



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 14, 2022

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Rachel Flynn, AIA
Deputy County Executive

SUBJECT: Resilient Fairfax: Public Comment on Draft Plan

This memorandum provides a status update on the draft Resilient Fairfax Plan.

Background

The purpose of the Resilient Fairfax Plan, for climate adaptation and resilience, is to help Fairfax County better understand and prepare for climate change effects, such as increasingly severe storms, precipitation, and extreme heat. The Board of Supervisors (Board) approved the development of the plan on September 29, 2020. The planning process began in February 2021. The final Resilient Fairfax plan is scheduled to be presented to the board in October 2022.

Four major components of the Resilient Fairfax planning effort have been completed to date:

- The [Climate Projections Report](#), which describes current and future climatic conditions for Fairfax County, based on advanced data and modeling.
- The [Vulnerability and Risk Assessment](#), which describes the county's top climate-related vulnerabilities and risks.
- The [Audit of Existing Policies, Plans, and Programs](#), which describes how the County currently incorporates climate resilience into its policies, plans, and programs, and where there are opportunities for improvement.
- The [Draft Resilient Fairfax Plan](#), which includes strategies and an Implementation Roadmap to enhance our County's resilience to climatic hazards.

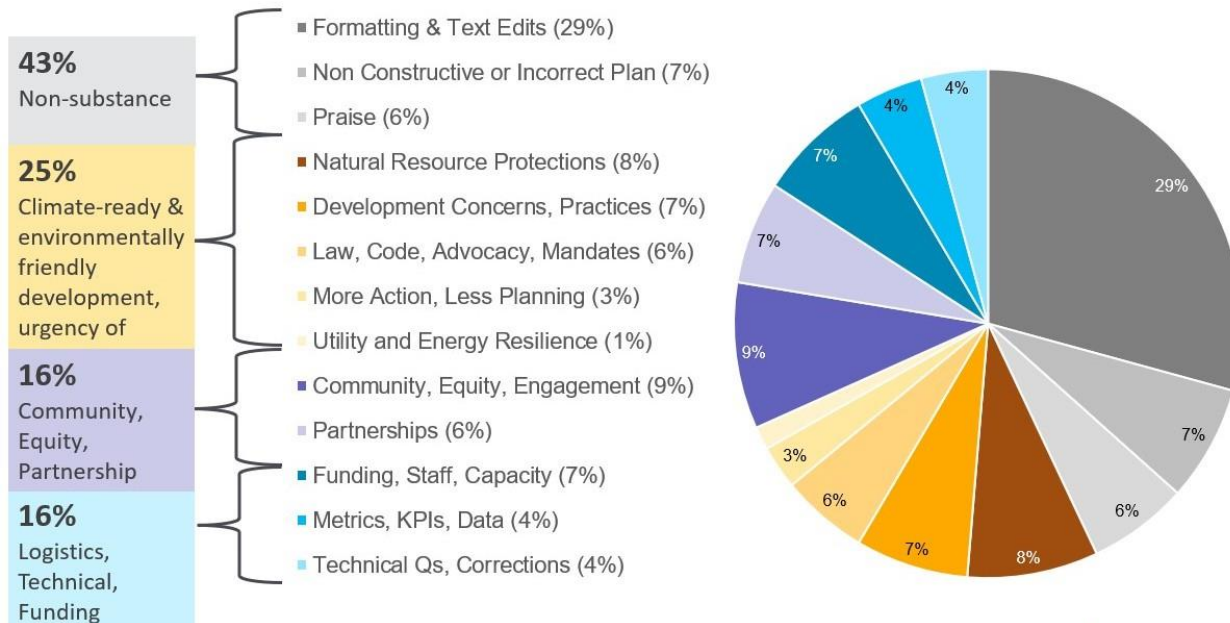
Summary of Public Comments

The full draft Resilient Fairfax Plan was open for public comment for a one-month period between May 16 and June 15, 2022. In addition to this formal public comment period, each step of the Resilient Fairfax planning process has involved intensive stakeholder and public engagement.

During the public comment period, the draft plan received a total of 2,204 views and 453 comments. Commenters were given the option of anonymity to preserve their privacy, so the total number of unique commenters cannot be definitively confirmed. There were 61 unique commenters who chose to identify themselves either on the commenting platform or through email. In addition to the general public, confirmed commenters during the formal comment period included representatives of nine county agencies, four environmental organizations, three

community associations, three regional entities, and two utilities. It should be noted that many additional entities previously commented on earlier drafts of the plan. Attachment 1 includes a list of entities who commented during the comment period, a full list of active plan participants, and a table documenting the 211 total Resilient Fairfax engagement meetings and presentations that have occurred to date.

The graphic below summarizes the major topics of the comments received. Many comments addressed more than one topic. Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number.



Non-Substantive Comments

Approximately 43% of the comments were not substantive. This included formatting, grammatical, and wording suggestions (29%), non-constructive comments that did not relate to the draft plan or included a criticism but not a suggestion for improvement (7%), and comments that simply praised the plan and its content (7%). In the category of non-constructive comments, many commenters confused Resilient Fairfax with a separate U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposed floodwall.

Comments Relating to Climate-Ready and Environmentally-Friendly Development

Approximately 25% of comments related to the need for neighborhoods and developments that are climate-resilient and sustainable. Most of these comments either supported the plan’s strategies or requested that they be further strengthened. Over 7% of these comments specifically related to concerns over the County’s current development practices. Several comments (8%) related to support for (and requests for strengthened) natural resource protections including tree preservation, native species and biodiversity, stream restorations, green infrastructure, nature-based solutions, sustainable and resilient landscaping, and protections for Resource Protection Areas (RPAs). Approximately 6% of comments urged stronger laws, incentives, codes, advocacy, and mandates, and 3% of comments urged that the plan language be strengthened to

be more directive and less flexible. A few comments (1%) advocated for the undergrounding of utility lines, independent microgrids, and solar energy.

Comments Relating to Community, Equity, and Partnership

Another common theme among the comments received was advocacy for community engagement, equity, and partnerships (16% of comments). Commenters expressed support for the plan's equity focus and requested clearer prioritization of vulnerable groups. They also requested additional opportunities for public involvement during implementation and monitoring. Additionally, commenters expressed support for the proposed community aid, capacity building, and education strategies. They noted that practical resilience tools and guidance for the community may be more helpful than "Climate 101" education. Within the "partnerships" category, commenters noted they would like to see stronger partnerships between the County and non-profits, community organizations, private businesses, and other entities. Commenters also advocated for continued and strengthened interagency partnerships.

Comments Relating to Logistics, Funding, and Technical Details

The remaining comments (16%) related to implementation logistics, technical details, and funding. Within this theme, approximately 7% of comments included concern over adequate funding and staff capacity to implement the plan. Several (4%) suggested updates to the plan's Key Performance Indicators, metrics, data collection, and monitoring. Finally, approximately 4% of comments related to the plan's technical details, including requests to clarify scientific terms and technical edits made by county departments.

Next Steps

The project team is currently revising the draft Resilient Fairfax Plan based on the comments received. OEEC staff is scheduled to present the final plan for adoption to the Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee (BOSEC) in October 2022, followed by a Board meeting this fall.

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

Attachment 1: Resilient Fairfax Planning Process: Commenters and Participating Entities

cc: Bryan J. Hill, County Executive
Christina Jackson, Chief Financial Officer
Kambiz Agazi, Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination

Resilient Fairfax Planning Process: Commenters and Participating Entities

In addition to the general public, representatives of the following entities commented on the draft Resilient Fairfax plan during the formal public comment period:

- Audubon Naturalist Society
- Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT)
- Fairfax County Health Department (FCHD)
- Fairfax County Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS)
- Fairfax County Department of Planning and Development (DPD)
- Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES)
- Fairfax County Land Development Services (LDS)
- Fairfax County Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC)
- Fairfax County Chief Equity Officer/ One Fairfax Team
- Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS)
- Fairfax Water
- Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions,
- Federation of Citizens Associations
- Friends of Little Hunting Creek
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG)
- Multicultural Advisory Council
- Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce
- Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative (NOVEC)
- Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC)
- Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD)
- Reston Association
- Sierra Club

*The broader Resilient Fairfax planning process has regularly involved over **100 advisors** representing the following entities:*

Planning Team: Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS), Facilities Management Department (FMD), Department of Family Services (DFS), Geographic Information Systems and Mapping (GIS), Health Department (FCHD), Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Health and Human Services (HHS), Land Development Services (LDS), Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS), Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD), One Fairfax/Chief Equity Officer's office, Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA), Department of Planning and Development (DPD), Department of Public Safety Communications (DPSC), Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), Urban Forestry Management Division (UFMD), Department of Transportation (FCDOT), Department of Vehicle Services (DVS), Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC).

Infrastructure Advisory Group: American Society of Highway Engineers (ASHE), Columbia Gas, Cox of Northern Virginia, DEMS, DPWES, Dominion Energy, Engineers and Surveyors

Institute (ESI), Fairfax Water, FCDOT, FCPS, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), OEEC, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG), National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP), Northern Virginia Building Industry Association (NVBIA), Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative (NOVEC), Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC), Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVRTA), OEEC, RUCA Capital, United States Department of Defense – Fort Belvoir (USDOD), Verizon, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (VDCR), Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ), Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Washington Gas, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), WTS International.

Community Advisory Group: Residents of the following Districts: Braddock, Dranesville, Hunter Mill, Lee, Mason, Mount Vernon, Providence, Springfield, Sully, 350 Fairfax, Cornerstones, EcoLatinos, Environmental Quality Advisory Council, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (FACS), Federation of Citizens Associations, George Mason University (GMU), League of Women Voters, Multicultural Advisory Council, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), NVSWCD, Resilient Virginia, Reston Association, Sierra Club, Small Business Commission, and Tysons Partnership.

In addition to the formal public comment period, the Resilient Fairfax planning process has included over 200 engagement meetings and a public survey. The meetings included the following:

BOS, BOSEC, BACs	Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee (BOSEC)	4	18
	Mount Vernon District Environment Committee and/or BOSEC Chair	8	
	Environmental Quality Advisory Council	4	
	Tree Commission	1	
	Planning Commission	1	
County Depts	Full formal Planning Team meetings	6	77
	Sub-group meetings with county departments	71	
Infrastructure Advisory Group	Full formal Infrastructure Advisory Group (IAG) Meetings	5	23
	Sub-group meetings with infrastructure managers and regional, local, state, and federal government entities	18	
Community Advisory Group	Full formal Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meetings	5	17
	Sub-group meetings with CAG non-profit and advocacy organizations, community groups, and other entities	12	
Public and Community	Formal public meetings	4	10
	Additional meetings with neighborhoods and community groups	6	
Other Agencies & Jurisdictions	Other government agencies and levels of government, jurisdictions, regional groups, and relevant workgroups not otherwise involved	66	66
Total			211

Note: These meetings do not include any project management or other internal logistical meetings.