



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 11, 2023

TO: Fairfax County Park Authority Board

FROM: Larry Zaragoza, DEnv, Chairman *Larry J. Zaragoza*
Environmental Quality Advisory Council

SUBJECT: EQAC Comments on FCPA Budget Proposal

The Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) asks the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) Board to continue to increase funding for management of its natural resources in this year's budget priorities. EQAC has long supported funding of natural resources across Fairfax County and, since 2021, our EQAC Annual Report has included a recommendation to "Seek More Stable Funding Sources for Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) Initiatives".

FCPA's 2016 Needs Assessment¹ reported that an additional \$2,350 per acre of annual funding (for all 17,000 acres of natural area owned by FCPA--close to \$40M/year) would be needed to perform the necessary maintenance activities for the county's natural resources. While some additional funding has been secured over the past two years for natural resources, such as the Board of Supervisors' General Fund allocations to support the Landscape Legacy and Sustainability Program, significant additional funding will still be required each year, for many years, to achieve the funding goal in the 2016 Needs Assessment.

Another key challenge highlighted in EQAC's annual report is in the current funding structure for hiring people to lead longer-term initiatives. The current disparate funding avenues lead to instability and lack the long-term security needed to effectively protect natural resources. The current practice of holding positions open in order to use that funding to cover more immediate needs underscores the issue of underfunding.

EQAC appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments for consideration and looks forward to continuing to support FCPA's natural resources funding needs.

cc: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Rachel Flynn, Deputy County Executive

¹ <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sites/parks/files/Assets/documents/plandev/parkscount/needs-assessment-plan-050616.pdf>

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EQAC