

INTRODUCTION

This year continues the significant departure in format for the Annual Report on the Environment from previous years. With the advent of the COVID-19 virus in early 2020 and the necessary shifts in work and focus required by county government and staff, the members of the Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) felt that while it is important to meet the requirements of our charter to report on the environment annually, it was equally important we continue to minimize demands on the staff who normally provide us with most of the data upon which we base our report. To that end, members of Council have continued instead to have conversations with staff for updates but have requested little written data reports for this last year.

We are aware that the Board of Supervisors has had to face significant challenges in keeping people safe, fed, and housed, while keeping the economy functioning, and keeping our students educated during this ongoing pandemic. We sincerely appreciate and thank the Board for their leadership on all of these daunting issues.

We also thank the Board of Supervisors for their continued support of environmental efforts during this past year, including the creation and funding of the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC), adoption of the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP), their ongoing efforts in creating the Resilient Fairfax Plan, the full funding of the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) including the Invasive Management Area program, Watershed Protection and Energy Conservation Matching Grant Program, and stream bank and meadow restorations, and lastly the county's ongoing support for the broad efforts of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services.

FORMAT

In June 2017, the Board of Supervisors adopted an update of its Environmental Vision document. EQAC decided in 2018 that the updated Environmental Vision provided an opportunity to better align our Annual Report on the Environment with the updated Environmental Vision; we have followed the same structure again this year.

However, there will be no Scorecard this year. Our very abbreviated Annual Report of 2020 consisted of primarily revisiting the Scorecard. It would be difficult if not impossible to "Scorecard" the Scorecard of the Scorecard which is what would essentially happen if we were to attempt to include a Scorecard this year. With the return of full chapters this year, we will have the basis for a scorecard next year.

However, we have retained the revised structure which continues to address the seven core service areas identified within the vision document. The first six listed address individual core service areas from the vision document:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Water

- Waste Management
- Parks and Ecological Resources
- Climate and Energy

The seventh core service area, Environmental Stewardship, touches upon all of the other core service areas and is therefore integrated within each of the other chapters.

We have added the following to this framework in order to ensure sufficient coverage of issues that are addressed at least to some extent in the Environmental Vision but have not been identified as core service areas in the vision document:

- Air Quality
- Wildlife Management
- Technology

We again refer to the 2019 report, in which you will find these additional chapters that should be of use and interest.

- Appendix B: Spotlight on Fairfax County Schools
- Appendix C: Environmental Stewardship Opportunities in Fairfax County
- Appendix D: How to Report Environmental Crimes or Concerns in Fairfax County

EQAC RECOMMENDATIONS PRIORITY FOCUS

Each of the chapters presented in this report contains comments and/or recommendations for actions that, in our view, would further progress in support of the Board of Supervisors' Environmental Vision or related environmental considerations.

Given the global and local impacts of climate change this year we wish to focus on those recommendations throughout the chapters that focus on climate change, both the proactive measures to reduce environmental impacts, and measures that sustain and add to the components of resiliency that already exist within the county. We also recognize that all of these efforts will only add to support for implementation of One Fairfax goals that all of our citizens receive an equitable benefit from the county.

These recommendations include:

In Land Use

- Update the State of the Plan and Concept for Future Development Map.
- Advance Land Development Applications and Information.
- Improve Processes to Minimize Ecological Degradation from Development Pressure.
- Private Sector Green Building Standards.

In Transportation

- Develop a formal plan to increase light-duty electric vehicle (EV) registrations to at least 15% of total registrations by 2030.
- Develop a formal plan to increase transit and non-motorized commuting (including teleworking) to at least 30% by 2030, including setting interim target goals to be achieved by 2024 and 2027.

In Water

- Continue and enhance as needed the protection of the Occoquan Reservoir. The studies and actions listed below have reaffirmed over the last 50 years the need for continued protection of the waters of the Occoquan Reservoir that provide part of our drinking water supply.
- Fund monitoring of emerging contaminants and the rising sodium levels in the Occoquan Reservoir.
- Set the fee rate collected for wastewater treatment to meet the documented needs of the necessary upgrades and maintenance requirements for all the plants that serve the county and their respective wastewater collection system.
- Continue aggressive public education and monitoring of the new alternate septic systems performance is necessary.
- EQAC recommends that those policies and ordinances protecting streams, floodplains and designated Environmental Quality Corridors (EQCs) should remain unchanged or be enhanced. The protection of environmental assets is an essential part of resiliency planning in the face of climate change.
- EQAC recommends that the funding for the Stormwater Program be increased either by an increase in the Stormwater Service District rate in FY 2023 by at least one-quarter penny, from a rate of 3.25 cents per \$100 assessed real estate value to 3.50 cents per \$100 or that the increase occur through a change in the tax rate.

In Waste Management

- Institute recycling data collection and reporting.
- Institute strong litter controls.
- Establish environmental purchasing numeric targets.
- Work with Covanta to reduce local air pollution.
- Consider environmental and safety benefits of sanitary districts petitions.

In Parks and Ecological Resources

- Increase the capacity for environmental review of development plans.
- Improve the Land Development Process by prioritizing trees.
- Seek more stable funding sources for Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) Initiatives.
- Strengthen authority to address management of invasive species throughout the county.

In Climate Change

- Adopt climate and energy related recommendations from other chapters.

- Establish plans and milestones and assess the progress that is being made for both Fairfax County efforts and Virginia's implementation of the Virginia Clean Economy Act.
- Undertake a major outreach and educational campaign on the actions that businesses and residents can do to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors should appoint a group of business leaders to advise the Board on Climate and Energy issues.
- Work with the Virginia Association of Counties and the Northern Virginia Regional Commission to explore, promote, and possibly provide incentives so that visitors to Fairfax County and other areas in Virginia and neighboring states will have access to efficient (i.e., quick) charging for electric vehicles.
- Take actions in the Community-wide Energy and Climate Plan (CECAP) report that the County can take immediately.

In Air Quality

- As Fairfax County and the Washington Metropolitan Region recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, county officials should strongly encourage people to telework where possible, take public transit, and use alternative forms of transit.

In Wildlife Management

- Hire of Part-Time Wildlife Assistant.

In Technology

- LiDAR Capture.
- GIS Staffing.