



Overarching Vision

Fairfax County has achieved an exceptionally strong local economy and high quality of life through its focus on, among other things, the economic development efforts of the community. Our sustained efforts have resulted in the County being the largest and strongest economy in the Washington Metropolitan area and one of the strongest in the nation. This is evidenced by a high quality of life, a strong local employment base, competitive tax rates, nationally recognized schools and governance, and a preeminent economic development program.

However, no community has a preordained right to prosperity. Prosperity can only be achieved and sustained when a community's citizens, businesses and government work in concert for everyone's benefit.

Success requires examining our goals, strategies, and approaches. The County must work deliberately to maintain, diversify, and enhance our strong and vital community in order to sustain and grow our economic prosperity. In the challenging and changing economic climate and changing demographics of this century, Fairfax County cannot rest on its previous achievements. Our vision is a community where businesses, residents, and employees of a variety of ages, abilities, and experiences want to live, work, play, and grow.

The framework is in place for such efforts.

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September 12, 2014

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The Board of Supervisors has adopted a set of Priorities:

By engaging our residents and businesses in the process of addressing these challenging times, protecting investment in our most critical priorities, and by maintaining strong responsible fiscal stewardship, we must ensure:



A Quality Educational System Education is Fairfax County's highest priority. We will continue the investment needed to protect and enhance this primary community asset. Our children are our greatest resource. Because of our excellent schools, businesses are eager to locate here and our children are able to find good jobs. A well-educated constituency is best able to put back into their community.



Safe Streets and Neighborhoods Fairfax County is the safest community of our size in the U.S. We will continue to invest in public safety to respond to emergency situations, as well as efforts to prevent and intervene in destructive behaviors, such as gang activity and substance abuse.



A Clean, Sustainable Environment Fairfax County will continue to protect our drinking water, air quality, stream valleys and tree canopy through responsible environmental regulations and practices. We will continue to take a lead in initiatives to address energy efficiency and sustainability and to preserve and protect open space for our residents to enjoy.



Livable, Caring and Affordable Communities As Fairfax County continues to grow we will do so in ways that address environmental and mobility



challenges. We will encourage housing that is affordable to our children, seniors and members of our workforce. We will provide compassionate and efficient services to members of our community who are in need. We will continue to protect and support our stable lower density neighborhoods. We will encourage and support participation in community organizations and other activities that address community needs and opportunities.



A Vibrant Economy Fairfax County has a well-earned reputation as a business-friendly community. We will vigorously pursue economic development and revitalization opportunities. We will support the business community and encourage this healthy partnership. We will continue to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of our corporate neighbors in the areas of workforce development and availability, affordable housing, regulation and taxation.



Efficient Transportation Network Fairfax County makes it a priority to connect people and places. We will continue to plan for and invest in transportation improvements to include comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian initiatives, bus and para transit, road and intersection improvements and expansion of Metrorail and VRE.



Recreational and Cultural Opportunities A desirable community is one where there is a lot going on that residents can enjoy. Fairfax County will continue to provide for athletic, artistic, intellectual and recreational activities, in our communities, parks, libraries and schools.



Taxes that are Affordable The property tax is Fairfax County's primary source of revenue to provide services. We will ensure that taxes are affordable for our residents and businesses, and we will seek ways to diversify County revenues in order to make our tax base more equitable. We will ensure that County programs and services are efficient, effective, cost effective and well run.

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Reflecting Board Priorities, Fairfax County's Vision is:

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County by:



Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities

The needs of a diverse and growing community are met through innovative public and private services, community partnerships and volunteer opportunities. As a result, residents feel safe and secure, capable of accessing the range of services and opportunities they need, and are willing and able to give back to their community.



Building Livable Spaces

Together, we encourage distinctive "built environments" that create a sense of place, reflect the character, history and natural environment of the community, and take a variety of forms -- from identifiable neighborhoods, to main streets, to town centers. As a result, people throughout the community feel they have unique and desirable places to live, work, shop, play and connect with others.



Connecting People and Places

Transportation, technology and information effectively and efficiently connect people and ideas. As a result, people feel a part of their community and have the ability to access places and resources in a timely, safe and convenient manner.



Maintaining Healthy Economies

Investments in the workforce, jobs, and community infrastructure and institutions support a diverse and thriving economy. As a result, individuals are able to meet their needs and have the opportunity to grow and develop their talent and income according to their potential.



Practicing Environmental Stewardship

Local government, industry and residents seek ways to use all resources wisely and to protect and enhance the County's natural environment and open space. As a result, residents feel good about their quality of life and embrace environmental stewardship as a personal and shared responsibility.



Creating a Culture of Engagement

Individuals enhance community life by participating in and supporting civic groups, discussion groups, public-private partnerships and other activities that seek to understand and address community needs and opportunities. As a result, residents feel that they can make a difference and work in partnership with others to understand and address pressing public issues.



Exercising Corporate Stewardship

Fairfax County government is accessible, responsible and accountable. As a result, actions are responsive, providing superior customer service and reflecting sound management of County resources and assets.



We need a strong economy to achieve the Board Priorities and County Vision.

A strong economy underpins the priorities and objectives identified. The Board of Supervisors established an Economic Advisory Commission (EAC) to provide policy level recommendations on matters related to the development and expansion of the County's economy. The EAC developed a strategic plan, *Fairfax County: Preserving our Quality of Life Requires Maintaining a Strong Economy* ("Plan"), in 2011. That Plan provides the blueprint for nurturing and sustaining a vibrant economy in Fairfax. While a number of efforts called for in the 2011 Plan have been implemented or are on-going, it is time to review that work, update it as necessary and develop an action plan to guide our future efforts. What follows is a vision of an economically strong Fairfax County, as well as goals, actions and metrics to achieve and sustain that vision.

To further implement the Plan's vision of an economically strong and sustainable Fairfax, we will focus on four fundamentals:

People, Places, Employment and Governance.

Each of the four areas contains a vision of what we aspire to, and the related goals from the 2011 Plan. An action plan for each of the four areas will implement this vision and goals.

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We will be a magnet for the best prepared and best educated workforce in the country. We will support and adopt policies that support residents and employees of a variety of ages, abilities, and experiences. Our system of education will be of the highest quality from pre-school and secondary through post-secondary and continuing learning programs in order to attract and serve all people and businesses and to provide for a skilled workforce and opportunities at all levels. We will have a variety of housing opportunities available to those seeking to live in the County and will encourage people to both live and work here. We will embrace the diversity of the County's populations, neighborhoods and business communities. We will have a full spectrum of cultural, art and institutional opportunities that support a diverse community and foster social interaction.

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To achieve that vision, Fairfax County should:

 Prepare, attract, and retain a **skilled, innovative and competitive workforce**. Our high-quality education systems must be sustained and supported. Students need to be prepared for the high-wage, high-demand jobs in science, technology, and engineering; for "knowledge worker" jobs and entrepreneurial endeavors; and, for high skill jobs at all job levels that are critical to sustain a competitive and innovative business environment. Delivering a continuous supply of job-ready applicants depends on an integrated system that includes public schools, job training programs, community colleges, and institutions of higher education. The County will encourage and support new and ongoing partnerships among the County, the school system, businesses, charitable organizations, and higher educational institutions to align workforce development efforts to the skill needs of targeted industries.

 Have **available and affordable housing**. The County will encourage all who want to live in Fairfax to be able to do so, and will encourage public and private actions that support the County's workforce housing policies and the provision of a full spectrum of housing opportunities, most notably those in mixed-use areas that are accessible to multiple modes of transport.

 Continue to value and support the provision of a broad array of **cultural and recreational opportunities** to enhance the lives of residents and to build community among its diverse populations. The availability of strong, dynamic, and diverse cultural and recreational opportunities provides economic, social, health, and educational benefits and opportunities.

 Continue to embrace a **diverse population**. Our County's demographic and cultural diversity is one of our strengths. We will be renowned as a leader in human and civil rights, creating an environment for all our residents to reach their full potential. The County will implement policies that support and protect our existing population, and that attract future employees and residents from a variety of cultures, ages, and with a variety of abilities.

 Our **high-quality schools** will be sustained and supported. Our schools will prepare students for the world of the future; they will attract people and businesses to locate in Fairfax County; they will provide for a skilled workforce and will offer a full spectrum of educational opportunities.

PEOPLE: Goals at a Glance

-  **Skilled, Innovative, and Competitive Workforce**
-  **Available and Affordable Housing**
-  **Cultural and Recreational Opportunities**
-  **Diverse Population**
-  **World Class Public Schools**

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We will focus on building sustainable, healthy places and creating destinations of choice. We will focus our growth in activity centers that facilitate efficient delivery of services and protect existing residential neighborhoods. We will implement land use policies that foster revitalization and redevelopment of key areas of the county and support the attraction and growth of businesses. We will protect the environment and enhance public health by preserving air and water quality, minimizing energy use, and having a broad range of open space and recreational amenities to support the needs of our residents and employees. We will have high quality, well maintained infrastructure and multi-modal transportation systems to support the demands of present and future growth and to provide a healthy living environment. We will provide a full spectrum of art, cultural, and institutional uses and a built environment that is a national model reflecting the highest quality of architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design – creating places where people want to be.



To achieve that vision, Fairfax County should:



Recognize that the quality and availability of our **infrastructure** is integral to the County’s success in attracting people and employment opportunities. The County will implement policies that support necessary infrastructure improvements to maintain and/or enhance levels of service, so that it will remain an attractive and competitive location.



Focus on optimal **mobility** and regional connectivity for all residents and employees in the County. The County will achieve a multi-modal transportation system that supports the economic growth, health, congestion mitigation, and prosperity goals of the county and provide context sensitive mobility solutions that are based on the principles associated with sustainability, diversity and community health.



Acknowledge that **redevelopment** has unique challenges and requires new approaches. A significant portion the County’s new development will be redevelopment of existing uses, embedded within existing communities. The County will develop policies and processes to facilitate new investment while retaining important community values. The County will continue to support public/private partnerships that further target development opportunities and provide benefits to communities.



Ensure a vibrant and successful **retail sector**. Retail opportunities need to be provided to support population growth and reflect the significant role that retail plays in local communities and the County’s overall economy.



Provide opportunities for **industrial** and **other emerging uses**. Businesses and employment activities are dynamic; the County will develop flexible policies that support innovative employment activities in strategic locations.

PLACES: Goals at a Glance

-  **Physical and Environmental Infrastructure**
-  **Mobility**
-  **Redevelopment**
-  **Retail Sector**
-  **Industrial Uses**

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We will maintain and continue to pursue a prosperous economic climate with increasingly varied and innovative employment opportunities. To achieve this, we will continuously develop and pursue a broad range of actions aimed at enhancing our long-term competitive position in the region, nationally and internationally. Our vision includes establishing an environment conducive to the retention and expansion of existing employers; attraction of new employers; support of new and emerging industries and technologies, including the incubation and growth of new businesses.

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To achieve that vision, Fairfax County should:

-  Adopt policies conducive to **attracting and retaining business**. The County will continue to maintain and enhance its diverse economy with an eye on its long-term economic health. Our community will attract a wide range of funding opportunities, including venture capital, angel investors, and federal sources that support new and emerging businesses and technologies; consider and pursue targeted catalytic investment opportunities; seek to diversify the economy by continuing to support existing and targeted emerging industries; and, encourage efforts of local educational institutions to commercialize research. County agencies will work collaboratively on strategies geared to the requirements of existing and evolving industries and to support business incubator and accelerator efforts as appropriate.
-  Achieve a proper **balance between job and housing growth**. Growth in new workers at all income levels must be matched with a sufficient stock of housing and housing types, and such housing choices need to be located convenient to places of employment.
-  Promote policies which protect and enhance **Dulles International Airport (IAD)**. As a key job engine, IAD is an important contributor to the economic vitality of Fairfax County and the National Capital Area. Business and industry is attracted to those locations that have good global access, and IAD provides excellent connectivity to the nation and the world. We will promote IAD’s range of international flights and foster a diverse domestic flight portfolio.
-  Grow as a tourist destination. **Tourism** is an economic engine which supports domestic and international trade, as well as the retail and service sectors. Tourism results in beneficial direct impacts (for example, dollars spent on hotel rooms by the visitors) and indirect or induced impacts (dollars spent throughout the community with visitors’ dollars that are received).

EMPLOYMENT: Goals at a Glance

-  **Attracting and Retaining Businesses**
-  **Balance Between Job and Housing Growth**
-  **Dulles International Airport**
-  **Tourism**

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We will foster a vibrant, inclusive culture of civic engagement and collaboration. We will have policies and processes that anticipate and accommodate market conditions, future innovations, changing demographics, and new opportunities and technologies. We will provide a responsive and collaborative development review process, including a regulatory framework that encourages business development, retention and expansion and that accommodates economic development opportunities. We will have a safe environment which includes state-of-the-art public safety services including police, fire protection, emergency medical services, and health facilities. We will nurture strong inter-governmental relationships among local, regional, state, and federal governments as well as other local agencies, authorities and non-government/non-profit organizations.

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To achieve that vision, Fairfax County should:

-  Take into account the effects on the County’s economy when making **financial decisions**. We will ensure that taxes are affordable for our residents and businesses, and we will seek ways to diversify County revenues in order to make our tax base more equitable. When making financial decisions such as tax levels and fee rates, evaluation should balance the financial health of the County, cumulative debt, the current target of growing and achieving 25 percent of the tax base in commercial uses the goals of this Plan, and more reflective financial targets as may be appropriate.
-  Continually review **regulatory processes** with an emphasis on providing a customer service-oriented process; expediting the process; making the process more predictable; increasing flexibility where appropriate; making timeframes and costs more predictable; more sensitive to market conditions; and, more urban.
-  Ensure that **land use policies** are targeted and align with Plan goals. Development policies should provide for future housing, public facilities, parks, and other amenities which contribute to the County’s high quality of life, and are responsive to market demands.
-  Enhance **organizational capacity** and support **coordinated leadership** to further our economic success. The work of the Economic Development Authority, Fairfax County agencies, the private sector, public and private educational institutions, foundations, and non-government/non-profit organizations should continue to be coordinated so that common goals can be achieved.
-  Continue a leadership role in **regional** efforts. As one of the largest jurisdictions in the National Capital Area and participant in the Greater Washington 2050 Compact, Fairfax County will continue to promote regional solutions to future challenges in transportation planning, environmental regulations, and other areas of mutual benefit—with the recognition that our future is intertwined with other communities in the region.
-  Improve **communications** to adapt to changing methods and technologies connecting people and communities. We will leverage new technology to receive input from, and provide information to, existing and prospective residents, employers and visitors. We will pursue programs that brand, promote, and market the unique elements of, and envisioned future for, Fairfax County. We will also foster close communication and collaboration within County government.

GOVERNANCE: Goals at a Glance

-  **Sound Financial Decisions**
-  **Regulatory Processes**
-  **Land Use Policies**
-  **Organizational Capacity and Coordinated Leadership**
-  **Regionalism**
-  **Communications**