EIP FY 2008 and 2009, the ECC has included within EIP FY 2009 specific global climate change actions with supporting fact sheets that are incorporated within and interspersed throughout the original six thematic areas listed above. For quick reference, the global climate change actions are summarized in appendix 5 of EIP FY 2009. The ECC continues to recognize that the EIP is a living document that does not yet fully address all areas or facets of environmental actions that fall within the county's purview. While staff is unable to close all gaps at once, the ECC is committed to incorporating new "areas of interest," actions and fact sheets into the EIP over time, with the goal of making the EIP a more comprehensive document.

EIP FY 2009 also includes a tracking mechanism to show progress and completion of previously implemented projects (please see appendix 3 for a list of completed projects).

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **Environmental Excellence for Fairfax County: A 20-Year Vision (Environmental Agenda):**

Good environmental quality is essential for everyone living and working in Fairfax County. A healthy environment enhances our quality of life and preserves the vitality that makes Fairfax County a special place to live and work. However, rapid growth and development that have characterized Fairfax County over the past half century and that continue today have challenged the county's ability to maintain good environmental quality. Federal and state guidelines and regulations have demanded not only extra diligence in the development of concrete strategies for a healthy environment, but also inter-jurisdictional coordination to address pollution that knows no boundaries.

Fairfax County has long recognized the need for proactive policies and initiatives to address its environmental challenges. Indeed, environmental considerations are imbedded in the county's policy and regulatory documents, and the county has pursued a myriad of environmental initiatives that continue to grow in number and complexity. The county's dedication to meeting its environmental challenges is reflected in its recognition by the Chesapeake Bay Program as a Gold Chesapeake Bay Partner Community. Nevertheless, both the board and county staff

recognize the need for enhanced environmental efforts, in that environmental challenges are continuing and in many cases becoming more daunting.

For these reasons, at its regular meeting on Monday, June 21, 2004, the board, in continuation of its long history of environmental vigilance and dedication, endorsed and adopted the award-winning “Environmental Excellence for Fairfax County: *A 20-year Vision*,” also known as the Environmental Agenda (please see Appendix 2 Environmental Agenda or [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/environment/eip/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/environment/eip/)). The Environmental Agenda is organized into six themes: Growth and Land Use; Air Quality and Transportation; Water Quality; Solid Waste; Parks, Trails and Open Space; and Environmental Stewardship. The Agenda centers on two main guiding principles: First, conservation of our limited natural resources must be interwoven into all government decisions; second, the county must be committed to providing the necessary resources to protect the environment.

The board has noted that the Environmental Agenda will provide more specific guidance for board members, county staff, and the community when making decisions that have environmental impacts. The board has recognized that the environmental impact of every decision the county makes must be carefully and purposefully evaluated and that environmental concerns should not be trade-offs or compromises; rather, they are foundational to the decision making process. By adopting the Environmental Agenda, the board not only demonstrated its commitment to environmental excellence, it provided the necessary guidance for creative decision-making and leadership for the county. The board has acknowledged that the Environmental Agenda is an aggressive, multi-year plan that will require a long-term financial commitment.

### **The Environmental Coordinating Committee’s Strategic Plan of Action:**

In November 2004, the ECC chartered an interagency action group (EIP Action Group) to prepare a comprehensive and coordinated strategic response to address and support the goals and objectives identified in the Environmental Agenda. The end result of that work was the fiscal year 2007 Environmental Improvement Program (EIP FY 2007), which was presented to the board’s Environment Committee on September 19, 2005. The EIP provided an action-oriented implementation plan to support the strategic framework of the board’s Environmental Agenda, thereby providing a means for the board and the county executive to prioritize cross-organizational actions with budgetary implications regarding environmental investment planning and policy needs assessment. EIP FY 2007 was intended to support the consideration of environmental initiatives in the FY 2007 budget process. The ECC envisioned that the EIP would be updated on an annual basis to reflect both progress made and additional needs.

The ECC recognized that EIP FY 2007 did not capture all ongoing and potential environmental areas of interest and that future EIPs would need to be broadened in scope to consider other environmental themes and areas of interest that support board-adopted environmental goals, objectives, policies, and initiatives.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FISCAL YEAR 2009**

In February 2007, the EIP Action Group reconvened to begin the process of developing EIP FY 2009. A final draft of EIP FY 2009 was distributed to the ECC in July for review and approval prior to its presentation to the board's Environment Committee on October 1, 2007. The ECC intends to prepare and present the EIP on an annual basis prior to the development of the county's budget in order to provide the time necessary to allow for funding decisions. The ECC has representation from the following agencies: Department of Public Works and Environmental Services; Department of Planning and Zoning; Department of Vehicle Services; Fairfax County Department of Transportation; Fairfax County Health Department; Fire and Rescue Department; Fairfax County Park Authority; Police Department; Office of Public Affairs; Fairfax County Water Authority; County Attorney's Office; Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District; Department of Management and Budget; Fairfax County Public Schools; Virginia Department of Transportation; and the County Executive's Office.

In this document, various environmental initiatives and actions are identified that the county has taken, is taking, or could take in support of the board's Environmental Agenda. The EIP consists of the following sections:

**Section A:** Introduction

**Section B:** A summary of the objectives within the board's Environmental Agenda and the EIP actions that support each objective;

**Section C:** A summary of other board-adopted or board-accepted policy documents and initiatives and the EIP actions that support these efforts;

**Section D:** A matrix summarizing the action, status, funding allocated, funding needs and priority for each of the EIP actions;

**Section E:** A set of fact sheets providing more details for each of the EIP actions;

**Appendix 1:** A summary of acronyms and abbreviations;

**Appendix 2:** A copy of the board's Environmental Agenda;

**Appendix 3:** A summary of EIP actions completed during the prior year EIP period; and

**Appendix 4:** A summary of tree actions

**Appendix 5:** A summary of global climate change actions

The actions in the EIP (please see Section D for EIP actions) are organized broadly within the context of the six theme areas of the board's Environmental Agenda and are present in the same order as the themes are addressed in the Environmental Agenda. As noted in the preface above, specific tree and global climate change actions that support the goals in the board's Environmental Agenda have been added to this year's EIP, and have been incorporated throughout the six theme areas according to the most appropriate location for the particular type of action. Many of the actions shown in section D serve to support more than one objective in the Environmental Agenda (please see section B for Environmental Agenda objectives), and some actions support objectives in more than one theme area. Each fact sheet in Section E provides cross-references to relevant Environmental Agenda themes and objectives, and Section B references the EIP actions by Environmental Agenda objective.

In Section D, actions requiring new or additional resource needs are prioritized based on their ability to be initiated or continued in the fiscal year for which funding is requested. The following criteria were used for prioritization:

**Priority I:** The project or program is ready to be implemented in fiscal year 2009;

**Priority II:** The project or program is not ready to be initiated in fiscal year 2009, but would likely be implemented in fiscal year 2010; and

**Priority III:** Implementation timing is unknown – the project or program should be considered in a future year EIP.

Policy efforts are noted with an “N/A”, as are projects and programs that have been completed or that have no follow-up actions requiring additional funding (beyond maintenance of existing staff resources).

The Environmental Agenda is a clear and specific statement of policies on which the staff can and will act. It reflects and strengthens Fairfax County's environmental commitment. The ECC looks forward to implementing the Environmental Agenda and to contributing to its continuing evolution.

**Members of the EIP Action Group:**

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Randy Bartlett, Department of Public Works & Environmental Services  
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