

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

February 15, 2022

11:00 A.M.

Government Center Board Room

Board of Supervisors Members Present:

Board Chair Jeffrey C. McKay

Committee Chair Daniel G. Storck, Mount Vernon District

Supervisor Walter L. Alcorn, Hunter Mill District

Supervisor John W. Foust, Dranesville District

Supervisor Penelope A. Gross, Mason District

Supervisor Pat Herrity, Springfield District

Supervisor Rodney L. Lusk, Lee District

Supervisor Kathy L. Smith, Sully District

Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw, Braddock District

Others Present:

Bryan J. Hill, County Executive

Elizabeth D. Teare, County Attorney

February 15, 2022, Meeting Agenda:

[February 15, 2022 Environmental Committee Agenda \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

February 15, 2022, Meeting Materials:

[Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee Meeting: Feb. 15, 2022 | Board Of Supervisors \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

The following is a summary of the discussion from the February 15, 2022, Environmental Committee meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 A.M.

Item I Opening Remarks

After a brief introduction from Supervisor Storck, Committee Chair, the Environmental Committee was asked if there were any changes to the minutes of December 14, 2021. With no changes, the meeting minutes were accepted.

Supervisor Storck then introduced Kate Daley, Environmental Analyst with the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC), to provide a brief update on the FY 2022 Fairfax County Sustainability Initiatives report. Kate announced that the FY 2022 report had just been published and was available for the Board and members of the public to review.

The Sustainability Initiatives report is a comprehensive account of the county's work in the environmental realm. The FY 2022 update highlights long-standing programs as well as achievements from the last two years, such as the 2021 Operational Energy Strategy update and the county's climate planning initiatives. The report is available to view at [Sustainability Initiatives | Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/sustainability).

Item II Fairfax Green Initiatives

The second item on the agenda was an update on Fairfax Green Initiatives, presented by Kate Daley, OEEC. Fairfax Green Initiatives refers to a series of Board Matters from 2019 and 2020 that introduced 33 environmental and energy action items for county agencies. The February 2022 update focused on progress made on action items since the last update was provided in September 2021.

To address action items in the first Green Initiatives Board Matter, county agencies continue to seek and oversee grant and cooperative agreement projects for climate and energy initiatives; oversee existing pilot projects, like the Bike and Pedestrian Safety Pilot; develop a new Pitch and Pilot event focused on carbon neutral technologies; and advance and report on tree canopy goals in the county, including in historically underserved communities.

To address action items in the second Green Initiatives Board Matter, agencies reported on efforts to electrify county bus and vehicle fleets, including the

procurement of electric buses and efforts to install charging infrastructure in county-owned parking garages. County agencies, in consultation with a contractor, continue to conduct a feasibility study for a Fairfax Green Bank. Finally, agencies have been helping to implement and conduct regional outreach on the five-cent tax on disposable plastic bags that went into effect January 1, 2022.

With the latest update, 20 of the 33 Green Initiatives action items are considered complete. Eleven are ongoing and continue to be reported on; two are being addressed through CECAP implementation.

Board Discussion:

Supervisor Stork noted progress on Fairfax Green Initiatives. It's a statement about the commitment staff and the county are making to green initiatives and climate change issues. Challenges with implementation are universal, but we are approaching them and looking at them one-by-one.

Supervisor Lusk asked about the Carbon Neutral Pitch and Pilot event and the number of companies that might be participating.

Kate responded that she would consult with the Department of Economic Initiatives and provide an update.

Item III

CECAP Implementation: Public Education and Outreach

The third item on the agenda was a presentation on CECAP Implementation: Public Education and Outreach by Ali Althen, Public Information Officer, OEEC. Before going into the public education and outreach plans for implementation of the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP), Ali first highlighted existing initiatives and activities that are public-facing and help to ensure Fairfax County is a more sustainable, efficient, and equitable community.

Programs Ali highlighted included HomeWise, which educates and enables low- and moderate-income residents to reduce their energy use and utility costs. Ali also touched on the Green Business Partners and Energy Action Fairfax programs. To execute these programs, the office works with dozens of county agencies and external groups.

The office is layering in a new public education and outreach initiative along with its current offerings called Carbon-Free Fairfax, to support public engagement around the goals and strategies included in CECAP. The educational component of Carbon-Free Fairfax will include messaging and materials around individual or collective climate actions, and may include tactics such as web content, social media, video, audio, webinars, seminars, ad campaigns, public service announcements, presentations, and briefings.

Outreach under Carbon-Free Fairfax will involve engaging individuals in solutions and stakeholders in activities that address our local greenhouse gas emissions. Outreach takes a step beyond education and provides opportunities for action. Examples may include workshops, competitions and challenges, incentive programs, demonstrations, public-private partnerships, office hours, and personal planning sessions.

Ali then presented a series of goals and objectives for public education and outreach over the coming 18 months, including goals that address equity and access, and a goal to reach at least 100,000 community members with content, events, and engagement opportunities.

Next, Ali presented eight campaigns under the Carbon-Free Fairfax initiative and their run dates. The campaigns target actions and behavior changes community members can take to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, such as adopting solar, purchasing electric vehicles (EVs), increasing public and alternative transit use, performing home energy audits, and implementing energy performance improvements in homes and businesses. The campaigns focus largely on the transportation and buildings and energy sectors, as these are the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in the county. Additional campaigns may be developed over the coming year.

Finally, Ali presented a series of education and outreach tactics that can be pursued under Carbon-Free Fairfax with current staff and resources. She also presented several tactics that staff would like to do to take public engagement to the next level, such as special events, pledge programs, and interactive web-based platforms. However, doing so would require additional staff and resources.

Board Discussion:

Supervisor Storck commented on the importance of engaging with different sectors of the community, particularly the private sector. He also discussed the importance of finding champions within the community and offering incentives, to support low-income residents, in particular.

Chairman McKay commented on the importance of education. Many community members are already wired to do the right thing, but do not always know what the right thing is; Carbon-Free Fairfax will be tremendously helpful in that respect. He mentioned that some constituents have expressed difficulty finding information on all the different county activities in one place. One thing to think about long-term is how to present these initiatives or activities, blending in the big and small pieces. He also commented that for the eight campaigns highlighted in the presentation, it would be helpful for Board members to see a more detailed master schedule. He asked that staff share monthly or bi-monthly updates with the Board members so they can help build public awareness about campaign events.

Ali commented that monthly updates are sent to Board offices the first Wednesday of the month. Staff will continue to do that and include upcoming dates for education and engagement that Board offices can help share.

Chairman McKay reiterated that Board offices can help promote specific events, especially those that have not been getting as much traction.

Ali also commented that staff will be working on the presentation piece, to better showcase the county's different initiatives to the public. Staff will continue to collaborate with the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) to build web architecture and infrastructure to do so.

Chairman McKay noted that this will help the public understand the magnitude of work that has been stood up in such a short amount of time and how the county is a leader in the region, and in a lot of cases, in the nation, in confronting some of the climate and environmental issues we are dealing with.

Supervisor Lusk noted his appreciation for the slide on equity and access. He said it will be critical to help identify some funding for the lower-income communities, as they will be less likely to afford improvements that will reduce their carbon footprints. We might have to think about how we can work with philanthropic

organizations, foundations, and corporate partners to raise this money. He also volunteered that he is happy to work within his office in the area of manufactured housing, to address efficiency issues in those types of units. Customized solutions may be required for those units.

Supervisor Foust asked about the C-PACE program and if anyone has taken advantage of the program.

John Morrill, Division Manager, OEEC, replied that a project has not come to fruition, although there are some leads, including a large project under discussion with the county's PACE administrator.

Supervisor Foust commented that the program has a lot of potential. That is an area where we need to get the word out.

Ali commented that staff can look at renewing public messaging around the program. Staff has also built into its Explore Solar Systems campaign a C-PACE for solar seminar for business and commercial entities. Staff will look at the offering and see if there is a way to expand upon it.

Supervisor Foust also asked about how we are measuring our progress toward the 2050 goal of carbon neutrality.

John Morrill stated that staff can track community-wide energy use in buildings, drawing upon tax payments and data from utilities. That is the closest thing we have for real-time, community-wide energy use. Staff is setting up a process to compile that on an annual basis, looking at the trends in the building sector. At the same time, staff is developing several other metrics for some of the other sectors, including EV registrations and deployment of solar. Data is showing steady progress in both areas.

Supervisor Foust then asked how much it would cost to implement the additional educational and outreach tactics Ali touched on in her presentation.

Bryan Hill, County Executive, replied that the information would come back to the Board as a Budget Q+A.

Supervisor Smith stated this is all important information for the community. The biggest challenge will be getting out to enough of the community in different areas.

She asked what the role of the CECAP Working Group members is in reaching out to the greater community.

Ali replied that the Working Group members are viewed as key champions on public education and outreach. Staff examined what it would take to partner with them in a very robust fashion and decided that with current staffing capacity and resources, it made sense to form formal promotional partnerships with some of the organizations they represent and to have them help us get the word out on events. From there, staff would like to build greater capacity to have a more robust partnership program with business, nonprofits, and organizations from different sectors, to have them take a role in certain actions or tactics we need to accomplish.

Supervisor Smith asked if we are going to use organizations like the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (FACS) to push out information to its members.

Ali replied that, yes, that is the intention.

Supervisor Storck noted that FACS is seen as a sector champion in the faith community. The county could work with FACS as a potential pilot to champion and move things forward. The county does not have the resources to do all of this, but we know it's crucial that the private sector is involved and committed to doing this work. Supervisor Storck then commented that he liked the metrics included on the education campaigns, which will give us some sense of our progress in reaching and engaging members of the public.

Item IV CECAP Implementation: Legislative Concepts

The fourth item on the agenda was a presentation on CECAP Implementation: Legislative Concepts, by Susan Hafeli, Deputy Director, and John Morrill, Division Manager, both with the OEEC. The concepts are intended to help advance CECAP goals, including the overarching goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Susan highlighted two of the county's own legislative proposals that were moving forward in the 2022 General Assembly session and that would support the goals of CECAP. The first would expand virtual net metering for municipal entities, like the county, helping to advance our solar implementation goals; the second would

allow the Park Authority to provide retail fee-based charging for EVs, which would help advance transit electrification goals. Despite progress on these two items, it was noted that the General Assembly is different from years past. Its signaled intent to roll back certain climate-related initiatives in 2022 means that future legislative proposals related to CECAP must be selected carefully for maximum achievable results.

Susan then shared the greenhouse gas emissions inventory generated under the CECAP planning initiative. The inventory demonstrates that the primary sources of emissions in Fairfax County are from building energy use and transportation. This information has guided staff's legislative efforts, which have been focused on the building and transportation sectors. As community action in these areas have the greatest potential to achieve noteworthy reductions in emissions, staff will be focusing on legislative initiatives that encourage, incentivize, or require action by residents and businesses in these areas.

Susan handed the presentation over to John Morrill who discussed legislative strategies under building energy efficiency and performance. One priority strategy is gaining authority for localities to enact energy codes that exceed state codes; another is local authority to require energy benchmarking of large commercial buildings. John discussed other building issues in need of legislative assistance, including electrification requirements for new construction and major renovations and the removal of regulatory barriers to on-site renewable energy generation for several types of customers, especially multi-unit housing complexes.

Susan then presented the final slides on EVs and other transportation issues. Legislative strategies are intended to promote the purchase of EVs by lowering the cost and to promote EV charging by reducing barriers to cost or installation. Specific strategies include funding Virginia's EV rebate program, establishing a vehicle replacement program like the federal "Cash for Clunkers" program of the late 2000s, promoting public investment in EV infrastructure, and working with common-interest communities to devise state legislative solutions for EV charging in common areas.

In addition, staff will be exploring other strategies intended to reduce transportation-related emissions, including researching options for reducing vehicle miles travelled generally, based on land use decisions like transit-oriented development; researching design and other practices intended to reduce vehicle idling; and looking at practices that have been adopted or are being piloted in other

states that recognize that it isn't just about making cars cleaner, it's also about what's built. She cited an example from Colorado which assigns emissions budgets for major transportation projects.

Finally, Susan discussed next steps. Staff intends to return to the July 2022 Environmental Committee with legislative proposals for the 2023 General Assembly, after assessing the impact of the 2022 General Assembly on the county's energy and climate priorities.

Board Discussion:

Supervisor Storck commented that to get to where we need to go, we need to make sure we have identified the barriers or challenges that we have and address them as quickly as possible. Whatever we do now can have a multiplier effect in the future. He commented on the power of the private sector in energy and innovation, and the success the U.S. economy has historically had in identifying solutions to problems.

Supervisor Alcorn expressed his support for working with common-interest communities to identify EV charging solutions. He noted that less than half of the households in Fairfax County are single-family detached, which means there is a real impediment for many residents that do not have garages. There is likely not one silver bullet to address these issues. He also noted that discussions on emissions from major transportation projects have been occurring at the Transportation Planning Board. This is an initiative that hopefully can be led by data and regional collaboration.

Supervisor Gross noted a federal initiative aiming to install EV charging stations along interstates, every 50 miles within a mile of the interstate. She asked if the federal program has an opportunity for localities to access some of that funding.

Susan replied that the state will be addressing expenditure of the federal funds. She will follow up with more detail on the funding structure.

Item V Solid Waste Collection Service Options

The fifth item on the agenda was a discussion on solid waste collection service options, led by Christopher Herrington, Director, and John Kellas, Deputy Director

of Solid Waste Management, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES). John referenced a memo included in the Board package that covers how private haulers are regulated, how neighboring jurisdictions operate, and potential options for future solid waste management services. Solid waste collection systems in Fairfax County and across the nation have been strained by a combination of COVID-19, worker shortages and supply chain systems. John and Supervisor Storck opened the item up for discussion with the Board on potential solutions for solid waste collection and sustainability.

Board Discussion:

Supervisor Walkinshaw commented on inefficiencies with solid waste collection services in the county due to different companies servicing one neighborhood. He also commented on the opaque nature of pricing with private haulers. He does think the county has to take a more in-depth look at the franchising model. He noted that Montgomery County conducted an extensive review of its model. It is a good test case because they have both models - one half of the county has the franchise model while the other half has a private hauler model. A franchise model might impact local, small haulers, but if the district is small enough, it can provide local, small haulers with a better opportunity to compete. He does not think it is necessarily true that costs under a franchise model would be higher. There is also a potential for improved quality of service. He noted that the system we have now is not working for a lot of residents and we must seriously look at changing that system.

Chairman McKay commented on the frequency of private hauler service in his neighborhood. He asked if other jurisdictions or if Fairfax County has the authority to regulate which days of the week collectors can be in certain parts of the county. He commented on the impact on air quality, infrastructure, and walkability of neighborhoods.

John noted that the county can regulate hours of the day for service but, as of now, the county does not have the ability to regulate service in one part of the county on certain days. He noted that industry moved to one or two day a week collection several years ago. Staff can look into that.

Chairman McKay reiterated that he would like staff to look at what it would take to limit the number of collection days and what the cost differential might be. The volume of trucks that we have on the road seems unsustainable from an

infrastructure and environmental standpoint. It seems to work against the driver shortage issues in the community.

Supervisor Gross also commented on the disparity of rates with haulers. She noted that the solid waste industry is changing and challenging right now. This is not a new discussion. Back in the 2006-2007 timeframe, the Board held discussions with private haulers. It ultimately decided not to make changes between the private haulers and county haulers. Discussions with the private haulers are needed again. But keeping in mind all the regulations that govern this issue, we should count on the conversations occurring over a couple of years. When we come out of it at the end, we have to discount COVID; we should not be making long-term decisions during an emergency. And we should have some marching orders at the end of a year or so to do something different. This may be the time to make a major change.

Supervisor Alcorn echoed that we are undergoing quite a bit of change with the industry and the way we address solid waste and recycling. He raised the idea of a task force to look at this. If we do that, he hopes that we take into consideration food waste and composting and how that affects the way we do trash hauling. The bottom line is we are going to need more control, perhaps through a franchising model or through our existing ordinances. We might need some additional legislative authority. Going forward, we should make sure we know what we have legal authority to do and what we would need to ask for.

Supervisor Smith stated that it is apparent we need to do something. Listening to some of the public hearings we had in the past, one of the things we heard from the community is that they do not want trucks in their neighborhoods every day. We also have the environmental issue. She expressed some concerns with the franchising model; she does not think it is an easy process to get to. It could be expensive and timely. She also expressed concerns for contracting and the impact on employees. If we can find a way to service communities so they have one company coming to their neighborhood and can address the environmental piece, we should do that. She also expressed that the county should get out of the business.

Supervisor Herrity noted that he hopes we do not wait two years for a solution. He mentioned a lot of places across the country are moving to single stream. Some jurisdictions have gone so far as to eliminate recycling and he is glad we have not done that here. Franchising is not something he is very excited about doing, but it might make sense in this case. He looks forward to a robust discussion on the pros

and cons on that. If we get a franchise, he hopes companies will be competing on a regular basis. The franchise hurdles are pretty high right now and we might need to look at legislative changes. It might make sense to put a how-to out to residents to organize and negotiate changes within a community. We can also contract out waste collection in our county agency buildings to reduce some inefficiencies.

John Kellas responded that staff has inventoried county buildings where the county collects waste and is looking at the efficiencies and how that will transform in the future.

Supervisor Lusk noted that abolishment of the existing sanitary districts does not resonate with him. He would be very concerned with the impacts to residents and staff who work in these areas. He said he would be curious to know more about the idea to contract out certain areas – how many and where and what the logic is behind that. On the franchising, he does feel that could be a viable option. He would want to understand some of the impacts. He noted that the main issue here is the drivers – we do not have enough. This is the issue we need to try to fix. That needs to be part of the conversation as well, and then we can get into what some of the options may be.

Supervisor Foust asked how many small haulers are operating in the county.

John Kellas estimated that there are 18 small- to mid-size haulers. There are about 20 registered haulers total in the county, and that number ebbs and flows. Three of those are major haulers that are publicly traded.

County Executive Bryan Hill noted we need to have a comprehensive approach moving forward. Franchising is probably an option, but there are also several alternatives that we could look at.

Supervisor Storck turned to next steps. His objective is to be back here in June to continue the conversation.

County Executive Bryan Hill stated that he would prefer to have a conversation with staff first about getting a timeline out for this item. He wants to see what staff's existing work plan is like first in order to make the next discussion as robust as possible. He would like to come back with a report on when we are going to do something.

Supervisor Storck reiterated a desire for some sort of follow-up by June. He then asked staff to summarize the major issues identified in the meeting.

Christopher Herrington stated that staff heard concerns about multiple private haulers operating in a single neighborhood and haulers operating on multiple days a week. He noted that the committee would like more information on options and what it would look like in terms of competitiveness, quality of service, and impacts on local businesses if we were to explore either a franchising option or contracting option. As any options are evaluated, consideration will be given to existing employees. He noted a need to continue to make sure drivers and laborers are appropriately compensated.

Supervisor Storck asked that the environmental piece be considered, as well as an examination of existing versus needed authorities.

Christopher Herrington noted final consideration items: Interaction with industry, cost-competitiveness, and the zero-waste nexus.

Supervisor Herrity asked for something short-term to help residents band together and get better answers. He would also like to see something on the agency trash routes. He also noted that with franchising, it will be important to evaluate the impact on the different geographies.

Item VI

Review of Environment and Energy Not in Board Packages (NIPs)

Supervisor Storck reminded the Board that five NIPs were included in the Environmental Committee Board package, including Maryland Incentives Regarding Electric Vehicles, State and Federal Vehicle Emissions Standards, Fairfax Green Initiatives, CECAP Implementation: CY 2022 Through Mid-CY 2023, Chloride Total Maximum Daily Load and Salt Management Strategy.

Supervisor Storck noted that there were no hard copies of Board packages distributed at the meeting as Board members are now encouraged to bring their own. If there is a concern about that, he asked that Board members let him know.

The meeting adjourned at 12:42 P.M.