



Resilient Fairfax: Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan
Community Meeting
June 15, 2021 | 6:30 P.M. | Via Zoom
Meeting Minutes

The Community Meeting was hosted by Fairfax County and it took place on June 15, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom. It was open to all community members. The following meeting minutes summarize the presentation and discussion.

Attendees:

64 people registered for the meeting and approximately 35 participated, including members of the Project Team, as listed below.

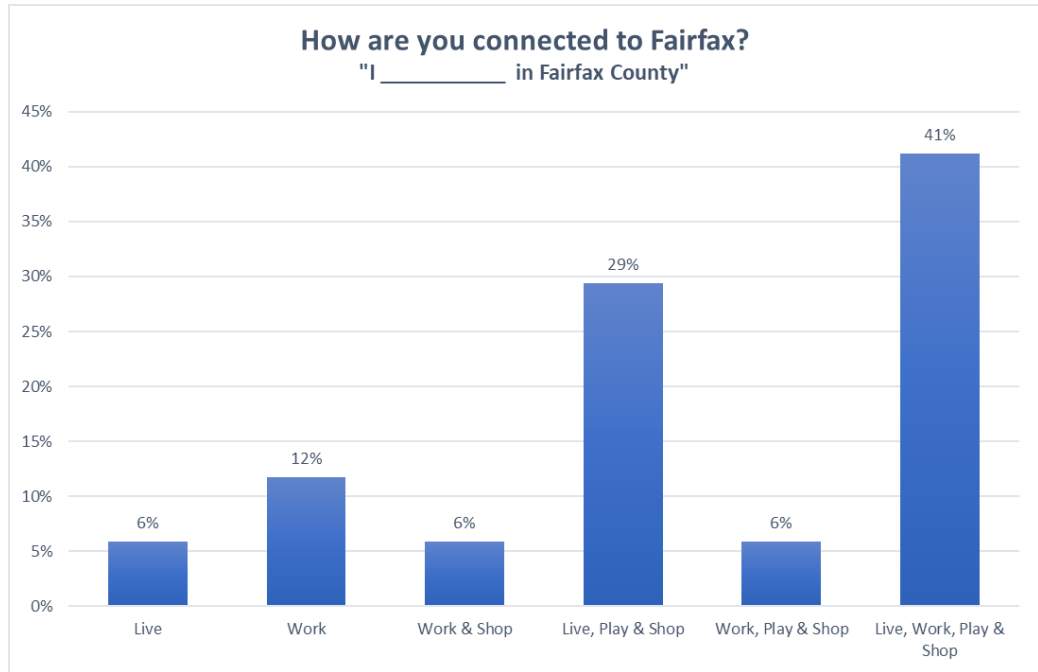
Project Team

- Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination
 - o Matthew Meyers
 - o Allison Homer
- Consultants (the “Cadmus team”)
 - o Cadmus: Deb Perry, Julia Nassar
 - o WSP: Dr. Rawlings Miller
 - o Nspiregreen: Anne Tyska
- County guest speakers
 - o Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services: Catie Torgersen
 - o Fairfax County Health Department: Anna Ricklin
 - o Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management: Cara Howard
- Infrastructure Advisory Group
 - o Northern Virginia Transportation Authority: Monica Backmon
- Community Advisory Group
 - o Lee District Resident: Renee Grebe
 - o Mount Vernon District Resident: Barbara Bacon
 - o Braddock District Resident: Jini Mohanty
 - o Mount Vernon District Resident: Glenda Booth
- Resilient Fairfax Planning Team
 - o Fairfax County Parks Authority: John Burke

Meeting Start: 6:30 p.m.

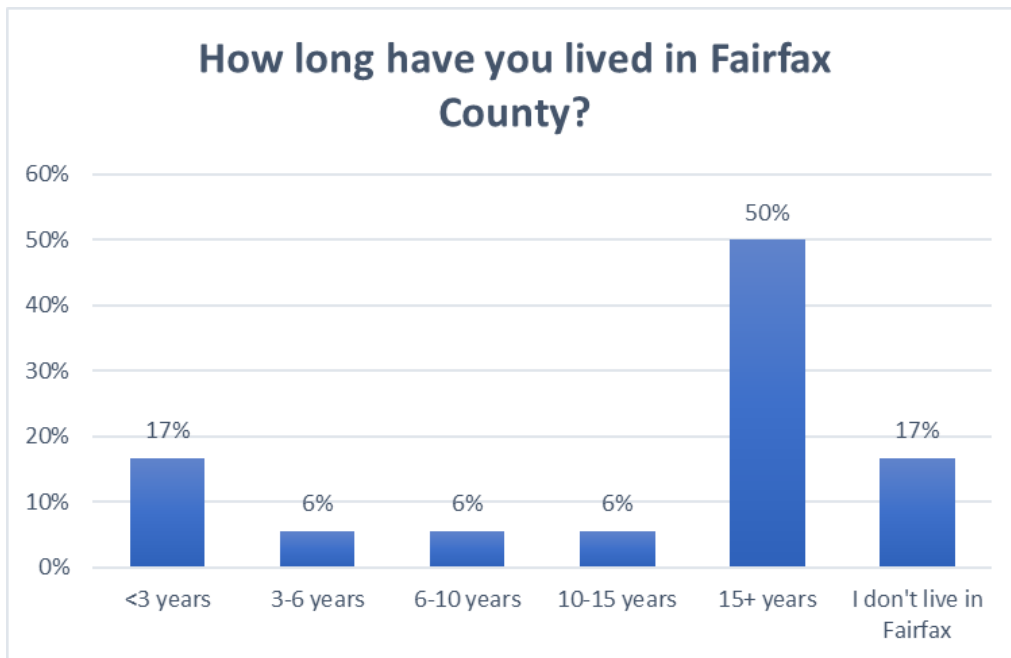
- I. **Welcome and Background | 6:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.**
 - a. Welcome
 - i. Matthew Meyers from the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) provided opening remarks to welcome participants and introduce the project team.
 - b. Meeting Logistics
 - i. Deb Perry, consultant on the Cadmus team, walked through the meeting’s agenda as well as Zoom logistics. She shared the goals of the meeting, which include updating the public on Resilient Fairfax and ongoing County efforts in climate adaptation and resiliency and gathering feedback on the public’s top climate priorities and concerns.
 - c. Purpose and Background
 - i. Allison Homer, OEEC, reiterated the difference between Fairfax’s Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) and Resilient Fairfax. While CECAP aims to reduce emissions that contribute to climate change (e.g., transition to renewable energy), the Resilient Fairfax plan aims to answer the following questions:
 - a. What climate change effects will our County face? Where are we vulnerable? Which strategies will be pursued to strengthen our resilience? How will these strategies be implemented?
 - ii. To provide awareness for agencies and partners actively engaged in Resilient Fairfax, Allison Homer provided an overview of relevant stakeholder working groups including the Planning Team, Infrastructure Advisory Group, and the Community Advisory Group. Allison concluded the introduction with an outline of the project team’s timeline as for completion by major tasks.
 - d. *Polling: Who’s in the Room?*
 - i. To better understand “who’s in the room,” Anne Tyska, consultant on the Cadmus team, asked the community members the following polling questions:
 - a. How are you connected to Fairfax County?

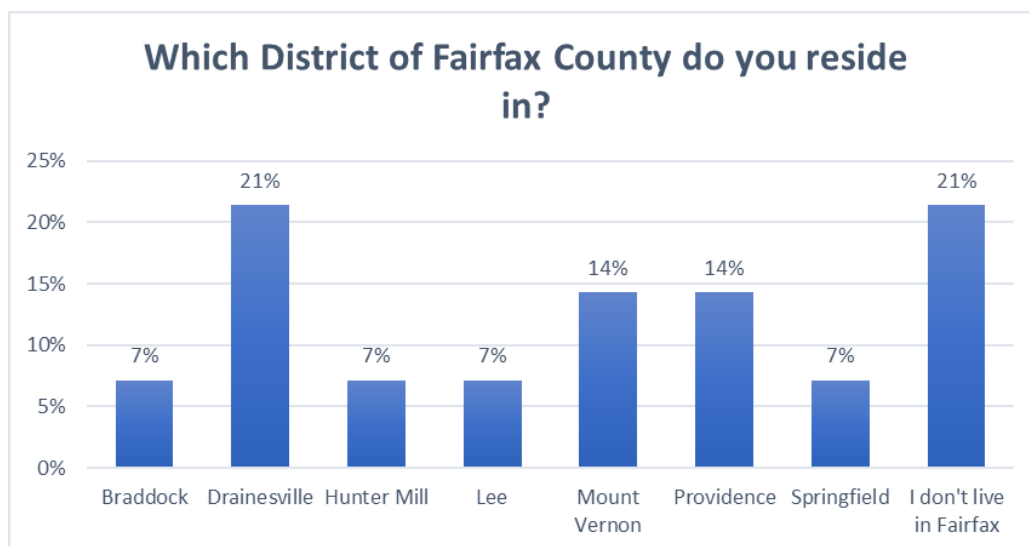
Most participants live, work, play, and shop in Fairfax County. Some participants live in Fairfax but work outside the County; others live outside of Fairfax but commute in to work, shop, and/or recreate.



b. How long have you lived in Fairfax County?

Half of the participants have lived in Fairfax County for over 15 years, approximately 17% do not live in Fairfax and another 17% have moved recently to the County (<3 years).





- C. What district of Fairfax County do you reside in?
 There was representation from the majority Fairfax County Supervisor Districts across the County, excluding Sully and Mason. Approximately 21% of the meeting participants did not live in Fairfax County

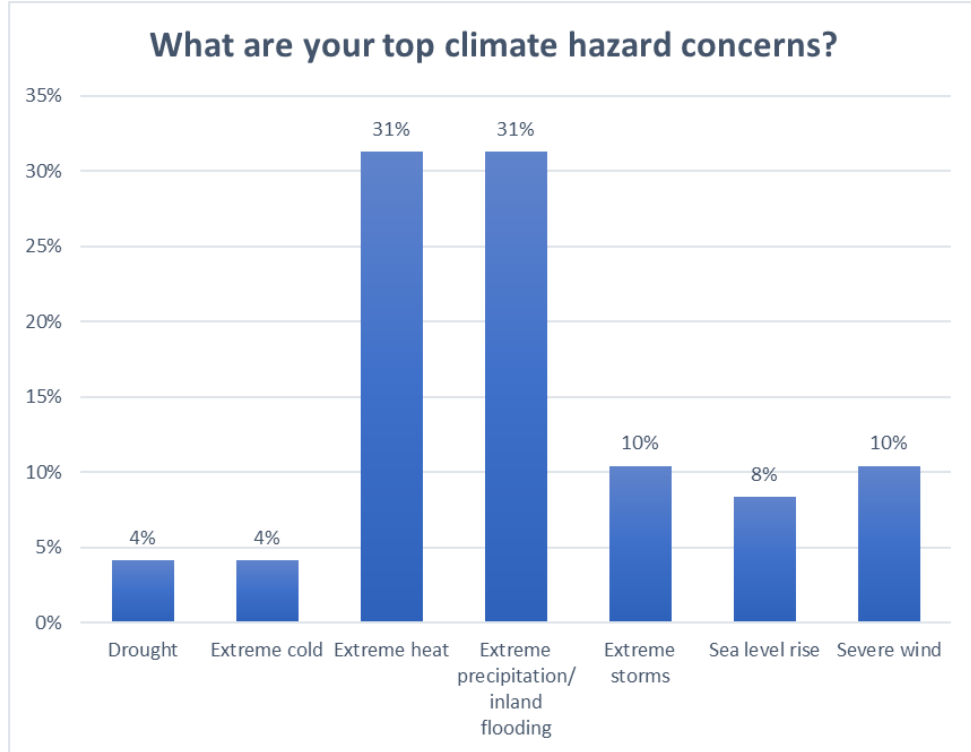
II. **Climate Projections | 6:45 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

- a. Dr. Rawlings Miller, consultant on the Cadmus team, shared an overview of climate hazards in Fairfax, including extreme heat, drought, extreme cold, extreme precipitation events, inland flooding, coastal flooding, severe wind, and extreme storms.
- b. Dr. Miller then presented a primer on climate projections (i.e., low versus high emissions scenarios) and preliminary, draft climate projection modeling results for Fairfax County. The initial climate projections show:
 - i. Temperature: Annually, Fairfax County is projected to become warmer (average annual temperature expected to increase by 4 to 5 degrees Fahrenheit by 2050 relative to the historic average) and wetter (i.e., total annual precipitation is projected to increase by approximately 3 inches by 2050 relative to the historic average).
 - ii. Heat: By 2050, Fairfax County is projected to experience 35 to 44 additional days above 90°F and 21 to 30 additional days above 95°F each year in Fairfax County.
 - iii. Heavy precipitation events: There is a projected increase in more intense precipitation events; shift from snow to rain; increase precipitation depths.
 - iv. Coastal flooding: Flooding along the coast is projected to increase due to elevated sea level rise and storm surge.
 - v. In summary, summertime heat and heavy precipitation (i.e., inland flooding) are the most significant future concerns to occur by 2050. The potential increase in

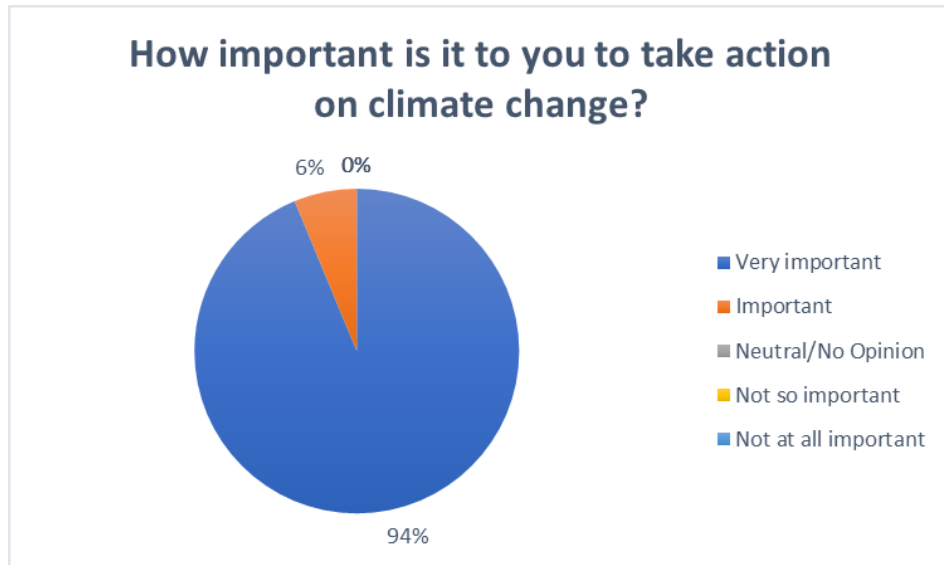
frequency of severe thunderstorms and coastal flooding along the southeastern coastline are moderate concerns. Droughts are a minor concern. However, opportunities also exist regarding reduced cold temperature events and reduced snowfall poses as they pose less risks to public health.

c. *Polling*

- i. Following the climate projections presentation, Ms. Tyska facilitated the following polling questions:



- a. What are your top climate hazard concerns? Each participant was able to select their top three concerns. Extreme heat and extreme precipitation/inland flooding were the top climate hazard concerns among participants.
- b. How important is it to you take action on climate change? 94% of participants identified climate action as “very important” and 6% identified climate action as “important”. No participants responded with “Neutral/No Opinion,” “Not so important,” or “Not at all important”.



- ii. What locations in the County are you most concerned about being affected by climate change? This question was facilitated via the Zoom Chat and discussed further during the group discussion. Below is a summary of the responses:
 - a. Areas of most concern: agricultural areas, lower income areas with less tree canopy cover, large paved areas (as it relates to the urban heat island), shorelines and other areas near rivers (Potomac and Occoquan Rivers).
 - b. Specific locations: flooding in Belle View, Belle Haven, New Alexandria, Sugarland Run, Pimmit Run in Dranesville; Huntington; Tyson’s Corner, Rt. 1 corridor; at-grade flooding of streams on Lawyers Road (has killed one person in the last 10 years); wetland migration from the rising Potomac River.
 - c. Populations: concern over outdoor workers (particularly those that repair our infrastructure); homeless population vulnerable to heat and cold.

III. Climate Adaptation and Resiliency | 7:00 p.m. – 7:25 p.m.

- a. Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Primer
 - i. Julia Nassar, consultant from the Cadmus team, presented an overview of climate action, outlining:
 - a. Emissions reduction (i.e., actions to reduce contributions to climate change) and adaptation and resiliency (i.e., adjusting to live with impacts of climate change; the ability of a community/business/natural environment to prevent, withstand, cope with, and recover from climate-related shocks).
 - b. The need for adaptation and resiliency, including three examples from the last year that have posed significant disruptions to County operations and residents’ lives and properties.
 - c. The co-benefits related to improving adaptation and resiliency at the County-scale, including: environmental action (e.g., reduce drivers of climate change, cleaner air/water), economic opportunity (e.g., job creation, greening and

growing the economy), and enhancement of equity and social inclusivity (e.g., public health, stronger better-connected communities, improved access to services, equity-focused outreach and implementation).

- ii. One of the project team’s main tasks is to review the existing plans, policies, programs, and identify opportunities to support resiliency efforts. To learn more about existing efforts, representatives from the following three departments provided a brief presentation on relevant climate resiliency efforts:
 - a. Catie Torgersen, Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES)
 - i. Ms. Torgersen shared the following DPWES emergency and flood response initiatives: The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System, structural flooding mitigation, identification of flood prone areas and drainage concerns.
 - b. Anna Ricklin, Fairfax County Health Department (HD)
 - i. Ms. Ricklin briefly described environmental and climate-related determinants of health and the impacts of climate change on public health. She also outlined the Health Department’s goal and health equity in climate planning.
 - c. Cara Howard, Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management (OEM)
 - i. Ms. Howard described the following OEM resiliency efforts: Hazard Mitigation Plan, Ready Fairfax, and Community Emergency Response Guide.

IV. **Break** | 7:25 p.m. – 7:35 p.m.

V. **Group Discussion** | 7:35 p.m. – 8:10 p.m.

- i. Ms. Perry facilitated a group discussion to explore the questions below. The following is a summary of the participants’ verbal and written responses from the Zoom Chat.
- b. *Out of the climate hazards discussed today, which are your top concerns? Why? Are there specific areas in your community you consider vulnerable to climate change?*
 - i. In both the poll and discussion, residents demonstrated the top climate hazard concerns are extreme heat and extreme precipitation (i.e., flooding):
 - ii. Residents questioned how the County will actually adapt to rising temperatures and the heat island effect.
 - iii. They also emphasized flooding concerns and highlighted impacts the County has already experienced on flood beds, streams, and waterways. Participants questioned how to handle soil saturation and extreme precipitation/rising water table impacts on septic systems.

- iv. Residents expressed worry on the impacts of climate hazards on the power grid and the need for resiliency in energy systems.
- c. *What do you want to see changed in your community? What strategies might we consider including in Resilient Fairfax to support these changes?*
 - i. The following strategies were cited by participants to include in Resilient Fairfax: social resiliency efforts, impervious surface requirements in parking lots, building/infrastructure standards that account for long-term projected storm intensification (for both new development and improvements to existing structures), telecommuting, improvement/implementation of tree prioritization in the review process, regional collaboration (i.e., follow what other counties in the state and the Washington metropolitan area are pursuing, how they are being implemented, and what would be suitable for Fairfax), transportation/electric vehicle infrastructure and solar energy (as it relates to resiliency), a climate service to go along with weather/disaster services, avoid development in current/future floodplains, and create more stormwater retention systems.
- d. Residents offered the following additional thoughts:
 - i. Given competing interests, the Resilient Fairfax Plan may be difficult to get consensus from different communities across the County.
 - ii. Resiliency must be considered from all perspectives, including considerations around future development of infrastructure and population growth, changing tree canopy, etc.
 - iii. One resident expressed concern over allowable impervious surface area in new developments. There was commentary on the Zoning Ordinance Modernization ([ZMOD](#)) project and opportunities for the public to be involved in zoning processes.

VI. **Adaptation and Resiliency Strategies | 8:10 p.m. – 8:25 p.m.**

- a. Ms. Nassar presented an overview of adaptation and resiliency strategy “buckets” currently being considered or implemented regionally and nationally. The strategies noted below are *not* strategies Fairfax County has committed to pursuing in the Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan, but rather common examples to serve as fodder for discussion. The purpose of this section is to gauge interest in strategies and understand community priorities in order to help inform the upcoming strategy development phase.
 - i. The strategy buckets described include:
 - a. Emergency preparedness/social resiliency (e.g. New York City’s Be A Buddy Program); resilient design standards (e.g. Washington D.C.’s Resilient Design Guidelines); outreach and awareness (i.e., raise awareness for climate change risks, impacts, and strategies, especially in vulnerable communities); green infrastructure (e.g., green roofs, strategies that support both stormwater management and urban heat mitigation); flood protection (e.g., Cook County and Charlotte-Mecklenburg County’s residential flood retrofit program, City of

Austin’s equity-focused Watershed Protection Master Plan); resilient energy system (e.g., micro-grids on critical facilities, ensure utilities are prepared for outages); and heat reduction (e.g., Philadelphia’s heat relief network and cool roofs ordinance, Los Angeles cool pavements pilot, adjustment of outdoor workers’ hours).

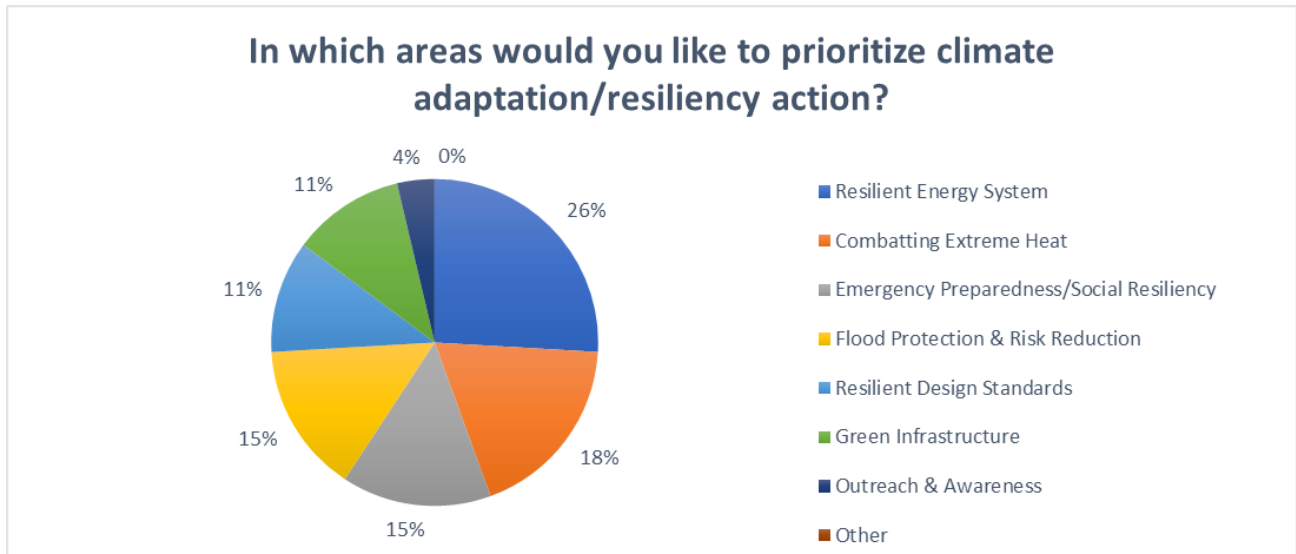
b. Polling

i. Following the presentation, Ms.Tyska facilitated the following polling questions:

a. In which areas would you like to prioritize climate adaptation/resiliency action? Each participant was able to select their top three priorities.

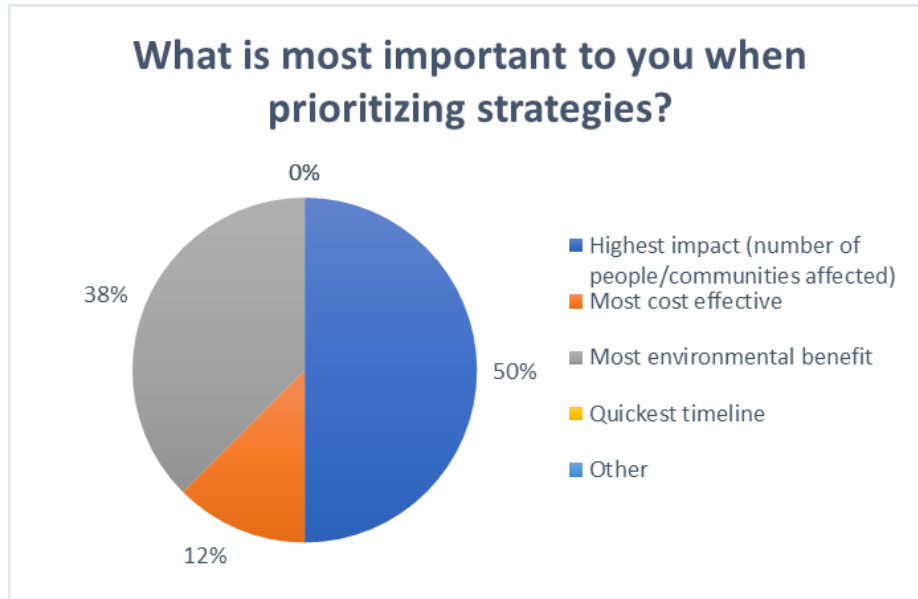
Roughly a quarter of participants selected resilient energy system as a top priority for climate action. 18% selected combatting extreme heat followed closely by emergency preparedness/social resiliency and resilience design standards, each at 15%.

tat



ii. What is most important to you when prioritizing strategies?

Half of the responses considered the impact (i.e., number of people/communities affected) to be the most important criteria when prioritizing strategies. 38% selected environmental benefit and 12% selected cost-effective strategies.



VII. **Next Steps** | 8:25 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

- a. Allison Homer concluded the meeting by outlining the project team’s next steps (including a climate risk and vulnerability assessment, development of strategies, and the implementation plan, and the final Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan) and opportunities to remain engaged throughout the process.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:30 p.m.