



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

DATE: June 2nd, 2021
TO: Council Members, City of Falls Church
FROM: Environmental Sustainability Council (ESC), Andrew Young, Chair
SUBJECT: Recommendations on City Council Work Plan and Equity

This spring, the Falls Church City Council asked all boards and commissions to:

- Review our duties and goals to ensure that we're equitably serving the needs of all. As part of this, ESC should review the City Council Work Plan that calls for ESC input.
- Recommend policy changes that might more effectively achieve the goal of equity while serving our entire community.
- Recommend prioritization of work that might more effectively achieve the goal of equity while serving our entire community.

To fulfill that charge, the ESC reviewed the four City Council Work Plan action items that call for ESC input, as well as identified other work plan items that ESC members thought would promote equity within the City of Falls Church.

General Equity Considerations

In conducting this review, ESC members recognized that they lack knowledge about specific equity challenges that City residents face, including who those residents are and how widespread their challenges are. To that end, the ESC recommends that the City provide a training forum during which board and commission members can learn from City residents, City social workers and/or others who are more knowledgeable about the City's historical and current equity issues.

ESC would like to recruit members from broader cross-section of the community, but were unsure how that could be achieved other than through individual efforts. Video recording of meetings was seen as a positive step towards increasing the accessibility of our discussions to a wider public. Multilingual agendas and notices, and the provision of interpreters in meetings were all identified as possibilities.

City Council Work Plan Review

1. Glass Recycling: Deliver sustainable plans for glass recycling for all city residents, including regional solutions.

ESC recommendations:

- Offer glass recycling in more locations. The current bin is in a single location at the western edge of the City and is not wheelchair-accessible.
- For recycling in general, provide enforcement of the City's recycling rules. The City does not currently assess or enforce recycling provisions in businesses or multi-family housing (MFH), nor does it direct publicity about recycling programs to MFH residents. Although they are required to, a recent study in the City showed that some commercial and MFH buildings did not offer recycling.

2. City Council Action Item on Energy Efficiency: Seek LEED Gold on new development projects with focus on Energy Use Intensity Measures. Meet COG reduction goals.

ESC recommendations:

- Requiring high energy efficiency in new major developments can reduce utility costs and improve resiliency. Additionally, the resultant reduced greenhouse gas emissions would benefit all City residents.
- Mandating specific LEED points for features like energy efficiency, transportation access, water runoff and the minimization of heat islands could help address disparities between renters and other community members.
- A provision to encourage racial equity, diversity, and inclusion policy adoption by companies working on future development team could be included in the Special Exception process. Arlington County's [December 4th, 2020 Board Report](#) references this idea (see page 8).
- Communication, education and outreach to disadvantaged residents and businesses on energy efficiency should be improved. The City could consider subsidizing energy audits and energy efficiency upgrades.

3. Street Light Conversion: Convert the remaining Dominion-owned streetlights to LED; include test lights so residents can provide feedback.

ESC recommendations:

- In general, ESC members are satisfied that more reliable streetlighting and reduced government streetlight costs will benefit all residents, especially if the new lights reduce glare/light pollution for residents near the lighting.

4. Electric Fleet Vehicles: Transition to an electric vehicle (EV) fleet for the City, as older vehicles are replaced at their end of useful life.

ESC recommendations:

- Prioritize the purchase of school buses in order to maximize the number of residents who benefit both from the public transportation option and from the resulting air-quality improvement.
- Recognize that while creation of EV and other renewable fuel infrastructure is essential, the City also must stay focused on initiatives that boost walkability, bikeability and affordable, efficient and safe mass transit (shuttle, bus, metro) access.

Other Action Items From The Current Work Plan and Beyond:

The ESC is supportive of other action items in the City Council Work Plan that can advance both environmental sustainability and equity in the City, including actions focused on urban agriculture and all actions addressing mobility and accessibility, including the scooter program.

Beyond the current workplan, ESC members discussed zoning changes (removing parking minimums, upzoning) urban agriculture promotion, sharing/re-use programs (tools, toys), and energy efficiency education as potential future priorities to improve both sustainability and equity within the City of Falls Church.