

▶ 2021

PROJECTS, PROGRAMS & SUCCESSES



Fairfax County Department of
economic
initiatives
NAVIGATING WHAT'S NEXT

The Department of Economic Initiatives (DEI)

“Navigates What’s Next”

to support competitive and prosperous businesses,
workers and communities



In 2021 DEI helped small businesses recover and also

- **Delivered small business solutions** to cultivate a diverse and thriving local business base
- **Facilitated development** through public-private partnerships to address strategic priorities
- **Fostered an entrepreneurial and innovative ecosystem** within the County and the region



NAVIGATING ... SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH

BIZ EX HELPS COMPANIES START, GROW AND FLOURISH

The Business Experience Partner (“BizEx”) program provides direct assistance and process and resource guidance for people who are seeking to establish or grow their small business within Fairfax County. 2021 marked a period of service broadening through producing sector-specific and searchable content, intake and referral enhancements to more efficiently serve customers, and increased education opportunities. Notable BizEx accomplishments in 2021 include:

- Direct assistance to approximately 450 entrepreneurs through individual virtual consultations
- Participation on more than a dozen panels and class events with the Economic Development Authority and various Chambers of Commerce to provide entrepreneurs and prospective small business owners an overview of requirements and available support
- Updated business specific guides for contractors and collaboration with several county agencies to provide consistent website content
- Significant improvements to the [Starting a Business](#) website, including the creation of a resource page that allows entrepreneurs to search for information based on their business type, their specific need, and/or by business characteristics
- Curated content for an [interactive mapping application](#) to help businesses locate and connect with geographically-based Chambers of Commerce.
- Collaboration with County partners to clarify and streamline relevant business information on other County webpages



NAVIGATING ... SMALL BUSINESS RESILIENCE

HELPING THOSE MOST IMPACTED BY THE PANDEMIC TO PIVOT

Building on the Microloan and RISE small business and nonprofit grant programs in 2020, in 2021 DEI designed and implemented PIVOT, a targeted business recovery grant funding program. The PIVOT program provided funds to the business sectors most negatively impacted by the pandemic including accommodation and food services, retail and personal services, and arts and entertainment. The goal of the program was to help those businesses continue their recovery by providing needed capital for ongoing operations.

With the Latino Economic Development Center acting as the Grant administrator, DEI awarded \$16,836,300 in PIVOT funding to 1,016 small businesses and nonprofits. Among those businesses receiving assistance, 69% identified as minority-owned, 44% woman-owned and 3% veteran-owned. The average one-year revenue loss reported was 40%. A breakdown of PIVOT grant awards by funding type, industry sector and geographic location is available on the 2021 [PIVOT Business Recovery Grant Program dashboard](#).

Repayments from the Microloan program have begun to be redeployed through the Revolving Loan Fund. Three new loans were made in the third quarter of 2021.



NAVIGATING ... INVESTMENT IN OPPORTUNITIES

STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS HELP COMMUNITIES PROSPER AND CREATE RETURNS

In 2021 the Economic Opportunity Reserve (EOR), administrated by DEI, facilitated two investments to help local communities thrive, businesses expand, and create new tax revenue. In July the Board of Supervisors voted to allocate up to \$250,000 to the Tysons Partnership to install mural artwork at the [PARC at Tysons](#) (8508 Leesburg Pike) and continue efforts to create placemaking events to benefit the Tysons area community, attract visitors, and help brand Tysons as a great place to live, work and shop. Efforts have included the [Tysons Block Party](#) and local holiday market hosted at [PARC](#) in December. Additional events are planned throughout 2022.

In December, the Board approved \$5 million in EOR funding to further capital construction on the Downtown Herndon Redevelopment Project, also known as the [Historic Downtown Redevelopment Project](#). This development project will transform four acres of Town of Herndon property into a mixed-use complex that will include residential units, retail/restaurant spaces, structured parking, and a new an art center and public arts plaza for the community. This growth plan furthers the county's vision of creating places where people want to be and is a strategic investment that will provide significant returns through tax revenue and increasing the economic vibrancy of historic downtown Herndon.



NAVIGATING...CATALYTIC DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS ACTIVATE OPPORTUNITIES AND MEET COUNTY-WIDE GOALS

DEI continues to support the Wiehle-Reston Station Metrorail Garage and Reston Station community through managing the partnership between Fairfax County and Comstock Companies. The Reston Station project is a mixed-use development on county-owned property leased to Comstock Companies for aboveground private development. In 2021, the site received occupancy for their fourth building, a 185,000 square foot office building located at 1906 Reston Metro Plaza. Construction is underway for the final office building, which is anticipated to be occupied in 2022. Since the public-private partnership was established in 2009, Fairfax County has collected over \$37 million in lease and direct real estate tax revenue generated by this partnership.

Fairfax Peak is a partnership project proposed by a developer on the county owned I-95 Solid Waste Management Complex. The proposal was submitted in 2019 and passed several major milestones in 2021. The development partner, Alpine-X, conducted geotechnical studies and continued to make progress on engineering and design as well as solicit capital through an innovative crowd-funding model which allowed for local community members to have an ownership stake in the project. Fairfax County amended the Interim Agreement with Alpine-X for this project twice, with the December 2021 approval allowing Alpine-X the ability to file for zoning review. The project is anticipated to begin the entitlement and public review process in 2022.



NAVIGATING ... THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

SETTING THE STAGE FOR A RESILIENT ECONOMIC RECOVERY

In early 2021, the Department of Economic Initiatives (DEI) along with the Economic Development Authority completed a countywide strategy for economic recovery. The Economic Recovery Framework provides an in-depth look at the pre-pandemic economy, the economic impact of COVID-19, and provides recommendations to foster an equitable, inclusive recovery and an economy that will better withstand future shocks. Other goals included retaining Fairfax County businesses and workers and mitigating economic impacts.

The report includes 32+ high-level recommendations and 92+ separate actions to consider and prioritize. Categories address business growth and retention, worker reskilling, barriers to employment and access to childcare and affordable housing. Principal agencies participated in quarterly Economic Recovery Forums to coordinate, share, and leverage work. Implementation is closely coordinated with the Countywide Strategic Planning Team and the Chairman's Task Force on Equity and Opportunity.



NAVIGATING ... INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

EMPLOYING EMERGING TECHNOLOGY TO SOLVE TODAY'S CHALLENGES

In April, Fairfax County partnered with Smart City Works and the Center for Innovative Technology (CIT) on the [Pitch and Pilot: Fairfax County Innovation Challenge](#), a competition where teams and companies propose high-impact solutions to address local challenges. The goal of the 2021 Pitch and Pilot was to find, and ultimately pilot, innovative solutions to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety in Fairfax County's increasingly multimodal transportation landscape. Street Simplified, an emerging firm based in Los Angeles, California, won the Challenge by pitching their data and video-analytics systems that identify risks using existing infrastructure; details appropriate safety countermeasure; and then evaluates and studies the results. A pilot project is currently in the data collection stage with analysis and recommendations available by mid-2022.

The ultimate outcome of this Pitch and Pilot is saving lives. In addition, Fairfax County will employ new technology into our already robust tech ecosystem, enhancing our brand as a place where innovative ideas and firms can thrive.



NAVIGATING...

LOCAL MILITARY PARTNERSHIPS

WORKING TOGETHER TO LEVERAGE ASSETS AND REALIZE JOINT OBJECTIVES

This year marked the first full year a DEI staff person was dedicated to working directly with Fort Belvoir and the Garrison Command. The Liaison position seeks to support Fort Belvoir as a strategic economic development driver in Fairfax County and lead collaboration for mutually beneficial projects. The strong relationships forged between Fort Belvoir leaders and stakeholders helped lift two tremendous initiatives in 2021.

- A Veterans Career Fair in November hosted by Fairfax County Department of Economic Initiatives, the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, and the Department of Family Services. The Fair drew more than sixty-six local companies and 500 job seekers from across the county, giving veterans, active-duty service members and their spouses transitioning out of the military an opportunity to interview for positions both in person and virtually.
- The convening of the Joint Employment and Transition Services (JETS), a Fort Belvoir employment readiness and transition group at USO. JETS collaborates on efforts and has created a shared calendar of collaborative events such as career fairs and networking receptions.

DEI NAVIGATES ... IMPACTFUL INITIATIVES



In October 2021 DEI partnered with George Mason University on their inaugural 'Accelerate 2022', and even to showcase the next generation of cutting-edge ideas, technologies, and startups in Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia for local and coastal investors. At Accelerate 2022 Chairman McKay introduced the proposed Fairfax Founders Fund early-stage investment program.



DEI partnered with other County agencies to review and respond to the proposed George Mason University Master Plan update. The [GMU Master Plan](#) will serve as a framework to guide future land use planning and infrastructure improvement decision at GMU's Fairfax campus.



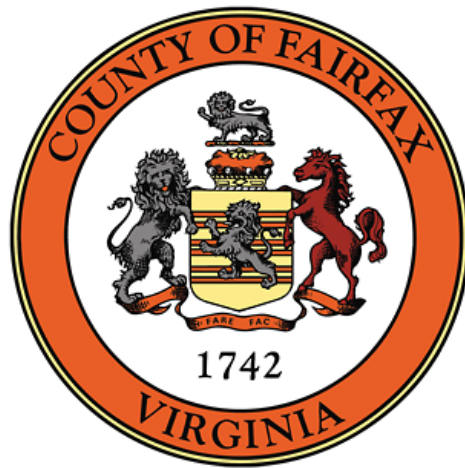
DEI deepened work to develop business development and entrepreneurial opportunities through the Original Mount Vernon High School (OMVHS) redevelopment, including efforts to establish a Food Business Accelerator and Entrepreneurship Center at the site. Look for Requests for Expressions of Interest in early 2022!



In October, as part of the ongoing work on the Smart Region Initiative, DEI collaborated with Smart City Works, the Center for Innovative Technology, Homeland Security, JPL, and the Fairfax County Fire Department to test Pointer, a new tracking and location technology that uses magnetoquasistatic fields to three-dimensionally locate responders during emergencies.



Supporting activation of Tysons we assisted in kicking off the inaugural season of the PARC. PARC held several events in the fall and winter featuring local businesses, including the Made In Fairfax entrepreneurs. DEI assisted with promotion, marketing and planning. As the PARC becomes a staple of Tysons, we will continue to work with them to cultivate small business opportunities and events.



Fairfax County Department Economic Initiatives (DEI)
12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 432
Fairfax, VA 22035
703.324.5171
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/economic-initiatives



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