

2. TRANSPORTATION

Board of Supervisor’s Environmental Vision:

“A dependable, safe, efficient, accessible, and multi-modal transportation network is necessary to support the travel needs of Fairfax County residents now and into the future. The county will continue to develop policies and strategies that reduce the dependence on single-occupancy vehicle trips through smart development, efficient use of the transportation system, and by expanding the county’s bicycle, pedestrian and transit infrastructure. The county will pursue transportation strategies in support of regional attainment of air quality standards.”

Introduction

Transportation is a key element impacting the quality of life for Fairfax County residents, and transportation planning choices must be made which balance a myriad of concerns, including but not limited to convenience, cost, efficiency, health, equity, and environmental impact. Fairfax County residents and visitors are overwhelmingly dependent on automobile transportation due to the long distances that often must be traveled, neighborhoods designed for cars, as well as the lack of convenient or safe (actual or perceived) alternative options such as mass transit, bicycling, or walking. Yet it is this heavy dependence on automobiles that has resulted in some of the worst traffic congestion in the United States, and with that congestion large amounts of wasted time and productivity, as well as added pollution from vehicle emissions that degrades our air quality and contributes to climate change. [Data from INRIX shows the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area](#) as the 9th worst city for congestion in the United States and 22nd worst in the world, with 62 hours lost each year to congestion and a cost of \$1,110 per driver.

Current Concerns

Heavy Use of Single-Occupancy Vehicles

There is a lack of reliable data available to fully understand the current use of different modes for transportation in Fairfax County. [Data from the American Community Survey](#) shows approximately 58% of workers used single-occupancy vehicles for transportation to work in 2023 (representing approximately 400,000 households). This number has remained relatively constant over the ten-year period from 2013 to 2023. What are not included in this data are the many non-work trips taken in Fairfax County. Anecdotal information suggests that the number of trips made by single-occupancy vehicles in Fairfax County has greatly increased in the past 2-3 years with the fraction of travel (work and non-work) made by single-occupancy vehicles significantly higher than 58%. Such information suggests that traffic congestion is also no longer limited to traditional rush hour times but occurs

throughout the day. In addition, safety issues such as aggressive driving (e.g., speeding well in-excess of the speed limit) and distracted driving (e.g., driving while looking at a cell phone or other mobile device) are considerable problems. Anecdotal information also indicates that county residents are continuing to adopt one or more of the many micro-mobility options such as bike share and scooters and that E-bike sales also expanded. Examples of approaches that Fairfax County has implemented to address the heavy use of single-occupancy vehicles include bikeshare expansions and promotions across the county along with Bicycle Friendly America Program promotions and Active Transportation promotional events such as Walk and Win Challenge and Bike to Work Day. Fairfax County did not provide EQAC with data to evaluate the extent to which its efforts to reduce single-occupancy vehicle use in the county are addressing the One Fairfax Policy.

RECOMMENDATION: Further support efforts by Fairfax County and regional partners to reduce use of single-occupancy vehicles by expanding emphasis on Transit-Oriented Development, use of public transit, and other relevant efforts. This recommendation should be considered in conjunction with EQAC’s recommendation in its chapter on Land Use about promoting Transit-Oriented Development.

Public Transit

Fairfax County has significant transit infrastructure and ridership has increased over the past 1-2 years as the region recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. For FY 26, Fairfax County contributions to WMATA (Metrorail and Metrobus), Virginia Railway Express (VRE), and Fairfax Connector total approximately \$384 million (Table T-1). The county contribution to WMATA comprises \$105,546,270 (\$63,046,270 from the general fund and \$42,500,000 from bonds) to support capital and operating, respectively. Further, the county directs \$187,079,916 in state aid, gas tax, and interest on state aid to fund WMATA operating. Overall, the county contributes 5.8% of WMATA’s \$5 billion overall budget for FY 26. WMATA’s funding gap for FY26 has been addressed through a combination of additional state aid paid directly to WAMATA and additional state aid out of the county’s balance. However, Fairfax County currently has no solution for FY 27’s anticipated funding gap. **COMMENT: EQAC continues to support county and regional efforts to provide a safe and sustainable public transit network for use by county residents and visitors.**

Table T-1. Summary of Fairfax County’s Contribution to Public Transit Organizations.

Source: FCDOT, e-mail from Arletta Thirus; July 1, 2025.

| Public Transit Organization | Fairfax County Contribution to Organization’s Operating Budget | Fairfax County Percentage of Organization’s Operating Budget |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| WMATA – FY 26 | \$292,626,186 | 5.8% |
| VRE – FY 26 | \$6,261,092 | 2.8% |
| Fairfax Connector – FY 26 | \$85,238,075 | 52% |

Increased Use of Electric Vehicles

In 2021, Fairfax County published its [Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan \(CECAP\)](#) which lays out multi-sector greenhouse gas reduction strategies and identifies roles and responsibilities for federal, state and local stakeholders. A review of [Fairfax County's Climate Action Dashboard](#) shows that, despite reductions, transportation is the second-largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Fairfax County (after buildings), contributing 44% of the emissions. ~~The dashboard shows that, based on 2023 data, approximately 3.4% of light-duty vehicles registered in Fairfax County are battery electric vehicles (BEVs) or plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs). This is more than the approximate 1.1% in 2020 but less than the goal of having at least 15% of all light-duty vehicle registrations be BEVs or PHEVs by 2030, corresponding to about 125,000 vehicles.~~

The dashboard shows that in 2023, approximately 3.4% of light-duty vehicles in Fairfax County were electric. This includes battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs). This is an improvement from 2020, when only 1.1% were electric. However, it's still less than the county's 2030 goal of 15% electric vehicles, which equals about 125,000 vehicles.

In addition, the dashboard shows that about 7% of light-duty vehicles registered in Fairfax County are hybrid electric vehicles. [County staff noted](#) that electric vehicles produce less air pollution and carbon emissions – less than 25% of the emissions of a comparable gas-powered vehicle, per national averages. Further, that drivers save \$6,000-\$10,000 in reduced fuel and maintenance needs by buying an electric vehicle. Information about the cost savings of switching to an electric vehicle also is available at the [vehicle comparison website of the U.S. Department of Transportation](#). For example, in looking at [sedans](#), they estimate annual fuel costs for fully electric ranged from \$550-750 and for fully gasoline from \$850-1,550. Fairfax County also is seeking ways to improve its estimates of the number of light-duty electric vehicle registrations. **COMMENT: EQAC appreciates efforts by county staff to coordinate across departments (Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination with the Department of Management and Budget) to improve the quality of data about electric vehicle registrations.**

Fairfax County's ongoing EV Readiness Strategy development and the Charge Up Fairfax program are the two main approaches being used by the county to increase light-duty electric vehicle registrations. The Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) is developing a draft EV Readiness Strategy plan that is ~~anticipated to be posted for public comment in August 2025~~ posted for public comment and will be open through August 17. A public meeting is scheduled for August 6. The final report is scheduled to be completed and submitted to the Board of Supervisors in September 2025. Additional details are available on the ~~EV Readiness Strategy public engagement website~~ EV Readiness Strategy public engagement website. As of July 2025, 16 communities (approximately 5,200

households) have participated in ~~Charge Up Fairfax~~Charge Up Fairfax. ~~Recent improvements to the Charge Up Fairfax~~Recent improvements to the Charge Up Fairfax program include increasing the grant amounts and collaborating with Dominion Energy on their related electric vehicle charging infrastructure program for multifamily residential communities. Additionally, Charge Up has a new rolling application cycle rather than having specific deadlines for cohorts in order to make the program more widely available throughout the year. The eligible organizations have also expanded beyond just homeowner associations and condominium owners associations (COAs) to also include faith-based organizations and non-profits. Additional information relevant to increase use of electric vehicles is described in the Climate and Energy chapter of the ARE.

Commented [RW1]: Please spell out COAs

RECOMMENDATION: Further support efforts by Fairfax County increase light-duty electric vehicle registrations in Fairfax County to at least 15% of total registrations by 2030.

Recommendation: 2TRANS-2021.1 | Age: 5 years | Status: Making progress

Electrification of County Vehicles

Fairfax County's Operational Energy Strategy calls for a transition of the county's buses and fleet vehicles to fully electric or a non-carbon emitting alternative by 2035. Also, that by 2035, 99% of Connector bus fleet miles traveled will be with non-carbon emitting vehicles. The county reports that, as of July 2025, 6% of the Connector buses and vehicle fleet are electric. Additional information about the status of school bus electrification is provided in the FCPS Spotlight of this ARE under discussion of the Joint Environmental Task Force (JET) implementation. As part of its efforts to develop an EV Readiness Strategy, the county is considering three fleet transition scenarios in collaboration with the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination and Department of Vehicle Services. These scenarios vary based on which EVs are selected, the number of vehicles replaced annually, the length of time for postponing a replacement, and the length of time for the study period. The Fleet Transition strategy will be published as part of the EV Readiness Strategy published in September.

COMMENT: EQAC supports a timely transition of county vehicles to electric and anticipates additional input as part of its feedback on the EV Readiness Strategy.

Fairfax County's Dept of Transportation (FCDOT) has commissioned an analysis to identify a pathway to diesel alternatives for the Connector transit fleet and has implemented a zero-emission bus pilot program; FCDOT will report to the BOS on the study and electric bus pilot in 2026. Fairfax County received a \$50 million grant award from the Federal Transit Administration in 2024 for low emission, diesel-electric hybrid buses. The new buses have next generation hybrid technology and will help with the Connector's ongoing fleet replacement plan, while the pilot and study considerations including feasibility of today's technology are further evaluated. For the non-bus fleet, OEEC and the Department of Vehicle Services are working with consultants and many other agencies on a fleet

transition plan. OEEC noted that the primary hurdle to more rapid electrification is a lack of suitable electric alternatives that meet the operational needs of most vehicles in the county fleet, including public safety vehicles (police and sheriff pursuit vehicles and fire apparatus) and heavy equipment used by DPWES and FCPA. A summary of the fleet transition study will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in September.

EQAC is supportive of Fairfax County's efforts to provide county residents with green vocational technical training. For example, the [Workforce Innovation Skills Hub \(WISH\)](#) provides services to help the community to develop its workforce, support business, and cultivate a thriving economy. The WISH center is broad in fields and services offered and includes training for career paths in the building and construction trades industry though not specifically for areas such as electric vehicles or solar panels.

ActiveFairfax Transportation

Fairfax County's main planning effort related to non-motorized infrastructure is the [ActiveFairfax Transportation Plan](#), including the Safe Streets for All Program which the Board of Supervisors unanimously endorsed on May 10, 2022. In May 2025, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to consider a Comprehensive Plan amendment that incorporates the Active Transportation and Trails Plan. The Comprehensive Plan amendment process is expected to take 10 months (i.e., through March 2026) and provide opportunities for public engagement in late summer/early fall 2025. Implementation of the plan is not funded. Fairfax County DOT applied for but did not receive funding to support a staff position to implement the Safe Streets for All Program position. FCDOT is currently working on an application to request Safe Streets and Roads for All federal grant funding for a part-time staff augmenting consultant position to support launch of the Safe Streets for All Program in the interim. **RECOMMENDATION: Provide the resources and funding needed to complete and implement the ActiveFairfax Transportation Plan in a timely manner, including providing a staff person the Safe Streets for All Program.**

Recommendation: 2TRANS-2023.1. | Age: 3 years | Status: Making progress

Sidewalks and Trails

Fairfax County has an extensive network of sidewalks and trails available to county residents and visitors who use them for work, school, commerce, and recreation. We note the recent completion of trail segments along the I-66 Corridor and support county efforts to highlight the trail route and access points for the public along with wayfinding signage. EQAC notes an ongoing concern with the need to address maintenance of non-motorized infrastructure in the county so it can be safely used by residents and visitors. The Board's approval of funding for trail maintenance as part of the \$100 million for Active Transportation over 6 years funding effort will be helpful in that regard.

Installation of bicycle paths, crosswalks, and roadway lanes are done by FCDOT as well as Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), developers, or other entities. Much of the work to construct non-motorized infrastructure is performed by VDOT (for example, when they are repaving a road, they might add a bicycle lane). However, estimates of the infrastructure constructed by VDOT or private developers were not made available to EQAC. FCDOT noted the following for projects they manage/implement: new bicycle paths – linear feet of cycle track and on-road bicycle lanes added (FY 25: 0; FY 26: 1,562); crosswalks – linear feet of sidewalk added (FY 25: 1,787; FY 26: 5,318); and roadway lanes – linear feet of new roadway vehicular lanes added (FY 25: 760; FY 26: 3,484). Source: FCDOT, e-mail from Arletta Thirus; July 1, 2025. **COMMENTS: EQAC supports efforts to provide adequate maintenance of sidewalks and trails so they can be safely used by residents and visitors. Also, EQAC supports efforts by FCDOT and VDOT to increase the number of miles of bicycle paths, crosswalks, and roadway lanes for non-motorized transit in the county. Additional efforts to provide connected pathways would also be helpful in their use for traveling to work, school, commerce, and recreation.**

Impact of Transportation Projects on Trees and Natural Areas

EQAC is following the approach being used by FCDOT and VDOT to reduce the impact of transportation projects on trees and natural areas (e.g., in Environmental Quality Corridors [EQCs], resource protection areas [RPAs], and the Occoquan Watershed). FCDOT follows [Section 4\(f\) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966](#) to minimize impact to parkland (on federal-aid projects) and the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance/RPAs. Some recent transportation and electrification projects in Fairfax County have resulted in follow up about tree loss. In [June, 2025, EQAC sent a memorandum to the Board of Supervisors](#) requesting that proposals for roads need to include information on tree loss so that the Board and communities can be better informed about potential tree loss before a plan is accepted by the Board and that tree preservations options need to be known at the earliest stage of road construction projects. Recognizing that the county's Department of Transportation maintains county roads, EQAC recommended that the Board direct the County Executive to ask that the Department of Transportation explore possible options to reduce tree loss and possibly plant trees that are removed during road construction when appropriate. Further, VDOT is in the process of developing landscaping guidance for their projects. **RECOMMENDATION: The Board of Supervisors should work with VDOT and utility companies to include in their guidance the development of options to reduce tree loss and maximize the replacement of trees at the conceptual stage of projects. Such a provision will help to align road decisions with the Board's goals and reduce surprises for the Board and communities.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section is only a placeholder. Each recommendation will be moved into a “call-out” box near the location you indicate in the chapter’s text.

- Each recommendation should be rephrased, if necessary, into a single clear imperative sentence.
- Along with the recommendation, you may include a short paragraph containing any necessary clarifying or supplemental information, much like is done in the 2024 Scorecard.
- Staff will move each recommendation, status, and supplemental text into

DRAFT