



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 9, 2023

TO: Planning Commission

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

SUBJECT: EQAC Recommends Upholding Existing Environmental Policies During the Planning Commission's SSPA Workshop Reviews of Nominations

EQAC is looking forward to the Planning Commission's first of several workshops on February 22 during the 2022-2023 Countywide Site-Specific Plan Amendment (SSPA) Process. This new step in the SSPA process presents another opportunity to apply the county's existing environmental policies to site specific plan amendments.

EQAC asks the Commissioners to ensure county environmental policies are considered in SSPA decisions. These policies include the land use and environmental policies Fairfax County has recently adopted, including Community-wide Energy & Climate Action Plan (CECAP) and Resilient Fairfax, as well as long-standing policies such as the protection of Environmental Quality Corridors, Resource Protection Areas, and floodplains. Application and implementation of these policies are what results in positive change, not the policies alone. Each development decision will impact the county for decades to come, either positively or negatively.

With those policies in mind and while selecting recommended nominations for the Board, EQAC specifically asks the Commissioners to:

- Prioritize nominations which include transit-oriented development, integrated affordable housing (particularly for low-to-moderate income households), and sufficient stormwater capture and tree canopy. Doing so is an equitable, ecological, and significant way to reduce stormwater runoff, heat islands, and carbon emissions while simultaneously providing sustainable opportunities for people to live where they work and to use alternative modes of transportation such as metro, walking, or biking.
- Prioritize nominations which produce a net-environmental benefit. Because the SSPA process, by its nature, does not approach land use decisions holistically, EQAC asks that this benchmark be met to ensure that only the most sustainably-focused nominations move forward. For example, prioritizing nominations which propose multiple benefits such as energy efficient buildings, solar panels on roofs and/or

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parking, or preserve or expand tree canopy will better position Fairfax County to achieve its aggressive climate goals.

EQAC asks that the Planning Commission's recommendations at the conclusion of the workshops support the County's existing environmental policies in their recommendations to the Board.

cc: Board of Supervisors
Rachel Flynn, Deputy County Executive
Kambiz Agazi, Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination
EQAC