

# Joint Environmental Task Force

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Fairfax County School Board

## Final Report

[Date]

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## Executive Summary

The challenges of climate change are growing exponentially and we, as County leaders, need to set a clear and determined agenda to move as swiftly as possible to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change. Today, we not only hear the news and statistics about the environmental challenges across the globe, but we hear regularly from Fairfax County residents that they are concerned and want us to lead and be leaders.

The County and Schools have done much to advance environmental efforts, but in light of the urgency of the climate crisis, we must do more. The evidence is clear. We are experiencing more frequent and intense storms, sea level rise and extreme rain events, increasing temperatures with July 2020 being the hottest on record in the Northern Hemisphere and wildfires burning out of control.

Across the globe this past year we have seen unprecedented fires in Australia, the flooding of Venice due to sea level rise and extreme heat in Siberia. Here in Fairfax County we are prone to sea level rise along our east coast. The July 2019 rainfall and flooding event cost more than 14 million in recovery. We experienced 26 days over 90 degrees in July 2020. We also know that much like COVID-19, the effects of climate change will impact our low-income residents and communities most severely.

We must act now, and the Joint Environmental Task Force (JET) was established to do just that.

The following subcommittee sections detail the recommendations of the JET. Below is an executive summary of the JET recommendations for consideration by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Board:

- **Energy:** The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, the Fairfax County Park Authority, The Fairfax County Regional Housing Authority, and the Fairfax County School Board should commit to being energy carbon neutral by 2040.
- **Solid Waste and Recycling:** Fairfax County government and schools should set an aspirational goal to be at zero waste by 2030.
- **Workforce:** Fairfax County government and schools should provide additional resources for students and adult learners to know about and pursue “green” career paths.
- **Transportation:** Fairfax County Connector bus fleet should be transition to electric alternatives by 203, and the FCPS fleet by 2035. All non-bus fleet vehicles that have elective alternatives should be transitioned by 2025.

All County and school initiatives undertaken as a result of these recommendations shall be implemented through the One Fairfax Lens with a prioritization on equity.

## Background

On October 30, 2018 then Chairman Sharon Bulova brought forward a Board Matter, passed unanimously, that instructed County staff to identify potential areas of environmental collaboration with Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) to be presented at a joint Board of Supervisors – School Board meeting. At the subsequent Environmental Policy Meeting between the two Boards on April 2, 2019, the Boards discussed and decided to move forward to establish a joint committee, the Joint Environmental Task Force (JET). The respective Board Chairs, Chairman Bulova and then School Board Chair Karen Corbett Sanders, presented the framework of the JET to their Boards. The JET was charged with working with staff and engaging the community to identify areas for collaboration between Fairfax County Government and FCPS to further County efforts in energy efficiency and environmental sustainability, developing implementation strategies and making recommendations to the Boards.

In spring and summer 2019, the JET Executive Committee solicited community members to round out the membership, drafted a mission statement and developed focus areas. In September 2019 the JET held its first full membership meeting. At subsequent meetings, the mission and organizational areas were finalized and approved. From the organizational areas identified, four overarching focus areas were chosen for priority focus and subcommittees were formed to work with staff to understand existing practices and policies and to draft recommendations. The subcommittees included: energy, transportation, waste management and recycling, and workforce development. On September 2, 2020 *[will update if necessary]*, the JET adopted the draft report from the subcommittees and recommended the Executive Committee members present them to their respective Boards.

## **Mission, Authority, Organization and Focus Areas**

### **Mission**

The mission of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors/School Board Joint Environmental Taskforce (“JET”) is to join the political and administrative capabilities of the County and the school system to proactively and equitably address climate change and environmental sustainability. The JET will include community partners from higher education, industry, community and student advocacy groups to recommend aggressive goals in areas of common County and school operations and influence, such as workforce development, infrastructure and sustainability of public facilities and transportation, land use planning, communication and community engagement, and other challenges and opportunities as they arise. The JET will provide a forum for informing, advising, collaborating and addressing Countywide issues and aligning institutional policies and practices pertaining to climate change and environmental sustainability through the lens of One Fairfax and to appointing bodies.

### **Authority**

#### **Communication and Authority**

The JET will communicate to the Board of Supervisors and School Board on a regular basis. Items identified by the JET, Superintendent or County Executive that require modifications to budget, policy, or capital improvement planning will be referred to respective Boards for consideration. In addition, the JET has a unique opportunity to get our environmental message out to the community. Joint efforts by the County and Schools amplify our messages and broaden our audience as we seek to engage, inform and change behaviors.

### **Organization**

#### **Facilities/Infrastructure**

Many efforts are already underway to improve the environmental quality of our existing and new facilities and to reduce greenhouse gasses through passive and active designs, solar power, lighting, HVAC, etc. The JET will focus on identifying, co-locating and combining facilities and uses for accelerating these improvements, exploring new and innovative concepts, encouraging pilot initiatives to test these concepts, and educating/tasking building managers and leaders as to findings and implementing them in their own facilities. SMART goals for achieving net zero carbon emissions and energy or carbon emissions per industry appropriate measures will be recommended by the JET. SMART goals should include energy use per anticipated user, comparable best practices for similar facilities, LEED or like rating organization certifications and other third-party measures.

#### **Land Use**

In order to enhance and accelerate our collaboration resulting in more environmentally sustainable land use decisions, the JET will prioritize co-locating resources, usage densities, types and intensities of development, and green space planning and preservation. Plans will incorporate walking, biking and multi-modal trails, employing green energy opportunities and carbon capture. Comprehensive Plan decisions, which more effectively partner and plan for “smart growth” and align with nearby, right-sized public facilities, will be key JET goals essential for reducing misaligned facility needs and transportation costs. The JET will recommend measures for assessing improvements and best practices for land use.

### **Transportation**

This element provides significant potential and opportunities for partnering on climate change mitigation. The JET will identify SMART goals consistent with our Board's environmental policies and leadership expectations by developing recommendations for decreasing per person carbon emissions per mile traveled.

### **Workforce Development**

The JET will recommend County/school partnerships in collaboration with continuing education entities to create and enhance educational programming, internships, and co-op programs to support workforce development in green energy and environmental sustainability fields. Educational partnerships SMART goals will include career ready graduates and local talent retention.

### **Public Health**

Impacts of climate change to public health will be considered in our joint roles of protecting and improving quality of life in our community. The JET will work to identify needs, seek and grow available public health resources, and advance use of modern health care technology.

### **Focus Areas**

After outlining the organizational areas of the JET, four overarching focus areas were identified as priorities. The four overarching focus areas inherently encompass many of the organizational areas. The four main areas of focus were determined to be **energy, transportation, waste management and recycling, and workforce development.**

**Energy Recommendations**

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**Transportation Recommendations**

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**Waste Management and Recycling Recommendations**

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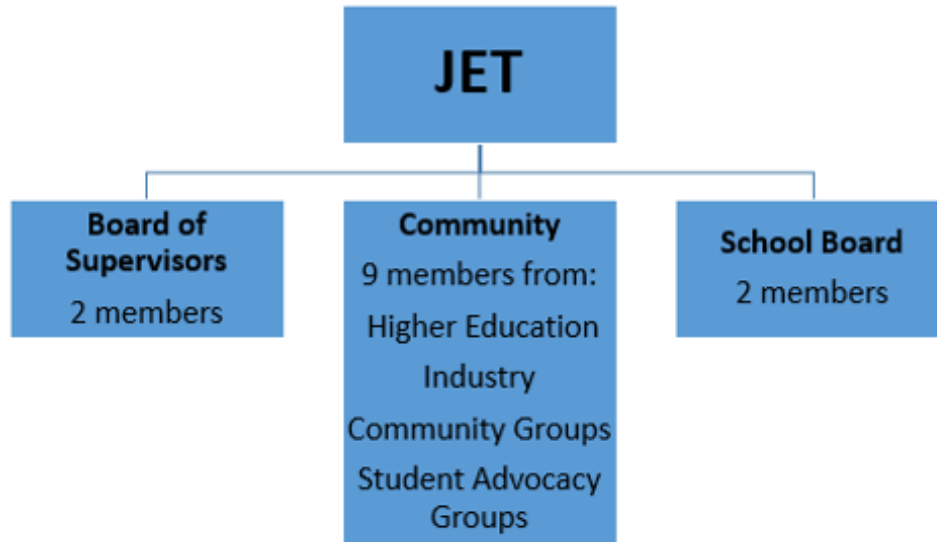
**Workforce Development**

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## **Bibliography**

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# JET Membership



## Executive Committee

Supervisor Dan Storck  
 Supervisor Penny Gross  
 School Board Chair Karen Corbett Sanders  
*(April 2019 – August 2019)*  
 School Board Member Pat Hynes  
*(April 2019 – December 2019)*  
 School Board Member Dalia Palchik  
*(August 2019 – December 2019)*  
 School Board Member Elaine Tholen  
*(January 2020 – present)*  
 School Board Member Karl Frisch  
*(January 2020 – present)*

## Taskforce Members

Richard Aiken  
 Karen Campblin  
 Richard Clayton  
 Meg Mall  
 Susan Stillman  
  
 Smita Chandra Thomas  
 Greg Ulises

## Taskforce Student Members

Wendy Gao  
 Ire Kim

## Subcommittee Membership

Energy  
 Waste Management & Recycling  
  
 Workforce Development  
 Transportation  
  
 Energy  
 Transportation  
 Transportation  
 Waste Management & Recycling  
 Transportation, Waste Management & Recycling  
 Energy  
 Workforce Development  
  
 Energy, Waste Management & Recycling  
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