

**FAIRFAX COUNTY**  
**AIR QUALITY COMMUNITY FORUM**  
**FEBRUARY 25, 2004**

**SUMMARY OF  
CITIZEN INPUT**

DRAFT - 5/7/04 AM

## **INTRODUCTION**

On February 25, 2004, the Air Quality Subcommittee of the Fairfax County Environmental Coordinating Committee held an Air Quality Community Forum at the Fairfax County Government Center. The primary purpose of the forum was to gather input from County residents regarding the Air Quality Management Plan that is being developed by the Subcommittee. In developing this plan, the Subcommittee is focusing on the following areas:

- A review of current education and notification practices to determine whether modifications would be appropriate;
- A review of air quality-related goals, objectives, and policies in the Comprehensive Plan, as well as air quality-related regulations and codes to determine whether modifications would be appropriate; and
- A review of air quality-related measures and practices to determine whether modifications would be appropriate.

The Subcommittee has drafted a findings document and preliminary recommendations related to these areas of emphasis, and the breakout questions that were posed at the community forum focused on these documents. Specifically, the following questions were asked:

1. What are your recommendations for changes or additions to the Findings Document?
2. For each of the three topical areas noted below, do you agree with the conceptual recommendations as presented? What would you change or add?
  - a. Education and Notification
  - b. Comprehensive Plan and Codes & Regulations
  - c. Measures and Practices
3. What other suggestions and recommendations do you have?

This document summarizes the responses that were received prior to, at, and subsequent to the community forum.

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**1. Recommended Changes to  
Findings Document**

1. Need to look at air quality throughout the year—not just Code Red days.
2. Work on implementing/calculating emissions generated (direct and indirect) by County. Verify successes of this plan.
3. Analysis in the Plan of what changes in driving behavior can make significant dents in VOC emissions (e.g., short trips).
4. Quantify relationship of ozone precursors and ozone itself re: mobile, area, and point sources. What is the breakdown of our sources?
5. Need to recognize that the amount of ozone produced through County activities is miniscule compared with countywide emissions.
6. Need to discuss the implications of the eight-hour standard as it relates to a possible roll-back of the designation of “major sources.”
7. We can address the relationships between trees and air quality; several Web site links are available that relate to this issue.
8. Need inclusion of Bose System in the Air Quality Management Plan.
9. The Findings document should lay out what the various emissions levels and exceedences are.

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10. The Findings document should provide more detail regarding sources of emissions; a logical starting point would be the COG data on sources of ozone precursors (NO<sub>x</sub> and VOCs). The plan could also go a step further and provide detail on the character and magnitude estimated for each source category. For example: How many dry cleaning establishments, bakeries, and paint shops are there in Fairfax County? What do we know about the technology and regulation of them? How many vehicle miles are traveled each year? What is the potential for reduction in each category?

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**2.a. Conceptual Recommendations:  
Education and Notification**

1. Need to educate public on effective mechanisms regarding what changes in driving behavior can make significant dents in VOC emissions.
2. Education re: what the standard really means (significance of unhealthy air). Most people don't get it. Stress the severity of the impact.
3. Give specific examples to citizens on sources of pollution. Note excessive idling of cars by citizens. They need to understand the implications—let's educate.
4. County needs to reach out to industry to bring them on board with telecommuting efforts. The County government is only a small part of the whole—need to reach out to the private sector. *[Also "Measures and Practices"]*
5. Educate the citizenry regarding our lack of authority to forbid clear cutting.
6. Address awareness about barbequing on Code Red days.
7. Support for the recommendation that the County's Web page inform residents about what actions the County is taking to reduce ozone levels and what businesses and residents can do.
8. Residents should be made aware that air quality degradation occurs throughout the summer and not just on Code Red days. The

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Web page should reflect this and advise residents to limit activities (such as driving) throughout the summer season.

9. Prepare an education program for developers to illustrate ways that good environmental designs pay off in marketability, and that there are already incentives for such designs.

10. County residents should be encouraged to minimize the use of those industrial products contributing significant emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> and/or VOCs. For example, encourage the use of alternatives to high VOC paints and dry cleaning.

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**2.b. Conceptual Recommendations:  
Comprehensive Plan/Codes &  
Regulations**

1. Require all new commercial and retail development above a certain density to provide bike parking facilities and changing facilities/showers. Arlington County may have such requirements.
2. The County should encourage employers to provide changing facilities for bicycle commuters.
3. For enabling County citizens to accept retrofitting the Bose system in their cars, SUVs, light duty and heavy duty trucks, the Bose System should be recognized in Chapter 103 of the County Code as being worthy of relief from property taxes similar to what has been endorsed for hybrid or alternate fuel vehicles.
4. The Area Plans Review process needs to improve air quality impact consideration/environmental impacts.
5. The County should not approve Comprehensive Plan changes allowing higher density residential development. This results in more cars and air pollution.
6. Clear cutting should not be allowed. Need to leave trees and green spaces.
7. Advisability of mixed use development—need to provide opportunities for people to live near where they shop.
8. Require developers to build sidewalks to their property lines. Currently, there are many gaps in the sidewalk system due to the

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fact that developers often stop sidewalk construction before the property line, because of the possibility of infringing on the adjacent property. We need to work with developers to prevent these gaps by making it easier to overcome the obstacles of working with adjacent land owners.

9. The additions suggested are good, although the Plan already has good guidance in a number of places. The question is how the plan is followed and the extent to which citizens can enforce these policies.

10. Will referencing the Air Quality Management Plan in the Policy Plan give it the same standing as other Comprehensive Plan recommendations? Assuming that goals are quantified (as recommended in other comments), what would be the consequences of failing to meet a particular or general air quality goal? Language should be included that would trigger an in-depth analysis, reporting, and a public hearing once it has been determined that a goal has been missed. [*Also "Other Suggestions and Recommendations"*]

11. Plan statements should be translated into a set of quantitative measures.

12. The Comprehensive Plan should spell out air quality measures of effectiveness and their value for offsets or credits (i.e., density credits). In this way, developers will know that doing the right thing will yield an advantage that they can see.

13. Implement the recommendations of the Infill and Residential Development Study that would require that sidewalks be constructed on both sides of the street along bus routes and within a specified distance of major community attractions. These

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recommendations were approved by the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission.

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**2.c. Conceptual Recommendations:  
Measures and Practices**

1. Encourage kids to walk to school—implement the “Safe Routes to School” program.
2. Need to forbid, not just challenge, schools re: kids driving to school.
3. Need to provide safe routes to school (e.g. Stenwood ES lacks such access—can’t cross the street safely).
4. Employers are not required to implement measures to ensure that a certain percentage of their employees will use alternative forms of transportation (to the single occupant automobile). Look at Montgomery County and Arlington County requirements—set goals for employers to attain threshold percentages for alternatives to commuting by single occupant vehicle.
5. Reinforce transportation demand management (TDM) measures. Need to do a better job of enforcing them—have companies lived up to TDM requirements?
6. Nonmotorized Transportation Plan—The Transportation section of the Policy Plan establishes a goal that “3% of all trips will be made by non-motorized (pedestrian and bicycle) transportation” by the year 2000. We need to implement this plan in order to provide safe, direct access to major destinations. What is our plan for building these facilities? County has dedicated no funding over the last two or three County budgets.
7. We are far behind on providing pedestrian facilities.

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8. Need to quantify the emissions reductions of the proposed recommendations and compare these reductions with the overall emissions figures.
9. County needs to reach out to industry to bring them on board with telecommuting efforts. The County government is only a small part of the whole—need to reach out to the private sector. *[Also “Education and Notification”]*
10. Don’t “explore” idling enforcement. Do away with idling.
11. Increase natural meadows and no-mow areas. Work with the state to reduce mowing along rights of way.
12. We don’t have the authority to forbid clear cutting. The County should pursue legislation to obtain this authority. Support Fairfax ReLeaf’s efforts.
13. Need to adopt a parking tax regionally. Fairfax County should take the lead—can provide funding for trails, etc.
14. When a fee-based levy is imposed on point sources (due to nonattainment), a certain percentage should be dedicated to retrofits of vehicles to reduce 50 tons per day of emissions.
15. Consider a requirement similar to one in Switzerland where residents are required to turn off their motors at stop lights rather than sit and idle.
16. Provide safe, secure, covered bicycle parking at park and ride lots and at the Government Center.
17. Sanction \$300,000 from our “Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement” funds for enabling EPA

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(Environmental Test Verification) of WMATA and County school buses, etc. (The Bose system [incorporating high speed, centrifugal separation of lighter combustible pollutants from heavier non-combustible gases] has been shown to be the most cost effective amongst all the new “TERMs” reviewed by the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments and Transportation Planning Board staff.) The “Bose System . . . is a worthy candidate for CMAQ Fund allocation.”

18. Increase funding for clean public transportation options such as fuel-efficient buses and light rail electric trains.
19. Reduce funding for road and car-only projects.
20. Increase funding for sidewalk and bicycle projects by a fixed percent by a specified date. The recent Washington Post Magazine article that highlighted the dangers of walking along Route 50 in Fairfax County (particularly for low-income individuals who depend upon public transportation) illustrates the need for better sidewalks.
21. Increase public involvement in the transportation planning process so citizens have an equal voice in their community’s future.
22. Encourage innovative incentive-based programs that encourage walking, biking, or carpooling.
23. Decrease energy expenditures for County vehicle fleets by a fixed percent by a specified date through the fleet inventory.
24. Reduce the emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> and hydrocarbons (HC) from the County fleet by a fixed percent by a specified date.

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25. Support expressed for providing electrification at truck rest stops to reduce idling; this should be extended to include the Fairfax County Public Schools for those schools that are not already using them.
26. Idling restrictions for County school buses can be easily extended to a no idling policy. Fairfax County Schools should adopt an official policy that includes instructing drivers to turn off the bus engine as soon as they arrive at the school. Such policies are now being implemented at some public school systems across the country.
27. Replace older school buses (more than 10-15 years old).
28. Use Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel (ULSD), as it becomes available, for school, County, and Fairfax Connector bus fleets. ULSD will be widely available by 2006. Add particulate filters to all vehicles running on ULSD, giving highest priority to school buses, as children are particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of diesel fuel emissions.
29. Initiate incentive or exchange programs that will reduce the amount of VOCs and NO<sub>x</sub> so that Fairfax County residents who own old gasoline powered lawn mowers will purchase a push mower. Residents that turn in their old gas cans would be given a coupon towards the purchase of new, less-polluting gas cans.
30. Use current emissions inventory data to determine which industry in the County is contributing the greatest amounts of NO<sub>x</sub> and VOCs and develop a plan to reduce emissions of each pollutant category from those industries by 20% within 5-10 years.
31. Clarify how the County plans to subsidize wind/solar energy purchases for upwind jurisdictions.

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### **3. Other suggestions and recommendations**

1. The plan should lead with an introduction that states the overall objective. It should state a set of measurable goals to reach by various dates.
2. A broad goal such as “Make a fair share contribution, in the form of emissions reductions, to help the Metro region reach attainment by (date)” would be appropriate.
3. We need to consider our role in the regional planning effort—COG planning efforts in the past have been too timid; previous plans haven’t held up.
4. Recommendations need to be strengthened, and there need to be incentives. The recommendations are too soft (e.g., “encouragement”)
5. Recommendations should be broader—suggest measures that the County and County citizens can do to reduce air pollution.
6. The current Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan supports the building of a new parkway, the Tri-County Parkway (TCP) in Western Fairfax County. Construction of this highway would facilitate development, resulting in loss of forests/open space and increasing traffic, which would, in turn, bring more pollution to this area in direct conflict with the Policy Plan's objective to "preserve and improve air quality" and the supporting policy statements. The Board of Supervisors should withdraw support

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for the Tri-County Parkway alternative in Western Fairfax as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

7. The recommendations should set specific goals for various source categories
8. There should be a strategy type that will yield a total achievement by a timeframe targeted in an objective.
9. Fairfax County should support improvement of the travel demand model used by COG. Several deficiencies in this model have been confirmed; Fairfax County should support changes to make the model more accurate at predicting trips in the region.
10. The recommendations should follow a structure similar to the Findings document, based on sources.
11. The Plan should have an overall goal for transportation; e.g., reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita by 10% by 2010.
12. Will referencing the Air Quality Management Plan in the Policy Plan give it the same standing as other Comprehensive Plan recommendations? Assuming that goals are quantified (as recommended in other comments), what would be the consequences of failing to meet a particular or general air quality goal? Language should be included that would trigger an in-depth analysis, reporting, and a public hearing once it has been determined that a goal has been missed. [*Also “Comprehensive Plan/Codes & Regulations”*]