

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
POLICY AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 12, 2013**

PRESENT: Kenneth A. Lawrence, Chairman, Providence District
Earl L. Flanagan, Mount Vernon District
James R. Hart, Commissioner At-Large
John L. Litzenberger, Jr., Sully District
James T. Migliaccio, Lee District
Timothy J. Sargeant, At-Large
Janyce N. Hedetniemi, At-Large

ABSENT: Janet R. Hall, Mason District

OTHERS: Frank A. de la Fe, Hunter Mill District
Ellen J. Hurley, Braddock District
Peter Murphy, Springfield District
Marianne Gardner, Director, Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ)
Meghan Van Dam, Branch Chief, PD, DPZ
Jennifer Lai Garcia, PD, DPZ
Jill G. Cooper, Executive Director, Planning Commission Office
Barbara J. Lippa, Executive Director, Planning Commission Office
Kimberly Bassarab, Assistant Director, Planning Commission Office
John W. Cooper, Clerk to the Planning Commission

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Fairfax Forward Evaluation Plan
- B. Abridged Schedule To Evaluate The Fairfax Forward Plan Review Process
- C. Thoughts on Fairfax Forward Outcomes

//

Chairman Kenneth A. Lawrence called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., in the Board Conference Room of the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

//

Chairman Lawrence introduced the committee members, as well as Meghan Van Dam, Branch Chief, Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ), who would discuss the evaluation plan for Fairfax Forward.

FAIRFAX FORWARD EVALUATION PLAN

Ms. Van Dam explained that on July 9, 2013, the Board of Supervisors adopted Fairfax Forward as an addition to the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program, and directed staff to evaluate Fairfax Forward two years henceforth to assess the efficiency and impact of the new

process. She explained that staff would discuss Fairfax Forward and its four goals, which included:

- establishing a systematic approach to review all parts of the Comprehensive Plan;
- expanding public participation and stakeholder collaboration in planning activities;
- promoting a more focused approach to planning studies; and
- monitoring planning trends and Plan implementation.

Jennifer Garcia, PD, DPZ, explained that the evaluation criteria had been developed in response to requests from the Board and Planning Commission. She added that the evaluation would provide an opportunity to discover the successes and failures in the process and establish a baseline for future evaluations. She noted that the goals were tied to the evaluation criteria to determine the degree to which the goals will have ultimately been satisfied. She noted that page two of the draft criteria addressed staff's evaluation and detailed the county's approach to public participation through questions, and its subsequent responses to those questions.

Commissioner Hurley noted that the public participation in Goal B should include the actual number of citizens involved through measurements like emails and/or website comments. She also addressed Goal C, Item 4, and noted that applications for individual parcels needed to be included in county measurements. A brief discussion ensued between Commissioner Hurley, Ms. Garcia, and Ms. Van Dam, wherein it was noted that the open house meetings might be the ideal forums to bring up new ideas and/or recommendations on how to handle such parcels.

Commissioner Migliaccio said that past public participation must be included to provide a benchmark for current and future outreach. He acknowledged, however, that acquiring that information might be quite labor intensive and suggested providing questions to citizens regarding previous land use involvement at the open house events.

Commissioner Flanagan said that a benchmark needed to be in place to demonstrate to the public that Fairfax Forward might prove more beneficial to citizens than the current APR process after two years.

Commissioner Hedetniemi suggested that the County convey to the public that this was an evaluation of the new process, not a test to determine whether to keep the process or return after two years to the APR process should it fail. To clarify, she said that this evaluation should be described as an assessment of the new process that the Planning Commission had requested to determine what might be modified to make it work better, not whether the county should continue to use it.

Commissioner de la Fe pointed out that many citizens did not feel that Fairfax Forward would allow them the opportunity to make suggestions/nominations the way the current APR process did. He suggested that the county set up sites on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites where citizens could at least make land use suggestions for subsequent collection and tracking. Commissioner Hart suggested adding a "parking lot" for citizen concerns, which would help citizens understand that long-range suggestions would not be ignored. Ms. Gardner pointed out that staff was already working on something similar and planned to address it at the Committee's next meeting. Commissioner Sargeant suggested electronic media such as social networks to

increase public participation, adding that measurements should be in place to indicate their usage. He, along with Commissioner Murphy, cautioned that staff should ensure that sufficient staff personnel were in place to handle the additional workload. Commissioner Hart suggested that limits be put in place so that no one citizen could clog the site with excessive inquiries.

Commissioner Migliaccio pointed out that once a commitment to social media was made, it would become a permanent expectation by the citizens.

Chairman Lawrence pointed out that Fairfax Forward would be a foundational change to the Comprehensive Plan and said that it was premature to judge whether two years would be enough time for evaluation or not, particularly as it integrated with land use and transportation. In addition, he suggested that one way to manage questions might be to accept citizen inquiries within a set period of time and notify everyone that responses would be provided at a later scheduled date, so that no one might expect an immediate response. A brief discussion followed wherein Chairman Lawrence and Commissioner Murphy talked about ways to inform citizens that responses to their inquiries could not be immediately provided.

Ms. Gardner noted that staff had been working with the Office of Public Affairs to develop a system for responding to questions, which included an approach that would have some staff looking up responses to questions while others provided the responses to citizens. She added that the Office of Public Affairs provided training on how to properly respond to citizen inquiries so that the conversation stayed on subject.

Commissioner Hurley referenced Chairman Lawrence's earlier comment regarding integrating Fairfax Forward with land use and transportation, and said that schools, sewer, and cell tower facilities should also be included in the evaluations to demonstrate the benefits of the new process.

Commissioner Flanagan cited cases in the past in which staff had advised citizens during an Area Plans Review (APR) process in the Mount Vernon District, where the nominations were subsequently recommended for denial, and asked about the procedure for Fairfax Forward as he expressed concern about the same issue occurring with the process.

Commissioner Murphy explained that the procedure would be similar to the APR process with staff and the nominator making their presentations, with the Task Force Chairman providing a recommendation.

When Commissioner Flanagan asked if it would be a public hearing, Ms. Gardner confirmed that it would be. She noted, however, that Fairfax Forward might consider larger areas than those in the APR process. Commissioner Hart also noted a public hearing must take place before changes could be made to the county's Comprehensive Plan, as decreed by the Virginia General Assembly.

Commissioner Sargeant stated that including electronic media would be a great help in outreach to more, possibly new participants in the process.

Commissioner Murphy asked how questions unrelated to this subject might be handled. A brief discussion followed wherein Commissioners Hedetniemi and Flanagan discussed public

response and public input as part of this process. Ms. Van Dam referred to the Abridged Schedule to Evaluate The Fairfax Forward Plan Review Process, Attachment B, which noted that a Planning Commission public hearing would take place at the end of the evaluation process.

Chairman Lawrence referenced Attachment C, Thoughts on Fairfax Forward Outcomes, and said that, in considering possible outcomes for this process, the term "nomination" should be replaced and requested that committee members provide suggestions. When he asked about the next meeting on October 2, 2013, and its agenda, Ms. Van Dam suggested that staff review the comments from this meeting and review the revised draft for review and committee endorsement, after which the revised criteria would be published on the county's website for citizen review. Chairman Lawrence, with the Committee members' support, agreed to the agenda and adjourned the meeting.

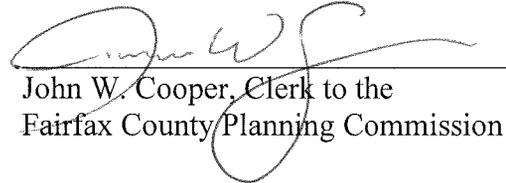
//

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.
Kenneth A. Lawrence, Chairman

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Planning Commission Office, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 330, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

Minutes by: Jeanette Nord

Approved: May 7, 2014


John W. Cooper, Clerk to the
Fairfax County Planning Commission

**Fairfax Forward Evaluation Plan:
Outline for Planning Commission Policy and Procedures Committee**



Purpose: Develop evaluation criteria to assess the Fairfax Forward Plan review process and the Pilot Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program. The assessment may result in recommendations to modify Fairfax Forward.

Background: On July 9, 2013, the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted Fairfax Forward and the Pilot Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program. The Board directed staff to evaluate Fairfax Forward two years after its authorization to assess the efficiency, effectiveness, accessibility, and impact of the new Plan review process. This recommendation further states the public should be involved in the assessment through surveys, comment forms, interviews, focus groups, and other methods. The evaluation should conclude by providing the Planning Commission and Board with recommendations on modifications and improvements to the process and the work program.

Relationship to the Fairfax County Vision Elements: The seven countywide Vision Elements are tied to the overall goal to protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County. The goals of Fairfax Forward are consistent with the Vision Elements, including maintaining safe and caring communities by building community partnerships; exercising corporate stewardship by increasing accountability and access to county staff and resources; and creating a culture of engagement to ensure that the public has a place in planning for the future. The four goals of Fairfax Forward are:

- A) Establish a systematic approach to review all parts of the Comprehensive Plan;
- B) Expand public participation and stakeholder collaboration in planning activities;
- C) Promote a more focused approach to planning studies; and
- D) Monitor planning trends and Plan implementation.

Methodology: The draft evaluation criteria, listed on page 2, relate to the goals for Fairfax Forward. The goals were established from feedback received from the public, the Planning Commission, the Board and staff during the APR Retrospective.

The evaluation of Fairfax Forward will begin by measuring public participation (Goal B) at open houses, task force meetings, or other public meetings for planning studies. Questionnaires will be distributed after meetings, and the same questions will be provided in an online comment form. Task force or advisory group members will be asked to evaluate their experience with particular planning studies separately.

Goals A, C, and D will be assessed by staff in July 2015 through September 2015 to determine the extent to which these three goals are being met. Conclusions will also be drawn about the efficiency, effectiveness, accessibility, and impact of Fairfax Forward. Suggestions for improving the process will be included in the staff report if warranted.

A detailed timeline for the evaluation is shown on page 3. This timeline includes the Fairfax Forward process evaluation, as described previously, as well as the related review of the schedule of studies included on the Pilot Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program. Review of the Work Program will begin when the preliminary staff recommendations for Fairfax Forward process are available. There are two meetings proposed with the Planning Commission Policy and Procedures Committee related to the evaluation of Fairfax Forward. The first meeting is to review the draft evaluation criteria in September 2013. The purpose of the second meeting in January 2015 is to review the results of the evaluation and staff's recommendations. The meeting schedule is subject to modification by the Planning Commission Policy and Procedures Committee.

DRAFT FAIRFAX FORWARD EVALUATION CRITERIA

Goal A: Establish a systematic approach to review all parts of the Comprehensive Plan.

Questions to be answered by staff, July-September 2015:

- 1) Is the schedule to review the Area Plans and Policy Plan being met?
- 2) What percentage of studies estimated to start prior to June 2015 did start during this time?
- 3) What percentage of studies estimated to be completed or underway prior to June 2015 were completed or are ongoing?
- 4) Is work being done to propose a regular cycle of review of the Policy Plan elements?
- 5) How many Board-authorized Plan amendments have been added to the Work Program?
- 6) Have Board-authorized Plan amendments affected the schedule?

Goal B: Expand public participation and stakeholder collaboration in planning activities.

Questions to be answered by staff, January 2014 – June 2015:

- 1) Has a web presence been established for planning studies?
- 2) Were new community partnerships created?

Questions to be answered by the task forces and the public, January 2014 - June 2015. A questionnaire will be distributed at task force and other public meetings and will also be available online:

- 1) Was the meeting time and location convenient?
- 2) Was the analysis sufficient and clearly presented?
- 3) Do you feel like your opinion was heard?
- 4) Was there an opportunity for the public to participate?
- 5) Will you participate again?

Questions to be answered by staff and the public, mid 2014 - June 2015. These questions will be asked when individual studies are nearing completion.

- 1) Were civic engagement techniques tailored to the study developed and used?
- 2) What partnerships were formed and when did they occur in the process?
- 3) Did the task force communicate with standing land use committees or other civic organizations that review land use at various stages of the study?

Goal C: Promote a more focused approach to planning studies.

Questions to be answered by staff, July-September 2015:

- 1) Was the implementation of land use studies consistent with the general framework as found on page 6 of the Fairfax Forward Staff Report Addendum dated April 3, 2013?
- 2) Was the implementation of Countywide studies or Policy Plan studies consistent with a general framework?
- 3) Where in the process have the steps varied?
- 4) Was there an ability to apply some flexibility for individual land use studies?

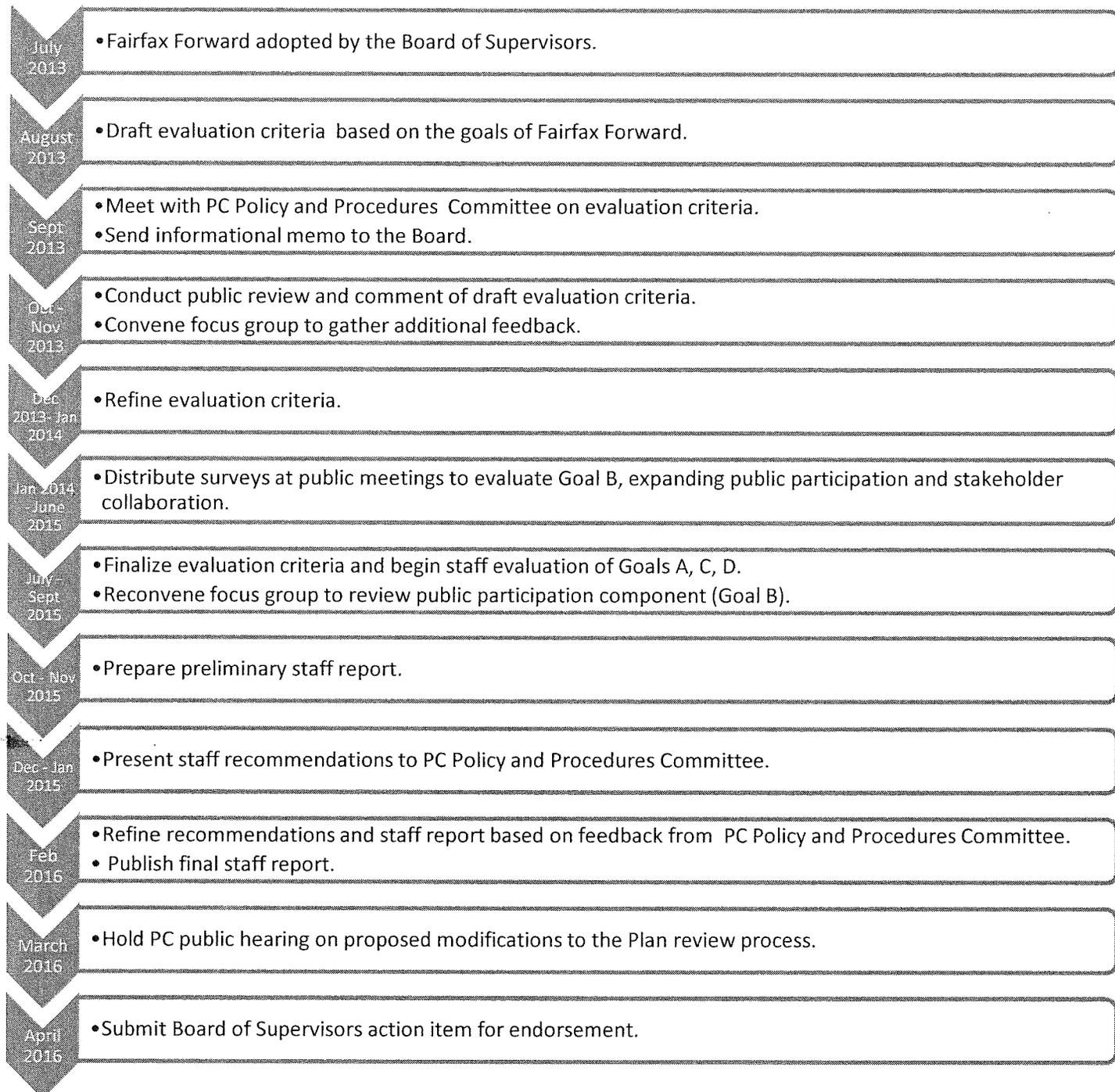
Goal D: Monitor planning trends and Plan implementation.

Questions to be answered by staff, July-September 2015:

- 1) Has an evaluation of existing and planned development potential been completed or is it underway as scheduled?
- 2) Has an evaluation of the outcome of Plan amendments compared to policy goals been completed or is it underway as scheduled?

Timeline for evaluating the Fairfax Forward Plan Review Process

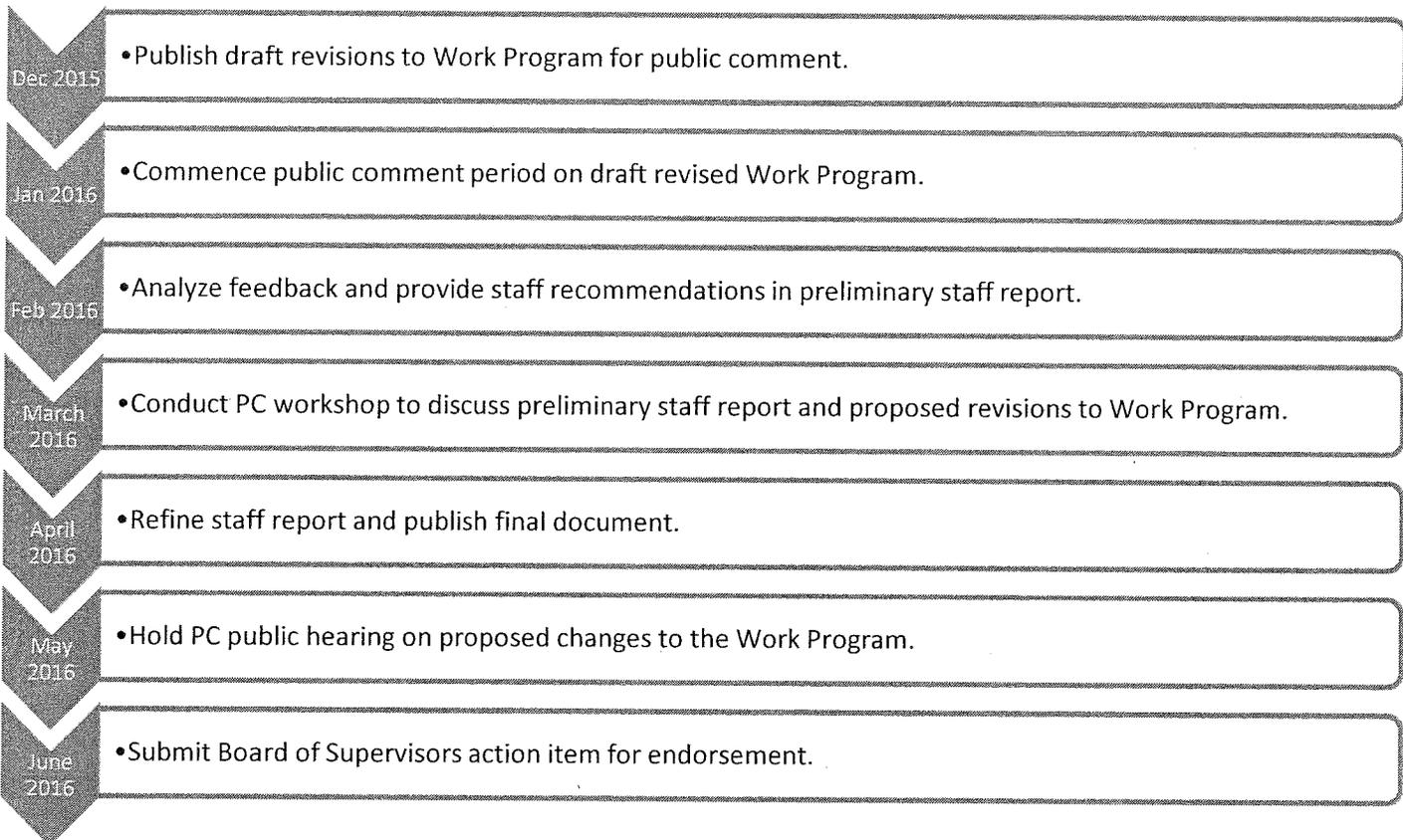
Proposed PC Policy and Procedures Committee Meetings: September 12, 2013; December – January 2015

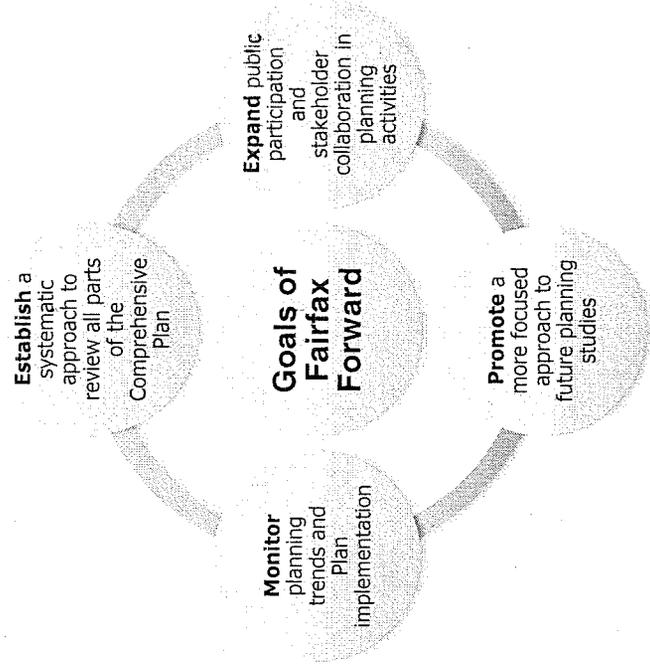


Timeline for reviewing the Pilot Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program

(for information purposes this timeline is provided)

Proposed PC Meetings: March 2016, May 2016





We appreciate your input!

Meeting date:

Name of project:

Primary role, please circle one:

TASK FORCE MEMBER RESIDENT PROPERTY OWNER BUSINESS OWNER INTERESTED COMMUNITY MEMBER

Other, please specify:

1. Was the meeting time and location convenient? *Please circle one:* YES / NO

Additional explanation:

2. Was the information provided sufficient and clearly presented?

Please circle one: YES / NO / NOT APPLICABLE

Additional explanation:

3. Do you feel like your opinion was heard? *Please circle one:* YES / NO

Additional explanation:

4. Was there an opportunity for public participation? *Please circle one:* YES / NO

Additional explanation:

5. Will you participate again? *Please circle one:* YES / NO

Additional explanation:

6. Would you like to be contacted in the future about this project? *Please circle one:* YES / NO Contact

NAME and EMAIL:

7. Additional comments:

Thank you!

You may also fill out this form online at:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/fairfaxforward/public_participation/present/evaluation.htm

Fairfax County Department of Planning & Zoning, 12055 Government Center Pkwy, Suite 730, Fairfax, VA

(main) 703-324-1380

(fax) 703-324-3056

Some thoughts on Fairfax Forward outcomes

The Fairfax Forward planning process establishes and/or validates the continued division of the county into communities (including growth centers) and neighborhoods.

These divisions may or may not correspond with other divisions, e.g. current magisterial districts, current Plan named divisions, tax map property maps, etc.

Neighborhood residents, community members and others acknowledge their placement in the various divisions. Where differing divisions meet, there is agreement on the location of edges.

There is consensus among neighborhood residents/community members on a planning vision for land use in their areas of the county.

Land use visions aggregate into a coherent overall vision for the county, defining e.g. focal nodes for growth, defining stable suburban neighborhoods.

The land use visions match with transportation and public facilities plans for the planning period.

There is public acceptance of the predisposition shown in the Plan for land uses and intensities appropriate to the land use vision for each part of the county.