

# **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE**

**October 4, 2022**

**11:00 A.M.**

**Government Center Conference Room 11**

## **Board of Supervisors Members Present:**

Board Chair Jeffrey C. McKay  
Committee Chair Daniel G. Storck, Mount Vernon District  
Supervisor Walter L. Alcorn, Hunter Mill District  
Supervisor John W. Foust, Dranesville District  
Supervisor Penelope A. Gross, Mason District  
Supervisor Pat Herrity, Springfield District  
Supervisor Rodney L. Lusk, Lee District  
Supervisor Dalia A. Palchik, Providence District  
Supervisor Kathy L. Smith, Sully District  
Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw, Braddock District

## **Others Present:**

Bryan J. Hill, County Executive  
Beth Teare, County Attorney

October 4, 2022, Meeting Agenda:

[oct04-environmental-agenda.pdf \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

October 4, 2022, Meeting Materials:

[Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee Meeting: Oct. 4, 2022 | Board Of Supervisors \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

The following is a summary of the discussion from the October 4, 2022, Environmental Committee meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 11:15 A.M.

## **Item I Opening Remarks**

After a brief introduction from Supervisor Storck, Committee Chair, the Environmental Committee was asked if there were any changes to the minutes of July 26, 2022. With no changes, the meeting minutes were accepted.

Supervisor Storck asked if there were any updates or outstanding items that were owed to the Board members. Hearing none, he moved to the next item.

## **Item II Local Stormwater Management Assistance Fund Grant Program**

Chad Crawford, Director Maintenance and Stormwater Management Division, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) presented on the possible creation of a new stormwater fund program focused on the maintenance of stormwater facilities on private properties and in common-interest communities (CICs). The fund could also be used for erosion and sediment control as well as flood mitigation and protection measures.

Last year, following the passage of state enabling legislation, county staff began to meet with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD) to discuss an observed need within the Stormwater Management (SWM) program. There are situations where the county lacks the tools to enforce compliance on failed stormwater maintenance facilities on certain private facilities; a grant would aid in that process. Specifically, the grant would be available to those with facilities that failed due to design/construction flaws, a defunct and/or purged homeowners association (HOA), or a lack of a private maintenance agreement. The grant would not be available to “bad actors” or those who have not done what they needed to do to maintain stormwater facilities.

As envisioned, the fund would be seeded with \$250,000 in its first year and be administered by NVSWCD. The proposed local assistance fund would complement the existing Conservation Assistance Program, administered by NVSWCD, as well as SWM’s Private to Public Pond Pilot Program. On the latter, Chad provided a status update on four pilot projects that are being undertaken. He also shared a table to compare the proposed new program with the Private to

Public Pond Pilot Program, noting that the new program would be more flexible and likely easier to implement.

Chad shared the staff recommendation that the county move forward with creating a new fund and fleshing out the program framework for the fund while wrapping up the Private to Public Pond Pilot Program and reporting out on program results. If given the go-ahead, staff plans to prepare an amendment to Appendix O of the Fairfax County Stormwater Service District for the Board's consideration, develop a program framework document to support grant distribution to private SWM facility owners and operators, and present the program framework document to the Board in spring 2023.

Board Discussion:

Supervisor Alcorn asked about how big the need is for this program.

Chad Crawford replied that the need is dependent upon how you set the context; the median need that we have is probably smaller than the overall need. As we talk about the number of private facilities that are non-compliant, that is a relatively small number, but if it was to be expanded to a larger program that addressed erosion and flooding issues, the need could be fairly sizeable.

Supervisor Alcorn asked that, even if with a more narrow view, that number is not getting any smaller as facilities age.

Chad confirmed that was correct.

Supervisor Walkinshaw asked about the average size of a grant or how many grants might be awarded.

Ellie Coddington, Deputy Director, DPWES, responded that the intent is to come back in the spring with details on that framework, but this is a need that has been around for years. Staff is aware of certain situations, about 10 of them, that would vary in cost. As the program gets started, it would be focused on the most egregious cases, where there is a defunct HOA or a design flaw that was missed. The number of the most egregious cases should not grow, as many of them occurred when Stormwater was still very new and has since learned from these cases.

Supervisor Walkinshaw asked if the idea is to cover the full cost of needed upgrades, or if the grant would match what an HOA or reformed HOA would contribute.

Ellie responded that those are the details Stormwater still needs to work out. There is a possibility for cost-share.

Supervisor Walkinshaw stated that it seems like there is value in cost-share in that the county grant can serve as a mechanism for the HOA to re-form or perform a special assessment or whatever else they need to do to do their part, wherever possible.

Chairman McKay asked in cases where the HOA is defunct, if after improvements are made, if the intent is to put the facility into the public system for future maintenance.

Ellie noted that one of the conditions for eligibility for the grant program would be reformation of the HOA, bringing it back into functionality.

Chairman McKay stated that he is concerned with those HOAs that have just a handful of houses, where the HOA could go defunct again and the upgraded facility would not be properly maintained. He noted that, as specific projects are identified, staff should be looking at the history of the HOAs, their capacity moving forward, and, if there is a low likelihood that the HOA is going to be able to manage the facility, whether it should become part of the public system.

Ellie replied that staff can include approximations of the cost of different options when they come back with the framework in the spring.

Supervisor Gross asked if individual private property owners would be eligible for the program.

Chad responded that yes, they would be.

Supervisor Gross noted that this program may be an option for individuals who have difficulty getting assistance from a similar state program. She then commented on the Private to Public Pond Private Program and the inclusion of million-dollar homes in the pilot. She stated that she is trying to figure out the equity piece and that she would like to see some sort of valuation of the homes in

future pilots to ensure that program funding is going toward those who are in most need of financial assistance.

Supervisor Foust asked if the program goal is identified in Resilient Fairfax.

Supervisor Storck noted that the next agenda item was an update on Resilient Fairfax and asked Supervisor Foust to hold his question until then.

Supervisor Foust also asked if the program would be funded by the stormwater tax.

Ellie Coddling replied that yes, it would be.

Supervisor Storck asked staff to clarify the three stormwater programs we have.

Chad summarized the Conservation Assistance Program, which is primarily in place to deal with drainage and erosion issues on private properties and areas of worship; the program is funded through the state with contributions from the county. Chad also described the Private to Public Pond Pilot Program, which is principally focused on detention and retention ponds, and moves a facility out of a private inventory into county maintenance. A major reason for doing so is because some community ponds receive a lot of through drainage, and the communities are bearing the burden of a significant percentage of off-site drainage. Only four facilities went into the program, and it is taking considerable time to get through those four facilities. The final program is the new proposed grant program, which complements the Conservation Assistance Program and the Private to Public Pond Pilot Program.

Supervisor Storck requested that, when staff return with the framework for the new program, that they do so with a table that lays out and compares these three stormwater programs.

### **Item III Resilient Fairfax Final Plan**

Allison Homer, Senior Community Specialist, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) presented the Resilient Fairfax Final Plan, which staff recommended the Board adopt at a future Board of Supervisors meeting.

Allison reminded the Board that the purpose of Resilient Fairfax is to enhance the county's adaptation and resilience to increasingly severe climatic conditions. There has been a measurable shift in Fairfax County's climatic trends, including notably more intense precipitation, an increase in average storm strength, and an increase in the average number of extreme heat days per year. In recognition of the need to enhance the resilience of our populations, infrastructure, services and natural resources to these intensifying conditions, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to develop this climate adaptation and resilience plan.

Allison summarized the Resilient Fairfax planning process, which began in February 2021. The plan and all associated technical analyses were accomplished within budget, on a shorter than average timeline, and with a higher-than-average level of detail. The process included a local climate projections report, a vulnerability and risk assessment, an audit of existing policies, plans and programs, the identification of strategies to enhance our resilience, and the creation of an implementation roadmap. The team also collaborated with NASA Develop to produce a detailed urban heat island effect study for the county and partnered with numerous agencies to produce an interactive climate map viewer.

Allison shared a timeline that depicted the regular engagement of the 20 department Planning Team, the Infrastructure Advisory Group, the Community Advisory Group, the general public and the Board, that occurred throughout the planning process. In total, over 200 engagement meetings were held with over 100 formal advisors and more than 800 total individuals, including members of the public.

The Resilient Fairfax plan includes three major parts: The first part covers background information including an overview of the planning process, stakeholder engagement and equity considerations; the second part summarizes the three major technical analyses that fed into the plan; the third and final section describes the strategies that Fairfax County will use to increase its resilience.

These Resilient Fairfax strategies are categorized into four major pillars or themes. The Integrated Action Planning pillar provides the foundation for the county's long-term success in resilience initiatives, through resilience-related interagency coordination, data, funding and plan alignment. The Climate Ready Communities pillar includes promotion of county services and aid that enhance our resilience, public education and outreach, and updates to our county codes to encourage more climate ready development. The Resilient Infrastructure & Buildings pillar

includes both direct resilience improvements to internal infrastructure that is within county control and advocacy for resilience enhancements to external infrastructure that is not directly controlled by the county. The Adaptive Environments pillar includes both protection and restoration of our environmental resources that naturally provide climate resilience. Within the pillars, there are a total of 48 strategies; 18 of those are prioritized as they address our top risks, are most feasible, respond to issues in most need of our attention or provide a number of co-benefits.

Within the plan, each prioritized strategy has a detailed implementation roadmap, which identifies specific actions and steps, lead and partner agencies, timelines, approximate cost scales, key performance indicators, equitable implementation considerations and co-benefits. Allison then highlighted five of the prioritized strategies, including Comprehensive Plan Updates for Resilience (IAP.1a), Community Aid and Services to Alleviate Resilience Needs (CRC.2a), Update Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Prioritization to Include Resilience (RIB.1a), Green Infrastructure Projects with Resilience Benefits (AE.2a), and Adaptation Action Areas (AAAs) Where Resilience is (CRC.1a). Adaptation Action Areas are places on a map where resilience actions, upgrades and assistance should be prioritized first. These incorporate areas that are heat-vulnerable, flood-vulnerable, and vulnerable in terms of socio-economic characteristics, as defined using the county's Vulnerability Index developed under the One Fairfax initiative. Additional details on all strategies can be found in the Resilient Fairfax Final Plan.

To enable implementation of the plan, staff recommended the Board of Supervisors adopt Resilient Fairfax at its November 1, 2022 meeting.

#### Board Discussion:

Supervisor Storck highlighted the importance of the plan and its inclusion of an implementation roadmap, recommended Comprehensive Plan updates for resilience, recommended community aid and services to alleviate resilience needs, the creation of Adaptation Action Areas to prioritize resilience actions in certain areas, updated Capital Improvement Program prioritization to include resilience and green infrastructure projects with resilience benefits.

Chairman McKay commented on the Resilient Fairfax meeting materials. A lot of people still get confused on all of our different environmental plans, but the meeting materials are helpful in that they point out that Resilient Fairfax is based

on the *effects* of climate change while many of our other environmental plans are based on the *cause*. Better explaining to the public how all of these plans work together is something we haven't entirely mastered, although that is pretty good description of why Resilient Fairfax is an important part of it. He asked that the Board Action Item be clear about how this particular plan fits in with all of the other environmental plans we have on the books.

Supervisor Walkinshaw noted his appreciation for the amount of work and detail that went into the plan. While the scope and scale of the problem can be depressing, it's an exciting opportunity for us as a community. The communities that thrive over the next 50 to 100 years are going to be those that face this head-on. One thing that jumps out as particularly urgent is updating the Comprehensive Plan to address resilience. He noted that the LEED standards that we have in the Comprehensive Plan are focused on the building itself as opposed to the surrounding acreage (e.g., parking lot and pavement), meaning that something like Cool Pavement or similar tools would not be included in the traditional LEED scoring. He thinks that is something we need to start pressing for in the redevelopment process. He asked about the timeline for Comprehensive Plan amendments.

Allison Homer replied that the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) is planning to pursue the updates to the Environmental Policy element of the Comprehensive Plan starting next year. The OEEC will be collaborating with DPD on those updates starting in 2023.

Supervisor Gross thanked Allison and staff. She noted that the plan is a guidebook that we can use, and resilience is something that everyone is working on, including the military bases. She asked about one of the prioritized strategies presented, Community Aid and Services to Alleviate Resilience Needs (CRC.2a). Allison noted in her presentation that certain communities most in need may not ask for help or know where to ask for help. Using flooding as an example, as we have indications of high water somewhere (perhaps through the Fire Department) but have no record of individuals calling for assistance, she asked if there is something that we would put into place where there would be feedback from whatever agency happened to be there to help. Supervisor Gross also asked about working with VDOT.

Allison noted that the strategies she highlighted in her presentation are only five of 18 prioritized strategies. There are many more, including RIB.2c, which includes



collaboration with VDOT on transportation resilience. As far as the services, our intention is to have interagency coordination to streamline that process and increase access to services, be it through the Fire Department or DPWES. There are other interagency collaboration strategies within the Integrated Action Planning pillar.

Supervisor Gross stated that we almost need an ombudsman, but they would probably only be brought into play when we are having big storms.

Supervisor Lusk also expressed his appreciation for the effort and hard work that went into the plan. He stated his excitement for the equity piece and the goal to increase community engagement. He asked about how to get an additional level of engagement for the most underserved communities.

Allison replied that the OEEC has been collaborating with Department of Family Services, Neighborhood and Community Services, One Fairfax, the Health Department and other departments that have existing trust in the communities that might need the most resilience help. These departments suggested using the Inclusive Community Engagement Framework for that engagement, but it really needs to be boots on the ground contact with community leaders, putting everything in layman's terms, putting in that in-person work, translating materials when needed, and making materials accessible to continue to build that trust and make sure people have access to the services they need.

Supervisor Lusk also commented on the section addressing extreme heat. We certainly have some things to prepare for and we need to be thinking about this because its going to cause a lot of health-related issues. If we are going to be providing services to support those who might need help with air conditioning or other kinds of equipment, by 2050 and 2085, we are going to be helping a whole lot more people, so we need to be thinking about that even now. This section of the plan really brings it home how severe and difficult our situation is going to be.

Supervisor Foust reflected on the work of community members, like Debra Jacobson, who advocated, with assistance from the Sierra Club and FACS, for the development of a climate adaptation and resilience plan. This plan demonstrates volunteerism, community input and a Board that listens to their community and implements their recommendations. He noted that staff did a great job on the plan and looks forward to working on the implementation side.

Supervisor Palchik agreed with Supervisor Foust's remarks. As we do work in our community, we often hear questions about how we can do more, break down silos, and continue to work strategically. The Resilient Fairfax initiative is leading the way with this. She noted her appreciation for the way the pillars, goals and strategies are laid out. The plan includes every department, every member of our community, and with specific measurable strategies and plans for implementation, this is truly an action plan. What is especially important is the coordination and work across so many agencies. One of the big ones is the Health Department through their community clinics and outreach efforts. They may be seeing individual symptoms or health issues that often tie into larger social impacts. It's important to include the health lens as well as the environmental and infrastructure lens. She asked about going beyond the engagement piece. Engagement comes at the beginning and now we really want community and/or agency ownership. She asked how we can work together on the next phases, thinking about the next steps and building social, structural, and monetary capacity and targeting those communities that may be the most vulnerable.

Allison stated that one of the goals of Resilient Fairfax is plan integration. Within the Integrated Action Planning pillar, several plans were listed that feed into Resilient Fairfax to make sure we are tracking everything in a streamlined manner and increase interagency ownership. To the point about the Health Department, Allison noted that it has been a great partner throughout the planning process. As such, there are a few strategies that relate specifically to health concerns. The OEEC looks forward to continuing that partnership.

Supervisor Palchik also commented on the usefulness of the interactive map.

Supervisor Herrity noted there was a lot of good work in the plan. He asked if there was a fiscally constrained version.

Matt Meyers, Division Director, OEEC, responded that the plan identifies costs related to the actions that are in the roadmap. As part of adoption, we are not asking for any specific financial requests. In the future, specific projects that require funding will be included as part of the budget process.

Supervisor Herrity asked if we have done any prioritization in terms of cost.

Matt responded that there are ranges of costs included in the prioritized strategies in the roadmap, whether its \$0 to \$100,000, \$100,000 to \$500,000, or more.

Bryan Hill, County Executive reiterated that specific actions or projects coming out of Resilient Fairfax will be a part of the budget process.

Supervisor Herrity noted that those cost estimates likely did not include impacts on the cost of housing or other items.

Matt replied that was correct.

#### **Item IV Zero Waste Program Update**

Nathalie Owens, Zero Waste Coordinator, Department of Procurement and Material Management (DPMM) provided an update on the county's Zero Waste Plan. To recap, the Zero Waste Plan and goal for Fairfax County Government and Schools to be zero waste by 2030 originated with the Joint Environmental Task Force (JET). A core staff team was formed to develop the county's Zero Waste Plan. Following its adoption in November 2021, the core team continues to meet biweekly and includes smaller action teams to carry out specific projects.

The mission of the Zero Waste Plan is to reduce our solid waste to close to nothing and to do that through a holistic and climate-conscious approach that considers what we buy, how we use it, and how we dispose of it. The two goals are 1) to divert 90 percent of our solid waste away from the incinerator or landfill and 2) for that diversion to focus heavily on reduction and reuse so that we decrease by 25 percent the totality of our trash, recycling, and composting.

The plan outlines 24 strategies, several of which are centered around education and outreach. Other strategies include new programs such as donation systems for untouched foods, expanding sustainable procurement, and upgrading facilities to phase out disposable products. The current diversion rate is 15 percent, but as this estimate does not include all waste types that are not centrally managed, staff believes the diversion rate to be closer to 30 percent. It's difficult to compare our performance to other jurisdictions because there is very little information on other government's *operational* waste diversion; more information exists at the community level.

As the Zero Waste Plan is being implemented, the core team is working closely with OEEC to coordinate with related efforts, including the Operational Energy Strategy; the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP), for which the county's zero waste initiative may serve as a proof of concept for the community; and the Litter Task Force Report from December 2021, with its government-facing recommendations now folded into the zero waste program.

The core team's priorities for the past year were to establish the program structure and to launch low-hanging fruit strategies and pilots. A number of education and outreach tools have been created, including a website which is expected to launch before the end of 2022. The website will include a toolkit for Zero Waste Champions who wish to take action within their department or facility. All departments will be asked to participate in zero waste. The team is also building tools to measure qualitative and quantitative progress, from waste audits to which departments are educating their colleagues and so forth. The team is currently evaluating the heavy lift strategies and mapping the resource needs for each.

Nathalie then highlighted two pilot programs that are ongoing, including the use of reusable pallet wraps to replace single-use plastic wrap at DPMM's Logistics Center. The second pilot is a three-bin station in the Government Center Cafeteria to include trash, composting and recycling with new, consistent signage to encourage proper sorting of waste. Other work has included the installation of air hand dryers and water bottle filling stations in County Government and Park Authority sites. DPWES is also now piloting an internal network of champions that will serve as a model for the systemwide network.

Finally, Nathalie highlighted challenges and next steps for implementation, with challenges including the complexities of recycling and purchasing upstream, and next steps including the launch of a program website and establishment of a Champions network.

Board Discussion:

Chairman McKay asked if we had an update on how the plan is being implemented in Schools.

Nathalie Owens noted that Schools continues to be involved in the core team to build the program structure to ensure the website and education and outreach tools will work for both entities. However, the School Board was unable to request

funding for a Zero Waste Coordinator for the current fiscal year, so the rollout of implementation is limited at the moment.

Bryan Hill stated that he would speak to the Superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools and return to the Board with a NIP.

Chairman McKay agreed with that approach. It's helpful to know what is going on in Schools and identify what we can do collaboratively in terms of community awareness, how we talk about this and how we can get on the same page.

Supervisor Gross mentioned that we really need to push the school system.

Supervisor Storck echoed that sentiment. He thanked staff for their report and noted that he thinks we are moving in the right direction.

### **Item V CECAP Implementation Plan Update**

Kambiz Agazi, Director, OEEC provided a general update on CECAP implementation. CECAP was developed by and for the community. Last September, staff was directed to take a look at the goals and strategies in the plan and asked to develop an implementation plan. What staff will be bringing forward in December is the CECAP Implementation Plan. The plan will address both short- and long-term implementation, with specific actions identified for the next two years. In addition, the implementation plan will include factsheets on specific programs and initiatives. Where there are new items, staff will bring those items forward to the appropriate Board committees. Staff will also be working through the budget process if there are any resource requirements for any of these programs.

Board Discussion:

Supervisor Storck commented that CECAP was a community-wide energy and climate action plan; it's not about Fairfax County alone, it's about how we address the other 95 percent of emissions coming from the community and make and find community partners and champions. We are looking at systems that bring in the private sector and help us to leverage action. This is a big, heavy lift. There will be more to come on that.

Supervisor Alcorn commented that he looks forward to the plan. He thinks that in terms of the role of county staff, in facilitating these types of improvements, we have to be creative. It's a huge challenge, crossing so many sectors outside of direct county control.

**Item VI**

**Review of Environment and Energy Staff Reports and Not in Board Packages (NIPs)**

Supervisor Storck reminded the Board of the Staff Reports and NIPs included in the Environmental Committee Board package, including the Resilient Fairfax Staff Report.

He concluded with a reminder that October 5 is Energy Efficiency Day. He encouraged everyone to take a moment and think about energy efficiency.

The meeting adjourned at 12:37 P.M.