

### Background

At the May Working Group meetings, four sector-based goals were established by the Working Group, but discussions were not completed for a fifth goal, regarding Natural Resources. The original Natural Resource goal concepts presented were:

- Inclusion of the Natural Resources goal as part of the green building sector goal.
- A focus on maintaining tree canopy in alignment with Fairfax County's Tree Action Plan.

Working Group members expressed a desire to modify the Natural Resources goal during the May meeting as follows:

- Adding an equity component to the goal, such as providing new trees and/or green spaces to areas with disadvantaged or vulnerable populations.
- Ensuring that the goal provided is adequately aligned with the SMART goal framework previously discussed.
- Determining whether the goal should focus solely on trees or also include access to green spaces such as parks.

As there was no group consensus at the May meeting, staff and the consultants promised to provide additional information for a goal reflecting these desired modifications. Following the meeting, CECAP staff discussed a tree canopy goal with staff from the Urban Forest Management Division (UFM) of the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) to learn about available data, constraints, and equity and the One Fairfax policy efforts. For a variety of reasons, the data collected by UFM on quantity, quality, and number of trees planted is not appropriate for use for the CECAP goals. Staff from UFM therefore recommended a standalone goal from the Tree Action Plan. UFM has started to map vulnerable populations and overlay this information with tree canopy information and recommends that such an approach may be useful for CECAP. A pilot program is underway to plant trees on residential properties in these identified areas.

### New Goal Option

Based on the information and additional research a new goal option has been prepared for consideration by the Working Group:

#### **Plant a minimum of 1,000 trees by 2030 in census tracts with vulnerable populations**

This proposed goal provides a metric for expanding tree canopy, contains an equity element, and uses data currently being collected by the County. The initial goal includes a target of 125 trees annually, which aligns with the current pilot program, however the program and related partnerships could grow considerably through additional funding. This concept reflects several considerations. First, the use of census tracts is preferred over the Fairfax County BOS districts or zip codes, since it more closely aligns with national data and provides more precision to the locations of disadvantaged communities. Second, "vulnerable populations" has not been explicitly defined to allow for the implementation of programs to adapt to specific needs. Lastly, while 1,000 trees has been noted above, the goal number could change based on Working Group priorities and projections on new resources.