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From: jenpradas@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2019 2:55 PM
To: Planning Commission
Subject: comments

Written Testimony to the Fairfax County Planning Commission regarding the FY 2020-2024 CIP

March 27, 2019.

Submitted by Jennifer Pradas, Oakton Resident

I just wanted to comment that I do not think the commission should vote on the CIP until the One Fairfax Policy is incorporated into the decision-making process.

Thank you.

Jennifer

March 12, 2019

FY 2019 - FY 2023 Adopted Capital Improvement Program

Public Hearing Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2019

March 12, 2019

FY 2019-FY 2023 Adopted Capital Improvement Program

Comments submitted in Writing by:

Catherine Ledec

Tree Commissioner, Mount Vernon District

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written public comments for the public hearing for this Fairfax County Program. Since I am out of town on travel, I submit these comments in writing.

The Capital Improvement program is important to ensuring that Fairfax County is ready to provide services for residents today and for future residents and that the facilities are available to provide these services. While providing these services and their associated facilities is important we must make smart decisions about land management to include reducing the environmental impact of these projects, reducing their footprint, and preparing these facilities for possible new technologies that take advantage of solar and green infrastructure (natural landscaping).

A HIGH PRIORITY FOR ALL FAIRFAX COUNTY CIP PROJECTS (INCLUDING SCHOOLS) MUST BE TO REDUCE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT and REDUCE THE FOOTPRINT

Do we know that this is a priority and integral part of the planning and design process within each County agency? As a member of the general public I'm not aware of how this is being handled within each agency. These details need to be presented to the public with presentations and video made available on line.

Each County Agency/Dept whether for new construction, renovation, expansion, etc. should be **required to describe** how the environmental impact and footprint of their agency's projects is being reduced. Fairfax County residents deserve excellence in this regard. While fulfilling providing more services to more people as our population grows is important, we must make smart decisions and reduce the impact of these facilities on our scarce environmental resources, and reduce their on the ground footprint.

I CHALLENGE EACH AGENCY TO DESCRIBE FOR EACH AND EVERY PROJECT:

- how each project will reduce its on-the-ground footprint, and reduce its environmental impact.
- that Best Management Practices will be followed without exception for all projects and to specifically describe and present for us which ones will be implemented and how will these be adapted for use at each facility?
- That Low Impact Development practices will be used without exception for all projects, and to describe which ones will be used and how will these be adapted for use at each facility.

Lead Coordinator:

There is a great need to have one person lead and work directly with all county agencies to reduce the environmental impact of all of the projects proposed through and implemented (including past present and future) through the CIP. This work needs to be forward-looking and creative. It should not be reactive. This work also needs to be collaborative so that staff without certain areas of environmental expertise seek out technical assistance from others (and from outside technical experts) for areas that could be pursued but where there is no expertise. **Staff should pro-actively seek out and propose creative and innovative solutions** to reducing the environmental impact of their projects. Thinking outside the box and looking at the many successful examples from other cities in the US and globally is key to fully seeing and implementing innovations here in Fairfax County.

An example: I applaud the staff team working on the Lukens Lane Fire Station (Woodlawn Fire Station) for coming up with a creative stormwater management solution (though **this was reactive rather than pro-actively** proposing an innovative solution). All Fairfax County CIP projects should follow this example of introducing best practices that are creative and go above and beyond the minimum requirements to satisfy the county's ordinances.

I am waiting to hear about creative and innovative solutions for the South County Animal Shelter and Police Station and the Lorton Community Center projects.

A BIG BIG NO-NO: USING FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY PROPERTIES (ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH ACTIVELY USED OPEN SPACES) FOR COUNTY BUILDINGS

We already know that there is already inadequate Parks, Open Spaces and Natural Areas.

County residents expressed as their TOP priority in the NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY what the FCPA should do for the future of Fairfax County: Preserve Open Space and the Environment. Any and all open space that has not been otherwise restricted for use MUST be preserved as open space.

Fairfax County Park Authority Land should NEVER be converted from Park use for construction of a building. This is currently being planned at Lorton Park a Fairfax County Park Authority open space/natural area property where a non-park Fairfax County owned property just across the street was overlooked for the Lorton Community Center.

Park Bond funds were specifically designated and used to purchase the land to establish Lorton Park. I seriously question whether it is appropriate or even legal to convert this FCPA property for construction of this facility.

METRICS

Each agency should provide metrics for measuring its success in achieving the goal of reducing the environmental impact of CIP projects. These metrics should be presented and updated each year with the annual CIP presentation and presented by project, then by agency, and then consolidated even further up the chain.

The best time to establish the metrics is at the early stages of planning of projects.

“IF YOU DON’T PLAN, PLAN TO FAIL” (Diedre Herbst, Environmental Manager Eskom):

At a recent international conference in South Africa Ms. Herbst noted: “If you don’t plan, plan to fail.”

We, as Fairfax County residents, require excellence not just in receiving high quality services provided by the County but we require that the County make good land management decisions.

We must address reducing the environmental impact and footprint of our facilities....this starts with pro-active environmental planning. I’m not convinced that this is being fully done since there is very limited to no information shared in the CIP presentations and there appears to be no focus in the presentations on this critical topic.

Here are some priority items that should be described and presented to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors by each agency (including schools) in the planning and presentation of each year’s CIP. There should also be a look back on what was funded and its success or failure in reducing environmental impacts.

PRIORITY ITEMS TO REDUCE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

These are priority items that should be part of core planning and implemented with Fairfax County funded Capital Improvement Projects.

PRIORITY #1: RESTORING NATURAL ECOSYSTEM SERVICES.

Restoring natural environmental systems will reduce maintenance costs for County properties over the long term, improve environmental conditions by restoring natural ecosystem services and should include things like:

1. **100% Commitment to following the County’s Natural Landscaping Policy** (even if not yet finalized). The use of native plants, trees and shrubs naturally:
 - reduce maintenance costs over the long term
 - are better adapted to local weather conditions

- absorb heat (reducing the urban heat island effect)
 - provide wildlife habitat for our pollinators including birds
 - provide climate resiliency by doing all of the above automatically
 - and more.
2. **Reduce impervious surfaces:** Reduced use of asphalt, concrete and turf grass through increased use of landscaped or mulched planting beds (with native plants) which will naturally:
- Filter, slow down and absorb stormwater (rather than it flow directly and quickly with high nutrients into the street gutters resulting in increased degradation of our streams and polluting our waterways)
 - Absorb heat
 - Provide wildlife habitat for our pollinators including birds
 - Provide visual relief and interest, and more welcoming appeal to county facility
 - provide climate some resiliency (with increasing intensity and frequency of precipitation events, mulched planting beds will do all of the above and buffer us from the adverse impacts of these)
 - and more.
3. **Plant Native Trees (including a diverse suite of native trees), especially trees for shade that will naturally:**
- Require less maintenance over the long term
 - Provide shade cooling the air and soil around them on days that are getting hotter due to climate change
 - Buffer noise (absorb noise)
 - Absorb, filter and slow down stormwater from increasingly intense precipitation events
 - Protect us increased wind events from the impacts of climate change
 - And more.
4. **Proper siting:** Locating buildings such that they work around and protects the best environmental features of a site.

For example retain the best trees on the site (even if and especially when they are not only on the edges of the site. Ensure that natural water flows on the site are retained to ensure the long term life of any trees preserved on the site – this water flow should not be blocked by the building that is to be constructed.

5. **Maximize utility and restoration of natural environmental site elements:**

A full assessment of surface and subsurface water flows should be done to protect the natural flow of these waters on all project sites. This will protect natural water flows (that may be subsurface) that naturally water large trees preserved on the site and could restore a water

flow that will naturally water new trees and landscaped planting beds. If possible a large under the road culvert with a natural bottom should be considered to provide for safe movement of frogs, salamanders, turtles and other wildlife underneath the road structure and reduce collisions with vehicles.

PRIORITY #2: REDUCE THE FOOTPRINT OF ALL FACILITIES:

1. Change the building model by requiring adding a second or a third (or more) level to a school or county building rather than use all available land, spreading the building out entirely over all available land at the site,
2. Consolidate services provided in separate buildings in facilities that are multiple stories high, rather than just adding new 1-story buildings wastefully using land – our scarcest and most resource,
3. Require, install and where possible place all surface parking structures underneath the buildings. Require open space on each site that will improve and provide natural environmental services to be provided by the land – including native tree plantings, planted areas, reducing the urban heat island effect, adding important climate change resiliency, significantly improved natural stormwater management.

PRIORITY #3: WILDLIFE FRIENDLY BUILDING DESIGN:

Bird-Friendly Architecture and Design

Fairfax County is entirely located within the Atlantic Migratory Flyway. We must be cognizant of this and act to protect our birds – both migratory and resident birds.

Planning and designing facilities to include this is easy. It just needs to be required as part of the planning and design phase of the work. We are fortunate to also be located adjacent to the Potomac River where we enjoy numerous species of birds including raptors – specifically Bald Eagles.

More information on this described in a downloadable publication can be found here:

https://abcbirds.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Bird-friendly_Building_Guide_WEB.pdf

Examples of bird-friendly architecture can be found in the publication noted previously but also online here:

https://www.audubon.org/magazine/fall-2018/by-design-architectural-awakening-could-save?fbclid=IwAR17Izlat-Neo0HEb1d7S_Bc98ygzo7UJn-exftp8yq23K7jgtpZLn5Zzrg

and here:

https://www.facebook.com/AmericanBirdConserve/videos/182869602630978/?_tn=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARDM6RvSNAqLBjo3qUdlpkQPER1rE5VzaXbXZ9xkh86uJin88eFLVnD8RxHHmI7AECusZVHP5NO_MiXXN

NO MIRRORED OR REFLECTIVE GLASS SHOULD EVER BE USED in the exterior design of the building.

Where possible window glass should be angled to prevent reflection of outdoor green elements. Expansive areas of glass should be avoided. All glass should be installed with the addition of bird friendly designs pre-installed on the windows including on windows of garage doors. These regularly spaced designs built into the glass itself (research proves the effectiveness) will break up the “invisible” nature of the glass (birds can’t see glass). Alternatively additional layers of architectural design can be added to the exterior of the building – serving the dual role of making the structure visible to birds and shielding the interior spaces from excessive heat during hot summer days. All county buildings must have these features installed.

Examples of bird friendly glass can be found here: <http://www.ornilux.com> A picture a the window (with a dot pattern – this was difficult to photograph – look closely at the right window in the picture) at Tri-state bird rescue is here:



Other examples of bird friendly glass and examples of bird friendly architectural designs for buildings can be found at https://abcbirds.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Bird-friendly_Building_Guide_WEB.pdf

THIS IS EASY TO DO and is best considered in the early design and planning for all facilities. This is all about planning in advance for materials selection that includes these features. Selecting windows that have a bird-friendly design should be a priority for this and all Fairfax County facilities.

PRIORITY #4: ALL COUNTY FACILITIES NEED TO PROTECT THE VIEWSHED OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES EVEN BEYOND THE BOUNDARY OF ANY HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT:

The intrusion of modern day elements into the viewshed is an adverse impact on the historic property and should be avoided. If no other location is not available then mitigations should be taken to screen the view from the historic property to protect the viewshed. This is critical to the protection of the historic sense of place and atmosphere that existed many years ago. The intrusion of vehicular traffic, even if infrequent, destroys the sense of place and is an adverse impact on the viewshed.

PRIORITY #5: ENERGY EFFICIENCY:

This is expected at Fairfax County facilities. Is it happening? We don't know since this is not presented by each agency. Every Fairfax County facility should do this. A lead staff coordinator that works with all agencies should be established to do this work.

Windows should be placed such that they maximize energy efficiency while at the same time do not expose the interior of the building to excessive heat in the summer months that would increase operating costs during the summer months.

Ideally the windows should open (at least partially) in order to provide refreshed air flow into the building during times of year when the outdoor temperatures are conducive to this.

Installation of electric vehicle charging stations. These should be installed during initial construction of the facility so that proper wiring to accommodate this is installed when the parking lot area is already dug up.

Surface and subsurface water flow on the property should also be considered in order to maximize natural flow of waters including stormwater throughout the site into the on site bioretention areas.

This is an obvious item to include in planning for future county facilities but is it happening? Residents don't know since it is not being presented either by agency or in a consolidated manner.

PRIORITY #6: IMPROVE NATURAL MANAGEMENT OF STORMWATER EVEN AND ESPECIALLY ON PARKING LOTS AND PARKING STRUCTURES.

Located underneath the building to minimize the need for an expansive impervious surface parking lot. All parking areas should be curbless in order to facilitate the unobstructed movement of stormwater off the impervious surfaces into bioretention facilities located along the entire perimeter of the surface parking areas. Shade trees should be planted in the interior of any surface parking area

in order to provide shade for users of this public facility. The use of bioretention areas should be used and showcased as demonstration areas with interpretive signage for others to see. This county facility should be a demonstration site showcasing what is possible for reducing the environmental impact of built structures.

The use of pervious pavement surfaces should be seriously considered for all facilities. Not only for surface parking but also for all outdoor sidewalks and walkways.

The inclusion of Rain Gardens within all surface parking areas should be required. Fairfax County's new facilities should set a high bar for all to follow using innovative low impact design techniques.

Any surface parking areas should include adequate space for large shade trees not just along the edge of surface parking areas but within it.

Parking structures should have green plantings on the exterior (vertical plantings) and rooftop plantings including shade trees.

Best examples of surface parking lot rain gardens:

These are located in the Mount Vernon District can be found on Richmond Highway at the former Safeway location – across the street from Don Beyer Volvo. The River Birch trees and other native plantings are magnificent and also provide needed shade to reduce the urban heat island effect of surface parking. The innovative stormwater system to be installed underneath surface parking at the Woodlawn Fire Station project could also be installed at every County facility.

See the photo here for a picture of these rain gardens. While these have curbs, I strongly recommend curbless rain gardens.



Mt. Vernon Safeway Parking lot – store now closed. 7450 Richmond Highway

Bioretention areas around the building structures: The entire building structure should be surrounded by landscaping that maximizes the collection of rainwater and directs it away from the building into bioretention areas. Rain Gardens including a mulched (with wood mulch or stone) planting bed should surround the building. No turf grass should be planted at any county property - instead demonstrations of the use of native plantings instead of turf grass should be used. There are many options available including native grasses such as Purple top (tridens flavus) or sedges such as Oak Sedge (Carex pensylvanica) or Creek Sedge (Carex amphibola) that can replace the turf grass. The establishment of natural biological corridors with multiple layers of native plantings will improve environmental conditions and reduce the environmental impact of this facility. Commitment to 100% native plantings should be implemented as a demonstration project with interpretive signage for all properties.

PRIORITY #7: OUTDOOR GATHERING SPACES INCLUDING SEATING AREAS AND ACTIVE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES ON COUNTY PROPERTIES:

All public facilities should provide users of the facility with gathering spaces around the exterior of the building. This should include places for quiet respite that include park benches with large shade trees that invite users of this facility including staff to connect with the natural outdoor spaces. Research shows the importance of connecting with outdoor natural areas as reducing stress and improving public health.

Since this facility will also house an animal shelter appropriate outdoor play and relief areas for animals need to be provided. These should be placed in an area that is quiet and without the distractions and traffic from the general public using other sections of the facility. This area needs shade trees, and landscape transition screening that provides for the opportunity to use these outdoor spaces year round.

PRIORITY #8: PREPARATION OF THE ROOFS OF ALL NEW BUILDINGS FOR INSTALLATION NOW (OR IN THE FUTURE) OF SOLAR PANELS:

If not ready for installation today, the roof structure should be reinforced to be able to accept the future installation of solar panels without the need to re-design and re-construct the roof for this. Rooftop solar is the ideal location for solar panels. Placing these on the ground should be considered only in the surface parking lot area where they are installed at 10-feet more or higher and installed above where vehicles park – essentially serving as a shade roof for surface parking.

I have not seen any presentations of the ways this project will be reducing its environmental impact. It is possible that some of these have already been included in the design and planning but I send these comments to be sure these features are taken into consideration.

Priority #9: Infuse Climate Change Resiliency actions into all of the above priorities.

This is easy to do, it simply must be done now before the effects of climate change adversely impact our facilities. It is simply not clear if it is being done for each agency's facilities. This should be included in the role of Lead Coordinator.

New planning for new facilities is easy to do at this stage. Planning for the retrofitting of climate change resiliency into existing facilities must also be done now. This is a valid capital improvement expense and should be considered for inclusion in any bond referendum. This includes large projects such as roof replacements to prep roofs for installing solar, large stormwater management retrofits for older buildings where no stormwater management was ever installed and other large projects. This of course would need to be reviewed by the County Attorney.

I'm sure there are other priorities that could be included here and a strong lead coordinator of these efforts with a diverse and enthusiastic environmental sense can work towards expanding this.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Written Testimony to the Fairfax County Planning Commission regarding the FY 2020-2024 CIP

March 27, 2019.

Submitted by Liz Murphy, Lee District Resident

Please accept my comments and questions as part of the written record reviewing the draft of the Fairfax County FY 2020-2024 CIP. The first set of questions are focused on the implementation of the One Fairfax Policy:

- 1) Why is the “One Fairfax Policy” document (adopted by the BOS in 2017 and FCPS in 2018) not referenced or provided in the draft CIP?

For example, the County Executive’s Letter of Review stating the “9 Primary Objectives and Principles of Sound Capital Improvement Planning,” does not include any language referencing the policy.

For example, the FCPS 2020-2024 CIP excludes the “One Fairfax Policy” document from its Essential Operational Planning Documents.

- 2) When will the “One Fairfax Policy” document become institutionalized into all County planning processes and important documents?
- 3) I notice the Planning Commission’s standing committees only include the development area of Tysons. When will standing committees be added that are dedicated to Innovation Station, Embark and other large developments in the works throughout the county?
- 4) Would the Planning Commission sponsor or direct the appropriate Fairfax County agency to hold a Community Workshop on how the One Fairfax Policy will be implemented in decisions coming before the Planning Commission?
- 5) What information have developers seeking zoning approval from the Planning Commission been given about addressing criteria outlined in the One Fairfax Policy?

The next set of questions are in response to Jeff Platenberg’s FCPS CIP presentation before the Planning Commission’s March 13 CIP Work Shop:

- 6) There are many instances when answers are not provided to the Commissioners and will instead be provided “off-line.” How is the public informed about the answers to questions that receive an “off-line” response?
- 7) Mr. Platenberg is asked about FCPS school brick and mortar use at a school that may be requesting a modular. Was the off-line response to this question addressing whether FCPS will be moving supplies out of Woodson HS rooms designed for student use before spending money and placing students in a modular? If no, what was the off-line response to this question?
- 8) The West Potomac HS Addition is in the planning stages (2019, FCPS CIP page 45), yet 6 miles from West Potomac HS sits Mt. Vernon HS with 428 seats currently available. Why build MORE capacity, when there are **428 seats currently OPEN** at a HS in close proximity to West Potomac?
- 9) Mr. Platenberg also mentions the need to address the overcrowding at McLean HS. Is this the school that will receive the **“UNFUNDED MODULAR ADDITION Relocation”** he mentions on page 5 of his power point presentation?
- 10) If yes, why aren’t there plans to move McLean students to the **NEWLY RENOVATED** Langley HS which now has **447 OPEN SEATS** (page 78 FCPS CIP), rather than spending money to expand McLean HS facilities?
- 11) Why is FCPS spending money **NOT** identified in the 2020-2024 FCPS CIP on renovating the McLean HS Science labs when Langley HS has an entirely renovated facility and McLean students can be moved to Langley HS?
- 12) **COMMENT:** Mr. Platenberg defines McLean HS’s needs as “not a renovation” because the overcrowding affects core subjects. Under capacity schools like Langley and Mt. Vernon are similarly affected, but do not receive similar attention or resources. In the case of McLean/Langley and West Potomac/Mt. Vernon, moving students would **BENEFIT** all of the schools and be a more equitable use of limited FCPS staff and financial resources. Projects such as those at McLean HS and West Potomac also have a **DIRECT** impact on the **RENOVATION CUE** of other schools- especially Falls Church HS.

- 13) Mr. Platenberg refers to a “Funded Project- Route 1 ES (Page 4 of FCPS CIP power point presentation). Is this the Pinewoods Lake ES listed on page 45 of the FCPS CIP?
- 14) If yes, how can Pinewoods Lake ES be considered Funded when it is not slated for a Bond until 2027?
- 15) On Page 7 of the power point, the Route 1 ES is listed as (NEW) w/the caveat to monitor capacity in Region 3- is this the Pinewoods Lake School?
- 16) Also on page 7 of the power point is the Fairfax/Oakton ES (New) – is this the school Mr. Platenberg refers to in his presentation?
- 17) If yes and if this project is unfunded, (Page 4 of the FCPS Power Point presentation) why is scoping and planning proceeding- especially since there is still a considerable amount of opposition to the need for this school -especially at this location?
- 18) One of the Commissioners refers to the Schools Committee’s presentation by Steven Fuller. Please provide the public with background information on Mr. Fuller.
- 19) What are the Commission’s next steps toward developing a combined County/FCPS model for regional population estimates?
- 20) What other steps are being considered for a more accurate developer proffer formula?
- 21) One of the Commissioner’s describes FCPS’ 20,000 student transfers as a “Hidden Boundary Change.” Mr. Platenberg mentions the growth of the AAP program as one contributor to traffic congestion. How does the Planning Commission intend follow up with FCPS’ plans to re-align programs and keep more students within their assigned boundary pyramid?

Thank you for this opportunity to comment and ask questions.