
EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department Name: Department of Planning and Development

Equity Lead(s): Michelle Stahlhut

Date: January 2025

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DEPARTMENTAL GOALS

Goal 1: Incorporate the consideration of equity in planning and development policies, plans, and processes.

1a. Continue incorporation of equity into the Comprehensive Plan Policy Plan process.

1b. Develop equity development review memo format and process.

1c. Public and implement the land use language guide.

1d. Implement equity impact assessment early in project and policy development where applicable.

Goal 1 Progress:

The update of the Comprehensive Plan Policy plan has been ongoing and is expected to be complete in 2025. To date this has included several community outreach meetings and presentations, completing a language analysis of all elements of the policy plan and publishing an internal Land Use Language Guide resource for staff, working with a Planning Commission (PC) liaison, drafting of a white paper on Equitable Development, and presentations to the PC.

DPD regularly completes Equity Impact Assessments for Board items and is increasingly working toward incorporating equity analysis earlier in cycle of projects. A format for equity related development review comments will follow completion of the Comprehensive Plan Policy Plan update. The Vulnerability Index has become a tool that has been incorporated into the early stages of projects. In 2025, the Vulnerability Index was a stated measure used to evaluate proposals in the Site-Specific Plan Amendment (SSPA) process application and the information was included as part of the Board of Supervisors staff report materials.

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Goal 2: Expand community engagement in order to ensure the breadth of interests, ideas, and values of all people are heard and considered.

2a. Provide training for staff on community engagement planning framework and implementation template.

2b. Deploy new communications hub to ensure consistent community engagement materials department-wide.

2b. Continue expansion of language access for meetings, materials

Goal 2 Progress:

Inclusive community engagement on land use issues continues to be a priority for DPD, as recommended by the 2017 Community Council on Land Use Engagement. New strategies are being implemented to ensure that the opinions of the County's growing and increasingly diverse population are considered, and that all residents have an opportunity to participate in planning and zoning activities. Such strategies include, DPD's creation of a new NextDoor account, publishing Spanish ads for Fairfax Connector buses, increased coordination with Neighborhood and Community Services to reach diverse communities for various projects, and expansion of language access services. County data on native languages is used with inclusive community engagement plans to ensure community members can request or receive project information, such as community meeting flyers, mailers and surveys, in multiple languages, as well as access interpretation services in their native language. DPD utilized an independent review of planning-related resources and outreach materials to create more accessible, plain language information about the comprehensive plan and plan amendment processes, which include new, informational videos and handouts.

To increase accessibility of community meetings, DPD hosts meetings in both virtual and in-person settings. The use of online meeting platforms continues to offer broader outreach to community members who may not be able to attend meetings in person or rely on meeting recordings to access information. Other outreach tools include increased use of social media, surveys, collaboration with the Fairfax County local access channel to create public service announcements, and online tutorials and videos. Community meetings, including charrettes, are held in areas of the County considering land use proposals; new webpages are created for all Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance amendments; and, as Comprehensive Plan amendments and Zoning Ordinance amendments move through the review, authorization, and adoption processes, information is posted on Facebook and Nextdoor, and shared through Listserv announcements and with Board offices.

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Goal 3: Support the County's work toward telling the history of communities of color in Fairfax County.

3a. Lead Heritage Resources Survey work for Gum Springs.

3b. Create a dynamic story map based on the African American Historic Resources Survey report.

3c. Seek grant support for research and initial work on racial equity and land use timeline.

Goal 3 Progress:

In 2024, the Heritage Resources Survey of Gum Springs began with a kick-off meeting at the beginning of the year and has continued throughout the year. A consultant has been working with the community and staff to survey the community, collect data, and interview community members. The study is anticipated to conclude at the end of 2025 with a set of recommendations for the community to consider.

The Heritage Resources team has drafted a Request for Proposals to develop an ARC-GIS Story Map for historically African American communities and resources in the county and is expected to move forward with this project in CY2025.

Additional accomplishments include: Developing the National Register nomination for Randall Estates subdivision, a community developed by an African American developer for African American clientele at a time when much new housing was high restricted with racial covenants. This nomination will be submitted in 2025; Supporting One Fairfax Office's project in partnership with George Mason University to research the county's land use and development history by providing resources, and continued work on African American historical markers.

Goal 4: Create an equity culture within DPD in order to implement One Fairfax into the work of the department.

4a. Continue annual RTPI training for staff new to DPD.

4b. Use County Ambassador program for additional department wide training to include Implicit Bias and/or ARETRG.

4c. Provide ongoing training for all staff on key topics such as equity assessment, key analysis tools, equity in land use examples, etc.

Goal 4 Progress:

DPD annually requests all new employees join a discussion of the Race - The Power of an Illusion video series. In 2024, 16 new staff joined the training for all three videos conducted externally by the county's Equity Ambassadors.

In lieu of additional department wide training conducted by Equity Ambassadors, training in 2024 has included discussions and training with all divisions in the department regarding development

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and implementation of the Land Use Language Guide, published in November 2024 as well as small group training and discussion regarding use of One Fairfax resources such as the Vulnerability Index and Communities of Opportunity Index.

Finally, the Heritage Resources Team supported the DPD Equity Lead in working with Dr. Krystyn Moon to coordinate a department-wide presentation, “A History of Racial Covenants on Fairfax County’s Property Deeds” which was attended by over 80 staff from DPD, Housing, and Transportation.

COUNTYWIDE GOALS

Goal 1: Increase the supply of housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income families in the region, particularly in areas that have historically lacked such housing. (Regional Goal 1).

Goal 1 Progress:

Fairfax County, in conjunction with COG and other regional jurisdictions, was **awarded the HUD PRO Housing Grant** in the Summer of 2024. This grant is being managed by COG with assistance from HCD and DPD.

- One of the Fairfax County activities includes: Analyze regulatory reforms that lower barriers to affordable housing production.
- Fairfax County will examine whether entitlement reform, reduced fee waivers, and/or expedited approval for affordable housing can incentivize the production of more units.
- Next steps include:
 - Working jointly with HCD to develop an action plan for this activity. Includes coordination with other County agencies including LDS, DMB and others.
 - Anticipate retaining a consultant to complete this analysis.
 - Analysis is anticipated to begin in Year 1 of the grant and continuing through the Fall of Year 2. Implementation would be Years 2 through 5.

Goal 2: Reform zoning and land use policies to expand access to fair housing choice by increasing the development, geographic distribution, and supply of affordable housing.

Goal 2 Progress:

The Board directed the Zoning Administration Division (ZAD) to consider changes to the Accessory Living Unit provisions in the Zoning Ordinance as part of the [2025/2026 Work Program](#). The project is currently in the research stage with outreach expected in spring/summer of 2025.

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Board Motion: **Accessory Living Units (NEW)** – Consider changes to the use-specific standards for an Accessory Living Unity (ALU), including the permitted size for detached ALU, minimum lot size for a detached ALU, parking, permit renewal and recordation, and other use-specific standards, as further described in [the Report on Accessory Living Units and Home-Based Businesses](#), dated April 12, 2024.

OTHER EQUITY-RELATED WORK

Major multi-year policy initiatives that have been led by DPD, or that DPD has participated in, that were approved in 2024 and have contributed to the effort of advancing racial and social equity.

Modified Accessible Parking Requirements

On December 3, 2024, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Review of Modified Accessible Parking Requirements Zoning Ordinance Amendment. The amendment establishes an innovative minimum accessible parking requirement, that by design ensures an adequate supply of accessible parking spaces, even when general parking requirements are reduced. The proposed adjustments, to maintain an accessible parking supply, while general parking requirements are reduced, aligns with support of accessible mobility solutions within the County.

WDU For-Sale Plan Amendment and Admin Guidelines

On September 10, 2024, the Board of Supervisors adopted the For-Sale Workforce Dwelling Unit Policy and Programs Plan Amendment.

The Board authorized the consideration of a Comprehensive Plan amendment to the Housing and Land Use elements of the Policy Plan and for specific guidance in Area Plans and the Glossary related to For-Sale Workforce Dwelling Units (WDU) based on policy adjustments recommended by the WDU Policy Task Force, which were endorsed by the Board on December 5, 2023. The Board also directed staff to prepare revisions to the Countywide and Tysons Corner Urban Center WDU Administrative Policy Guidelines for consideration in line with the proposed Plan Amendment. As described in the Task Force’s recommendations, the Comprehensive Plan amendment should incorporate language to maximize the potential for the for-sale WDU program to serve low-moderate income families, maintain project feasibility, and increase predictability in the development process. Consistency between the for-sale and the rental programs should be considered. The amendment shifted the affordability level of the program from up to 80% to 120% AMI to a new range of up to 70% to 100% AMI, proportionality of bedroom counts between the WDU and market rate units (with all 3+ bedroom-units considered family-sized units); extending the geographic applicability to properties that are zoned and planned for medium to high-density outside of development centers; and adjusting the WDU pricing model and resale requirements.