

**12-Point Energy and Climate Action Plan for Fairfax County by  
Great Falls Group of VA Sierra Club and Clean Energy for Fairfax Now  
Staff Response as of June 2019**

***Community-Wide Energy and Climate Initiatives***

1. *Launch Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) Program:*

*Enact a county ordinance by March 2019, award a contract for a third-party program administrator by late summer 2019, and launch the full program before the end of 2019. This action will provide critical financing to supercharge the inclusion of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures in eligible buildings, thereby supporting the county's goals to repurpose and revitalize underutilized buildings and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions resulting from energy use in new and existing buildings.*

**Response:** On March 19, 2019, the Board of Supervisors approved a C-PACE ordinance. Staff is currently working on a request for proposal (RFP) to select a third-party Program Administrator (PA). The PA will be responsible for developing and finalizing C-PACE program guidelines and marketing, managing and ensuring compliance for the program. Staff anticipates a formal C-PACE launch before the end of 2019.

2. *Approve Funding for and Initiate Development of Community-Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan:*

*Commit to develop and implement a community-wide energy and climate action plan to reduce the 97% of GHGs attributable to residences, businesses, and the state and Federal government sectors. This action is necessary to achieve the commitments in the county's 2007 Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Declaration and its 2017 Environmental Vision to reduce GHG emission 20% below 2005 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050. Such action also would follow up on Chairman Bulova's 2012 Private Sector Energy Task Force.*

*\*\*Provide funding in FY 2019 for development of an Energy and Climate Action Plan to be completed in 2020.*

**Response:** A similar recommendation was made by the Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) as part of its 2018 Annual Report on the Environment. In response to the EQAC recommendation, in April 2019 staff presented the Board's Environmental Committee with a proposed framework and timeline for a Community-Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) as well as a request for additional staff and resources necessary to support such planning. The Board endorsed the staff proposal, including the funding necessary for additional staff and contractual support, and approved funding in the FY 2020 budget. Staff is currently developing a structure and more detailed timeline for the first phase of the CECAP process, which it will present to the Board at the June 18, 2019 Environmental Committee meeting. Staff expects to initiate development of the CECAP following Board approval at the June meeting.

3. *Approve Funding and Develop Resiliency and Adaptation Plan:*

*Commit to develop and implement a resiliency and adaptation action plan to prepare for the impacts of climate change (e.g., flooding, power outages) on local residents, businesses, and critical infrastructure and to help reduce the impact and costs of extreme weather events.*

*\*\*Provide funding in FY 2019 for an MWCOG-led Coastal Storm Risk Management Study by the Army Corps of Engineers and commit to complete the resiliency and adaption plan in 2020.*

**Response:** A similar recommendations was made by EQAC in its 2018 Annual Report on the Environment and was addressed in March 2019 by the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) as part of the staff response to EQAC. OEM summarized the numerous initiatives related to climate adaptation and resiliency undertaken by county departments. However, recognizing the benefit in developing a more holistic, county-wide approach to climate resiliency, staff recommended that the Board of Supervisors endorse the establishment of an internal steering committee to address climate adaptation and resiliency and determine next steps. Staff anticipates that the CECAP will provide valuable information for a resiliency and adaptation plan. Consequently, at this time staff recommends that a resiliency and adaptation plan be initiated following release of the CECAP final draft.

4. *Strengthen County Energy and Climate Organization and Fund Increased Staff to Meet Best Management Practices:*

*EQAC has transmitted to the County Board a white paper highlighting the best management practices for energy and climate functions articulated by energy and climate experts in the public and private sectors. In order to meet the needs of county residents and businesses, the county should pursue aggressive implementation of such best management practices, including funding and hiring senior energy/sustainability managers and associated staff and clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of such managers and interagency teams in a county ordinance or executive directive.*

*\*\*Provide funding in FY 2019.*

**Response:** On May 7, 2019, the Board approved the FY 2020 Budget, which allocates funding for an Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC). The OEEC will be formally established on July 1, 2019 with 10 FTEs (six existing positions reassigned to the OEEC and four new positions). The mission of the OEEC is to lead the county's cross-organizational development and implementation of effective environmental and energy policies, goals, programs and projects. OEEC will engage county departments, authorities, businesses, and residents to advance environmental and energy priorities and address community needs. OEEC's collaborative approach promotes good governance, spurs innovation and facilitates constructive partnerships for a sustainable future for Fairfax County.

5. *Promote Reductions in Transportation-Related Emissions:*

*Continue investment in transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects, including a plan to transition to electric buses for the Fairfax Connector service and County schools. Consider options for public-private partnership funding.*

**Response:** Fairfax County has continued to invest significantly in transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects. The document that best describes these projects is the Fairfax County Department of Transportation's (FCDOT) biannual status report to the Board. The most recent FCDOT biannual report was released in February 2019 and is available at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/status-report>. The county's budget demonstrates the county's significant investments in this area, including the operations of Metro and the Fairfax Connector. Transportation-related budget information is available at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2020-advertised-budget-plan-volume-2-capital-construction-and-other-operating-funds>. Funds 3000 and 4000 detail the county's contribution to Metro and Fairfax Connector, respectively.

Regarding electric buses, there are currently no plans to transition either Fairfax Connector or Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) buses to electric buses. Fairfax Connector has determined that electric buses are not currently viable given Fairfax Connector's size and service structure. School buses are addressed jointly by FCPS, which purchases school buses, and the Department of Vehicle Services

(DVS), which repairs and maintains them. While FCPS and DVS recently attended a symposium on electric school buses, there are no plans for their purchase at this time. Prior to any such purchase, DVS would perform a technical review and recommend products that would benefit FCPS and the environment.

It is not clear what is meant by “Consider options for public-private partnership funding.” During the development review process staff looks for proffers, where allowed by law, that contribute to reducing peak-period vehicle trips. Staff also works closely with groups such as the Tysons Partnership on transportation programs.

6. Promote Actions to Reduce Climate-Related Impacts in the Land Development Process:

*Request that the County review and consider what actions can be taken in the zoning process to mitigate for climate impacts.*

**Response:** On a broad scale, the county emphasizes concentrating growth in mixed use, transit-oriented growth centers. At the site scale, the county reviews and negotiates during the zoning process, as applicable, for transit-oriented development, transportation demand management, non-motorized transportation opportunities/connections, mixes of uses, green building commitments and tree preservation/tree planting/landscaping.

The county’s current green building policy establishes expectations for green building design for residential and many nonresidential proposals. The Planning Commission has recommended that the green building policy be amended to establish an emphasis on energy efforts within green building strategies for development projects (without establishing a prescription or expectation for any particular approach or performance level). A Plan Amendment consistent with this recommendation has been authorized by the Board and is under review by the Planning Commission’s Environment Committee at this time.

This recommendation appears to request that the county establish a standard process for assessing climate impacts associated with zoning applications. If so, then a Policy Plan amendment likely would be a necessary prerequisite to establishing such a standard process. Initiating the amendment process would be facilitated by a Board directive and referral to the Planning Commission and its Environment Committee.

***Energy and Climate Strategies for County Operations***

7. Execute Solar Purchase Power Agreements (PPAs) for Large Number of Solar Energy Projects at County Government Facilities and Schools:

*By mid-2019, the County should finalize a PPA contract to provide for installation of on-site solar at county government facilities and schools. This PPA can be expected to substantially reduce county electric bills and GHGs. In addition, Fairfax County should draft the PPA contract to allow other localities to ride the contract, thereby jumpstarting solar development and jobs throughout Virginia.*

**Response:** A request for proposal (RFP) for solar power purchase agreement services was released by the county on June 6, 2019. The RFP applies to four county entities: Fairfax County, Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax County Park Authority, and Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority. The RFP contemplates two phases, with approximately 130 facilities identified as sites for potential Phase 1 projects. Responses to the RFP are due July 31, 2019. At this time, staff anticipates awarding one or more contracts by November 2019. For more information, see Bid Number RFP 2000002845 at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/solicitation/>.

8. Fund Conversion of Streetlights to High-Efficiency Light Emitting Diode (LED) Fixtures:

*Since 15.5% of all electricity consumption by county government operations was attributed to streetlight use in 2017, conversion to high efficiency LED fixtures should be a high priority. This conversion has been projected to reduce GHGs from streetlight use by more than 50%.*

*\*\*Provide funding in FY 2019.*

**Response:** Staff anticipates investing approximately \$9 million over a five-year period to convert existing streetlights from high pressure sodium vapor and other technologies to light-emitting diode (LED) technology. While estimated funding of \$5.9 million will be needed from the General Fund, staff estimates savings of \$3.1 million within the Capital Facilities utility budget over the period as fixtures are converted. In March 2019, as part of the *FY 2019 Third Quarter Review*, the Board approved funding of \$1.8 million to begin the conversion process.

9. Conduct One-Year Review of July 2018 County Operational Energy Strategy:

*Ensure that County staff provide to the Board of Supervisors a thorough one-year review of the approach, cost savings, and GHG reductions under the Strategy. Also strengthen and clarify the targets in the Strategy for the focus areas (e.g., energy efficiency, renewable energy) to support the County's efforts under its Environmental Vision.*

**Response:** Staff anticipates providing its first year review of the Operational Energy Strategy (OES) in the fall of 2019 at a regularly-scheduled meeting of the Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee. Staff intends to present estimated cost savings and greenhouse gas emissions reductions for projects approved and funded in FY 2019.

10. Evaluate Potential Use of Energy Savings Performance Contracts (ESPCs):

*Request and initiate a free "back of envelope" evaluation by the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy and energy service companies of the annual energy and operational cost savings of utilizing ESPCs. Other local governments have substantially increased energy efficiency savings and related GHG emission reductions with this approach.*

**Response:** Contracting opportunities are decided by the county's contracts and legal personnel. Fairfax County has a financial advisor under contract that reviews various types of financing opportunities for Capital Programs. The use of energy saving performance contracts (ESPCs) is not currently recommended. Energy improvements are being implemented through other programs that result in 100% savings being returned to Fairfax County.

Should a department or agency decide to pursue an ESPC, a contractual process is currently available to through a reliable statewide contract. State contract [#E194-77519](#) has prequalified 15 vendors and prescribed a process to evaluate and award each project. Access to this process is immediate, upon administrative action by DPMM. Implementation and determining when projects are appropriate is left up to each Department. DPMM stands ready to host briefings regarding contract details.

### **State and Regional Actions**

11. Continue Strong County Advocacy to Remove Barriers in Virginia Law to Consumer-Sited Solar Generation:

*Engage in strong advocacy with the General Assembly, the Governor, regional and local government organizations (e.g., VACO) to promote the enactment of legislation removing barriers to customer-sited solar energy. Removing these barriers would allow the county to install a major solar array on the Lorton Landfill and complete other solar development that would reduce the county's utility bills by millions of dollars and substantially reduce GHGs.*

**Response:** The county has been proactive in identifying existing barriers to widespread implementation of customer-owned solar generation on county property and in working to remove them. The county incorporated support for key aspects of the Sierra Club’s Solar Freedom Bill into its 2019 Legislative Package and invested substantial time and resources in producing an economic analysis of the solar potential and possible savings associated with a large-scale (5 MW) customer-owned solar generation facility at the I-95 landfill site. Although the county’s focus has been on county operations, staff also tracked renewable-energy bills in the 2019 General Assembly and provided support for bills that would have had a positive impact on the county government as well as residents and businesses. The county will continue to provide strong support to efforts to remove barriers to customer-owned on-site renewable energy generation, particularly solar generation, until those barriers are removed.

12. Support Reform of the Statute Electric Utility Regulatory Structure in the 2020 Session of the VA General Assembly:

*Reduce county electric bills and GHG emissions and increase county economic competitiveness by promoting State legislation in the 2020 General Assembly to reform the electric utility regulatory structure in the Commonwealth. For example, legislation is needed to overcome barriers to the development of microgrids that provide for emergency operations and shelter.*

**Response:** Fairfax County has long supported reforms in state law that will help it achieve its environmental sustainability goals. The county’s 2019 legislative program expressly supports efforts to reduce the county’s greenhouse gas emissions and operational demand for energy through efficiency, conservation, renewable energy, and education. That legislative program also expresses support for incentives and opportunities to expand renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives. It is likely that the county’s 2020 legislative program will support such efforts, as well.

See

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/sites/legislation/files/assets/documents/pdf/2019/adopted-2019-ga-program-12-4-2018-a-1a.pdf>.