Resilient Fairfax: Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan
Public Meeting # 4
May 24, 2022 | 6:30 P.M. | Via Zoom
Meeting Minutes

The fourth Resilient Fairfax public meeting was hosted by Fairfax County, and took place on May 24, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom. It was open to all members of the Fairfax County community. The following meeting minutes summarize the presentation and discussion. In addition to the meeting minutes, this document also contains the original Zoom Chat transcript which can be found in the Appendix below.

Attendees:
Approximately 30 people joined the meeting, including members of the Project Team, as listed below.

Project Team

- Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination
  - Matthew Meyers
  - Allison Homer
  - Aline Althen
- Consultants (Cadmus)
  - Julia Chase
  - Julia Nassar
  - Lindsey Popken

Meeting Start: 6:30 p.m.

I. Welcome, Introduction, and Project Recap| 6:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.

a. ***Welcome***: Allison Homer from the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) provided opening remarks to welcome participants, introduced the project team, and overviewed the agenda topics.

b. ***Background: What is the OEEC?*** Allison Homer (OEEC) provided an overview of the OEEC. Established in July 2019, the OEEC conducts county-wide coordination on environmental, energy, and sustainability topics. Prior to the establishment of the formal office, Director Kambiz Agazi was the environmental coordinator for the county for over 20 years. Some jurisdictions refer to Mr. Agazi's position as the "Chief Sustainability Officer." Fairfax County uses slightly different terminology, but the role is the same. With the establishment of the OEEC, Mr. Agazi now has staff to support him. The OEEC's primary focus areas include climate planning and action, energy management, sustainability and innovation, and community programs. OEEC

coordinates across Fairfax County departments, regional authorities, utilities, state and federal government agencies, businesses, organizations, and residents to effectively advance these policies and programs. The OEEC is fortunate in its cross-county coordination abilities that are enabled by the organizational structure; OEEC staff report directly to the County Executive office, rather than being housed underneath a different department. For example, the Resilient Fairfax planning team is led by the OEEC and includes 20 county departments from a range of disciplines.

c. ***Background: What does the OEEC do?*** Allison Homer (OEEC) provided an overview of four primary areas of OEEC work: community programs, climate planning, making county operations greener, and general environmental coordination. The OEEC currently has fewer than 15 staff members conducting the various plans and programs listed on the slide. Within "community programs," the OEEC has several community initiatives for the general public, businesses, low-income residents, and commercial entities. Within "climate planning," the OEEC conducts both resilience and emissions reduction planning. Within "county operations," the OEEC works to make Fairfax County government operations greener through projects such as solar installations, electric fleet vehicles, and energy efficiency improvements. Within "general environmental coordination," OEEC coordinates across all levels of government, conducts legislative and policy work, produces environmental reporting, and provides staff support to entities such as the Environmental Quality Advisory Council.

d. ***Difference between Resilient Fairfax and CECAP:*** Allison Homer (OEEC) explained the difference between Resilient Fairfax and the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP). CECAP focused on the community's emissions reductions, to help address the cause of climate change. Resilient Fairfax focuses on making the county resilient to the local effects of climate change, such as flooding, severe storms, and extreme heat.

e. ***Background: Why Resilient Fairfax:*** Allison Homer (OEEC) shared the origins of Resilient Fairfax. At the direction of the county's Board of Supervisors, Resilient Fairfax originated from the need to strengthen the County's resilience to the effects of climate change, including increasing storm severity, flooding, extreme heat, sea level rise, and other effects. For example, a single severe storm in July 2019 had a financial impact of $14.8 million. The Board of Supervisors would prefer that the county enhance our resilience to these changing conditions more broadly, rather than scrambling to respond to individual events. With enhanced resilience, we will collectively be safer and healthier as a county.

f. ***Resilient Fairfax: Planning Process:*** Allison Homer (OEEC) provided an overview of the planning process for Resilient Fairfax. The Resilient Fairfax planning process included a series of detailed analytical steps. First, expert climate scientists modeled Fairfax County's climatic conditions to answer the question, "what climate conditions and

hazards will Fairfax County face?" The results are documented in the *Climate Projections Report*. This modeling is rare and valuable at the county level; many jurisdictions are only able to rely on more generalized national or regional data. Next, the team examined how the county's infrastructure, services, assets, and populations may be vulnerable to these changing conditions. The team examined 21 sub-sectors for exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity to each of the six climate hazards. Those vulnerabilities are documented in the *Climate Vulnerability and Risk Assessment.* Third, the team conducted an *Audit of Existing Policies, Plans, and Programs* to identify how the county government is currently doing in terms of climate resilience, and where there are opportunities for improvement. These analyses were followed by development of strategies to enhance our resilience to climate hazards and an Implementation Roadmap to facilitate implementation.

g. ***Resilient Fairfax: Timeline****:* Allison Homer (OEEC) provided an overview of the planning process timeline, including the following points: The Resilient Fairfax planning process began in February 2021, and is scheduled for completion in autumn 2022. Currently, the draft plan is open for public comment, between May 16th and June 15th 2022. The Climate Projections Report, Vulnerability & Risk Assessment, and Audit of Existing Policies, Plans, and Programs are all also available to the public. Based on the comments received, the project team will revise the draft plan this summer, before finalization and final presentation to the Board of Supervisors this autumn. The bottom half of the timeline graphic shows that the project team has conducted regular stakeholder and public engagement throughout the planning process, with the Planning Team (20 county departments), Infrastructure Advisory Group, Community Advisory Group, general public, and the Board of Supervisors. In addition to the 26 formal engagement points shown here, staff have provided dozens of additional presentations and meetings to other community groups.

h. ***Resilient Fairfax: Key Players:*** Allison Homer (OEEC) provided an overview of Resilient Fairfax's key players, including project managers, consultants, the Planning Team, the Infrastructure Advisory Group (IAG), and the Community Advisory Group (CAG). Each engagement milestone involved coordination with over 100 stakeholders, in addition to the general public. The Planning Team is composed of 20 county departments. The Infrastructure Advisory Group is composed of dozens of utilities and infrastructure managers at all levels of government. The Community Advisory Group is composed of representatives of each Supervisor District, and various community organizations.

i. ***How does Resilient Fairfax fit with related initiatives?*** Allison Homer (OEEC) provided an overview of how Resilient Fairfax aligns with related federal, state, regional, and county initiatives. There has been an increase in climate resilience-related action at all levels of government. OEEC staff have worked with representatives of these related initiatives to help ensure that our data, plans, strategies, and funding opportunities are

aligned. For example, OEEC has coordinated closely with the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services as they develop their Flood Risk Reduction Plan. Another example is the coordination between OEEC Resilient Fairfax staff and the US Army Corps of Engineers' project in Belle Haven. The Resilient Fairfax team has also ensured coordination with local military base resilience planning activities, the regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan, regional climate planning, activities of neighboring jurisdictions, and federal funding opportunities, among others.

j. ***Review of Preceding Reports:*** Allison Homer (OEEC) provided a recap of the Resilient Fairfax planning process, outlining key takeaways from the following three technical reports:

i. *Climate Projections Report*: This report outlines the future climate conditions and hazards of Fairfax County. The main takeaway of this report is that Fairfax County is projected to experience warmer, wetter, and weirder climate conditions through 2050 and 2085. "Warmer" includes increases in both average annual temperature and prevalence of extreme heat events. The "wetter" category includes an increase in heavy precipitation, an increase in annual precipitation, coastal flooding of the Potomac River, and coastal storm surge during severe storm events. The "weirder" category includes an increase in storm severity, unseasonably warm and cool temperature fluctuations, and periods of no precipitation followed by heavy and sudden precipitation.

ii. *Vulnerability & Risk Assessment*: This report outlines the assets, systems, and populations in Fairfax County that may be vulnerable to climate hazards. Vulnerability was calculated as a function of exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity. The county's top vulnerabilities were identified: heavy precipitation causing inland flooding of communities, combined events impacting natural systems, storms & wind causing debris, damage, and unsafe conditions, storms & wind causing vulnerabilities due to power outages, extreme heat causing health related impacts, and coastal flooding impacts along the Potomac River. These top vulnerabilities were then evaluated for level of "risk," which refers to likelihood of the vulnerability occurring and the severity of the consequences. Fairfax County's inland flooding is predominantly "urban flooding," rather than "riverine/floodplain flooding." This means that 97% of the county's flooding-related service requests relate to flooding that is a result of heavy precipitation overwhelming our infrastructure, rather than waterways spilling into floodplains.

iii. *Audit of Existing Policies, Plans, and Programs*: This report reviews existing policies, plans, and programs in Fairfax County related to climate resilience. The Audit helps to identify 1) where Fairfax has already begun to implement best practices for increasing resiliency, 2) opportunities to expand, extend, or accelerate existing

initiatives, and 3) gaps where new strategies or policy updates may be needed to address climate resiliency needs. The consultants found that Fairfax County was strong in terms of governance, water infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources, but had room for improvement in the resilience of transportation infrastructure, buildings and sites, energy infrastructure, interdisciplinary items such as data, and populations services.

iv. *Resilient Fairfax Strategy Pillars:* To address these vulnerabilities and opportunities for improvement, strategies were developed and detailed in the draft Resilient Fairfax plan. These strategies were categorized into four pillars. The four strategy categories include:

a. Integrated Action Planning: provides the foundation for long-term resilience success, through interagency resilience coordination, resilience-related data, funding, and plan alignment for resilience initiatives.

b. Resilient Infrastructure & Buildings: includes strategies to increase resilience in both internal infrastructure (that is within county control) such as stormwater infrastructure, and advocacy for external infrastructure (outside of county control) such as electricity grid reliability and Metro transit resilience.

c. Climate Ready Communities: includes strategies to promote county services and aid that relate to climate resilience, public education and outreach, and updates to Fairfax County codes and ordinances to encourage more climate-ready development.

d. Adaptive Environments: includes strategies to protect natural resources to enhance resiliency in Fairfax County, and to restore damaged areas with nature-based and natural solutions.

II. Contents of Resilient Fairfax 6:45 p.m. – 7:10 p.m.

a. ***Public Comment Period***: Julia Nassar (Cadmus) gave an overview of the public comment period process for the Draft Resilient Fairfax Plan. The public comment period is open from May 16th – June 15th, 2022. Attendees were notified that the interactive PDF webpage where public comments will be submitted has links to the following technical reports, plans, and resources:

i. Draft Resilient Fairfax Summary Plan

ii. Climate Projections Report

iii. Audit of Existing Policies, Plans, and Programs

iv. Vulnerability and Risk Assessment

b. ***How the Plan is Organized:*** Julia Nassar (Cadmus) presented the organization of the Resilient Fairfax Plan.
   i. Background information on the plan and process:
      a. *Introduction*
      b. *Resilient Fairfax Development Process*
      c. *Stakeholder Engagement*
      d. *Equity in Climate Resilience*
   ii. Summaries of Technical Reports
      a. *Climate Projections: Warmer, Wetter, Weirder*
      b. *Vulnerabilities & Risks*
      c. *Audit of Existing Policies, Plans, and Programs*
   iii. How Fairfax County will enhance its resilience:
      a. *Strategies and Implementation Roadmap*
   iv. Moving Forward

c. ***Resilient Fairfax Snapshot of Strategies:*** Julia Nassar (Cadmus) provided an overview of the four (4) pillars, eleven (11) goals, and eighteen (18) priority strategies from the Resilient Fairfax Plan. Strategies are a mix of short- and long-term actions, low- and high-cost strategies, and new innovative programs vs expanding existing initiatives. An overview of each strategy pillar was provided:
   i. Integrated Action Planning:
      a. The purpose of Integrated Action Planning, specifically: Integration of climate in planning and coordination ensures resiliency is at the forefront of county initiatives. A county with integrated action planning is:
         i. Monitoring progress, supporting transparency, and informing implementation
         ii. Integrating climate change preparedness across county operations
         iii. Advocating for resilience action beyond county control (e.g., public transit, building codes, energy resilience)
         iv. Positioning county to be competitive for state and federal funding opportunities
         v. Building new funding streams and providing dedicated funding source to support county's climate goals
   ii. Climate Ready Communities:
      a. The purpose of Climate Ready Communities, specifically: A well-connected and prepared community is better able to respond to and recover from climate impacts. Climate Ready Communities have:
         i. Strong social cohesion to support community response to climate hazards

ii. Homes and neighborhoods that are prepared for flooding, extreme heat, storms, and power outages
iii. Resources easily accessible to all members before, during, and after climate events
iv. Historical inequities addressed and the needs of the most vulnerable populations prioritized

iii. Resilient Infrastructure & Buildings:
a. The purpose of Resilient Infrastructure and Buildings, specifically: Infrastructure and buildings that can withstand climate impacts, keep residents safe, reduce service disruptions, and improve countywide resilience. Resilient infrastructure and buildings:
i. Can withstand heat, flooding, and severe storms
ii. Are built and prepared for future conditions
iii. Are energy-resilient, energy efficient, and leverage diverse & clean energy sources with backup power
iv. Support safe movement to jobs, home, and other points of interest

iv. Adaptive Environments:
a. The purpose of Adaptive Environments, specifically: Natural environments that are protected and restored to improve overall county resilience to climate impacts. Adaptive Environments include:
i. Green infrastructure that enhances neighborhood resilience to heat and flooding
ii. Ecosystems that are able to thrive, provide ecosystem services and natural resilience, and be accessible to the public
iii. Environmentally sensitive areas that are protected and conserved
iv. Future conditions are considered in natural resources planning

d. Implementation Roadmaps
i. Julia Nassar (Cadmus) gave an overview of the implementation roadmaps from the Resilient Fairfax Plan. Priority strategies from each pillar have implementation roadmaps to guide readers through key action steps, project leads and partners, timeline, costs, Key Performance Indicators, equity considerations, and co-benefits. Timelines are the estimated time to ***complete*** the specific Implementation Actions listed for each prioritized strategy. Costs are the estimated operational/consultant scale of investment to ***complete*** the specific Implementation Action listed for each prioritized strategy (does not include construction or annual costs). Leads and partners are the County departments and agencies responsible for leading the County government's implementation of the strategy at hand. The public and community groups will also be engaged in the processes.

III. How to Comment | 7:00 p.m. – 7:15 p.m.

a. Julia Chase (Cadmus) provided an instructional overview to using Konveio, the interactive website utilized to collect public comments on the draft Resilient Fairfax

Plan. A recording of the tutorial can be accessed here: https://resilientfairfax.konveio.com/

b. One attendee asked if there is a word or character limit when submitting a comment.
    a. Matt Meyers (OEEC) and Julia Chase (Cadmus) answered that they doubt there is a limit, but if one exists, a commenter can submit the remainder of their comment in another comment. Allison Homer (OEEC) noted that commenters can email ResilientFairfax@fairfaxcounty.gov if they are having trouble submitting their comment via Konveio.
c. Allison Homer (OEEC) provided an overview of the Fairfax County-authored Interactive Climate Viewer Map. The interactive map includes climate hazard data, such as Urban Heat Islands, inland flooding vulnerability, and coastal flooding. It also includes numerous assets, infrastructure types, and population data that can be overlaid with these hazards. The Interactive Climate Viewer Map can be accessed here: https://fairfaxcountygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/media/index.html?appid=5b93ec3f3b4e4751bb63187df4e07be4

IV. Open Question and Answer Session 7:10 p.m. – 7:25 p.m.

a. Julia Chase (Cadmus) opened the Question and Answer session by asking attendees to pose any questions about the public comment process.

    i. One participant noted their surprise that the three previously held public meetings were not advertised more to the Fairfax County community.
        a. Julia Chase (Cadmus) noted that there is plenty of time remaining to submit public comment. Allison Homer (OEEC) explained the process for advertising the public meetings. Resilient Fairfax public meeting notifications are sent out to the media, county public meeting sites, various newsletters, social media, Board of Supervisors offices, and to a range of community partners to help spread the word. Flyers are also posted and given out at community events. Aline Athen (OEEC) welcomed any feedback on improving the public outreach process, noting that the public can email the OEEC at OEECinfo@fairfaxcounty.org. with feedback at any time. Aline also noted that OEEC has a newsletter and website that markets the public meetings, and recommended signing up for the newsletter to remain informed of events.
    ii. A participant asked if funding streams have been identified to complete the infrastructure improvements?
        a. Julia Chase (Cadmus) answered that the Resilient Fairfax Team identified funding opportunities to support implementation strategies. Additionally, one strategy is to develop a County Climate Fund for a dedicated source of funding for infrastructure projects, and a Capital Improvement Process strategy.
        b. Matt Meyers (OEEC) answered that OEEC is working with the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, who have 39

active flood mitigation projects in process. The Department of Public Works is applying for State grants to fund construction of flood mitigation projects.

iii. One participant asked if meetings will be held in Fairfax County neighborhoods, specifically for the Belle Haven/River Towers community?
    a. Matt Meyers (OEEC) answered yes. In fact, there is a public meeting coming up in the Belle Haven community for the US Army Corps of Engineers study on coastal flooding on **June 14th at Belle View Elementary School** NOVA Coastal Study (army.mil). OEEC and DPWES also intend to continually engage the Belle Haven area for various flood mitigation and Resilient Fairfax initiatives. To remain up to date on initiatives, residents can sign up for OEEC's newsletter by clicking this link: E-Mail Subscriptions (fairfaxcounty.gov) and selecting "Environmental, Climate, and Energy News."

iv. A participant inquired about whether Resilient Fairfax is considering natural solutions for flood mitigation. They also asked whether there would be financial incentives and support for residents wishing to become more resilient to coastal and inland flooding (e.g., rain gardens).
    a. Allison Homer (OEEC) cited that the Adaptive Environments strategies pillar (AE.1.a, AE.1.b, and AE.2.a) includes investing in green infrastructure and protecting natural areas that provide natural flood protection. One Climate Ready Community strategies (CRC.2a) prioritizes community aid and outreach, which is another area where residents can receive support for green infrastructure. Ms. Homer also noted that the County is working to leverage and expand the reach of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation's District (NVSWCD) financial support for green infrastructure projects.

v. A participant asked if the mentioned excluded construction and annual costs are tallied somewhere else.
    a. Julia Chase (Cadmus) answered that the costs for the strategies are the cost to complete the implementation actions for each strategy, so it is separate from construction costs and would be on a project-by-project basis.
    b. Allison Homer (OEEC) noted that more detailed construction costs would be developed in the Capital Improvement Program and the annual budgeting processes.
    c. Julia Nassar (Cadmus) added that the county is also considering a strategy (Strategy IAP.3b) on pursuing Federal and State funding sources to help fund Resilient Fairfax implementation.

vi. One participant asked if the Resilient Fairfax Plan has recommendations for immediate steps to minimize activities that increase impervious surfaces and increase flood risks.
    a. Julia Chase (Cadmus) answered yes, and cited a Climate Ready Communities strategy (Strategy CRC .3c) to pursue amendments to zoning ordinance and other County codes to enhance resilience.

vii. One participant asked how Fairfax Water has been involved in the Integrated Action Planning strategies pillar.
    a. Allison Homer (OEEC) noted that Fairfax Water is included in the Infrastructure Advisory Group and has therefore been integrated into strategy development. OEEC is eager to continue the partnership with Fairfax Water.

V. Next Steps | 7:25 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

a. Allison Homer (OEEC) concluded the meeting by outlining the project's next steps. The public comment period remains open through June 15th, 2022. The Draft Resilient Fairfax Plan will be updated with Public and Advisory Group feedback (Summer-early Fall 2022), after which the Draft Plan will be presented to Fairfax County's Board of Supervisors in Fall 2022.

    i. Residents can reach OEEC's Resilient Fairfax team at any time by emailing ResilientFairfax@fairfaxcounty.gov.

    ii. For questions other than Resilient Fairfax, residents can reach the OEEC team at any time by emailing OEECinfo@fairfaxcounty.org.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:30 p.m.

Chat Transcript

00:20:18 Julia Nassar - Cadmus: For Resilient Fairfax questions, please email ResilientFairfax@fairfaxcounty.gov

00:20:26 Julia Nassar - Cadmus: For other questions or comments, please contact OEECinfo@fairfaxcounty.gov

00:41:14 Julia Nassar - Cadmus: Access Konveio here: https://resilientfairfax.konveio.com/

00:57:46 Julia Nassar - Cadmus: Access the Interactive Climate Viewer here: https://fairfaxcountygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/media/index.html?appid=5b93ec3f3b4e4751bb63187df4e07be4

00:59:49 Catherine Zebrowski: I appreciate your detailed work

01:01:09 Barb Bacon: Well done -- thank you so much!

01:03:20 Leo Milanowski, MVCCA Special Cmte on Stormwater: Have funding streams been identified to complete the infrastructure improvements?

01:09:08 Julia Chase - Cadmus: Adaptive Environment (green): Strategies AE.1.a, AE.1.b, and AE.2.a

01:09:41 Julia Chase - Cadmus: Climate Ready Communities: CRC.2a (Community Aid and Engagement)

01:09:41 Elizabeth: Are the mentioned excluded construction and annual costs tallied somewhere else?

01:12:28 Leo Milanowski, MVCCA Special Cmte on Stormwater: Does the plan make any recommendations for immediate steps to minimize activities that increase impervious surfaces and increase flood risks?

01:12:38 Julia Nassar - Cadmus: Integrated Action Planning (blue): Strategy IAP.3b (Pursue Federal and State funding opportunities)

01:13:33 Elizabeth: How has Fairfax Water been involved in the first pillar?

01:17:10 Barbara Ryan: Thank you!

01:17:11 Julia Nassar - Cadmus: Thank you all for your thoughtful input and questions! Have a great evening!