

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) provides independent advice (e.g., [Annual Report on the Environment](#) (ARE) and memoranda) to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on environmental issues. The ARE – a requirement of EQAC’s charter – is intended to provide a big picture view of how environmental programs are working and identify areas that require attention. For 2024, the EQAC finds that residents and businesses can expect clean water, and good air quality. The county’s clean water and good air quality are largely attributable to the county’s past environmental investments. While the county has undertaken a number of initial investments to address climate change, the county will need to do more to address climate change and other environmental challenges to maintain a healthy environment and continue to improve our quality of life.

### EQAC Annual Report Priorities for 2024

While EQAC’s 2024 recommendations span many areas of the environment, EQAC continues to place a high priority (6 of 10 priority recommendations) on the county’s climate programs (i.e., Community-Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) and Resilient Fairfax). It is also clear that there are many interrelationships among recommendations (e.g., ActiveFairfax is common to both transportation and CECAP recommendations).

To direct the focus on urgent challenges, EQAC identifies two groups of priority recommendations in the Annual Report each year. The first are recommendations whose implementation is limited by budget constraints. The second will require coordination between EQAC and county staff to create an implementable solution. The Scorecard includes other recommendations that, though important, are not 2024 priority recommendations.

### Budget Priorities for the Board (listed in proposed priority):

- a) Incorporate adequate funding for both CECAP Implementation and Resilient Fairfax in the annual operations and CIP Budget. [*Recommendation: 6CE-2022.1; Important for both CECAP and Resilient Fairfax*]
- b) Provide the resources and funding needed to complete and implement the ActiveFairfax Transportation Plan in a timely manner, including providing a staff position for the Safe Streets for All Program. [*Recommendation: 2TRANS-2023.1; CECAP Transportation Strategy 8*]
- c) Increase funding for the stormwater program to adequately fund this program, including funding for the Updated Countywide Flood Reduction Policy. [*Recommendation: 3C-W-2022.1; Resilient Fairfax Climate Ready Communities Strategy 3a*]
- d) Set the fee rate collected for wastewater treatment to meet the documented upgrades and maintenance requirements for all the plants that serve the county and their respective wastewater collection system. [*Recommendation 3B-W-2021.1*]

- e) Seek more stable funding sources for Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) initiatives. [Recommendation: 5PER-2021]

Priorities requiring EQAC coordination with county staff (listed in proposed priority order):

- a) Given the extent of CECAP goals, identify those activities that are needed to achieve CECAP and Resilient Fairfax. Adopt a Climate Priorities Strategy for public consumption that identifies those activities that will be needed to achieve CECAP, Resilient Fairfax and other climate related goals, such as VCEA. [Recommendation: 6CE2022.2; important for both CECAP and Resilient Fairfax]
- b) Regularly, perhaps every 3 months, convene business leaders in the climate and energy area to share their successes and expertise with businesses leaders that are seeking to reduce their energy use and waste. [Recommendation 6CE-2021.4; CECAP Energy Supply Recommendation 4 and Onsite Energy Supply Recommendation 5]
- c) Plan and implement an EV charging network so that residents of buildings without EV charging and travelers will have options for charging their EVs. [Recommendation 6CE-2021.5; CECAP Transportation Strategy 7]
- d) Improve Policy Plan language to prioritize protection of fragile lands and enhance environmental benefits of redevelopment. [Recommendation: 1LU-2019.3]
- e) Address Illegal Dump Sites [Recommendation: 4WM-2024.4]

### Successes!

EQAC thanks the Board and congratulates staff on their success of completing the three following recommendations from the 2023 ARE:

1. Update the State of the Plan and Concept for Future Development Map [Recommendation: 1LU-2018.1]
2. Wastewater operates an enterprise fund, and the department needs to be supported in creating a salary structure and pursuing benefit programs that will hire and keep adequate numbers of employees in these essential positions. [ Recommendation: 3B-W-2023.1]
3. Make changes to zoning codes to grant exceptions for deer processing operations in Fairfax County to minimize impacts on participation in the deer management program. [Recommendation: 8WIL-2023.3]

Fairfax County is fortunate to have both a strong base of environmental policies and talented county staff to meet these challenges as directed by the Board. We thank the Board of Supervisors for their leadership on environmental issues. While EQAC has recommendations to adjust programs and undertake additional work, we see these kinds of recommendations as important feedback that the Board can use to inform adjustments to programs.