



FAIRFAX COUNTY

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES AND PRINCIPLES FOR THE 119 CONGRESS

ADOPTED DECEMBER 3, 2024

Recommended Strategies and Principles for the 119th Congress

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INTRODUCTION

“Protecting and enriching our quality of life for people, neighborhoods, and diverse communities.”

Fairfax County’s Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on October 5, 2021, and includes Ten Community Outcome Areas, which ensure a focus on the priorities of our community, including:

- Cultural and Recreational Opportunity
- Economic Opportunity
- Effective and Efficient Government
- Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability
- Environment and Energy
- Healthy Communities
- Housing and Neighborhood Livability
- Lifelong Education and Learning
- Mobility and Transportation
- Safety and Security

To address the racial and social inequities that remain in our community, Fairfax County has embraced a vision of One Fairfax: a declaration that all residents deserve equitable opportunities to succeed, regardless of their age, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, socioeconomic status, neighborhood of residence, or other characteristics. As the Countywide Strategic Plan is implemented, we will focus on transforming islands of disadvantage – areas where residents face economic, educational, health, housing, and other challenges – into communities of opportunity.

Fairfax County has long maintained a strong partnership with the federal government, as the home to numerous federal agencies, employees, and contractors. According to USA Spending, federal government contracts performed in Fairfax County reached \$38.5 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. Half of the top ten government contractors on Washington Technology magazine’s 2024 list of the 100 largest government contractors in the nation have US headquarters in Fairfax County. With a vibrant, diverse population and economy, Fairfax County is truly the federal government’s partner, fundamentally important to the functioning of the federal government. Enhancing this critical partnership in a variety of areas is a top County priority.

The recent Presidential election signals potentially sweeping changes for maintaining that relationship as well as challenges for a wide variety of federal policy issues related to Fairfax County priorities. Given the policy priorities of the previous Trump Administration combined with proposals the President-elect espoused during the November 2024 election, it appears that while some impacts may be positive for the County, there are likely to be many that are negative. As a result, the County should:

- Oppose efforts to dramatically reduce the size of the federal workforce, relocate up to 100,000 federal employees, and replace non-partisan career civil servants with political appointees, as such actions could have a devastating impact on the local economy, including the commercial and residential real estate markets as well as the County’s revenue sources. Fairfax County is home to more than 50,000 federal employees, and businesses located in Fairfax County receive over \$38 billion in federal contracts (*see also the Federal Agency Relocation, Consolidation, and Related Activities position on pages 10-12*).
- Oppose large-scale immigration enforcement actions that increase fear among all immigrants, leading to a reduction in trust and cooperation with localities, hindering law enforcement’s ability to combat crime and keep the community safe, and diverting resources from focusing on the small number of undocumented immigrants who have committed violent crimes. Recognizing the criticality of this issue, the County has adopted the Public Trust and Confidentiality Policy, which increases cooperation and communication

between immigrant populations and County agencies (including the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD)) (*see also the Immigration principles on page 22 and Public Safety principles on page 22*).

- Support continuation of, and funding for, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and domestic violence programs (*see also the Social Safety Net position on page 16*).
- Maintain federal regulations aimed at curbing climate change as well as the US' commitment to the Paris Climate Accord, an international treaty aimed at limiting global warming and adopted in 2015 by nearly 200 countries. Also support existing fuel economy standards and a continuation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law programs and funding (also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) for building energy efficiency, solar deployment, electric vehicle (EV) initiatives and EV charging infrastructure (*see also the Climate Change position on page 7 and the Environment principles on page 20*).
- Support the protection of the social safety net through federal entitlement programs, including Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), child care, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), particularly as a reduction in federal employees could lead to additional demand for services (*see also the Federal Agency Relocation, Consolidation, and Related Activities position on pages 10-12 and the Social Safety Net position on page 16*).
- Support the continuation of, and funding for, programs and services related to affordable housing, health, mental health, and substance use disorder for vulnerable residents, including families with low income, older adults, children, recent immigrants, people with disabilities, and members of marginalized communities like LGBTQ individuals (*see also the Federal Agency Relocation, Consolidation, and Related Activities position on pages 10-12, the Affordable Housing position on page 15, the Social Safety Net position on page 16, the Department of Justice position on page 17, and the Substance Use Disorder position on page 18*).
- Promote school readiness and access to affordable, quality child care for families with low incomes, including increased federal funding for Head Start and the Child Care and Development Block Grant. Improved access to affordable, quality child care is critical to support the workforce, leading to greater economic opportunity. A US Chamber of Commerce Foundation study found that breakdowns in child care cause states to lose an average of \$1 billion in economic activity annually (*see also the Social Safety Net position on page 16*).
- Protect the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), which supports housing, water, infrastructure, and human service needs (*see also the Community Development Block Grant position on page 17*).
- Preserve the integrity of, and funding for, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and public health institutions, ensuring protections for the system overall as well as for individuals seeking public health services (*see also the Health principles on page 21*).
- Ensure protections for the full continuum of reproductive health care.
- Protect the ability of local governments to promote local equity initiatives, including progress the County has made in repairing decades of discriminatory practices, consistent with the County's One Fairfax policy (*see also page 1*).
- Ensure that K-12 funding is directed toward local public schools rather than non-public options and fully fund programs for federally-connected students (*see also the Federal Funding for Federally-Connected Students position on pages 14-15 and the Education principles on pages 19-20*).
- Increase, or at a minimum, protect transportation and transit funding, especially for WMATA (the region's transit network is largely designed to efficiently move the federal workforce in and out of Washington, DC). Additionally, actions that create substantial impacts to the federal workforce could also create a tremendous impact on transit ridership (*see also the Transportation Funding position on pages 4-6*).
- Protect the accuracy and legitimacy of the Census, which is used to draw electoral districts and distribute \$1.5 trillion annually in federal funding (*see also the Census principles on pages 18-19*).
- Protect the integrity of free and fair elections, as well as the peaceful transition of power (*see also the Elections principles on page 20*).
- Oppose actions that target local government financing, including potential changes in tax policies, the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds, adjustments to state and local tax (SALT) deductions, tariffs, and Social

Security income taxation (*see also the Tax-Exempt Status of Municipal Bonds position on pages 12-13 and State and Local Tax Deductions position on page 13*).

- Support efforts to enhance consumer protections in various areas, including financial services, drug manufacturing, and online safety (*see also the Consumer Protection principles on page 19*).
- Oppose any preemption or circumvention of local governments' control over land use decisions and consumer protections, including restrictions related to telecommunications facilities, net neutrality (the principle that internet service providers should enable access to all content and applications regardless of the source, and without favoring or blocking particular products or websites), and the elimination of the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and DEI-related programs (DEI programs are designed to create workplaces where people from all backgrounds feel encouraged to express their ideas and perspectives) among others (*see also the Land Use principles on page 22 and the Telecommunications/Communications principles on page 23*).
- Ensure continued federal funding for libraries as well as access to library materials (*see also Libraries principles on page 22*). (*New position.*)

FEDERAL BUDGET

Federal Funding

Support a balanced approach to future federal deficit reduction solutions and a proactive approach to repositioning the County in anticipation of possible long-term changes in federal funding.

Fairfax County recognizes that the federal government continues to face fiscal challenges. As a result, the possibility of reassessing, and perhaps redirecting, the allocation of federal resources continues to exist. The County is a global technology hub with a thriving and diverse business community, and this requires federal investments including in state and local infrastructure projects that could help produce private sector jobs, improve the County's competitiveness, and generate federal tax revenues. Fairfax County supports continued federal investment in essential core services and programs, which have become even more critical during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, though such investments are always crucial.

Congress is still finalizing federal spending decisions for FY 2025. The federal government is operating under a stopgap Continuing Resolution from October 1 through December 20, 2024, at enacted FY 2024 funding levels. It is essential to avoid significant reductions to high-priority programs affecting the lives of Fairfax County residents. In general, the County opposes federal funding initiatives that shift costs to localities, impose unfunded mandates, or pre-empt local programs and taxing authority, particularly because revenue options for localities in Virginia are extremely limited.

In FY 2022, Congress returned to the practice of providing direct funding for specific projects, now called "Community Project Funding" (House) or "Congressionally Directed Spending" (Senate) (previously referred to as "earmarks"). This process is a fluid one, as project requirements between the House and Senate differ, and have changed over the years. For example, certain programs and accounts may be eligible for earmarks in the Senate, but not in the House. Members of the House have limits on the number of projects that they can request to have funded (though that number has changed over time), while there is no such limit in the Senate. It is unclear how the details of the process may change for FY 2026; however, the overall restoration of direct funding has strong bipartisan, bicameral support. With ongoing changes, however, it is important for the County to maintain flexibility in submitting potential projects for federal funding, as funding opportunities may present themselves quickly, with limited response time, and with very specific federal requirements. Such County projects should be previously approved by the Board to expedite the application process. Projects must also meet all federal requirements for individual funding accounts, including the amount of funding requested, types of projects eligible for funding, project readiness, and community support of projects, among other requirements. Project requests incorporate guidance from Congressional offices to maximize the competitiveness of each project.

A close working relationship between the County and the federal government continues to be essential. The County supports timely federal budget decisions to eliminate uncertainty that could be detrimental to the Northern Virginia economy. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Funding

Support increased federal investments in the nation’s transportation infrastructure, including maintenance and expansion of the existing systems, funding for buses and bus infrastructure, and programs that expand non-motorized travel choices (such as transportation alternatives). Also, as Congress works towards the next surface transportation reauthorization, support sufficient funding for vital programs and greater coordination and decision-making authority for metropolitan areas and local governments in determining how to spend transportation funding.

In FY 2025, the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) had an overall funding level of approximately \$107.7 billion, with a discretionary funding level of \$27.4 billion. President Biden’s FY 2025 budget proposed an increase for USDOT, at an overall funding level of \$109.4 billion (a \$1.7 billion increase from the FY 2024 enacted level) with a discretionary funding level of \$25.7 billion (a \$1.7 billion decrease from the FY 2024 enacted level). With the inclusion of an additional \$36.8 billion in guaranteed advanced appropriations provided under the IIJA, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, USDOT’s total budget for FY 2025 will be approximately \$145.9 billion. The House FY 2025 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (T-HUD) appropriations bill has an overall funding level of \$106.7 billion for USDOT (\$2.7 billion less than what is included in President Biden’s FY 2025 budget request), while the Senate FY 2025 T-HUD appropriations bill has an overall funding level of \$110 billion (\$600 million more than what is included in the President’s FY 2025 budget request).

Investments in transportation are necessary for a strong economy and to help spur growth. These investments not only make necessary improvements to regional and national infrastructure, but also create jobs – both by the construction of the facilities and access provided to other employment opportunities. Northern Virginia’s need for transportation solutions for all modes will continue to grow in size and scope. This includes the need for bicycle and pedestrian facilities that help improve travel choices while providing public health benefits, as well as other efforts to address “last-mile” connections to home and work. Fairfax County has taken actions to substantially increase local funding for transportation infrastructure and services. The Commonwealth has also taken important steps forward, and the federal government must do its part. The IIJA contains a five-year surface transportation authorization that includes additional funding for many programs vital to the County and the Commonwealth, and funding must be provided in accordance with those authorized levels. Fairfax County opposes any effort to reduce transportation funding from the levels authorized in the IIJA, as well as efforts to eliminate programs essential for the County. The IIJA authorizes and provides upfront supplemental appropriations from FY 2022 to FY 2026 for several new programs that support local transportation-related projects, including: \$5 billion for the Safe Streets and Roads for All competitive grant program, supporting local initiatives to prevent death and serious injury on roads and streets; and \$500 million for the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) grant program, for conducting demonstration projects focused on advanced smart city, community technologies and systems to improve transportation efficiency and safety (including autonomous vehicles and smart grids to support EVs). Safety must continue to be an important focus of transportation projects.

- **Support dedicated funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to ensure the success of this critical transit system.** Hailed as “America’s subway,” Metrorail is vital to the transportation networks and economic growth of Northern Virginia and the DC region, and is fundamental to the functioning of the federal government, carrying thousands of federal workers to their posts every day. The success of the Silver Line extension to Dulles International Airport and beyond demonstrates the extraordinary things that can be accomplished when federal, state, and local governments, along with the private sector, work together. The County supports WMATA’s efforts to enhance the safety and security

of the system and its riders through adequate funding and oversight to ensure the viability of this essential transit system.

In Virginia, local jurisdictions are responsible for providing substantial funding for WMATA – Fairfax County is providing approximately \$270 million for operating and capital costs in FY 2025 (approximately half is attributed to local and regional funding and half is transferred from state aid). Until recently, WMATA was the only major transit provider in the country without a permanent, dedicated revenue source for a significant part of its revenue base – the vast majority of the \$2.4 billion operating and \$2.6 billion capital budgets is derived from passenger fares and contributions by member jurisdictions, though the additional assistance provided by the federal government to assist during the COVID-19 pandemic was vital in continuing service. In 2018, Virginia, Maryland, and DC took a major step forward by providing \$500 million annually for state of good repair needs, as well as requiring governance reforms to enhance the safety, security, and efficiency of the system.

The federal government also provides capital support for WMATA since the enactment of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) – an annual appropriation of \$150 million, which was continued in the IJA (\$1.35 billion total from FY 2022 through FY 2030 and matched by the WMATA jurisdictions). The IJA also requires changes to WMATA’s Office of Inspector General (including independent hiring and budget authority). Unfortunately, due to inflation the annual federal investment does not meet as many needs as it did when first adopted in 2008 – had that funding had been indexed, the federal contribution would have increased from \$150 million to approximately \$240 million. Fairfax County strongly supports indexing this funding going forward.

WMATA also has significant operating needs. A substantial shortfall for FY 2025 and FY 2026 was recently addressed by the County, the Commonwealth, and regional partners. The gap is expected to increase in the coming years, and increased federal support is a critical part of any solution.

Additionally, in 2009, the federal government established a precedent for linking WMATA Board representation and financial investments in the system (which was followed by the Commonwealth in 2011) – upholding that precedent requires local jurisdictions to remain active participants on the WMATA Board as long as current funding patterns are maintained. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

- **Support continued federal investment in the Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program.** This program provides competitive grant funding for major transit capital investments, including rapid rail, light rail, bus rapid transit (BRT), and commuter rail. This funding is critical for transit projects that are developed by local communities, such as the planned Richmond Highway and Leesburg Pike BRT projects. This is especially important as, in June 2024, the Richmond Highway BRT received approval to enter the CIG Engineering Phase, marking significant progress for Fairfax County’s transportation infrastructure – the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has informed the County that this project is eligible to receive up to \$356.7 million in CIG funds (that level of potential federal funding is vital for such a sizable infrastructure project). The CIG program (which includes funding for New Starts projects) is authorized at \$2.3 billion annually. In FY 2024, the program was funded at \$2.2 billion. The President’s FY 2025 budget requested funding for CIG at \$2.4 billion, while the House and Senate FY 2025 T-HUD appropriations bills provide \$755 million and \$2.3 billion, respectively. Additionally, the IJA authorizes \$15 billion for CIG from FY 2022 to FY 2026 and provides \$8 billion in upfront supplemental appropriations. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*
- **Support full funding for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) formula program.** This program provides funds for state and local governments to improve air quality in transit-intensive areas that do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter (“nonattainment areas”); or maintain standards in areas where there is a risk of nonattainment, due to high transportation activity (“maintenance areas”). These funds are distributed to each state on a formula basis and are awarded to projects through metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). The authorization levels for CMAQ have been increased in the IJA, which provided \$13.2 billion

for FY 2022 to FY 2026 (approximately \$2.6 billion annually) – support for CMAQ funding is a long-standing County priority. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

- **Support full funding for transportation discretionary grant programs, including Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA), Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE), and the National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program.** These grant programs provide important funding opportunities for critical transportation projects. RAISE is not authorized, but is funded annually through additional appropriations in the IIJA. Specifically, the IIJA provides \$12.5 billion in supplemental appropriations for RAISE and National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program grants from FY 2022 to FY 2026 (or \$2.5 billion annually), with \$7.5 billion reserved for projects with significant local or regional effects (\$1.5 billion annually for RAISE grants) and \$5 billion reserved for multimodal projects of national or regional significance (\$1 billion annually for National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program grants). The House’s FY 2025 T-HUD appropriations bill does not provide any additional appropriations for RAISE or National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program grant programs, while the Senate’s FY 2025 T-HUD appropriations bill includes an additional \$550 million for RAISE grants. It may be beneficial to streamline these programs in the future, and to give greater consideration to congestion and mobility issues in the award processes. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*
- **Support full funding for the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan program.** TIFIA provides credit assistance for qualified projects of regional and national significance, seeking to leverage federal funds by attracting substantial private and other non-federal investment in vital improvements to the nation's surface transportation system. Prior to the IIJA, the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) authorized TIFIA for \$300 million per year from FY 2019 to FY 2020, expanded loan eligibility to include transit-oriented development (TOD) projects, and lowered the minimum anticipated project cost to qualify from \$50 million to \$10 million for TOD and from \$50 million to \$15 million for Intelligent Transportation System projects, retaining a \$50 million threshold for all other eligible surface transportation projects. The IIJA authorized TIFIA (and many other transportation programs) through FY 2026 and provides \$1.25 billion in guaranteed contract authority from the Highway Trust Fund from FY 2022 to FY 2026 for the TIFIA program (or \$250 million annually). *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*
- **Support funding and policies that enhance TOD options for local governments.** Fairfax County is considering various options for funding infrastructure to support TOD. The County was one of 16 organizations selected to receive funding through the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) TOD Planning Pilot Program in 2016. TOD grants can play a significant role in several areas in Fairfax County, including Tysons, Springfield, Seven Corners, and Reston. The enacted FY 2024 T-HUD appropriations bill provided \$10.5 million for the TOD Planning Pilot Program. The House and Senate FY 2025 T-HUD appropriations bills do not provide any additional funds for this program; however, the Senate FY 2025 T-HUD report requires USDOT and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to establish a task force to: examine ways of leveraging existing underwriting procedures used in the TIFIA and Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) application processes; explore opportunities for layering federal financing to meet TIFIA’s investment grade rating requirement; and, to address timing challenges for projects with multiple financing sources while minimizing the need for duplicative credit reviews. The IIJA does not authorize or provide any additional appropriations for this program. On October 27, 2023, the Biden Administration announced that USDOT released new guidance to states, localities, and developers on how the TIFIA and RRIF programs can be used to finance housing development near transportation, including conversion projects. In addition, USDOT released a policy statement with principles for pursuing transportation projects with the dual goals of increasing affordable housing supply and decreasing emissions. USDOT also released guidance that makes it easier for transit agencies to repurpose properties for TOD and affordable housing projects, including conversions near transit by transferring properties to local governments, non-profits, and for-profit developers of affordable housing at no cost. The County supports expanding its funding partnership with the federal government for TOD to ensure continuation of the region’s economic vitality. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

ENERGY

Climate Change

Support innovative approaches to address global climate change, including incentives to increase research and development for emerging energy-efficient and renewable technologies, and carbon pricing to incentivize market forces to decrease the use of fossil fuels. Also support federal funding for state and local governments to address issues related to global climate change, including the identification of climate risks and vulnerabilities; the development of adaptation and resilience strategies; energy conservation; use of renewable energy sources (including waste to energy); green buildings and vehicles; preservation of parkland and wetlands; habitat creation; carbon sequestration; and reduced emissions and greenhouse gases.

For decades, Fairfax County has pursued initiatives to combat climate change. The County is currently accelerating and increasing local efforts to address the causes of climate change through the implementation of a Carbon Neutral Counties Declaration, as well as by implementing goals, strategies, and actions included in the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP), accepted in 2021. Complementing CECAP is Resilient Fairfax, the County's Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan to address the impacts of climate change. Accepted in 2022, the County is implementing the strategies identified in Resilient Fairfax to reduce climate risks to County residents, businesses, infrastructure, and systems. The federal government must do its part by adopting a more aggressive strategy to address climate change, along with innovative policies, including carbon pricing, clean energy mandates, investments in green infrastructure and services, and strategies for preservation of forest and wetlands. This strategy should consider negative impacts on vulnerable populations and include community involvement and public education. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

ADDITIONAL TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization

Oppose further changes to the perimeter and slot rules for Reagan National Airport that upset the balance between Washington Dulles International and Reagan National Airports, as most growth should be directed to Dulles. Support efforts to reduce the impact of aircraft noise on Fairfax County residents. Support local government involvement in policies addressing unmanned aircraft systems (UAS).

Perimeter and Slot Rules

Federal law limits flights at Reagan National Airport to ensure appropriate flight volume between Washington Dulles International Airport and Reagan National Airport. Previous FAA reauthorization bills (2012, 2011, and 2003) have given Reagan National Airport more permitted slots (allowable takeoffs and landings per hour) and more non-stop flights beyond 1,250 miles (perimeter rule) to the detriment of Washington Dulles International. Despite opposition from many in the region, including Fairfax County, the five-year FAA reauthorization signed into law in May 2024 allows the addition of five incoming and five outgoing flights at Reagan National Airport. According to the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA), changes to the slot and perimeter rules will add to congestion, delays, and stress on airport infrastructure, eroding the passenger experience. The interconnectedness of Virginia's aviation system makes Dulles imperative to the continued success of airports around the Commonwealth, and focusing most air expansion at Dulles is not only critical to the region's air travel, but also a major economic driving force in Fairfax County and Northern Virginia. As a result, the region, the Commonwealth, and the federal government have made significant investments in transportation projects to further spur the airport's growth, including the Metrorail Silver Line extension and improvements to Route 28 that will provide greater accessibility to Dulles. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

Aircraft Noise Pollution

The 2024 FAA reauthorization mandates that the FAA review and revise, as appropriate, its noise standard, regularly updating the relevant Congressional committees on these actions. The law requires the FAA to seek

feedback from airports, airport users, and individuals living in the vicinity of airports and in airport-adjacent communities before implementing any changes to any noise policies or standards. The law also addresses noise-mitigating flight procedures, requiring the FAA to consider several actions to reduce aircraft noise:

- Implementing flight procedures that can mitigate the impact of aircraft noise, based on a consensus community recommendation.
- Working with airport sponsors and potentially impacted neighboring communities in establishing or modifying aircraft arrival and departure routes.
- Discouraging local encroachment of residential or other buildings near airports that could create future aircraft noise complaints or impact airport operations or aviation safety in collaboration with local governments.

The 2018 FAA reauthorization bill required the FAA to study the potential health impacts of overflight noise, consider the feasibility of amending current procedures for noise sensitive communities, and review the federal Next Generation Air Transportation System community involvement practices (known as NextGen, this is an upgrade to the nation's air traffic control system designed to manage more air traffic with greater efficiency). The implementation of NextGen has resulted in flight paths concentrated over certain communities. In particular, the concentration of flight paths for arrivals and departures to the south of Reagan National Airport has resulted in a significant increase in noise over residential areas in the County along those flight paths.

Based on the 2018 directive, the FAA released a noise survey in 2021 which noted a substantial increase in the percentage of people who are highly annoyed by aircraft noise. Following the release, the Congressional Quiet Skies Caucus, including Congressman Don Beyer (VA), sent a letter to the FAA expressing concerns over the survey's outdated noise metrics. The FAA's response indicated the agency is taking steps to begin a policy review to advance the scientific understanding of noise impacts. It also indicated it would continue a community engagement strategy to discuss the management of airspace with affected communities, as well as work with airports, airlines, and local elected officials on strategies to promote transparency in resolving community concerns. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) also released a report in September 2021, about the issue, which found that the FAA's approach for measuring noise does not provide a clear view of what communities may experience and recommended that the FAA supplement its analysis and provide more information to the public about potential flight noise.

Language included in the FY 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act directs the FAA to engage with communities affected by aircraft noise. It also directs the FAA to ensure that Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funds are made available to reduce the impact of noise on communities near airports and on communities further from airports that experience highly repetitive overflights, such as residential noise insulation. These items were supported by the Congressional Quiet Skies Caucus. Fairfax County supports efforts to reduce the impact of aircraft noise on County residents by modifying flight paths south of Reagan National Airport, keeping aircraft more centered over the Potomac River, rather than over residential areas. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)

The regulation of UAS (also known as drones) is another component of the FAA reauthorization legislation. In 1997, USDOT established a pilot program to test and evaluate the integration of UAS into the National Airspace System (NAS). Virginia Tech's Center for Innovative Technology (CIT) was one of the original 10 lead participants. In the 2018 FAA reauthorization, Congress sought to address some of these issues by directing the Comptroller General of the US to study the potential role of local governments in UAS regulations. Increased local government involvement in the development and implementation of UAS policy has been a priority of the National Association of Counties (NACo). In 2019, the FAA established UAS requirements related to recreational drone pilots in the Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability (LAANC) system, which automates the application and approval process for drone pilots, allowing for more efficient correspondence between such pilots and air traffic controllers. Those requirements remain in place. Additionally, in October 2020, the then US Secretary of Transportation announced the conclusion of the three year UAS Integration Pilot Program (IPP), and

indicated that eight of the nine state, local, and tribal governments that participated in the program, including the CIT team, signed new agreements with the FAA to continue to tackle remaining UAS integration challenges. The eight governments will participate in the new BEYOND initiative, which is focused “on operating under established rules rather than waivers; collecting data to develop performance-based standards; collecting and addressing community feedback and understanding the societal and community benefits; and streamlining the approval processes for UAS integration.”

In July 2023, the FAA released an Updated Fact Sheet on State and Local Regulation of UAS, revising a 2015 fact sheet setting forth the preemption framework applicable to UAS, and providing information about the federal regulatory framework to be used by states and localities when considering laws affecting UAS. The House and Senate FAA reauthorization bills include different aspects of the recommendations laid out in the framework and other best practices from the field. Fairfax County supports the continuation of initiatives, like the BEYOND initiative to integrate UAS into the NAS, which are crucial for addressing safety concerns while promoting innovation in this area.

The County supports provisions in the 2024 FAA reauthorization allowing law enforcement, fire departments, emergency medical services, and other public safety agencies to be eligible users of tethered UAS (devices that have a physical link to the ground and are less than 150 feet above the ground) unless otherwise permitted by the USDOT. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

Transportation Projects

The IJJA created several competitive grant opportunities that are funded through FY 2026. As these various funding opportunities become available, the County supports the following key transportation priorities:

- **Richmond Highway (US Route 1) Bus Rapid Transit (BRT):**

The Richmond Highway Corridor is one of the most heavily transit-dependent areas of Fairfax County, and one that is critically important to federal operations as an access point and evacuation route for Fort Belvoir. It is also one of the most congested and economically disadvantaged areas of the County. Embark Richmond Highway is an initiative focused on creating a multimodal future for the Corridor, which includes long-term planning efforts and a focus on economic development.

The County is working with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to widen Richmond Highway between Mount Vernon Memorial Highway (South) and Sherwood Hall Lane, with over two-thirds of the funding for this \$465 million project coming from Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTa) regional funds. When completed, this will result in a six-lane facility between Fort Belvoir and I-95/I-495 in Alexandria (including both pedestrian and bicycle facilities). Further, this is a vital component of the County’s Richmond Highway BRT project, known as “The One.” The One (a fundamental part of the Embark plan and redevelopment effort) will extend from the Huntington Metrorail Station to Fort Belvoir. The project will include new transit stations, as well as facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians. These projects will enhance the value of current and future federal investments, among them the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) related improvements to Fort Belvoir facilities, by improving access to and mobility around Fort Belvoir. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

- **Frontier Drive Extension:**

This project will extend Frontier Drive from Franconia-Springfield Parkway to Loisdale Road, including access to the Franconia-Springfield Metrorail Station and interchange improvements to and from the Franconia-Springfield Parkway. This project is designed to reduce congestion on I-95 between the Fairfax County Parkway and Old Keene Mill Road/Franconia Road, and in the area around the Springfield Town Center. It will enhance connectivity and access to and from the Franconia-Springfield Metrorail Station, Springfield Town Center, and the Springfield Industrial Park. The project will also create a better multimodal environment by including bike and pedestrian accommodations. Additionally, the extension of Frontier Drive will provide significant benefits to the new Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Headquarters in Springfield, as well as a General Services Administration (GSA) facility, the Medical

Campus at Northern Virginia Community College, and other businesses along Springfield Center Drive. Though this area currently has substantial and varied transportation and transit options, this project will further increase access, creating benefits for Fairfax County, the Northern Virginia region, and the federal government. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*

- **Davis Drive Bridge:**

This project will establish a new connection between Sunrise Valley Drive in Fairfax County and Innovation Avenue in Loudoun County over the Dulles Toll/Access Road. The new connection will be located just west of the new Innovation Center Metrorail Station, providing access to the facility and the development occurring near the station. The project will also include bicycle and pedestrian facilities, facilitating multimodal access to the Metrorail System and the entire Washington Metropolitan area through the newly opened Silver Line Extension. Further, the project will provide additional capacity across the Dulles Corridor, reducing congestion and delay on Virginia Route 28, Centreville Avenue, and other roadways in the area. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*

- **Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT):**

The County is working with its regional partners to study and implement a Route 7 BRT project. When finished, the project will provide 14 miles of BRT service, connecting Tysons in Fairfax County to the US Department of Defense Mark Center Facility in Alexandria through Bailey's Crossroads, Seven Corners, and Falls Church. When completed, the project will provide as many as 45,000 transit trips each day, connect vital business and residential areas, and provide high quality transit along this important historic corridor. The County has taken a variety of actions in support of this effort; including approving Memorandums of Agreement on various phases of the study, endorsing the preferred alignment for the Fairfax County Route 7 BRT study between West Falls Church Metrorail Station and the Spring Hill Metrorail Station; and authorizing a Comprehensive Plan amendment adding the preferred alignment and associated potential station locations as outlined in the County's study. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*

- **Potomac River Crossings:**

The need to cross the Potomac River creates major transportation challenges in the National Capital Region. The American Legion Bridge, one of the most heavily used in the region, is also the most congested with traffic volumes expected to increase over the next 25 years. Since the largest number of vehicles traversing the American Legion Bridge travel between Fairfax and Montgomery Counties, the chokepoint created by this bridge requires long-term solutions which are currently being considered by Maryland and Virginia. Additionally, Metro is limited to running 26 trains per hour through the Rosslyn tunnel while the areas around the three Metro lines utilizing the tunnel are projected to add 37 percent more people and 30 percent more jobs by 2040. The volume of commuters demonstrates that another crossing is essential to mobility in the area. It is vital that the capacity needs across the Potomac River be addressed, including at the American Legion Bridge and Rosslyn Tunnel, to alleviate the existing congestion and ensure the movement of people and goods throughout this economically vibrant region. Such action is essential to the economic success of Fairfax County and the National Capital Region. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

FEDERAL FACILITIES AND EMPLOYEES

Federal Agency Relocation, Consolidation, and Related Activities

Support relocation of federal facilities to sites in Fairfax County with close proximity to transit and numerous transportation options, to mitigate transportation impacts while encouraging redevelopment and job growth in the County. Also support the inclusion of sufficient funds to address the planning, infrastructure, and transportation issues raised by the federal agency relocations. Oppose haphazard cuts to federal employment and elimination of non-partisan civil service.

With its strategic location, skilled talent base, extensive federal employee population and facilities, and vibrant technology sector, Fairfax County provides an environment of impressive synergy for federal facilities and private

industry. With the largest suburban office market in the region and just minutes from Washington, D.C., the County's economic advantage lies in the access it provides to the federal government, as well as national and international companies.

Both the Commonwealth and Fairfax County have strong connections to the federal government, which provide tremendous economic growth opportunities, but also creates a unique vulnerability to fluctuations in federal funding, particularly as it relates to defense spending. In the FY 2023 US Department of Defense (DOD) Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) "Defense Spending by State" report, the Commonwealth of Virginia ranked second in total defense spending (\$68.5 billion), first as a percentage of state GDP (including \$46.8 billion in defense contract spending), and first in defense personnel spending (\$21.3 billion) – Fairfax County is vital to those placements, ranking second nationally in defense contract spending at \$18.3 billion (a significant increase from \$9.9 billion in FY 2016). Additionally, the Commonwealth ranked second in defense personnel, employing over 247,200 individuals, including over 21,700 in Fairfax County.

Fairfax County has a strong partnership with the federal government, and the County supports continuing that relationship by seeking additional federal agency relocations and consolidations, accompanied by appropriate federal funding and coordinated planning to ensure impacts are mitigated and a successful outcome is achieved for both the County and the federal government. Fairfax County will continue to focus on the County's role in the National Capital Region, providing a well-educated workforce, strong business climate, and connection to the functioning of the federal government, while closely monitoring potential future federal funding cuts that could affect the County and local economy.

In particular, Fairfax County supports:

- ***Relocation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Headquarters to Springfield, and other federal facilities to locations within Fairfax County.*** There are several opportunities to leverage Fairfax County's strategic location in Northern Virginia for federal agencies considering relocations, including the relocation of the FBI headquarters from its current location in downtown Washington, DC. In June 2022, the GSA, in a report to Congress, identified three locations for construction of a new FBI headquarters in the National Capital Region, and one of those locations is in the Springfield area of Fairfax County. The Springfield site is well situated for the headquarters – it is located less than 40 miles from Quantico, which houses the FBI's Laboratory Division, Operational Technology Division, and FBI Academy, along with the Drug Enforcement Administration's Training Center and other federal facilities. This site is also located next to the newly opened headquarters for the TSA, which has reaffirmed the robust collaboration between the County and the federal government. Further, it is well served by the existing transportation network, within walking distance of the Franconia-Springfield Transportation Center that is served by WMATA's Metrorail; the Virginia Railway Express commuter rail system; local, regional, and intercity bus services; and near several equity emphasis areas within the County. Though the GSA announced the selection of the Greenbelt site as the next home of the FBI headquarters in November 2023, the Director of the FBI and Members of Congress raised a number of questions about the process, particularly because the professional, three-person panel that evaluated each of the potential sites according to the parameters and criteria included in the published site selection plan, reached a unanimous recommendation that Springfield is the highest rated site, writing a detailed report articulating the basis for its recommendation of Springfield (the panel was comprised of two career GSA officials and one career FBI official, along with several technical, legal, and procurement advisors). Fairfax County continues to believe that the Springfield site is the best option for the FBI, and would welcome such a relocation, as well as other similar federal relocations to the Springfield site. The establishment of such a workplace increases the economic vitality of those areas along with the County by encouraging business development, supporting small businesses, and growing the tax base, among other benefits. These continued partnerships underscore the opportunities that exist, the importance of sustained relationships, and the benefits the County provides to the federal workforce. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

- **Legislative language requiring greater coordination between a federal agency and host communities in any future federal government relocation and consolidation proposals for both new facilities and the use of existing facilities.** Any future federal government relocations or consolidations should include a requirement that the appropriate federal agency analyze the transportation impacts of such a recommendation, both on the facility and the surrounding community, before final recommendations (including provisions addressing the identified transportation impacts) are made, as was done when the relocation of the FBI was being considered. Coordination should continue following such relocations as well – for example, agencies should provide Transportation Demand Management services and strategies, including offering information on transit options, mandating that employees stationed at the facility telecommute or arrive at work before or after peak rush hour, assigning preferential parking to carpool users, and other options. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- **Funding for transportation projects essential to DOD relocation and consolidation.** Continued collaboration between Fairfax County and its federal partners is necessary to provide transportation improvements in the areas most directly affected by ongoing operations at Fort Belvoir. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- **Distribution of full funding (\$180 million) for widening US Route 1.** The Defense Access Roads program, administered by the DOD OLDCC, appropriated \$180 million in federal funds to widen US Route 1 from Telegraph Road to Mount Vernon Memorial Highway to improve road access and traffic flow to the Fort Belvoir Army Hospital. This phase of the Route 1 widening is complete, and approximately \$30-34 million in unspent funds remains in the program – such funding could be used for additional improvements in the Route 1 corridor within the scope of the Defense Access Roads requirements. However, OLDCC personnel have stated that after completion of all six Veterans Affairs Hospital infrastructure improvement projects, OLDCC will seek guidance from the relevant Congressional committees on how the remaining funds should be spent. All projects are complete and the OLDCC expects the administrative process to close out all accounts will be completed by January 30, 2025. Thereafter, OLDCC will submit a report to Congress. The County continues to work with its Congressional delegation, federal agencies, and state partners on efforts to ensure that available revenue can be utilized to mitigate impacts in the Route 1 corridor as intended. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position)*

TAX AND FINANCE

Tax provisions included in the 2017 Tax Reform and Jobs Act will expire in 2025, so tax legislation and policy will be a top priority in the 119th Congress. Fairfax County has several priorities for consideration in the upcoming tax package.

Tax-Exempt Status of Municipal Bonds

Support maintaining the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds as a critical tool generating investments in vital public infrastructure for localities, saving state and local governments nationwide hundreds of billions in interest costs over the last century.

As the primary source of funding for local infrastructure projects, municipal bonds have provided localities throughout the US with a valuable funding tool for decades. In Fairfax County, such bonds are vital for investments in public improvements and strengthening economic development efforts. Fortunately, the 2017 Tax Reform and Jobs Act continued the tax deduction for municipal bonds, but there is still a risk that the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds could be eliminated. While the 2017 tax law protected tax-exempt municipal bonds, it eliminated the advanced refunding of such bonds. Fairfax County supports reinstating advanced refunding and preserving tax-exempt municipal bonds. Per NACo, if municipal bonds were fully taxable during the 2003-2012 period, it is estimated the financing for the 21 largest infrastructure purposes would have cost state and local governments an additional \$495 billion of interest expense. Localities, states, and state/local authorities financed \$3.3 trillion in infrastructure investments using municipal bonds from 2012-2022. Over the past half century, state and local

governments have increasingly borne the cost of infrastructure and public improvements. According to the Congressional Budget Office, about 75 percent of public funding for transportation and water infrastructure alone is supplied by state and local governments, and the federal savings from any proposed changes would not offset the economic strain that would be shifted to state and local governments (and their respective taxpayers) because those investments will become more expensive. The County urges Congress to maintain this critical exemption. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*

State and Local Tax Deductions

Support efforts to eliminate or increase the cap on state and local tax (SALT) deductions.

The impacts of the 2017 federal tax cuts affected individuals in a variety of ways due to personal circumstances and financial decisions; however, the inclusion of a \$10,000 cap on taxpayers' ability to deduct state and local taxes (SALT) from their federally taxable income raised concerns among state and local governments, as those revenues support a variety of services, including funding for education, public safety, transportation, infrastructure, and human services. Given the significant appreciation in home values in Fairfax County, the \$10,000 limit on the SALT deduction for federal income taxes poses a substantial hardship for many families. Fairfax County supports eliminating or substantially increasing the SALT cap. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

Support continuation of IRA Clean Energy Tax Credits and IIJA clean energy investments.

Passage of the IRA, which invests \$369 billion in climate change and energy security measures, was an important step in moving these issues forward. The County supports funding and incentives to increase research and development for emerging energy-efficient and renewable technologies, including extending the Solar Tax Credit (also known as an Investment Tax Credit) for both commercial and residential projects. The IRA increased that residential credit to 30 percent for systems installed between 2022 and 2032. That will decrease to 26 percent for systems installed in 2033, and to 22 percent for systems installed in 2034. The Solar Tax Credits for commercial projects include, for systems placed in service in 2022 or later and beginning construction before 2033: an Investment Tax Credit of 30 percent of project cost or a per kilowatt-hour Production Tax Credit for the first 10 years of a system's operation. Commercial projects may be eligible for bonus credits if they meet domestic content standards (which allow clean energy projects to be eligible for additional tax credits if they contain a certain percentage of manufactured products produced in the US (like steel or iron, for example)) or are located in a low-income community. In addition, the County supports President Biden's robust fuel economy standards for Model Year (MY) 2023 to MY 2026. Finally, the County supports continued funding for programs included in the IRA to incentivize the expansion of energy efficiency improvements and zero-emission vehicle infrastructure, including the Energy Efficient Home Improvement Credit and clean vehicle credits for new and used vehicles.

The County also supports continuation of Direct Pay, which provides financial assistance to local governments, non-profit organizations, and other tax-exempt entities to defray the costs associated with clean energy investments. Through this program, such groups are eligible for cash payments equal to the amount of money that would be reduced from their tax liability if they were not tax exempt. Tax credits eligible for direct pay include projects that generate clean electricity through solar, wind, and battery storage projects, the installation of EV charging infrastructure, and the purchase of clean vehicles for state or county vehicle fleets. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program

Support actions to strengthen and expand the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC), which plays a key role in financing affordable housing, to increase available credits and make tax credit equity usage more efficient.

In Fairfax County, approximately 10,000 affordable homes have been constructed, preserved, or rehabilitated utilizing the LIHTC program. The ability to encourage private investments in affordable housing through tax credits is critical to helping meet the demand in the County and to increase the number of affordable homes nationally. Specifically, federal legislation should, among other things:

- Increase allocations of highly lucrative and competitive nine percent housing tax credits to states by 50 percent. These credits are an extremely successful and efficient method for facilitating the production and rehabilitation of affordable housing across the US. On average, 50 percent of the total financing for nine percent LIHTC projects comes from the equity derived from the credit. In areas with high area median incomes (AMI) and rents, these credits can effectively create new and preserve existing rental housing with below-market rents (because of the higher incomes in these areas, LIHTC developments are financially feasible since LIHTC rents, while below-market, are tied to the AMI of the metropolitan area and as such will be higher in these areas than in areas with lower median incomes, leading to better cash flows for the property).
- Prohibit states from requiring special approvals that treat affordable rental housing differently from any other multifamily project; and,
- Lower the bond financing threshold from 50 percent to 25 percent for private activity bonds to enable more bond deals. Private activity bonds, such as those regularly issued by the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA), are tax-exempt bonds issued to provide special financing benefits for qualified projects. This step would relieve the intense pressure on the bond volume cap experienced nationally, including in Virginia. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.) (See also the Affordable Housing position on page 15.)*

Parity for Transit Benefits

Support continued parity between the levels of transportation benefits provided for transit and for parking.

Permanent parity between the level of tax-free employer-provided transit benefits and parking benefits is important in making transit service more attractive to commuters. The 2017 Tax Reform and Jobs Act eliminated the business deduction for private employers providing qualified mass transit and parking subsidies (this change did not affect the federal government, which can continue to provide such subsidies). In the past, businesses were able to claim a federal business tax deduction on the amount they contributed to the commuter benefits program. Private sector employees can choose to contribute a portion of their income for qualified mass transit and parking expenses, pre-tax. In November 2023, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced that employees who use commuter benefits can spend up to \$315 per month tax-free beginning for calendar year 2024. Since most County transit riders have vehicles available, an end to deductions for employers in the private sector may result in more commuters driving, thereby worsening the substantial congestion on Northern Virginia's roads. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Federal Funding for Costs of Educating Federally-Connected Students

Support full funding for Impact Aid, which provides funding to school divisions that educate federally-connected students, and revisions to the Impact Aid eligibility process to ensure all students with military student identifiers are automatically included in the program (reducing the administrative burden of identifying relevant students). Also support increased Impact Aid funding for schools with a substantial population of military-connected families, as well as increased funding for military-connected students with disabilities who receive special needs exemptions. Additionally, support federal reimbursement for costs associated with educating and providing supportive services to unaccompanied minors placed in Fairfax County by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

Impact Aid serves many federally-connected families and provides the well-educated workforce and strong business climate that is so vital to the functioning of the federal government. Serving nearly 16,400 federally-connected children places a significant cost on Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) (data from the 2023-2024 school year). The federal government attempts to compensate localities for these costs through the Impact Aid program, which is designed to assist local school districts that have lost property tax revenue due to the presence of tax-exempt federal property, or that have experienced increased expenditures due to the enrollment of federally-connected children. However, this program does not adequately compensate localities for the actual cost of providing a quality K-12 education as a result of consistent underfunding. In FY 2025, FCPS expects to receive approximately \$4 million in Impact Aid, which covers only one percent of the costs incurred by FCPS to educate such children. If this program were fully funded, based on current funding formulas, FCPS would have received approximately \$20.1 million in additional funding for FY 2024. FCPS receives less Impact Aid than other school divisions partially because when Impact Aid is not fully funded, as has been the case for decades, the funding formula prioritizes school districts with a higher percentage of military-connected students, rather than school districts like FCPS that have both more military-connected children overall and specific schools with high concentrations of military-connected students. Additional Impact Aid funding is needed to mitigate the effect of that component of the formula. Furthermore, revising the Impact Aid eligibility identification process to automatically “opt in” any student with a military student identifier would be extremely helpful in reducing the administrative burden of identifying relevant students and ensuring that FCPS receives Impact Aid funding for all military-connected students. In addition to basic Impact Aid funding, school districts also receive payments for federally-connected children who have disabilities resulting in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP); but in FY 2024, this payment was only \$763 per child, despite the fact that it costs FCPS more than \$32,000 per year per child to provide special education services (FCPS has over 1,126 military-connected students with IEPs). Increased Impact Aid funding is needed for military-connected students with disabilities who receive special needs exemptions. The Senate’s FY 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill includes \$1.65 billion for Impact Aid, an increase of \$20 million over the enacted FY 2024 funding level while the House’s FY 2025 Labor-Health and Human Services-Education appropriations bill includes approximately \$1.6 billion, an increase of \$5 million over the enacted FY 2024 funding level.

Additionally, significant numbers of federally-connected, school-aged children have been placed in Fairfax County through the federal ORR over the last decade. In fact, between October 1, 2014, and July 31, 2024, Fairfax County had the ninth highest number of placements in the country (over 11,000). Though the County celebrates its diversity and recognizes that a varied student population benefits all children in the school system, these placements (and the corresponding financial impacts on FCPS) are unpredictable, fluctuating dramatically over the past several years, and frequently occur after the adoption of local budgets. In addition, many unaccompanied children need supportive services, including case management, basic needs assistance, employment preparation, and health care, which are no longer provided by ORR once children are placed with sponsors. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

Affordable Housing

Support federal funding (such as the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and Homeless Assistance Grants, including Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grants) and actions to increase the availability of affordable housing, provide emergency rental assistance as well as rental assistance through Housing Choice Vouchers, and prevent homelessness. Also support incentivizing affordable housing creation and preservation, including full funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), which provides funding for affordable housing through acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction, and tenant-based rental assistance, and other innovative financing tools. Additionally, support legislation that would provide authority and funding to HUD to further protect manufactured housing communities. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

Social Safety Net

Support federal funding for programs and services that provide a critical social safety net for vulnerable individuals and families, including those who earn more than the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), but less than the basic cost of living in Fairfax County (known as the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) population).

It is the responsibility of government at all levels – federal, state, and local – to help individuals and families reach their highest level of personal achievement. However, the high costs of housing, child care, and other living expenses make it difficult for families to afford the essentials. According to the United Way’s United for ALICE report, in Fairfax County, 23 percent of households (95,647) are part of the ALICE population and are typically ineligible for traditional safety net supports. Recent data from the Capital Area Food Bank highlights concerning trends, with 37 percent of households in the National Capital Region (27 percent of households in Fairfax County) experiencing food insecurity in the past year – the greatest rate of increase is occurring in households earning approximately \$100,000 to \$150,000. Additionally, 76 percent of those experiencing food insecurity were employed and 20 percent of households earning the regional median income of \$120,000 experienced food insecurity, highlighting the particular challenges facing high cost-of-living regions. Healthy and engaged individuals, families, and communities with upward mobility opportunities are the foundation for present and future security and prosperity and ensuring that requires a strong partnership across all levels of government to maintain and expand the critical safety net. Fairfax County opposes changes that shift additional responsibilities to localities as well as new eligibility requirements intended to restrict access to basic needs, weakening the federal/state/local partnership – particularly in a state where financial support for the social safety net tends to be minimal.

Fairfax County supports programs and funding streams that:

- Help residents of Fairfax County meet their basic needs, including nutrition programs (such as SNAP, WIC, and universal school meals) and CSBG. It is also critical to ensure federal funds are available to replace any SNAP benefits stolen due to skimming cards and other scams, and that the security of Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards is enhanced to protect against future theft.
- Ensure a workforce equipped for emerging, high-growth industries by providing affordable and accessible learning opportunities (including through funding workforce development programs) for all ages and stages of development.
- Improve access to affordable, quality child care for families with low incomes, including increased funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant. With the end of federal COVID relief dollars in FY 2024, significant funding challenges will continue. According to a recent Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) report, infant child care is already unaffordable for 85 percent of Virginia households, and the lack of accessible and affordable infant-toddler care in Virginia costs taxpayers \$3.1 billion annually in foregone wages, lost productivity and unrealized tax revenue.
- Promote school readiness for at-risk children, including increased funding for Head Start.
- Provide local flexibility to meet the needs of a changing and challenging economic climate, while avoiding penalties to localities that exhibit prudent fiscal management.
- Protect the health and well-being of residents through programs such as the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).
- Provide sufficient funding to meet federal mandates, or at a minimum, adequate flexibility to ensure the success of priority programs.
- Ensure that the basic needs of low-income military families are met (many are paid so little that they are forced to use public assistance to feed their families).
- Help older adults and people with disabilities remain safe and independent in their communities, such as the Older Americans Act programs.
- Assist states in providing adult protective services and long-term care ombudsman programs. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

Support funding to address housing, water, infrastructure, and human service needs, and to expand economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and communities.

CDBG provides flexible funding for localities to address the needs of low- and moderate-income individuals, including community development activities to address threats to health or safety, rehabilitation of housing, conversion of commercial buildings to housing, construction and improvement of public facilities (such as water, sewer, and sidewalks) and job creation/retention activities. In FY 2025, Fairfax County received \$5.8 million in CDBG funds. Congress provided formula and entitlement funding for CDBG at \$3.3 billion in FY 2022, FY 2023, and FY 2024. For FY 2025, the Biden Administration proposed funding CDBG at \$2.9 billion, while the House and Senate Appropriations Committees each proposed \$3.3 billion for CDBG. Fairfax County supports increasing CDBG funding to \$4.2 billion in FY 2025, which is the level requested by NACo. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

Department of Justice (DOJ)

Support federal assistance to state and local governments to develop and implement programs designed to improve outcomes for individuals with behavioral health issues involved in the criminal justice system. Also support continued funding for DOJ programs that provide critical support to local law enforcement.

The Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCPC) provides funding for state and local governments to develop and implement programs designed to improve outcomes for individuals with behavioral health issues who are involved in the criminal justice system. Law enforcement officers are often the first responders when an individual is in a mental health crisis – FCPD responded to over 9,400 mental health-related calls in calendar year 2023. Such calls, at times, can lead to incarceration for non-violent offenses, precluding individuals from receiving appropriate treatment for behavioral health issues. Locally, Fairfax County’s “Diversion First” initiative offers alternatives to incarceration for people with behavioral health issues who come into contact with the criminal justice system. In recent years, the County has enhanced its behavioral health crisis response system, with a continuum of crisis response services in the community. This includes the County’s Co-Responder Program, comprised of both behavioral health and law enforcement professionals. Diversion First has had a significant impact – since 2016, there have been more than 4,100 diversions from potential arrest. Additionally, there has been a 21 percent decrease in the jail behavioral health population with misdemeanor charges from 2015 to 2023. However, over the same period, the number of inmates referred to the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) jail-based services increased by 84 percent. Though the average daily population has decreased since FY 2008, the medical complexities of inmates have increased, with complex substance use and mental health disorders becoming more common. Federal funding is needed to sustain and expand these critical initiatives. Fairfax County supports full funding (\$50 million) of the JMHCPC, which has not been fully funded since its inception in 2004. The program received \$40 million in FY 2024. For FY 2025, the Biden Administration requested \$45 million, while the House and Senate FY 2025 Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bills provide \$40 million and \$45 million for the JMHCPC, respectively.

The County also supports increased funding, or at a minimum, level funding for DOJ programs that provide critical support to County law enforcement, including: the Byrne/Justice Assistance Grant Program (Byrne/JAG); the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP); the COPS Hiring Grant Program; and the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA) grant program. Federal funding from these programs assists the County in combatting crime, managing better outcomes for youth, providing crucial resources to law enforcement officers, and achieving the highest level of public safety for its residents. Local public safety agencies are also diverting individuals to the 988 Lifeline when possible; however, increased promotion of 988 at the national level could reduce unnecessary 911 calls and use of public safety resources. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

Substance Use Disorder

Support increased capacity to address the ongoing substance use disorder epidemic through community-based treatment (including detoxification, medication-assisted, residential, and intensive outpatient programs) and innovative efforts to limit the supply of opioids, particularly fentanyl which is involved in nearly all fatal overdoses in Fairfax County and the Commonwealth. Reduce barriers to improve access and facilitate the expansion of treatment programs, while supporting coordinated strategies that target high-risk age groups, including youth. Regulatory actions and innovative approaches to treatment, prevention and cessation are necessary to address the ongoing public health concerns around teen and young adult vaping, smoking, and nicotine product use.

Across Virginia, the number of fatal overdoses remained high, with over 2,500 fatalities in calendar year 2023 – an increase of over 55 percent from 2019. In the Fairfax Health District (including Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church), opioids are a top cause of unnatural death, with 117 opioid overdose deaths in 2023; all but seven of these fatalities were due to fentanyl. Though there have been federal actions in recent years to expand prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and recovery programs, make reforms to Medicaid and Medicare to better serve program participants with substance use disorders, and provide greater support for federal drug courts, more funding is needed for treatment, prevention, and drug courts to respond to the increasing need for services.

Current e-cigarette use among US youth has significantly decreased since 2019, reaching its lowest point in a decade. According to the latest National Youth Tobacco Survey, the number of US middle and high school students who reported current use dropped from around 2.1 million (7.7 percent) in 2023 to 1.6 million (5.9 percent) in 2024. In 2024, about one out of every 29 American middle school students (3.5 percent), and one out of every 13 American high school students (7.8 percent) reported using e-cigarettes in the past 30 days. However, among students who currently use e-cigarettes, over 620,000 teens (38.4 percent) reported using them frequently, and 26.3 percent reported daily use, indicating nicotine addiction. In November 2023, among Fairfax County students surveyed in the 8th, 10th and 12th grades, four percent of students reported vaping in the past month, falling behind alcohol use (with 7 percent of students reporting past month use). Lifetime e-cigarette use rates were 5.3 percent of 8th graders, 8 percent of 10th graders, and 14.4 percent of 12th graders, showing a decline from 2022 data.

In April 2022, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced a proposed rule to ban menthol from cigarettes and to ban flavored cigars, which are popular with youth. However, in April, the White House announced an indefinite delay on this rule, noting feedback related to civil rights and criminal justice received during the public comment period. In a September hearing before the House Energy & Commerce Committee, the director of the FDA's Center for Tobacco Products confirmed to lawmakers that the rule remains a priority for the agency. The County supports a federal effort to accelerate the evaluation of the health impacts of e-cigarettes and vaping products; allocate funding to increase communication of the risks associated with vaping THC and products purchased on the street; and strengthen enforcement to ensure e-cigarettes and vaping products are not marketed or sold to youth. It is essential that all substance use prevention programs and services are adequately funded, cost-efficient, accessible, and outcome driven. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

CONTINUING PRINCIPLES

Census

- Support continued funding for the US Census Bureau as it prepares for the 2030 Census and its subsequent data releases, which have major implications for the distribution of federal funding, Congressional redistricting, and the availability of social, demographic, and economic data used to guide policy decisions. An accurate Census count is critical to state and local government operations, and various survey programs (primarily the American Community Survey – a demographic, housing, and socioeconomic survey program conducted by the Census Bureau) provide data annually that inform essential decision-making and program development for state and local governments. It is estimated that Virginia will lose up to \$2,000 annually for each person not counted, or more than \$20,000 per person over a decade. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

- Support the use of accurate, equitable methodology in carrying out Census operations. This includes assessing the new disclosure avoidance methodology (a process used to protect the confidentiality of census respondents' personal information) implemented in the 2020 Decennial Census. The Census Bureau is required to keep personally identifiable information confidential – in order to do this, they utilize a disclosure avoidance system (DAS) to anonymize the data. In 2020, a new methodology was implemented for the first time to modernize the DAS. This new method injects extraneous information into the data, leading to concerns about data accuracy (which could have a significant impact on larger jurisdictions like Fairfax County, since a possible effect of the practice is to shift population counts from larger to smaller jurisdictions). *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support the Census Bureau's ongoing surveys and programs, and the technology developed to aid data distribution and data application, especially as it relates to the integration and linkage of data suitable for local and regional applications. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support continued funding for the Census Bureau in the long-term, as the agency conducts research and development of information-gathering technology to be used in anticipation of the 2030 Census. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*

Consumer Protection

- Support efforts to enhance consumer protections in products sold by alternative financial services, such as payday loans and vehicle title loans, to minimize the negative financial impact of such products on financially vulnerable consumers. Payday and vehicle title loans are often associated with practices that drive consumers further into debt. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support efforts to enhance consumer protections in drug manufacturing, particularly for lifesaving medications like insulin, as substantial price increases potentially lead to dangerous patient practices (rationing, underdosing, and injecting expired medication). *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support efforts to enhance online safety for youth, especially around social media's known negative effects on mental health and the use of their personal data. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support efforts to protect residents (particularly older adults) from scams, especially given the rapid rise in such incidents due to advances in artificial intelligence. *(New position.)*
- Support the US Digital Service, which works to improve the delivery of government services through technology and design, including the Internal Revenue Services' Direct File Pilot (a way for eligible people to file their taxes for free), improving Medicaid and CHIP eligibility and enrollment systems, modernizing the child care application process, and implementing a new, quality-based Medicare payment system. *(New position.)*

Economic Development

- Support reauthorization and funding for the US Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA), the only federal agency solely focused on economic development. *(New position.)*
- Support and protect initiatives to stimulate the start-up and early-stage capital ecosystem to connect and educate investors and entrepreneurs, with a focus on communities and business founders that traditionally receive less venture capital (including women, veterans, and people of color). *(New position.)*
- Support bills that would make vital improvements and reforms to EDA's core programs, enhancing its ability to address critical national priorities (including disaster preparedness and mitigation, workforce development, broadband expansion, small business support, inward investment and supply chains, and community development capacity building). *(New position.)*

Education

- Support fully funding the costs of implementing federal mandates, such as the requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), and support broad flexibility and additional resources to carry them out. FCPS projects IDEA funding for FY 2025 will be \$41.9 million, well below the full funding amount of 40 percent (which would provide in an additional \$127.9 million to FCPS for FY 2025). While ESSA programs do not have historically promised

funding levels, additional federal funding is needed to fully implement this law as intended. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

- Support elimination of the current “prior use” rule for tax credits on school renovation and reconstruction, which disallows these credits when the building is rehabilitated and used in the same manner as before the rehabilitation. This could provide a tool for rehabilitating aging County schools. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*

Elections

- Support federal efforts, especially those of the US Department of Homeland Security, to ensure the security and reliability of voting technology and operations, and elections results as part of the nation’s critical infrastructure, including funding for technical improvements. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support sufficient, ongoing federal funding to assist states and localities in implementing any new federal mandates for elections equipment and infrastructure, including accessibility and security requirements. The Virginia Department of Elections received approximately \$22.4 million in cybersecurity Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds in FYs 2018, 2020, 2022, and 2023, but HAVA funding for other aspects of election administration is needed. If states are the recipients of federal funding for improvements to election administration, consultation with localities should be required in determining the use of the funds. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support robust annual funding to the US Election Assistance Commission (EAC) for Election Security Grants to provide state governments with funding to improve election administration for federal offices, including to enhance technology and make certain election security improvements. Congress provided \$75 million for Election Security Grants in FY 2023 and \$55 million in FY 2024. The proposed House version of the FY 2025 Financial Services-General Government (FSGG) appropriations bill provides no funding for Election Security Grants while the Senate version of the FY 2025 FSGG appropriations bill includes \$75 million for Election Security Grants. *(New position.)*
- Monitor potential impacts of the Supreme Court decision striking down Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act, which eliminated the requirement that changes to Virginia’s election laws be “pre-cleared.” *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support legislation that enhances collaboration between federal agencies, states, and localities for election administration and security, including funding for federal agencies (such as the US EAC) that disseminate research and information on elections administration and infrastructure. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

Environment

- Support and protect incentives and innovations that encourage environmental preservation, enhancement, and resource conservation, including solid waste management improvements (such as extended producer responsibility, which ensures producers of consumer products are appropriately responsible for the treatment and disposal of the post-consumer products that they generate). *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support and protect incentives for open space preservation and enhancement, including within developed areas. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support adequate funding to local governments and achievable timelines for any new federal environmental regulations or mandates, particularly requirements related to the Chesapeake Bay watershed. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support and protect incentives and initiatives to enhance tree canopy in urban areas. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support and protect incentives and the utilization by both the County and FCPS of federal funding opportunities made available by the IRA for energy efficiency projects, including those in school facilities. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

Federal Contracting

- Support efforts to streamline and increase efficiency and productivity in federal government operations, by maximizing the strengths of both federal contractors and federal government employees. Such efforts to strike this balance should be accomplished in a thoughtful, open process that is not arbitrary in nature. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support and protect the critical partnership that exists between the public and private sectors in the conduct of federal government operations. This is particularly important in Fairfax County, where federal employees and federal contractors each contribute significantly to the local and state economy. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

Health

- Support close monitoring of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), safeguarding the provision of critical health coverage and an efficient allocation of resources, while providing clear direction and appropriate incentives for consumers and employers, and avoiding both service reductions and restrictions on access to care. Also support actions to ensure equitable access to care and reasonable health care costs. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support close collaboration between the federal government and the Commonwealth to maximize Medicaid expansion in Virginia. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support enhanced Medicaid reimbursement for skilled nursing care. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support appropriate oversight by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services of Medicaid-funded transportation service, in order to resolve ongoing complaints stemming from consistent poor performance and ensure adequate service is restored. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support federal funding initiatives that will advance research, surveillance, reporting, and diagnostics for Lyme disease. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support parity between primary healthcare and behavioral healthcare to ensure reimbursement parity for critically important behavioral health services. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support robust and sustained federal funding for Community Health Centers, which are non-profit, patient-governed organizations that provide high quality, cost-effective primary care, dental, behavioral health, and ancillary services to medically underserved populations. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support robust and sustained funding for health workforce programs such as the National Health Service Corps, which increase health care access in urban and rural health professional shortage areas. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

Homeland Security/Emergency Operations

- Support greater funding for “high risk” areas such as Northern Virginia and Fairfax County. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support timely delivery of funds and ways to achieve greater flexibility for use of funds, while maintaining strong accountability standards. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support federal assistance for the implementation of “Next Generation 911,” a major change in the provision of 911 services that is particularly critical for the National Capital Region. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support efforts to allow local governments to perform hazard response work that would be eligible for reimbursement of costs when a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application is pending to ensure essential mitigation efforts are not delayed while awaiting award decisions. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*

Immigration

- Oppose actions that would compromise the County’s ability to deliver local government programs and services that benefit or protect the community as a whole. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Oppose legislation that would mandate local governments to enforce federal immigration laws, especially in the area of law enforcement. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Oppose legislation or Executive Branch efforts that focus limited immigration enforcement resources on deporting law-abiding immigrants rather than on the small number who have committed violent crimes. *(New position.)*

Land Use

- Oppose any diminution of local land use authority, either by further limiting the scope of local regulatory authority or by creating new and more elaborate land use regulatory structures. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- The County supports the concept that disputes over land use authority are local in character and should be solved at the local level. Further, the County requests that the development community and regional entities discuss any concerns or problems with the County before seeking legislative solutions. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*

Libraries

- Support increased federal aid to state library agencies and local public libraries. The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) provides critically important federal funding for the nation’s libraries, including resources which allow the Library of Virginia to support local libraries, early learning, summer reading, training for library staff, and access to Virginia’s documentary history. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support reducing barriers to libraries acquiring eMaterials under reasonable terms and costs. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Oppose censorship efforts, ensuring access to library materials is preserved. *(New position.)*

Local Taxation

- Preserve existing local taxing authority. Encroachment upon local authority skews local accountability and hampers efforts to provide for constituent needs in the most cost effective and efficient manner. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support legislation allowing local governments to participate in the Federal Offset Program, which would improve the ability of local governments to collect delinquent local taxes by offsetting the owed taxes with reductions in the federal income tax refunds of the delinquent individual. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Oppose federal efforts to limit or delay the ability of states to collect sales tax from remote sellers. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*

Public Safety

- Support efforts to reauthorize the federal assault weapons ban included in the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support enhanced federal efforts to assist localities with gang prevention and intervention programs, as well as stronger gang prevention measures. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support additional resources to ensure gang prevention and intervention programs are adequately staffed with specialized personnel (including law enforcement data analysts and gang coordinators, among others). *(Reaffirms previous position.)*

Telecommunications/Communications

- Oppose any preemption or circumvention of local governments' control over land use decisions, including restrictions on the placement, construction, and modification of small cell and other wireless facilities, undergrounding requirements, and the implementation of time limits for reviewing wireless facility applications. Also oppose any attempt to eliminate local governments' right to charge, on a non-discriminatory basis, fair and reasonable compensation for use of public property. Monitor Federal Communications Commission (FCC) actions related to wireless antenna zoning and siting that diminish local authority over telecommunications facilities and equipment, particularly actions requiring local governments to automatically permit expansions of cell sites and other wireless facilities beyond currently approved boundaries (limited to 30 feet at present) and changes to the timing of the "shot clock" (the time limit for local governments to review wireless infrastructure applications). *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*
- Oppose any reduction or diminution of local government authority to: address consumer needs; regulate consumer services; and, negotiate and enforce cable franchises that include provisions such as redlining prohibitions, franchise fees, public, educational, and governmental channels and financial support, customer service provisions, and technical construction standards. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support pro-consumer actions by the FCC, such as the 2023 price transparency rulemaking proceeding, which required cable operators and satellite providers to show the full, "all-in" cost to their subscribers as a prominent single line item on bills and promotional materials, giving consumers an accurate reflection of their payment obligations and enabling them to comparison-shop among providers' offerings. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*
- Support federal grant programs that would fund broadband deployment, assist consumers in paying for broadband internet service, and help eliminate digital discrimination. *(Reaffirms previous position.)*