



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 1, 2021

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Bryan J. Hill
County Executive *B. Hill*

SUBJECT: Resilient Fairfax: Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan

This memorandum provides an overview and status update on Resilient Fairfax, the county's climate adaptation and resilience planning effort.

Background

Development of a climate adaptation and resilience plan is one of the 19 action items in Fairfax Green Initiatives 1, a joint Board Matter unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors in February 2019. On June 16, 2020, the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) put forward a proposal for the development of a [Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan \(CARP\)](#), now referred to as "Resilient Fairfax," which was endorsed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee. The proposal included a scope of work, framework for the planning process, structure for community engagement, and timeline. On September 29, 2020, the Board of Supervisors approved the development of the plan with the authorization of funding for two staff and contractual services in the FY 2020 Carryover budget. Using an existing Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments contract for climate adaptation and resilience planning services, OEEC selected the Cadmus Group and its subconsultants WSP and Nspiregreen to support the planning effort and issued a notice to proceed in February 2021.

Scope of Work and Status

The Resilient Fairfax initiative will help the county better understand and prepare for the impacts of climate change on our communities, services, and infrastructure. These climate impacts may include but are not limited to changes in temperature patterns, precipitation patterns, extreme weather events, flooding, sea level rise, and other impacts. The process and plan will examine how the County government, utilities and authorities, businesses, service providers, and residents can prepare for and bolster their resilience to these impacts.

Resilient Fairfax will be conducted using the lens of One Fairfax and in close coordination with other related plans and programs, including the Hazard Mitigation Plan, regional climate resilience efforts, county flood mitigation efforts, and county climate health initiatives.

The full Resilient Fairfax scope of work includes four major tasks scheduled to take place between February 2021 and June 2022. Once completed, the plan will be presented to the Board

at a Summer 2022 Environmental Committee meeting, and, if endorsed, presented for adoption at a Fall 2022 Board of Supervisors meeting.

- Task 1 – Project Initiation (February 2021 – May 2021). This task is complete. Task 1 included project initiation and project management tasks with the consultant team, and establishment of a Planning Team, Infrastructure Advisory Group, and Community Advisory Group. The roles and membership of these stakeholder groups are summarized in the following section on Stakeholder and Community Engagement. Task 1 also included development and finalization of governing documents and a kickoff meeting with each group to introduce Resilient Fairfax.
- Task 2 – Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (April 2021 – October 2021). This task is ongoing and includes three major subtasks: climate projections, vulnerability and risk assessment, and an audit of county policies, plans, and programs. Climate projections are being developed based on downscaled climate science data, supplemented by existing regional and local information. The projections will be used to develop a county-wide climate vulnerability and risk assessment to evaluate potential impacts of climate change on our communities, services, and infrastructure. The county’s exposure and sensitivity to climate impacts will be assessed across sectors, including transportation and utilities, buildings and development, neighborhoods and communities, and government infrastructure and operations. When analyzing the neighborhoods and communities sector, a particular focus will be given to the county’s “frontline” or most exposed communities, and their ability to prepare for, respond to, and adapt to projected climate impacts. The third subtask includes an audit of existing county policies, plans, and programs that are relevant to climate adaptation and resilience. The purpose of this audit is to determine where the county is doing well in terms of resilience, and where there are gaps or opportunities for fortification.

The assessment and audit methodology, data collection, and analyses will all be coordinated with input from the stakeholder groups and community. In addition to meetings with the Community Advisory Group, Infrastructure Advisory Group, and Planning Team, this task includes a public meeting scheduled for June 15th and a corresponding public survey during the month of June.

- Task 3 – Adaptation and Resilience Strategies (August 2021 – February 2022). Based on the outcomes from Task 2, adaptation and resilience strategies and actions will be developed, drafted, assessed, prioritized, and finalized with input from the stakeholder groups and community. The strategies will be developed across sectors and incorporated into an Implementation Roadmap that identifies leads, partners, and timeline for each strategy.
- Task 4 – Plan Composition and Outreach Materials (January – June 2022). The Resilient Fairfax plan will be compiled, incorporating and summarizing the materials developed in Tasks 2 and 3. The Board of Supervisors, stakeholder groups, and the greater community will be able to review a draft of the plan and provide feedback. The final plan will be presented to the Board for endorsement at a summer 2022 Environmental Committee meeting. In addition to the plan itself, Task 4 will include outreach materials to share key information with the public, including fact sheets and interactive online maps and resources.

Stakeholder and Community Engagement

The Resilient Fairfax planning process is led by the OEEC. Stakeholder and community input is a critical component of the planning process to develop feasible strategies and encourage buy-in from these groups when the county moves to the implementation phase. This planning process is aided by the expertise of the stakeholder groups listed below.

- The ***Steering Committee*** is composed of executive county leadership, responsible for high-level guidance at key project milestones.
- The ***Planning Team*** is composed of technical leads and subject matter experts from relevant county departments and agencies. The Planning Team is responsible for technical feedback on deliverables and assisting OEEC in coordinating between Resilient Fairfax and related initiatives of other county departments.
- The ***Infrastructure Advisory Group (IAG)*** is composed of representatives from utilities and authorities, building industry groups, transportation commissions and authorities, and regional partners. The IAG is responsible for reviewing and providing feedback on key deliverables to help ensure that the plan is in alignment with the expertise of infrastructure managers.
- The ***Community Advisory Group (CAG)*** is composed of representatives from each of the nine magisterial districts, environmental, religious, non-profit, and civil rights organizations, businesses, residential communities, and the county's boards, authorities, and commissions. The CAG is responsible for reviewing and providing feedback on key deliverables to help ensure the plan is in alignment with the needs and experiences of the community.

Next Steps

The OEEC will provide updates to the Board as the plan proceeds through the tasks and engagement processes described above. The next update will focus on the results of Task 2, the vulnerability and risk assessment, and the public survey. Additional information on Resilient Fairfax is available on the project web site at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/resilient-fairfax>.

If you have questions, please contact Kambiz Agazi at 703-324-1788 or via email at Kambiz.Agazi@fairfaxcounty.gov.

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