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City of Fairfax City Council Work Session, Tuesday, December 2, 2025

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[00:00:13] Good evening. I would like to call the special meeting of December 2nd, 2025, to order. Welcome, everyone. It's not snowing. Let's be glad. At this time, I would like to ask if there is consideration for a remote participation by Councilmember Amos pursuant to the Code of Virginia, Section 2.2-3708.2.

[00:00:38] Is there a motion to approve the remote participation by Councilmember Amos? Yes. Councilmember Hall. In accordance with City Council adopted policy and as permitted by Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.2 I move to approve Councilmember Amos' request, properly submitted in writing prior to today's meeting, for remote participation, subject to compliance with the requirements outlined in the City Council adopted policy and applicable law in all or portions of the City Council special meeting of December 2, 2025. Is there a second? Second. The motion been made and seconded, a roll call vote. Councilmember Harrell? Aye. Councilmember Peterson?

[00:01:18] Aye. Councilmember Bates? Aye. Councilmember Quillen? Aye. The motion passed unanimously. I will now recess the special meeting to go into a work session. Do we know that Councilmember Amos is with us? He... Okay, well, Councilmember Amos, when it's time for questions, just speak up because we can't see your hand. All right, Ms. Clark, what is the first work session item for

[00:01:53] discussion our first item is a presentation and update from the housing and healthy communities advisory board I'll recognize Jamie Ergis the housing program manager for the presentation good evening mayor Reed and members of the council as Casey just shared my name is Jamie Ergis and the housing program manager for the city of Fairfax I'm also the liaison the staff liaison to the housing and healthy communities advisory board also known as h cab and they will

[00:02:30] actually be presenting to you this evening and if you wanted to go ahead and introduce yourselves. We have the HCAD leadership here with us this evening. Great. Mayor, members of City Council, I'm Mark Light. I'm the chair of HCAD. Good evening. I'm Susan LaCroix. I'm the vice chair.

[00:03:03] We appreciate the opportunity to come before you tonight. This is our first time, and part of our charter that City Council adopted was that we report out once per year, and this is actually our 10th month. We started in February of last year as our first meeting, and so this is our 10th month, and so we have some things that we want to bring you today. We want to kind of set the stage, let you see where we are on a couple of issues, and kind of give you some history. We want to look at what the current housing landscape is in the city and in the region, and we want to look at

[00:03:41] the key populations. We want to look at some of the data that we have about housing and homelessness. what yes council member amos we can hear you can you hear us that's not good council member amos so i think i think that's a no he can't hear us i do not hear you at all let me try my phone okie dokie smoky um yeah we can hear you just give it give it a minute we have technicians

[00:04:19] working on this i can't even ask him if he can see the slides uh are you all trying to talk Uh-oh.

[00:04:42] Yeah. Change the microphone. Well, and tell him we can hear him. Say, we can hear you.

[00:04:58] No, it's like the camera. Is that to the phone? All right. And also accept your mic. So it's a microphone.

[00:05:16] It's a parking. It is. It's okay. Turn on again.

[00:05:27] Sure.

[00:05:58] We're going to recess for like five minutes while we work on this technical issue. So if you're watching us from home, give us a few minutes to take care of this, and we will be right back with you.

[00:06:12] Thank you.

[00:12:37] So we were just having introductions from the chair and vice chair of HCAP, and I believe that Chair Mark Light was just beginning the presentation. Now we have Councilmember Anthony Amos fully on board. He can see and hear us.

[00:12:52] We can see, well, we can hear him. So please proceed. Okay, great. So, as I was saying tonight, we're going to give you a summary of things that we've been working on, kind of the landscape of what we're seeing here within the city, what we're seeing in the area, and give you some data points I think are somewhat unique for us, and so we will kind of take you on that journey.

[00:13:19] As we get toward the end, we have two items we want to bring before you. And there are two items that HCAB has been working on. One is on home sharing, and the other one is on a housing trust fund. You heard probably both of those at the housing strategic plan presentation that was given last month by TPMA.

[00:13:39] And we have been working on those, and we'll be able to give you an update. And we need to get some feedback from you as far as what direction that we need to go in, because there's some fairly significant work that will need to be done on each one of those. And so we just need to get a sense from council of kind of where you're at on these items.

[00:13:59] When we look at HCAB and we look at the purpose of why we were established, we came about as a result of a homelessness task force. In February of 2023, the Homelessness Task Force was put together, was charged with looking at where we were within the city.

[00:14:19] coming up with recommendations that were made to City Council we came up with 38 recommendations and ten of those were prioritized and two of those of the ten was to dissolve the Homelessness Task Force so that does not exist in any form or fashion anymore and HCAB took on those responsibilities that were recommended from the homelessness task force in addition to the housing and healthy communities and as we've moved forward with that of the ten items that

[00:14:56] were priorities that City Council accepted we have worked on at least in part on seven of those and continue to work a couple of those are things that are further into our work plan but those are the priorities and then a number of of just the regular, the other 28 are things that we have been working on with our various teams.

[00:15:21] We were established with a broader purpose in mind rather than just look at homelessness because there's a housing issue, there's a healthy communities issue, there's a lot of other issues that go in rather than just homelessness, and those are the things that we're working on. A board was appointed. We have 17 members. And when you look at the PowerPoint and you look at how the board is laid out, it really was based on people's functional jobs and their experience levels.

[00:15:56] You've heard me say a couple of times that we have the best of the best. We have a top-notch board. The board is really involved. The board brings a wealth of experience to HCAB, and we're able to draw on that.

[00:16:13] Last night we had a meeting. It was amazing. The perception and some of the ideas they had on how we verbalize this to you and really drill down and ask really hard questions, it really makes us think. So we're very fortunate to have the HCAB board that we do.

[00:16:34] I believe Jim Gillespie is the only member I saw. Oh, and Leslie and Angie. So they snuck in on me. So we do have three members in addition to Susan and myself. So the first thing we wanted to do with you is to kind of set a common stage so everybody knows where the city is and how we are on housing.

[00:16:58] When you look at this particular map, you'll see that the light blue is single-family detached housing. And you'll notice that the majority of the city is single-family detached housing. And about 47.6% of our residents live in single-family detached housing.

[00:17:17] If you look at the orange and the yellow and the green, you'll see that's the multifamily. That's our condos, that's our garden apartments, that's our townhouses. And you'll see that they are really focused in specific areas throughout the city.

[00:17:38] The unique piece with this is that even though 47.6% of the population is in single-family detached, the vast majority of the land has single-family detached.

[00:17:54] And when we get to home sharing, you'll see why that could be such an important thing for us to consider as a city because there's a whole lot more single-family detached areas that may be able to assist in some of the housing. I think that the other item that we kind of drilled on is, okay, who, which of these types of housing is giving us students?

[00:18:18] Obviously, that's something that, you know, with the school system and the cost and everything. And so up in the far right-hand corner, this came from the schools, and per 100 units, detached established housing brings about 38 students.

[00:18:37] Detached contemporary housing brings about 23. The first question everybody's going to say, what's contemporary housing? We had that same question. And basically contemporary housing is housing that's been built since the 80s. And that's kind of a line that they've drawn because the housing somewhat changed at that point where the housing, houses may be bigger.

[00:19:00] They may have garages. And so it's a different feel to it. And so it may have a different type of resident living there. And as you can see, a townhouse established is about 28 students per 100 units, townhouse contemporary 15, garden apartments about 37, and mid-rise apartments are about 11, which is very low right there with the condo contemporary.

[00:19:28] And so each one of these types of housing brings that need to provide the school services within the city. The next piece we want to look at is the housing costs and rentals. And there's a couple of things here, I think, that can jump out at you.

[00:19:48] One is the dedicated affordable housing is in that top block, and we have Westwood Oaks, Scout on the Circle, and The Point. and each of those have dedicated affordable housing units and then there's the market rate affordable housing units and you can see the list there and then there's the affordable units pending these are units that have been approved with the number of affordable units listed there but they have not been constructed and then the lost affordable we had two which was the

[00:20:25] Knolls and then Fairfax Gardens. Combined they had 148 units of affordable housing that was lost within the city. One of the discussions that we've had with HCAB is to establish a goal of having a net sum zero loss of affordable housing units and that would be a goal that if council so desires we would work on how that would happen because there has you have to have something to give people uh if they decide they want to get rid of some of the affordable housing and we would

[00:21:02] have to look at what are some options and how would we how would we do that uh but a lot of municipalities fairfax county included establish that goal of we don't want to lose any of the affordable housing we have because when you look at the lost affordable housing 148 units and then you looked at the affordable units pending uh those numbers still don't come up they get close but they're still they're still not there the other piece on this if you look at the yellow highlighting okay those are the only two places of the units in

[00:21:37] within the city that would meet the definition of affordable housing of 30 percent of AMI they would need to make about \$60,000 in order to to expand about 1,500 per month on housing and if you look at that that it's Westwood Oaks is currently the only development where someone could make \$60,000 and spend 30 percent or less of their income on housing Fairfax Gardens has been demolished but that would have been a second one but it is no longer there so

[00:22:15] So that gives a tremendous challenge because Scout on the Circle and the Point, even though they have dedicated affordable units, and that was part of what the city worked out with them, as you can see, you've got to have \$99,000 income in order to afford a two-bedroom unit there.

[00:22:41] Same way with the Point, you need \$85,000 to afford a two-bedroom unit. You can go over to the 30%, and we'll talk about that in just a minute. However, that gives us some tremendous challenges of making sure that we have that affordable housing within the city.

[00:23:03] So when we look at rentals, the next thing we want to look at is what is the actual cost of housing within the city. A buyer needs an income of nearly \$200,000 to buy the median price home in the region.

[00:23:20] Even a starter home now is considered to be about \$500,000 for a starter home. The other piece that we found when we were at the 2025 Housing Symposium at George Mason that was just recently is one in five sales in Northern Virginia is all cash sales.

[00:23:41] So people are coming in with all cash. They're probably not people that would need affordable housing because often what they're doing, they're coming in, they're buying them, they're flipping them, and then selling them for a profit. or they may rent them, but it's certainly probably not going to be in the affordable housing rentals area. When we look at the median house sold in the city in September of 2025, it was \$883,725.

[00:24:11] That is a 20.9% increase from September of 24 to September of 25. So that's a significant increase. The good news, though, is in August, that was 4.5% higher.

[00:24:28] So it was even higher. So it was above 25% increase in that one year. So when you look at those kind of numbers, it shows that buying a home within the city is very, very expensive if you're buying a medium home.

[00:24:47] And so there may not be that supply of affordable units. And so when people want to work, live, and play in the city, they may not be able to afford to do that. And we'll share some things with you shortly that looks at how that impacts, particularly some of our workers, in fact, some of our most populated positions within the city.

[00:25:11] When we look at affordability, what are people then paying for homes based on their income, we see two key points. The far left is owners, and the dark blue is the city of Fairfax.

[00:25:28] The green is the northern Virginia region. But you'll see that the third section of bar graphs over show that 20% of owners pay more than 30% of their income in their house payments.

[00:25:47] The second piece, though, is the one I think that gives us even more concern, and that is the renters pay right at 50% of their, or 50% of the renters pay more than 30% of their income on the rent. And then combined, it's right at 30%. So that is significant. And when you look at the bottom lines there, a family of four needs an income of \$92,820,

[00:26:19] Okay. And that would be considered low income. Very low income would be a family of four on \$77,350. And when we look at what the median family income is, is \$154,700.

[00:26:36] So there's some big gaps there in some of these numbers, particularly as it relates to how much someone needs to earn to not have to spend that much for their income on a regular basis.

[00:26:54] I think the danger that we have when people are spending over 30% is then they run into other problems and can easily be in a situation where they could become homeless. We want to talk just a little bit about the homeless issue within the city and how that is handled and give you some data points there, and Susan's going to cover that.

[00:27:20] So Mark just talked about the broader housing landscape, and I'd like to shift to talk about some of the people who are the most affected by the lack of affordable housing in Fairfax City. It's notable that since 2017, homelessness has been increasing in Fairfax City and Fairfax County.

[00:27:42] The 2025 point-in-time count shows that 1,322 people across Fairfax County were experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. For the first time, we also have some Fairfax City-specific data.

[00:27:58] There were 46 older adults experiencing homelessness were identified in the city, and that's about 42% of the total. And two of those individuals were unsheltered residents over the age of 70.

[00:28:15] This really underscores how vulnerable seniors are. Older adults who experience homelessness face serious health risks, faster physical decline, and tremendous psychological stress. Even short periods of homelessness can worsen chronic conditions and make recovery much harder.

[00:28:36] Countywide, we also have data that 1,800 students met the broader federal definition of homelessness, which includes families who are doubled up or living in unstable housing. Taken together, these trends highlight the urgent need for prevention, more affordable housing options, and continued collaboration across the city and county to support our most vulnerable neighbors.

[00:29:04] The next slide is daunting to look at, but we want you to just to reiterate that Fairfax City is part of the Fairfax Falls Church Continuum of Care, our regional homeless services system.

[00:29:20] And we show this slide to emphasize three points, that there is a coordinated system in place. At the same time, some of the services in this system are not as strong or accessible as they need to be, and resource shortages continue to limit capacity and responsiveness.

[00:29:40] This slide highlights how the regional system functions and why continued investment and partnership matter for Fairfax City. The goal is to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. Who is Alice?

[00:30:02] Well, 32% of Fairfax City households are either in poverty or Alice, and Alice is asset-limited, income-constrained, and employed. 860 households live below the poverty line, and additional 2,036 households meet ALIS criteria.

[00:30:27] The cost of living exceeds what many working families can afford in our city. Most ALIS households lack a financial safety net, such as savings, access to credit, or family support. A large share of residents are economically at risk.

[00:30:43] So, HCAB believes that strengthening affordable housing strategies that supports these Alice households is a good idea. In terms of the workforce, what I'd like to do is I have a fictional narrative of a day in the life of a resident.

[00:31:08] And because we just talked about Alice, her name is Alice. Alice starts her morning with a quick cup of coffee before heading out the door. On her walk to the car, she notices a public works crew already checking storm drains, quiet and essential work that helps flooding and keeps the roads safe for everyone.

[00:31:30] As she drives towards the office, she decides to stop at her favorite cafe in Old Town. While waiting for her order, she notices a police officer chatting easily with the owner. It's a small moment, but it reminds her how first responders and local business staff help to create a sense of safety and connection in Fairfax City.

[00:31:51] Back on the road, she reaches a school zone where a crossing guard is guiding students through the busy morning drop-off. A school bus pulls away in front of her as a simple reminder of the daily partnership between Fairfax City and FCPS and the many workers who support children and families every day.

[00:32:09] Alice arrives at the office and settles into her workday. At lunchtime, she meets a friend for a quick bite, and when their food arrives, the server lingers for a friendly chat. Another example of the small interactions that make this community feel personal and welcoming.

[00:32:26] After work on her drive home, Alice passes Parks and Recreation staff, setting up for an evening program. Their work, often happening outside of regular business hours, helps bring neighbors together and supports residents of all ages. Turning into her neighborhood, she's thankful for her short commute.

[00:32:44] She notices that trash and recycling have been collected and leaf piles cleared. Quiet, often unnoticed services that keep the community clean and running smoothly. That evening, Alice and her family go out to their favorite local restaurant.

[00:33:01] The warm atmosphere is created by the servers, hosts, dishwashers, and cooks who keep the place running. Many of them, she knows, commute long distances because workforce housing in Fairfax City is very limited. By the time her day ends, Alice realizes just how many workers across the city departments and local businesses supported her from morning to night.

[00:33:25] Their work is essential, yet many of them cannot afford to live in the community they serve. Next one. So this slide is, it highlights a network of service providers that we have supporting residents experiencing homelessness or housing instability in Fairfax City and Fairfax County.

[00:33:52] It includes nonprofits, faith-based partners, and community agencies, and this is just a snapshot. It is not the full list. These partners addressed a wide range of needs, mental health care, financial assistance, food security, and supportive housing.

[00:34:10] This slide is not specific to ALIS populations. It reflects a broader ecosystem. Together, these organizations form a diverse, interconnected system, providing emergency response, permanent supportive housing, and ongoing advocacy.

[00:34:30] Potential federal budget cuts may reduce capacity, making strong local partnerships more important than ever. We have strong, committed partners who need our continued support and collaboration to remain effective.

[00:34:45] And just to close off my part of this, that homelessness and housing instability are rising in Fairfax City. Alice households and essential workers face increasing financial pressure, stretching their ability to live in our community.

[00:35:05] Our network of service providers is strained by growing needs and potential federal budget cuts. The need is rising, and strong local action and partnerships are critical. And now Mark will share

some more information.

[00:35:20] Before I do Jamie if we can go back to slides to the one I think that Susan's story shows that every day we come into contact with people that are on the list here and that this starts with the the number of jobs of 1052 that is the most number of jobs within the city is home health and personal care aides and then comes down. And when you look, seven of those 10 are in positions where they are not making enough

[00:35:59] as a single earner in order to afford affordable housing, even at the cheapest place that we have within the city. So that really kind of sets the stage for how do we have to think about affordable housing? Because these are people that are working hard. They spend a lot of time servicing and doing uh service level jobs but uh it's just real tough for them to make it with with the cost that they have to incur and so i think that's one of the things that we really want

[00:36:34] to think about is you know we're we're not talking about when we talk about affordable housing we're talking about workforce housing we're talking about people that that provide the services that makes the city and makes the entire region really function okay so if we can go back to the business community perspective one of the things that that we've had is what are our people telling us on the left-hand side and number 10 and 11 there this was a survey that was done by the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce and looked at the perspectives and sentiments of 135 CEOs corporate

[00:37:14] executives and business owners operating in Northern Virginia including fortune 500 companies. And number 10, when asked about what did they want the next governor in the General Assembly to work on, the number one thing was affordable housing. That even scored higher than reducing taxes. When they asked them what are the priorities for your county government or local government, affordable housing was their number one answer, even above reducing taxes.

[00:37:42] When we look specifically at Fairfax City, when we did the community survey, there's the results there and you'll notice that uh the city did very very well a lot of areas but of the one of the areas that had the most concern uh between about 45 percent total of either they were neutral or uh they were uh dissatisfied with about 45 percent and that was the uh accessibility of affordable uh housing quality housing so i think that uh and those are people that are living in

[00:38:20] the city that probably took the survey, where a lot of the people that have that issue don't live in the city and probably didn't take the survey. So even the people within the city understand that affordable housing is an issue. Now, in many cases, people look at affordable housing differently than the way we may look at it. Because if somebody says, oh, I'd really like to live in Fairfax City, but I don't want to pay the \$900,000. And so they're not looking at the affordable housing that's \$2,500 and \$3,000, they're looking much higher. But I think overall, there's a

[00:38:58] perception and the reality that the housing in the area costs a lot of money. And people realize that. And I think that there's a quest for how do we address that. So with all of these data points, one of the things that HCAB looked at was, okay, what do we do with that? And so we came up with the HCAB work plan. And this was based on several things. This looked at the Homeless Task Force recommendations, the comprehensive plan, the housing assessment and strategy report,

[00:39:32] and then the strategic plan. And one of the things we were able to do was to come up with things and areas that we need to address as HCAB. And that is listed there under resource and services and

policy. We stayed very, very in touch with the housing strategic plan to make sure that there was not things that they had that we didn't, and we think we have most of those covered in these items that are listed. Under partnerships, under our communications plan, and then collaboration

[00:40:06] with you seniors in the faith community, those are things that as we start putting these other items together that we will then be doing that outreach and working with those those partners because many of those fit within this this category we did a process where we looked at impact and effort to determine which what are the things that we may be able to do and get low hanging fruit or things that may make an impact within the city and the two of those that we want

[00:40:41] to talk with you tonight about is the home sharing program and the housing trust fund. First, we'll talk about the home sharing. This is a unique program. We got with one of our fellow other city boards, Villages in the City, and they assigned two or three people that worked with, came to our meetings and worked with us as we started looking at what is home sharing.

[00:41:09] Home sharing has some unique possibilities in the fact that this does not require building additional housing. It takes the housing that we have, primarily in single-family, detached, and so the housing is already there.

[00:41:25] And it makes it more of a formal sharing process. There are many people that may rent their homes already, But this would be where somebody may exchange rent or let somebody rent there for assistance with household tasks.

[00:41:41] It could be both. And it may give somebody companionship, may give them affordable housing, some security. And not everyone may want to do that, but there may be people that haven't thought about that. One of the data points that they gave us at the housing symposium was in the previous years, people typically kept their house about seven years, and then they'd flip it and go somewhere else. I don't mean flip it in the terms of remodeling it, but they would go somewhere else.

[00:42:13] Now that's about 13 years. And I think when you start looking at people that are at the retirement age, their house may be paid for, and they can't afford to go anywhere else. Even though they may be able to sell their house here at a good price, they're going to pay a good price somewhere else.

[00:42:29] And so for them, if they have a four-bedroom house and it's just one or two people, this may be a very viable option is to look at home sharing because it doesn't require them to do anything beyond getting someone to rent. Our group worked very diligently with this and looked at different options. And one of the things that we determine and we need feedback from city council is there's kind of like there's home sharing light, home sharing, okay, we're going to do a little more

[00:43:04] and home sharing, we're all in. Fairfax County has kind of done the approach of making it an information system where you provide information, you give people documents that they can use, checklists, any number of things that we may be able to share with them, make people think about it I think one of the discussions was some of the Friday morning sessions at the villages in the city does that may be prime to have somebody do a presentation there where people that may haven't thought about renting their home or a room in their home not their whole home that may be a very good option for

[00:43:41] them so one thing the kind of the base level would be is an information and documents that people could have and that's very low it's very passive system there's not a lot of effort once it's established the second option is to set up where you have somebody that within the city that would be doing criminal

history checks and possibly credit checks that adds a little bit more to it you don't we don't know how many people would use it but that would be like option two and then option three is kind of like a matchmaker somebody that seeks

[00:44:19] out people somebody that they can call and say you know uh this is alice and i live at xyz street you know i'm 75 years old and i really need somebody that can move in and pay minimal rent but i would need them to help me rake my leaves you know shovel my snow uh you know several things like that uh and so then that person tries to find somebody and makes that match that is the most intensive that would be there. Obviously, that starts running into cost money to have people

[00:44:53] to do that task. I think one of the things that we have to look at is with this is, you know, the question comes up is what are the liabilities with it? How much effort do we want to put into it? And the question that our work team that was working on it came up with is we really don't know how many people would be interested. Fairfax County, to our knowledge, has no way of tracking how many people are using their passive system. So there's no good way of saying, yes, this would

[00:45:27] be very, very popular or may only have five or six people that would avail themselves of that. And then a way to look at it is you had 10 or 15, that's 10 or 15 homes that may have a rent that is affordable and can help out somebody who already has that property and then also help somebody that needs affordable housing so this is one of the items we would like some feedback from City Council on tonight the second one that we have is a housing trust fund the city technically does not have a housing

[00:46:05] trust fund for we have a fund that we call a housing trust fund but if you look this has been recommended numerous times in 2013 uh it was recommended the city have a housing trust fund in 2018 the mayor's advisory committee on housing report recommended housing trust fund 2023 2025 and the affordable housing strategic plan was there and the comprehensive plan each one of those talks about the city having a housing trust fund so then the question is well what's a

[00:46:38] Housing Trust Fund, and how does that work? So there's a couple of different options that are a wide range of options that people can use. And the National Low Income Housing Coalition ranked those as to what is used the most, all the way down to what is used the least, which was for renewable energy. As you can see, the four in the right is for preservation of existing multifamily housing. And I think, you know, if we can save what affordable housing we have, we're ahead right there. So, but there has to be a way of preventing the loss of that

[00:47:18] housing. Acquisition, rehabilitation of existing multifamily housing, and then of course new construction. And as you can see, there's a wide range of things that people use a housing trust funds for. It can be for rent assistance. It can be for transit-oriented housing, vacant or abandoned properties. When I was at the NACO conference this summer, I had a conversation with some folks from a county in Arizona, and their approach is

[00:47:54] anytime that any city or anyone foreclosed on property, they had a policy, they bought the property. They rezoned it immediately for affordable housing. And then they would sell the property or have a partnership with somebody to build there. So there's some creative ideas of things like that. That was something they did. But these four things are probably the, would give us as a city a good bang for our buck if we had a dedicated housing trust fund

[00:48:27] revenue source when we look at where we are now with our system that we term a housing trust fund we have five hundred and forty two thousand dollars that was in there and this was put in prior to 2020 when we the city council established that there's some ratios of what you have to have if you're going to build a multi-family or you're going to build within the city you have to meet certain ratios prior to that different builders gave

[00:49:06] money in lieu of having affordable units and so as of now we have five hundred and forty two thousand dollars in that particular account there is no process for how that money goes out there is no requirements for what somebody has to do and that was what is one of the things that h cab i think will need to work on i think the issue becomes is does that is that 542 000 the end and that's all we have and we're not going to have any more or do we establish a trust fund where there's a recurring revenue source that can do

[00:49:45] different things and then we determine what are those things that will assist us in affordable housing. And when you look there at identified uses, and it looks like it based on the affordable or the comprehensive plan, the affordable housing strategic plan, and our survey and community surveys, that affordable housing development, preservation and rehabilitation, and rent and mortgage relief would be great things to use for future if we have that recurrence dollar amount.

[00:50:20] If we only had the 542,000, does it make sense to give that 542,000 in one or two larger pots rather than trying to develop a system that would be used one time or two times?

[00:50:40] And so one of the things that the HCAB did was to look at if we had a dedicated source, what would those sources be? There's a wide range of sources where revenue can come from.

[00:50:56] There's a list there on the screen, as you can see, from real estate transfer taxes, document recording fees, developer fees, permit fees, property taxes, tax increment financing district, payments in lieu of taxes, sales tax, hotel motel tax, any number of things.

[00:51:15] And so this was put together by Local Housing Solutions and just kind of gives a different way of looking at how could you fund a housing trust fund. When you look at some of those, they're all dependent upon things that are totally out of your control.

[00:51:35] For example, a document recording fees. You only get those when people are recording documents. I looked at the statistics today, and in October, 21 homes were closed on within the city of Fairfax.

[00:51:51] So 21 homes, if there was a fee based on closing of a home, that's not a lot of dollars unless you charge a lot of dollars. And then it makes it for people that are buying the \$885,000 homes pay a lot more.

[00:52:08] And so with that, we looked at a property tax and a hotel motel tax and looked at how that might look. And when we go back and look at the 2018 suggestion is there was a suggestion of taking a half of a penny and to put that from the real estate tax and put that toward a housing trust fund.

[00:52:34] If you did that under current tax situations, that would bring in about \$417,479 per year. If you took the transient occupancy tax, if that is increased, but if you took 2% of that tax, that would bring in \$250,000 a year.

[00:52:53] So that would be a total of \$667,479. And this is not saying a tax increase of a half a penny. It's simply saying take a half a penny of the tax rate, and it would go to a housing trust fund.

[00:53:10] When you look at how that could be allocated, it gives the ability to allocate that for affordable housing development, preservation and rehabilitation, rent relief programs, and affordable housing development.

[00:53:26] You could have 27 units based on a Beacon Landing example. And if we looked at rent relief program, we could impact 33 households at \$2,000 per household. The question obviously becomes, well, how would, you know, what would be the requirements to get that money?

[00:53:43] That would be something that HCAB would have to develop a process. They'd have to develop a scoring system and a rating system, and that's a significant amount of work. If we're not, again, if we're not going to have that continued funding source, that would be work that would not need to be done.

[00:54:00] And so that's where we need feedback from city council on how that might look and if that is within the realm of possibilities. So along with that, one of the things I mentioned earlier was establishing a target of no net loss of affordable housing.

[00:54:22] Another area that falls within that housing trust fund, so that would be the preservation piece. The second piece was have development targets that says within X number of years or, you know, within five years, we want to have an additional 50, 100, whatever that number is, of affordable housing units located within the city.

[00:54:45] And then again, that would be something that HCAB would work on, come back with a recommendation. You know, it's real easy to say, oh, we'd like to have 1,000 units. Well, that's a lot of units, and you look at how long things take to happen, that would be probably not realistic to have those kind of numbers.

[00:55:06] In the housing assessment study that was done, they recommended that over the course, I think by 2032, that the city was probably going to need about 4,500 additional units. Of those, about 2,000 were homes, and then additional 2,500 thereabouts was going to be required for rent type of situation.

[00:55:34] So that's significant. That's a significant increase in a lot of areas. But when you look at the housing, people need that housing in order to have jobs. If we don't have jobs, then we're not going to have businesses that want to locate here.

[00:55:54] So it's this kind of big circle that we really have to think about. And I think one of the things that somebody had mentioned recently was that we make a tremendous investment in K through 12 education. And then hopefully when they finish high school and they go to college, we want them to come back here so we can reap the benefit of our investment K through 12.

[00:56:19] But in order to do that, we have to have jobs. In order for jobs to be there, we have to have housing, and it has to be affordable in order for that to happen. So it's really that big system that we have to figure out how do we make decisions and how do we do things within the city to make it so it is affordable and people want to live here.

[00:56:40] They can afford to live here, and living here is attainable. I think when we often look at who we compete with, we don't compete necessarily all the time with Fairfax County and Prince William and everybody. We're competing with Raleigh.

[00:56:57] We're competing with Austin, Texas. We're competing with all these cities that try to build all, you know, that has affordable housing, and they have jobs. So, you know, I think our role is to try to figure

out How do we make sure we have that housing available for them?

[00:57:13] So at this point, what we would welcome is your questions, your comments, observations, and have a discussion on the home sharing, the housing trust fund of how that might work, if we can answer any questions on that.

[00:57:30] And, you know, is it feasible to look at a sustainable program to have that as a sustainable fund over a period of time? Well, thank you very much for the presentation.

[00:57:46] Lots of food for thought. So I will look and see who has questions, comments on the presentation at this time. Okay. All right. Council Member McQuillan has questions.

[00:58:04] You'll have to bear with me because my notes are kind of all over the place. So I apologize in advance. But thank you for all of that information. Let me see what I had here. So one of the first things you discussed and mentioned was the cash purchases being an issue. What specifically about home sharing or the housing trust fund or any other of the solutions mentioned will address that and will help? What can we do to

[00:58:39] potentially detract these cash purchases? I don't know that we would have an answer for that. I think that there's if somebody comes up with cash it's and if the seller is probably gonna be very happy with that as I don't know that there's any specific things we'd have to defer to legal counsel on are there things a city could put in place to to create that so that that wouldn't happen and I don't I'm not aware of anything in the discussions at the housing symposium there was no

[00:59:13] solutions on that particular thing other than the data point that that many, the 20 percent was being bought like that. Yeah, that's something that I'm noticing and observing in my own neighborhood is these large purchases or these purchases of these older homes and then these big giant mega houses being built in their place, right? So I would be really curious to learn more about what can we do in our locality if it means I know that there are certain things in place that

[00:59:46] make it difficult for these professionals to come in and flip homes or to do that so easily. So any of those options would be great to hear more about that. I also noticed that you had mentioned the home sharing. Do we currently have any examples of successful home sharing in the area i know you mentioned that the county doesn't isn't very aware of how many they have but are we aware of any or have heard of any that we can hear from themselves of how it's working

[01:00:25] um i have a lot of concerns regarding um the enforcement of that and how we're going to keep people safe in those situations so i'd love to learn a little bit more about that those are my concerns in that regard so we do have examples though of that happening successfully in the area home sharing let me defer to jamie on that yeah yeah so um the county had actually created a task force on this some years ago and through their research they looked at 10 different programs to sort of benchmark and look at examples as well um hcab specifically their home sharing committee

[01:01:01] that worked our strategy team that worked on this also um reviewed a program in new jersey which actually it's a statewide program i think the challenges in some in some cases um it's happening naturally. Right. And, um, those are the ones where it's, uh, occurring in the community under the parameters of, um, the occupancy limits, right? So no more than for, um, people that are not related staying together. So, um, that's, that's one part of it. Um, the, the, um, the

[01:01:38] Montgomery County program, it is another one that has examples and success stories where this is, a partnership that has worked out well. It's a nonprofit that's providing the in-depth matching and the background checks and the credit checks to kind of figure out what that looks like.

[01:01:55] New Jersey, that program is a whole statewide program. So there's lots of different options to review. And there's also lots of different approaches along that spectrum of home-sharing programs. Yeah. Thank you. I like the idea.

[01:02:12] My concerns with that are strictly how do we prevent any exploitation, how do we handle enforcement when things go wrong, what does that look like? With our location being so close to George Mason University, also close to Northern Virginia Community College, and being close to Washington, D.C., and a lot of amazing opportunities for work, I see this being a really good fit for our community, but I have a lot of questions regarding how that would work out.

[01:02:41] How would we enforce that, like I said, those concerns? I think that's where it would depend on the degree that we did it. If it was simply a passive system, here's information about how it could work. If you think about it, if somebody is just retired and they've never rented their home, where do they go?

[01:03:01] Where do they ask? How do they get a criminal history check? Where could they get a credit check? If simply there was information and checklists and things like that, That may go a long ways, but I think the farther you go into it, then I think, as you said, you start having a lot of concerns.

[01:03:18] What happens when things go bad? Do you have an ombudsman who gets with them and tries to sort it out? But then that's a big investment that the city or someone's making. And it sounds like Montgomery County found that sweet spot with a nonprofit, but then that nonprofit somewhere has to get the money.

[01:03:38] So, you know, it's kind of a much bigger thing. I think the group that put it together had lots of questions. The legal liabilities obviously always comes into it. What happens when somebody does bad things, criminal acts and things like that?

[01:03:56] And those are all things that would have to be flushed out and looked at to make sure that there's not a lot of liability brought to the city for anything like that. And I'm sure a lot of that work has already been done by the county. Excellent.

[01:04:12] Let me see. Okay, so another question I had was in regards to the housing trust fund. We're jumping ahead now. I would be strongly interested in how we could possibly use the funds to support affordable child care as well.

[01:04:29] It seems to me that a lot of people, when we're talking about prevention and the cost of child care being so expensive here, if we have families in need or that are on that edge in need, you know, for the housing trust fund are showing as the words are not coming to me today.

[01:04:52] If they are in need and they have two needs here, it seems to me that that would make sense. so i would like to um discuss that a little bit or look into that and how we might be able to hit two birds with one stone so to speak and come back to me give me a few more minutes please perfectly fine council member hall thank you um so my i'll start with the home sharing my brain goes to i like the idea i think that it could be an option for some i think others will

[01:05:28] have absolutely no interest in it. I do think that understanding more about how other localities are doing it would be really helpful. I can see where bringing in a non-profit to help with matching and background checks and things like that would be certainly much more helpful than just kind of going it alone. My finance and tax brain goes to do the people that are renting their house know that this is taxable income to them, because it is. So if we don't help them with that information. Obviously, we're not taking liability for being their tax accountant, but we're letting them know these are the things that you do need to be considering because nobody wants that to get

[01:06:06] that letter from the IRS. Things like renter's insurance, the liability factor that you brought up, the background checks. So I'm open to pursuing this. I'm not sure that it's going to, I think there's a wide variety of people that are in need. Is it, you know, families? Is it a single mom with some kids? Is it a group of individuals, right? I think that those different people may very well have a different idea of where they would like to be. So I think that these two approaches here

[01:06:40] that you're suggesting can help cover a, you know, a wide variety. I think one of the things we have to be careful of also is that it doesn't become a housing system for students, you know, and I think we'd have to again have legal counsel make sure if a student applies can you say no no this is not aimed at a student does that hit any uh fair housing laws and things like that because being here at mason that that could be a very attractive thing for them to suddenly be able to live in a four-bedroom house and the yard and everything else for a fraction of what they may

[01:07:19] pay uh at the you know apartments that are up here why would that not be a demographic that we would want to encourage i think we'd have to be careful that we didn't end up with that being the only demographic uh okay with mason being here that could really kind of overflow where if our intent really is to make sure we got affordable housing for the workforce and for those lower paying jobs that we looked at uh and then we end up with students that are going to be here four years you know they came from new jersey and now they're gone i think we would just have to we'd have to build something in to be able to to monitor that i don't know how that would look

[01:07:56] or if it's even legal uh but that's the reason the city has good attorneys yeah i think um hcab is certainly still working through all the possibilities with home sharing and hasn't necessarily targeted a specific demographic or population just exploring the concept of we have a lot of single-family detached homes. We have people that might be able to benefit both from an additional person living there, also providing some rent towards that situation, maybe some help, depending on what their agreement is for their living situation,

[01:08:29] whether that's raking leaves, shoveling snow, sort of those things. But no defined populations or restrictions. And that would also be in sharing information about home sharing would make sure that people are equipped with what they need to know in order to be able to do it.

[01:08:45] Some people in the community that are already doing it may have figured all of those things out on their own, whereas somebody else would feel more comfortable if somebody else gives them what they might possibly need to think through if they're considering this. Yeah. Okay. Thank you. On slide 18, you mentioned the last four items on the right, the preservation of existing multifamily housing, acquisition, rehab of existing multifamily housing, and new construction.

[01:09:12] There's something further on the left, though, the emergency rental assistance process. To me, that would be something that would be an important component of the housing trust fund. I would like to

see that considered as well. And then with regard to the preservation, I'm interpreting that to mean keeping what we already have as opposed to not losing it.

[01:09:33] But I also think that an important component of this is keeping it up, meaning keeping it worthy of living there and not letting it fall apart. And then that's just affordable because no one else wants to live there. And that's what it is. I think the other, I'm not necessarily in favor of, and I know it wasn't really an example that you gave, but it's just something you were talking about with the document recording fees and things like that.

[01:10:03] Personally, I think that there's an opportunity for our residents in general to have skin in the game. To me, that comes from some of the legislative things that we are talking about at the state level. you know, I think so much of our burden locally falls on real estate and property taxes. And to add one more thing onto there, I don't think is going to be a super popular thought when it comes to our residents. And I think it's unfortunate because if we could re, if we could divert funds,

[01:10:40] not saying new funds, not saying new tax, what are we giving up, right? What else are we taking away from? So it's not a no, but it's a, I think those are things that we need to consider. I do think it's interesting that the thought about the one half of the one half cents of the real estate tax has been around since 2018, but it's never actually been funded.

[01:10:59] And I imagine that that's probably a lot of reasons for that, but I can come to my own conclusions on those. When the 667 here on slide 21, and again, I recognize these are just thoughts, right? This is not a we're laying this out to do.

[01:11:17] I think this is a good attempt at trying to meet different needs, you know, fill different gaps. I do have to say I don't think that helping out a household with \$2,000 per year is really going to do a whole lot.

[01:11:33] And so I think that's where it comes back to my other point about emergency rent assistance or having funds that are there that they could have their car repaired or get a new transmission. so that way they're staying in their home. A lot of people, and you know this better than I do, but a lot of people are on the brink of homelessness.

[01:11:52] Simply one medical bill, one car repair, one insert whatever here can make that difference for people. And so I think, I don't want to see this be a charity for lack of a better word, but I think having structure in place to be able to recognize different needs and different intents could be a beneficial way to use this.

[01:12:16] and the system being responsive enough to do that within that time frame yeah somebody has a car major car repair you can't say well we'll get back to you and we got to review it and then we got to take it to this review board we'll be back in about three months agreed it's you know we need to turn that around in a week so they can get the car fixed or or get transportation for them so right the system would have to be built to to do that yeah and i think you know i don't mean people need to like check in and check out of the system but knowing who we're trying to identify and how we can help and where we can go and meet those people where they are to get them to be part of this collective conversation, I think is really important. Just one other thing

[01:12:55] on the heels of what Councilmember McQuillan said is we do have some of these big McMansions that are being built. And, you know, I know we have zoning conversations and we have ADU

conversations and things like that. But in light of that house that I'm sure everybody and their mother and grandmother has seen that's in, yes, that I think we need to keep that away here from the city.

[01:13:20] And I think several houses are on the brink of being that next house online that everybody's seeing. But I think that we, nobody wants to say you can't renovate or you can't add onto your house, but we need to make sure that we're doing it in the character of what we have here.

[01:13:37] And just one other final thought is I understand that developers are required, in most cases, to do 6%. To me, it's not enough. I don't think that we need to, as a city, build, my math's going to be funky here, but I don't think we need to build 4,000 units in order to say we got 100 affordable units.

[01:14:03] So as we talked about in our other meeting, I think there are other ways to identify that. I appreciated the developer over on the Van Meter property having that conversation about a building specifically devoted to it, but looked like everything else and was the same quality, the same materials.

[01:14:21] To me, that's more a way to attack a housing shortage of affordable housing. And one other thing that I will ask is that, and again, we talked about this too, but the term affordable housing means a lot of different things to a lot of different people.

[01:14:37] It's, are we talking about low-income housing? Are we talking about affordable housing in the guidelines of income? Or are we talking about workforce? And I think we need to use those terms a little bit more clearly to define what it is that we're looking for, what our goals are, what we're asking for, because I think that when you present that to the community and you identify exactly the number of blanks that you're trying to fill, to me, that's a much easier ask to understand.

[01:15:08] when you just tell me oh we're going to do affordable because i'd like to know who my new neighbors are and i'd like to be able to see are we really identifying x percentage of people that that do need to be helped so i think that's all from me for now thank you for indulging me and there's some very clear uh delineations or definitions for each one of those for example workforce housing typically is considered between 80 to 120 of the ami right those definitions exist and i know that we know them but when we just say on here we want to do you know you do a survey we want to do more affordable housing what does that mean who who is really asking for that is it the

[01:15:47] people that need the most support or is the people that need help paying their rent once or is it the people that are more workforce and have like alice that have a salary and can do you know some more things with it so that's all i'm saying the definitions exist but i think we need to call call them out for what they are with these properties.

[01:16:06] I think one of the slides for our work plan is the communications to folks, where we start communicating is this is, you know, taking care of the or providing housing opportunities for people that provide service every day, you know, within the community.

[01:16:26] It may be teachers, it may be firefighters, it may be police officers. And then the question is, well, They want to live in a multifamily-type dwelling because, you know, different people have different ideas of how they want to live and raise their kids. So, you know, it's all convoluted to try to figure out what that best solution is going to be.

[01:16:45] And one of the actions that was recommended in the Affordable Housing Strategic Plan is to develop targets. And what I'm hearing you saying is develop specific targets in the context of the

definitions. So a term that's being used in Loudoun County is attainable housing.

[01:17:03] I mean, you know, all of these vocabulary words mean different things. So affordable housing has a definition in workforce housing. But basically the bottom line is a person who wants to have a home in the city, is there something here that is attainable based on their income and earnings?

[01:17:20] So attainability is even separate and apart. You know, there's a lot of discussion about millennials not being able to afford a home. And there's a lot of, you know, my kids are in their 30s and they are not homeowners. And there's just this overall idea in that particular age group that they'll never be able to afford a home.

[01:17:40] And so when you talk about attainable housing, regardless of what you do or how much you earn or what your profession or your career is, whether you're single or you're married, is there something in this city you can afford or not? And that's the attainability factor of do we have something for people who want to live here, regardless of what it is they do.

[01:18:00] And so maybe as we're talking about workforce and affordable and people have some broad concept of what they mean, what we're really saying is, is there housing for people who want to live here? And I think things like home sharing, and this is not on here, but the affordable dwelling unit ordinance, which we're working on too.

[01:18:19] You know, right now there's only 25 affordable dwelling units that are not detached in the city that the city knows about. So out of thousands and thousands of homes, 25 have something that's called an accessory dwelling unit. But that gives people options.

[01:18:35] All of these things give people options. I don't know if it will be a few people who do home sharing or maybe 10 years from now, like that's what people do here. It's hard to say. But I think having systems and processes and establishing options for people and feeling confident that we have the housing stock.

[01:18:54] And one of the things we have with these affordable, I mean, with this older stock is we don't have homeowners associations. So we didn't even talk about the fact that we have tiny homes on huge lots in post-World War II neighborhoods. And if you don't want McMansions, then you kind of have to offer.

[01:19:12] Home sharing is one way of having a property that houses more than one person and creates income. Accessory dwelling units are something else. And so we have to think about that because we have a city full of older homes. And if we don't want them scraped and torn down and something else built, then what are the options?

[01:19:33] And so, you know, the thing that I'm really focused on with this presentation, and I know that you're asking council to say you know what what could be the priorities that the council's willing to support in this arena because it takes a long time to put anything in place like as we've you know the affordable the detached affordable dwelling unit concept started with the last council and here we are you know halfway through this council and we're still not even to a public hearing so it takes a long time and so asking the council i mean i think that's a a thing that is

[01:20:10] a reasonable request for HCAP to say what is the council willing to support going forward that we can get started on because it could take years before we take a concept and we have delivered a program and and we already have a a crisis situation right now and we can't solve it instantly but getting

started or at least eliminating things or prioritizing things would be an enormous help i think to what you're trying to do council member bates yeah so um

[01:20:47] as far as home sharing and the housing trust fund uh personally i think that a home sharing program is certainly worth looking into and um you know and i know that there are different flavors of home sharing out there so it depends on what uh we have the um or can put you know the infrastructure in place to take care of in-house and then what partnerships would be needed there.

[01:21:16] On the housing trust fund, personally, I think that helping to fund affordable housing programs is perhaps one of the best things that we can do to really just advance the greater good.

[01:21:35] And it's something where we, I think, can pretty reasonably assume that the funding that is gained is actually going to a cause that is really helping the less fortunate, you know, more directly.

[01:21:54] And so I think that whether it's, you know, half cent or perhaps even less of the real estate tax or 2% of the transient occupancy tax or both or a mix, just whatever I think that we can have consensus for is something I'd want to look into doing.

[01:22:14] And so that I think is a pretty high priority because that's something where we could more directly see, I think, a positive impact on the situation. Beyond that, I would look forward to anything else that can be done to help support affordable housing, housing affordability, and, you know, just addressing homelessness in general and those who are at risk of homelessness.

[01:22:47] As far as private developments, I think it's important to acknowledge that, you know, the 6%, let's say it's, I think one of the numbers I saw on there was 17 units for one of the projects. You know, I mean, 17 units is still 17 units.

[01:23:03] It's not a lot, but it's still something. And we've seen individual projects, for example, the Presbyterian Church project and the Pathway Homes project that are, you know, like 10 or 15 units. And so that's still significant.

[01:23:20] You know, of course, it's perhaps a different income limit, but we're talking about, I believe it's 60% for the multifamily projects that we require. And for some of the lower-income ones, it's I think maybe around 15% to 30%, but it's still something, and I think that I would like to see certainly as much as possible if developers are willing to contribute even more than that.

[01:23:54] But we also want to make sure that we're not inadvertently perhaps discouraging development that would otherwise lead to affordable housing by requiring too much. So we want to try to balance that out and make sure that we're getting the greatest benefit that we can and, you know, balancing everything.

[01:24:17] And also something else that is very important here is partnerships, and that's something that was mentioned earlier and something that really kind of permeates the original Homes of Task Force recommendations, you know, partnerships involving nonprofits as well as city staff, including human services, you know, the CRT, of course, police, even to some extent, perhaps, Public Works, Parks and Rec, you know, a lot of different departments do kind of deal with the impacts

[01:24:53] of homelessness. And we need to make sure that we are supporting all of them in carrying out their missions and doing their jobs. Everybody has a role to play. And, you know, I don't see a world where we don't, you know, unfortunately need nonprofits to do the work that they do, or frankly, for, you know, police care at enforcement, you know, I mean, we can't simply

[01:25:26] allow the encampments anywhere, you know, and personally, you know, a lot of cases I might be hesitant to report an encampment, but, you know, if they're not hurting anybody anyway, but we certainly can't hold it against anybody just for doing their job. You know, I mean, I think that those who work for nonprofits, you know, police, other public servants, they're there to help people. You know, nobody wants to have to deal with the homelessness situation. Police, you know,

[01:26:03] even put themselves at risk in responding to some of those. And so we need to make sure that we're acknowledging that um you know the amazing work that that all of them do um and supporting them when we have non-profits who want to come before us with the project to provide housing for the less fortunate um we need to make sure that we're also uh supporting them and uh you know just you know those partnerships and that public trust and giving them the benefit of the doubt you know

[01:26:40] everybody involved, everybody who has a role to play there, is of the utmost importance. And that really, I think, kind of forms a foundation of, you know, the path forward on this. Thank you. I see that Council Member Amos has his hand up. Are you with this, Council Member Amos?

[01:27:01] Yes. Can you all hear me well? We can hear you. Yeah, I'll just be brief. The main goal here is that I think we need just additional options for flexibility, for exploring the conversation, everything from a home sharing program to what does our trust fund look like to even future policy decisions even related to zoning. And for example, parking minimums is a discussion that they're having nationally as well that came up at the recent governor's housing conference too. So I think that there's going to be a lot of opportunity for tackling this from multiple perspectives. The main thing is just making sure that we know as a

[01:27:40] locality what options we have on the table to try to address this problem because it's not going to just be developing affordable housing especially with our limited amount of land it's going to be maximizing as much space and incentivizing some of these single family homes and some of our older residents as well to help tackle this challenge. Thank you Councilmember Amos. Councilmember Peterson. I want to make sure I'm not standing in the way of Councilmember McQuillan's follow-up questions. Okay. Yeah. And I think I'll build on some prior comments. First, I want to thank you

[01:28:18] for some very meaningful analysis that's very helpful and the translational work around it. I think a couple of big picture questions that I would find helpful, perhaps others would as well.

[01:28:33] I'm curious to know to what extent in your work on affordable, affordability and attainment issues in particular, but housing issues and imbalances, how much have you looked into underlying causes and drivers, understand why this is happening?

[01:28:54] And it obviously gets to the issue of what's controllable and what's not controllable, et cetera. And I'm just curious how much you've been able to look at that and or if you can point us towards information that might clarify the underlying causes and the underlying drivers of the dynamics that you've been raising with us here in the city.

[01:29:16] So what are the underlying causes of the prices basically continuing to rise? Well, that's one of the metrics, but there's a gap, if you will, a divergence between some things going up and other things not going up fast enough. I mean, income can't chase price fast enough is one of the gaps, I gather.

[01:29:36] What's the underlying cause of that, that we've got this stretch occurring between those two particular variables, the other variables as well. Yeah, that's not something that the HCAB has looked at at

this point. I think that at the housing symposium, there was a number of discussions about, you know, why is the prices going up, and, you know, when the economy is good and people have money, you know, people pay more for houses, and it becomes this cycle.

[01:30:05] And I think that those are some of the causes. Bright MLS does a lot of analysis and looks at the percentage increases and that type of thing. And I think one of the things that they discuss there is just the desirable place to live.

[01:30:22] Nobody says, I want to go to a place that's dying. I want to go to a place where there's not a lot of jobs. And as long as there's jobs and things like that, then the prices continue to go up. But HCAB itself has not looked specifically at what those specific causes are, you know, from a macro level.

[01:30:44] And if I could, the housing crisis is certainly not unique to the city of Fairfax. There's a national shortage of housing. Some estimates have said that it's short 5 million homes, 7 million homes. I think there's a combination of factors with wages not keeping up with the cost of housing.

[01:31:02] There's also the availability of units that people are looking for. It's that people that maybe had once transitioned out of their housing to different housing and maybe had given up a cheaper option, that people are staying in their homes for a longer period of time.

[01:31:17] There's not that transition, so there's not the vacancy rates that occur within housing. So there's many different factors that are not just unique to the city but across the country. Okay. Well, helpful, because it sounds like, again, we've got some things are increasing faster than others and it's creating some imbalances here.

[01:31:40] It's not the only area of the economy where that's the case. We see natural resource scarcity, for instance, as a driver for these kinds of things. Maybe related to this, I'm also curious to what extent you could point us towards regional analysis for many of the same things you looked at here that might put this in context in terms of the region, whether it is Fairfax County, whether it is Northern Virginia.

[01:32:13] It has an impact on the regional dynamics have an impact on our goals and then the methods we use to actually pursue them. And I'm just curious to know whether, as a part of this, there is a context here in terms of regional analysis that we could kind of look at and understand here.

[01:32:31] Yeah, that is something we certainly can do. In fact, a number of the metrics that are out there looks at all the different areas and then combines them. And as I was mentioning, Bright MLS has an option where you can go in and basically cut and dice different things.

[01:32:52] So that is something that's done, but that's not something that HCAB has worked on at this point. And COG does set regional housing targets, so that's one area where there's a regional effort. The Northern Virginia Regional Commission just did a migration report that looked at the middle income, so about \$150,000, and the number of people across the region in that income range that are moving out of the community at a much faster rate in which they're moving in.

[01:33:20] So that's also losing the talent, losing the workforce that's at that range, just because the housing types are not available and the cost is too high. So the Northern Virginia Regional Commission actually just hosted an event two weeks ago, But Ms. Ergis and myself and Mr. Hardin were there because the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, the new executive director, Craig Pfeiffer, has decided that

looking at housing, not just affordable housing, housing in the region, is something NVRC wants to focus on.

[01:33:51] So they convened an interjurisdictional meeting with people from all over. Loudoun, Prince William, Falls Church, Fairfax, we were represented there. And so this topic definitely is on the top of everybody's lists everywhere. And so I think you're going to see more regional analysis come out of the work of the NVRC as well as COG that will show us patterns that are happening across the Northern Virginia region.

[01:34:15] So it's definitely a priority. Lots of people are working on this. Well, and I think that's helpful. Let me just call out one or two examples of where I think it's helpful in terms of shaping our understanding of the city's challenges that may or may not change when we start looking at it through a regional lens. So I think one of the issues that was raised here is essentially the co-location of jobs and housing. And it's one thing to do an analysis of that within the confines

[01:34:52] of the city, drawing a boundary around the city and looking at that. But it's another matter to look at the region, regional level. And of course, the bigger the region is, the more opportunity there is for the co-location of jobs and housing. So when our children graduate from school, et cetera, and go on, one version of a goal is we want them to have their job here in the city of Fairfax. The other is that they have a regional opportunity. And that is, of course, a very different question. And I think an important one to be able to evaluate at the same time as we're

[01:35:28] evaluating a city goal here. I think we don't want to kind of chase a fool's errand here when the real issue may be a regional issue and we want to be aware of that. The other is, you know, the very real concept that people want to be somewhere that is desirable. So you certainly don't want to reduce housing demand by becoming undesirable. And of course, one of the features of that or the attributes of a community is employment, but there are other attributes also. There are other

[01:36:02] amenities, environment, education, entertainment, et cetera, those kinds of things. And the city, I think, has frankly treasured those kinds of amenities and tried to create and protect an area that has these kinds of amenities. And clearly they are a draw. At a regional level, there are other places in the region that probably haven't tried as hard to do that. And probably that is one of the things that has reduced the level and type of demand for housing in those areas.

[01:36:35] So, you know, there are some differentials that may be driven by attributes and amenities here. And, again, you have to kind of look at that. And when you're crafting a solution here, be very careful. You're not shooting yourself in the foot as you do that. And it's not just one variable. It's a couple things.

[01:36:50] So I do think a little bit bigger picture, look at some of this stuff, will help put it in perspective. By the way, and I don't know whether you're familiar, a few years back, Fairfax County conducted a comprehensive study. I don't know the name of it, dealt with housing that did quite a bit of regional analysis that I thought was very helpful, and that would be an example of something that would be helpful to sort of understand and parallel what we have here.

[01:37:22] Curious on a couple of other quick things. Let me just note on affordability, attainability, however it's described there, one way to look at it is we've kind of got these annual income thresholds, and are we at, above, below, whatever.

[01:37:48] But one of the drivers for instability and homelessness, but instability in terms of residential occupation is interruptions in income. And the stats are pretty difficult there.

[01:38:07] Nationwide, a pretty significant percentage of people are a month of income away from losing rent or mortgage, et cetera. And they need time to adjust. So I think where that may go is on the solution side, whether it's a housing trust fund or any other area, to recognize that there are these emergency periods.

[01:38:28] And the issue here is a period of time, a period of transition that has to be supported. That's a little bit different than what's the median income, which gets to another set of issues. I think it would be helpful to sort of understand the role that that plays in instability in housing as well.

[01:38:47] I'm curious also on kind of some definitional stuff just to sort of understand where we are in things. I think this was raised in a prior session we had in a study we were looking at. But in terms of how we understand housing cost, what's in that?

[01:39:07] How much of that is rent or mortgage? How much of it is taxes and fees and all taxes and all fees? I mean, we've got real estate, property sales, et cetera, because they stack. And that stack is what really determines your ability to support housing as well as other important needs, transportation, energy, et cetera.

[01:39:29] But in these numbers that we saw, what is the definition of housing costs and how much of the property tax, real estate tax, other things are in that or not in that? I'll have to circle back. I think the consultant TPMA also maybe talked through this, and they had a great answer, which is escaping my mind right now.

[01:39:47] But I think when they talk about no more than 30% of your income on housing costs, it is meant to be inclusive and comprehensive of your housing costs. But it depends on each data point, right, of how they're surveying, of how they're asking the question. So it is something that has to be sort of dug through in terms of what specific data point that you're looking at.

[01:40:09] But, yeah, generally when you're talking about housing, it is more encompassing than just straight rent or mortgage payments. Okay. And that's really, really helpful because it, again, kind of goes back to underlying causes, strategies, and how we're managing solutions.

[01:40:25] And we see in the surveys that you showed here and commonly in other places, kind of neck and neck, affordable housing and then taxes, people wanting control over them. Those are integral for the reasons we just mentioned. So those are two things you have to manage at the same time.

[01:40:42] And that's a fiscal issue here that we have to watch very carefully in the city on both sides. Again, I think this is really helpful information. I think some expansion of the information I would certainly find helpful to put this in an even broader context.

[01:40:58] I do support the notion that we would benefit from learning more about the full range of options and flexibility for pursuing some of these key areas, the home sharing and housing trust fund among them, but really kind of understanding when you look at any of these potential solution areas that we've got to dig deeper in on.

[01:41:24] We are going to dig deeper. I think we need to pull in the broader context to really understand what we're dealing with here and then also the full range of solutions. It seems to me you've done a great

job of listing, in many cases, a really big broad spectrum of solutions like the sources of capitalization for the housing fund and what have you.

[01:41:41] That's the kind of information that would be very helpful, but even to go beyond that to sort of understand how have those choices panned out for those who have adopted them so we have a little bit more to draw upon And if we're looking at how to structure this, what's the experience been there?

[01:41:58] My last question is just on the home sharing. I guess the honest question is how much of that already is occurring and what's our baseline for that? Do we have any idea? Because obviously we do have a level of that that's already underway.

[01:42:16] No, we don't. And I think that was part of the dilemma that the group between HCAB and Villages and the city had is there's no way of really capturing that data. who do you go out to how do you get it out to those people and what responses so no I don't think we do know because there are a number we can get the numbers from the city of those that have got their appropriate permits and everything else but I can tell you and going through this with our HOA somebody that when we reminded the HOA members that they had to have a permit their first

[01:42:55] questions was well we didn't and are you gonna pay the fines that we have to pay. No, because their thing was we didn't tell them. And I would say there's a good number of people in the city that may be doing that that don't have that record. But that was one of the things we ran into is it was really tough to survey. One is how many were currently doing it and two, how many would do it if they could. And I think that's where we wanted some feedback from council was do we actually go and you have to spend the money to do a survey. And I'm sure

[01:43:29] There's firms that would be glad to help us do that, but is that going to be a good benefit for what it's going to cost? We don't know that. Well, I'm not suggesting that it would be because I see the dilemma there. It's an informal market, and they are notoriously difficult to measure and even to manage.

[01:43:51] But I think just worth noting how big of a marketplace is that. Is it rampant? Is it anecdotal? I mean, what are we dealing with here without going overboard on it? just kind of curious well there is a firm that uh that i'm aware of again i've talked with it at naco they can tell you how many rental units you have within your locality uh and they use all kinds of magic to do it uh and they claim they're pretty accurate but they help cities find people who aren't paying uh and you know they can tell you where they track numerous sources in order to

[01:44:27] come up with what all really is for rent within the city. I guess my last question, just to be sure I'm understanding the possible request before us, it's my understanding that you have a certain amount of bandwidth to be able to pursue things further, and you'd like some feedback from us about priorities for where you would put that bandwidth.

[01:44:55] You can't do it all. The studies that would be involved here would be kind of endless, you know, so we need to be more targeted. Is that a fair characterization you want to sort of understand where to invest the time and resources you have where it's going to be of greatest benefit? You have some initial thoughts here of things that might be, which are the home sharing and the housing trust fund.

[01:45:14] But is that a fair kind of characterization of where you are? It is. And I think that one of the issues is developing a process to expend funds for the housing trust fund. If it's not going to continue, that doesn't make good use of the time.

[01:45:31] Now, obviously, you all have to go through the budget process, and we understand that that, you know, has ups and downs and changes or whatever, but that is one of the things that, you know, we would certainly recommend is for that to be given consideration of funding at some level, and then that gives us the opportunity to develop some systems and to develop some recommendations as to what it would be used for.

[01:45:59] If that's not even a possibility, then we have \$542,000, and how we would expend that may be very different than if it's going to be a continuing fund. Okay. Well, it's very good timing, obviously, because we're just about to step into budget stuff.

[01:46:16] I mean, I will say all of this, from my standpoint, is extremely helpful in going through a process of deciding where to focus, given all this, is a very important thing to do. One number just kind of does really stand out for me, and that is the number of older people who are economically insecure in the city.

[01:46:38] I think that has been underappreciated, and so I really appreciate you bringing that out, because I do think that's a number we need to watch and we need to manage, and that ought to be included in whatever priorities we have going forward, among others.

[01:46:55] Thank you very much. Council Member McQuillan. Council Member Hall. Thank you. I remember when I was living in Maryland and we found out we had a water leak because the owner of the property got the water bills and they were like, we think there's another person living there. And I was like, there is no one else living here. And it was because we had a leak. So that's one of the ways that they find out who lives in your home. My question is quick and you might not have the answer for it tonight, but what funds were initially used to establish the housing trust fund what was put into it and where have the funds been

[01:47:35] dispersed and how much has gone where I don't know if we have I have that exactly tonight we do have available so we can pass that it came from different proffers agreements from the developments that have already happened so some in 2015 2016 I think the latest contribution was just a couple years ago from the, yeah, Pulte Homes redevelopment that occurred.

[01:48:03] So we can get to the list of where it was. Yeah, that'd be great. Thank you. Yeah, I have that information, actually. We, City, received \$500,000 for Mount Vineyard in 2015. The Enclave, which is off of Pickett, \$275,000, and then an additional \$417,000 for the Breezeway Fairway Gardens.

[01:48:26] And then \$700,000 was disbursed for Beacon Landing. Correct. \$700,000 went to Beacon Landing, and a 542 is what is left, is my understanding. And just to clarify, we do have some numbers up on the screen regarding affordable housing development, and if a portion was dedicated of what that would produce.

[01:48:49] Just to clarify, for that specific project, that's based on what the city contributed, but there is significantly more in their capital stack that contributed to that project. So it wouldn't necessarily be that \$350,000 always equates 27 units. It all depends on the individual project.

[01:49:06] Great. Thank you very much for that information. Council Member McQuillan. Thank you. Thank you for your patience while I organize my thoughts here. Going back to the general background, one of the things that you noted was that our renters are paying over 30% of their total income on housing to live here.

[01:49:30] So how do we prevent the new rental developments that are in process from contributing to this issue? Is there anything that we can do? Or when we have potential new rental developments coming to us, what are some things that we can discuss with them in order to prevent this issue from increasing?

[01:49:53] Yeah, so the affordable dwelling unit ordinance that currently exists for a certain number of multifamily units and a certain number of single detached homes, they have to set a certain amount that's affordable at 60 or 70 percent AMI.

[01:50:12] So when there are limits on affordability, then it remains affordable. If there are no limits, then, you know, rents are set at the market. So they're going to look around and see what they can rent their units for. And if we have a lot of units in the region that are unaffordable, that's where it's going to be.

[01:50:31] So I think it is being strategic about setting the number of affordable units that you need and the expectation. Right now it's at 6%. I heard comments about should that be the right cap, Or should we find other ways to increase affordable units by having a bulk instead of the percentage across the board?

[01:50:55] So I think looking at what's currently in place in terms of ordinances and restrictions and affordability levels that we're setting, I think those are ways that the city could make sure that you're on pace for whatever targets end up being set. Okay, so the affordable dwelling unit percentage for new developers, that's basically our...

[01:51:15] Councilmember McQuillan, the other option is also in your legislative program. You have the anti-rank gouging legislation request, which is one way to get at the market rate. Yes, I was kind of hoping they would provide that because I knew about it.

[01:51:31] But yes, thank you. And then the 1,800 students that you mentioned previously that were ID during the point in time count in 2025, were those just county, those were all just county students. They weren't broken down from county and city, right? So those were all county. We don't really know how many of our city students are included in that.

[01:51:50] So that was actually, it wasn't during the point-in-time count, but that was actually the school year up until last April or this past April 2025. So that was over the course of the year. That was for Fairfax County. We have gotten numbers for city schools in between the four schools, the high school, the middle school to elementary, that's around 100 students.

[01:52:10] We don't have current data or we haven't gotten current data for this school year so far of how many at this point. And when we're talking about receiving services or defined as homelessness, it's the Department of Education definition, which is either doubled up.

[01:52:28] It could be that they're also staying in one of the family shelters in the county. And you said that was around 100? Is that what you said last year? Yeah. Okay. Thank you. And that's a rolling number also. Correct. 1800 you know you may have 25 now and then they have a home and it may have 50 later so that's a rolling number um and and then you said for the homeless in the county at that the point in time count 2025 i'm just making sure i have my numbers right you said that was 1322 and the cities was 46 adults two of them being over 70 so that was the um 46 adults were the number of people that

[01:53:07] WERE AGE 55 AND OLDER, AND THAT WAS 42% OF THE TOTAL NUMBER. OKAY, SO DO THE MATTER. YEAH, SO THERE WAS SOME INDIVIDUALS IN SHELTER BECAUSE THE HYPOTHERMIA

PROGRAM HAPPENED TO BE IN THE CITY ON THAT NIGHT, AND THEN THERE WERE A NUMBER OF PEOPLE THAT WERE UNSHELTERED IN THE CITY.

[01:53:27] THIS WAS ACTUALLY THE FIRST TIME THAT THERE WAS A QUESTION ADDED TO THE POINT IN TIME COUNT THIS PAST JANUARY THAT SEPARATED OUT AND ASKED, WERE YOU EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS ON THIS NIGHT IN THE CITY OF FAIRFAX? We identified after looking through the data and working with OPH that perhaps a little bit more training was needed to make sure that those asking the question knew the parameters of the city versus the county.

[01:53:50] Keep in mind that some people may not be from this area, right, that are working in the programs that are asking the questions. And then those that are also answering the questions may not also know the zip code and the distinction of the lines. So we think there's some room for improvement in the data collection, and hopefully we'll have better numbers in the uptime, point-in-time count this coming January.

[01:54:12] Okay, so could you just then clear it up for me, because I'm a little confused now with all of that extra information as to how many adults? You said they were 55 and up, 46, 55? That's 42%, so we kept doing that. I think it was 74, but we can get you the total number of people.

[01:54:31] We can get you the total number of people that we had from the last, the 2020 five point in time count. I was just curious to figure out around the city number, what that was in comparison to the county. That's how I read that. Yeah, and just with that city number, that's what we're a little unsure of the quality of the data, just because it was the very first time and people confuse the city and the county all the time.

[01:54:52] So we don't know if there is some confusion or if that was the solid number. Yes. So this coming year, we, this coming year, we're, we're, we're now prepared, hopefully, to make sure the people know where the city lines are. Okay. And then, okay. So then, okay. So it looks like, according to one of the slides here in your chart, it showed that in around 2016, it appeared to be the lowest homelessness.

[01:55:21] Let me find the slide. Yeah, it goes down. There's a big dip. Right. It was stable. It went down. It was stable for a while. Yeah. Do we know why that was so low? Yeah, there is a significant investment in affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing.

[01:55:37] Rapid rehousing was a program that hadn't existed before that provided that short term rental assistance for people to exit homelessness. So the county over the course of many years had had continued to make investments in this direction. And then we saw the numbers start to government funding, federal government funding, right?

[01:55:57] The federal government was giving more money. Yeah, so we had a program in place that was supported by the federal government that was helping to keep those numbers low. Yeah, some of it was also looking at the housing types and how they're classified.

[01:56:13] So transitional housing used to be funded more readily through the federal government. They classify that as still experiencing homelessness in their data collection. So then the county started to convert more of the temporary options into permanent housing options, so across the board, just more influx of permanent housing resources. So the trends also are similar at a regional level with more investment in these affordable options. And when we're talking for this population, oftentimes it is more deeply

[01:56:46] affordable, so 30% AMI, lower. That makes a huge difference. Thank you. And then what types of housing you had discussed housing types being really the housing mix is really important what housing types are the most desired in our city has there been any outreach done to kind of find out what it is that our residents are looking for here or the people looking to move here want I think the housing assessment and strategy report that was conducted in the city in 2023 looked at housing

[01:57:24] mix housing types so that I'd have to just refresh to see you know what exactly were the results they found but I think the bottom line is that there needs to be a variety of options similar to the conversation overall tonight when we're talking about affordable housing the housing trust fund it's kind of even home sharing it's kind of like yes and with all of these approaches all of them are strategies in order to meet the needs because everyone's going to want different things but we don't quite have enough of any of it at the current currently and not not enough that's affordable. So I'd like to know a little more information about that, what people are

[01:58:02] really looking for, because I don't think it helps if we're building a lot of something that no one wants. So I'd like to kind of make sure, especially since we don't have a lot to work with here in the city. So one of the other things I noticed was you had discussed some of the things that other locations are doing. Is there providing information and just the documents, the step-by-step instructions you had mentioned. That's one of the things I think it's really important to have

[01:58:35] people who have been through the situation that have been through that experience to share that with others. I think the word of mouth and people who have lived it are really important part of that situation. So I would like that to be included in any kind of educational aspect that we're doing sharing the story of someone who has been through this situation who's having a tough time finding housing that that hits a chord with people and so having someone who's a success story that has used some of these programs that has had success in which supportive services have kept them

[01:59:13] in their house I think that's really really key and I'd really like to hear from those people too another question I had was given the supply demand imbalance pushing runs upwards does h cab plan to recommend any zoning or regulatory changes that would allow or ease pressures especially for a missing middle or moderate income households is that on our radar we have that on our radar as part of our work plan but that has not been something that we've started yet okay uh we know that's going to take a lot of effort uh you know and i think that one

[01:59:51] of the things that everybody talks about is how long it takes to get things done uh and everybody knows it's an issue, but there's so many issues when you start kind of drilling down on it to find that it's not always as it seems. You know, everybody, it's easy to blame the city for the delays, and then you find out there's a whole lot beyond the city that has to happen to make those projects come together. But yes, those are things that it's part of our work plan. I would anticipate say maybe next uh in 26 we will probably get hopefully start on that uh and uh the chair of

[02:00:30] that team is actually here so she's taking this all in wonderful and h cabot also planned to work with our community development planning staff zoning staff to make sure that we're um walking in alignment and and um together jointly looking at where there's opportunities wonderful thank you um so what protections since you're going to be doing that what protections will exist to ensure that expanded supply doesn't lead to overdevelopment or gentrification that displaces long-time residents i know that this is something that you all have discussed i've heard it before

[02:01:08] yeah so i don't know if um hcap specifically has recommendations on those policies but i think that's something that needs to be considered when projects are being proposed when there's development that's coming forward um through the city and to council for different projects that that wouldn't necessarily go through hcab so i think it's um keeping in mind when projects are coming through um who benefits who's burdened right what what would be um gained if this project existed what would be lost if this project existed but we don't necessarily have um i think some of

[02:01:45] those uh screenings for affordable housing projects or when development comes through of maybe that sort of criteria to think through with each one um but that could be something that could be developed well will um hcow also prioritize a mix of housing types rather than standard mixed high development or high density proposals will they be um providing us the mix that that's again going back to that my original question of outreach and what our community needs

[02:02:21] will those things be also recommended to us so that we understand what our community is looking for and what things to keep people here in the city okay excellent yeah there was um as part of the affordable housing strategic plan the development of that plan there was an affordable housing survey that was completed this past spring that had 678 responses so there's a dashboard actually up on the city's website now to kind of dissect what are the responses what are people thinking what's the affordability issues that they're mentioning so it's a little bit deeper than perhaps the questions on the broader community survey.

[02:02:55] But I think hearing from people and understanding what they're looking for and what's needed in the community certainly needs to be at the forefront of the process. Excellent. Thank you so much. And then I had one last question. Sorry, guys. Thanks for bearing with me. How will or will HCAP be prioritizing Fairfax City residents through residency preference or eligibility for new affordable units, rental assistance or supportive programs, and how, if so, how?

[02:03:25] How are we doing that? We've not looked at that at this point. I'm not sure if that would be in the work plan or not. It probably would be maybe on a broad standpoint, but right now we don't have that as part of our plan.

[02:03:42] Do you have something specific in mind for that? No. No? Okay. And HCAB wouldn't necessarily. When there are affordable housing units that are developed, they wouldn't be choosing who goes into the units or what that looks like. We also know that there's a certain number of people that work in the city that cannot afford to live in the city, which means they wouldn't be existing city residents, right?

[02:04:04] So some of that is just trying to think of the balance and the property management companies would do the screening and bringing people into the units. But, yeah, I think they're, yeah. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. Yeah, I did want to make just one comment and just say, Please don't rule out any specific demographic for the home sharing.

[02:04:27] Most students tend to find work near where they go to school, where they graduate. They tend to want to settle down in that area. A lot of students fresh out of college don't have the ability to afford housing right now, as you're saying. So I would really like to continue to make sure that the students are also kept in mind, that age group is kept in mind because of our proximity to George Mason University.

[02:04:54] And because they do have a skill set and they have contributed to our community, I think it is important to make sure that they are included and thought about. Because they are, we have just learned

that, you know, first-time homebuyers are now at 40 years old. It's, I mean, this is insane.

[02:05:09] So to exclude any demographic just isn't right in my mind. I think, you know, just as we need to protect and consider our aging residents here in the city, we need to think about those that want to live here that are young as well and have been here and just maybe need a leg up, right, need a little help.

[02:05:29] So thank you so much for bearing with me and being so patient with all my questions. I appreciate it. Thank you. And there are no populations or demographics that are excluded from hope sharing. I think that's, just want to clarify, yeah. Any other comments or questions at this time?

[02:05:45] Councilmember Peterson. One of the, I think this is a question that is specifically about the housing trust fund, but it could be more general in nature, and that is the question mark of with any of the programs, policies that are put in place to address any of these housing issues, To what extent have you thought through the question mark about whether and how they might be targeted or prioritized to city residents as opposed to people who are not residents of the city?

[02:06:24] And part of what caught my eye on the graph with this long range of program implementation options for the Housing Trust Fund is the biggest one, which is all the way to the right, is new construction.

[02:06:39] and everything else before that falls into a box that sounds like it could be targeted to existing residents, whereas new construction is one that would be perhaps more difficult to target to that. Is that a conversation you've had about it? Because it comes up when people become aware of this, and they say, well, are you going to be able to prioritize residents?

[02:07:00] Yeah, no, we've not had that discussion at this point. Okay. I think rent relief would be easier to target for current city residents, of course, naturally. And the \$2,000 amount is just taken from the existing rent relief program. New construction, I think it would be challenging because if you only focused on existing city residents, you wouldn't include anybody that's working in the city that couldn't afford to live in the city.

[02:07:28] So that would be something that would need to be considered. And as Mark said, it's something that HCAB has not gotten to yet because the housing trust fund is limited now. And one of the things under the new construction, that doesn't necessarily mean bricks and mortar.

[02:07:46] You know, one of the discussions that we had with somebody who's building the development is there's a lot of infrastructure things that has to go in that if they are not paying for that, that may reduce their costs. So that, you know, it could be streets, sidewalks, you know, those types of things that would be under new construction, but it wouldn't actually be bricks and mortar.

[02:08:08] And so, you know, those types of things could be considered or worked into the plan. And that would have to be something that would be very delineated so that somebody didn't say, oh, you know, we can use it to actually build the piece of property unless we intentionally wanted to do that.

[02:08:26] And a really helpful note, because when we go through decisions that involve financial analysis of applications, infrastructure is something that from a public finance standpoint, we really ought to be considering as a part of that.

[02:08:43] So that's a very helpful call out. Then back to the bigger picture work. I think this is a work plan question. And I'm sorry I'm not familiar with your work plan, but you made the comment, which I think is

important. There's broad range of opportunity and need that has been identified here.

[02:09:04] And yet, in your estimation as a group, not all of those opportunities are created equal in terms of the value of pursuing them further and devoting the necessary time and effort, which will vary, of course, in them. Have you sorted these out, prioritized them first, second, third tier, whatever, with kind of thinking to help us understand your thoughts about what would be worth putting the time and effort into as opposed to things that not now, possibly not never?

[02:09:34] Yes. When we looked at the effort that it would take and the value that it would bring, each item was scored and given a quadrant score. And then that's what we've been working on those specific things. Unfortunately, when we meet two hours a month, you don't have a lot of opportunities to move a lot of things forward, which is why we've really focused on these two issues right at this point.

[02:10:03] And we will have to continue to evaluate each one of those, probably on a continual basis as we wrap these up, because there may be something else that suddenly may require effort, but it's going to bring a lot more value. And we're going to continue to do that.

[02:10:20] Is that a scorecard that is available that we could become familiar with? We did a scoring in a matrix that we could always share if you're interested. I think, yeah, and keep in mind, HCAP, they just started in February, so they just formed their work plan.

[02:10:37] So it's also okay that you're not familiar because this is the first time that they're coming. So I think the Housing Trust Fund and all of the topics, they are really starting to dig deep, And there is such a range of expertise across the 17 members.

[02:10:53] And I think in time, with the feedback that was provided tonight, I think it's very helpful. I think we'll be able to continue to dig deeper to figure out, you know, where is the best opportunity, where is the most impact, what are recommendations that HCAD can come back with. Well, and I think that this is a continuous, not just a continuous planning process, but a continuous learning process is important.

[02:11:16] And I'm speaking for myself, but I'm sure I have company would like to become a better part of that so that I could become more conversant with the issues, with the options, the implications, so we could do as well as possible at helping you be focused on these things.

[02:11:32] So I'd look forward to that follow-up. I think my final question, which is for the body here, is with respect to this evening's discussion, what will happen next? Because it seems to me this is a really important area and a lot of tremendous information. has been shared and then identified for some further conversation.

[02:11:51] Is this going to be followed up with a second conversation, or what do we do going forward from here? Because there have been a lot of information requests, a lot of interest expressed, and kind of learning and doing more here. We can certainly figure out what follow-up questions look like.

[02:12:07] Right. So I think this was, I think, tried to be a broad encapsulation of the work that's been done in the last 10 months by HCAB, an introduction to this new advisory board. It is new. And they're trying to hone in on two things that they're hoping the council will support, digging deeper into home sharing and developing the housing trust fund as two priorities that we can start with.

[02:12:31] It's not exclusive, and it doesn't mean that they're not working on many other things, because there are subcommittees working on zoning, and there are subcommittees and task force working on lots

of other things. It's just in order to have movement from this advisory board on areas that the council would support exploring, I think that's what they're asking us for, is are these two things they've identified as being a good investment of resources to further the goal of easing the housing crisis in the city?

[02:13:04] Is this something this council is interested in them developing so that we can have a program, a policy that the council would adopt to move these things forward? So is there a consensus on the council that we want to develop these two ideas, home sharing and the development of a housing trust fund, and what that might look like?

[02:13:31] Councilmember McQuillan. I'm interested in learning more about what the home sharing would look like as far as the housing trust fund, it appeals to me, but I also am big about prevention. That's huge to me. So I would want to ensure exactly how the funds would be spent, how that would be monitored and handled before I want to go full tilt saying, yeah, we want to fund this thing,

[02:14:06] right? So I need to understand first why it hasn't been funded in the past, except for how much it's been it's never been permanently set a specific amount each year so why has that never happened before even though we know that this has been an issue for a very long time and then i also want to understand exactly what would need to be in place as far as you know we would need to have a discussion as far as what we feel comfortable with you know i see all the things the housing fund can be used for do i like all of those no some of them though i i think are high priority are really important, especially when you talk about prevention. So for me, it's about prevention.

[02:14:44] It's about ensuring our longtime residents stay in their homes, are able to stay in their homes. And for me, that's what I would feel comfortable discussing and going forward with. As far as just putting a blanket statement like, yes, I like these things. I've been given two things. Sure, they sound great. I would like more. Personally, I would like to hear more options. I think they're out there so that's where i stand on that council member hall i hate to just say ditto but i agree with pretty much everything council member mcquillan said um i think my other consideration

[02:15:24] is when it and we had this conversation i had this conversation with um some of the police staff and some of the fire staff what can we do to help them want to stay here or be able to stay here but sometimes you know when it comes to the fire um fighters schedules if they're only here one day out of three or four they might not be a top priority for having them live here in the city in a place in which they work you know if i could only go to work for 24 hours every four days that might i might not want to live here i don't know um but i think that when it comes to our teachers

[02:16:01] and you know i was actually surprised that the teachers were not on this top 10 occupations were those specifically occupations that are people in the city so it might have just been by volume Okay. Yeah, I think that, but again, it comes to a different type of, do they want to move their family here? Are they caring about a one-bedroom apartment or are they caring about a single-family home?

[02:16:24] So I think that what that help looks like is very, very different. And I think, to me, prevention really is the key at this point for people that are struggling to pay their bills and might otherwise be homeless and then end up in these point-in-time counts.

[02:16:41] So for me, that's an easier demographic to hone in on early. But I also would like, I guess, some more information on, you know, these other entities that donated funds to the housing trust fund in lieu of whatever else their options were.

[02:17:01] It sounds like, I mean, that the Fairfax Gardens, you know, they moved out during the pandemic or right after. So that it's been a long time. So, and, you know, the funds that were used to go to Beacon Landing, that's also helping an entirely different demographic than where the other funds came from and what other housing was taken away in order to make that contribution.

[02:17:25] So I'm not saying it needs to be, you know, apples to apples, but just understanding what the goals are. So answers are yes and yes, but not that easy. Thank you. Council Member Peterson? I share a lot of the sentiments.

[02:17:42] I'd like to learn more about both of those areas, but in a way that doesn't obligate you to get ahead of yourselves and to get ahead of us. I think it sounds like there's kind of a next level of things that would be helpful to kind of understand, given what you've heard.

[02:17:59] I also think it would be helpful to understand a little bit more clearly what the regional lens tells us here about all this analysis. There's a stack of issues here and a stack of findings, but they may shift when we take a regional cut at them, and that affects our stack of priorities and what we want to put our time and effort into.

[02:18:21] I also think I agree very much, prevention. I mean, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, the old saying. That gets to the underlying causes analysis, and I think it would be helpful to understand what is driving any of these areas, And does that represent a cost-effective point of intervention?

[02:18:41] And if so, what does that do to our set of strategies here that we might want to pursue? So, again, the regional lens and the look at the underlying drivers and where that leaves us in terms of points of intervention, you know, from a strategic planning standpoint, I think would be helpful in addition to these two areas.

[02:18:59] Council Member Bates? Yes, I believe they're both worth developing further. Council Member Amos? Yes to both. And there we have it. thank you so much for your presentation and we look forward to hearing from you further on these two issues and many others that you are currently working on thank you so much thank you we appreciate your time and please keep us in mind as you go through the budget process and we will do that

[02:19:32] miss clark our next and last item is a presentation and discussion of the draft urban forest master

[02:19:40] plan. I'll recognize Anna Stafford, Urban Forest Manager, for the presentation. Good evening,

[02:20:20] Mayor and Council. Tonight, we are here to present an update on the Urban Forest Master Plan project. With me is Dr. Garrett Wolfe from Marcel Day. Not with us tonight is Davy Resource Group, the lead consultant on the project, as well as WSSI, who has provided technical assistance and local expertise along the way. Tonight, we'll provide a project status

[02:20:55] update, and then spend most of the time providing an overview of the draft Urban Forest Master Plan, followed by next steps, and then opening it for questions and discussion. So as for project status update, we are nearing the end of phase two.

[02:21:13] Phase one focused on information gathering, while phase two focused on developing the actual draft itself. Community engagement has been focused throughout the whole project. During phase

two, we've done tabling at History Day and Fall Fest.

[02:21:31] We've held two public meetings and a spring photo contest. The winners of the photo contest were incorporated throughout the plan, as well as this presentation tonight. The drafts we've been developing over the past few months, we've had numerous drafts reviewed by the core project team, as well as a broader group of city staff, as well as then a public review period.

[02:21:54] Now that we've completed the public review period, we have been preparing this draft for you all to review, as well as providing updates to boards and commissions, Environmental Sustainability Committee, as well as the Park and Rec Advisory Board. And then as we receive feedback from you all, as well as Planning Commission, we'll be preparing the final draft, aiming for a final draft in mid-December and presenting that back to you all in January.

[02:22:23] Taking a step back and just kind of recapping the project timeline as a whole, phase one, or the project, started in May of 2024. Again, that involved a lot of stakeholder and public engagement, interviews with boards and commissions and city staff.

[02:22:42] The project also reviewed current regulations, program levels, and urban forest data to kind of get an idea of the state of the urban forest. As that wrapped up in winter of 2025, we transitioned to that phase two of the plan development itself.

[02:23:02] On this slide, you can see we last came to you all in May to provide an overview and update from phase one. And then, of course, we are here tonight to provide you an opportunity to provide input on the draft plan itself.

[02:23:18] And again, aiming for a final draft and wrap up of the project in January. And so with that, I'm going to hand it over to Garrett to present on the plan itself. Thank you, Anna. As Anna mentioned, I'm going to share some highlights from the draft Urban Forest Master Plan.

[02:23:40] The main chapters of the Master Plan are organized around the four phases of the adaptive management process. Each chapter is color-coded to one of these four questions shown on the graphic. The first question, what do we have, focuses on gathering current information about Fairfax's urban forest, creating a baseline for that planning process that we underwent.

[02:24:03] The second question, what do we want, looks at the visioning and guiding principles for the plan, informed by input from stakeholders, the steering committee, and the public. Third question, how do we get there? This is also known as the implementation plan, includes the objectives, strategies, and action items needed to put the plan into action.

[02:24:24] finally how are we doing includes metrics and assessment timelines to evaluate progress and measure the plan's success over the next few slides I'm going to discuss some of the key pieces of each of these chapters in more detail and the what do we have chapter readers find information about the urban forest conditions and benefits non-native invasive species and the city operations review that were conducted in phase one in the presentation of this we wanted to highlight the benefits of the urban forest and the benchmarking compared to similar

[02:24:59] or peer cities. Benefits were calculated using land cover data from the city's most recent tree canopy assessment conducted in 2021 and the U.S. Forest Service iTree calculator. In terms of benefits, Fairfax's urban forest removes 31 tons of air pollutants, sequesters 66,000 tons of carbon and prevents 20

million gallons of stormwater from entering the municipal stormwater management system each year. The measurable annual value of the urban forest is \$1.2 million, and over its lifetime, Fairfax's urban forest is estimated to store approximately \$28 million worth of carbon.

[02:25:38] We also heard during public outreach that Fairfax's urban forest plays a significant role in defining Fairfax's urban character. Residents highly value the city's urban forest. Together, these data points underscore the importance of caring for Fairfax's urban forest now and into the future.

[02:25:56] Moving in terms of, we also wanted to highlight some of the benchmarking comparisons, as I mentioned, to similar municipalities. So the six benchmarks listed here were determined using a report titled 2016 Municipal Tree Care and Management in the United States.

[02:26:16] This is a national assessment of municipal tree management conducted periodically since 1974 in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, ISA, and universities. A 2025 update using 2020 census data is currently underway and estimated to be available later in 2026.

[02:26:34] So benchmarking values were identified for cities with populations between 25,000 and 49,999, which are considered peer cities for Fairfax. During public meeting number four, the team did receive questions about comparisons to cities with similar urban forest composition as opposed to just based on population.

[02:26:55] And while the study doesn't provide information on the respondent cities urban forest composition and condition, it does include key statistics on miles of roadway, land area, acreage of green space, number of public trees, street and park to provide a baseline context of infrastructure and land managed by peer city grouping.

[02:27:15] And so we looked at cities where Fairfax is comparable to these peer cities for these infrastructure and green space findings, not just population. The last line in that table on the screen regarding peer cities' budgets comes from that 2016 municipal tree care census.

[02:27:36] Notably, Fairfax employs three certified arborists and is proactive in developing its first urban forest master plan. However, Fairfax operates with 58% of the staff capacity compared to peer cities, and its budget is 76% lower than the national average for similarly sized cities.

[02:27:55] And although the plan used this report as its basis, we can also share anecdotally from surrounding jurisdictions that the town of Vienna has five full-time employees and the city of Falls Church has four dedicated exclusively to an urban forestry division.

[02:28:10] Given these findings, staff capacity and budget were major considerations when developing the implementation plan, which we'll share in a few slides. The master plan has much more benchmarking information on page 24, and the full operations review and references can be found within appendices B and E.

[02:28:31] All right, the What Do We Want chapter focuses on the vision for the urban forest informed by input from the community and other stakeholders. Over the course of the project, we engaged over 150 individual stakeholders through public meetings, an online survey, stakeholder interviews, steering committee meetings, and many more residents through tabling at various events that Anna mentioned.

[02:28:56] Many more members of the public also visited the project hub on the Engage Fairfax webpage. Community input shaped the plan through both phases, one and two, but in particular, we'd like to note

how recent community input shaped the plan's drafts.

[02:29:11] At public meeting number three, attendees reviewed the draft objectives and voted for high-priority strategies. Public comments indicated that overlapping objectives and strategies could be confusing, so the original six objectives were consolidated into five and their language was simplified to improve clarity.

[02:29:29] The plan also highlights which strategies were voted as highest priority by community members. In the plan, these strategies are noted as community priorities. We also consistently heard strong interest to simply learn more. To address this, the plan incorporates call-out boxes to highlight examples and provide additional information and context related to the implementation actions.

[02:29:52] We also added species identification captions on photos of plants to provide additional learning opportunities while skimming the plan. I don't know if you all have had a chance to look at the plan, but we did really spend a lot of time on how it could be usable, both for community members, usable and readable for community members as well as staff.

[02:30:14] So we spent a lot of time on readability of the plan. The vision and guiding principles represent the overall themes for the Urban Forest Master Plan. and were informed by many conversations with stakeholders and the public throughout the process. The vision reads, through thoughtful planning and shared care, Fairfax will grow a resilient urban forest now and into the future.

[02:30:36] The guiding principle highlights three broad ways that Fairfax's urban forest contributes to the city's livability, and they underscore the importance of proactively caring for the urban forest. The guiding principles include urban forests are healthy communities, urban forests are climate solutions, and urban forests are cost savings.

[02:30:56] These benefits are reinforced throughout the plan. So the third step in the adaptive management process is characterized by the question, how do we get there, otherwise known as the implementation plan. The implementation plan consists of objectives, strategies, and action items.

[02:31:12] The objectives represent key outcomes to achieve, while the strategies are approaches used to enact the objectives. We'll share more information about objectives in a few slides. Action items are specific steps taken to implement the strategies and objectives, and they are sorted into short, mid- and long-term timeframes for implementation.

[02:31:34] In the body of the report, each objective, strategies, and action items are presented in detail with key findings, metrics for success, partners, and necessary resources. Call-out boxes are used throughout the plan to provide educational content and establish a baseline context.

[02:31:51] since this is the city's for since this is the city's first urban master plan we wanted to prioritize those elements that can be further built on in subsequent updates to the plan recognizing that the implementation plan in the report body contains a tremendous amount of information a summary table for quick reference is provided in appendix f the timeline for forming the urban for within the plan there's a timeline for forming a dedicated urban forestry division This timeline was kept in mind when recommending implementation timeframes for each action.

[02:32:29] The implementation timeframes aim to balance existing capacity constraints and future opportunity to increase implementation activities once the division is formed. Lead and support roles for

implementation are identified in the interim until a new division is created.

[02:32:47] So we recognize the flux that may occur in an attempt to do that. We wouldn't want that to interrupt engaging in some of the actions and strategies and objectives that the plan wants to implement. And so we've used a variety of strategies to try and create that momentum in the interim.

[02:33:09] Creation of the urban forestry division is recommended, however, within the one to five year time frame. After the division is created, additional implementation actions become more feasible. In addition to summarizing the implementation plan the table in appendix f also identifies lead and support roles for implementation until the centralized urban forestry division is created the implementation plan is organized into five five objectives as you can see on the screen each with four to five strategies these strategies have between three and 13 action items the five

[02:33:44] objectives include protect, regulate, grow, manage, and engage. Protect focuses on conserving the urban forest through planning and management practices. Considerations for protect include pest, disease, and emergency response plans as well as a dedicated management plan for forested natural areas. Regulate examines how city policy, how policy content, and enforcement can be enhanced to support the urban forest for example this includes embedding trees as essential green infrastructure within city policy as well as improving tree-related decision-making during

[02:34:21] capital improvement projects grow aims to expand the urban forest through planting as well as improved tree care this is not only limited to short-term tree care such as young tree establishment practices but also involves longer-term considerations such as diversifying the urban forest species composition the key component of manage is to establish an urban forest division including seeking needed funding to support this new division it also recommends clarification of roles of various city departments involved in urban forest care and regulation finally engage

[02:34:56] fairfax's community already cares deeply about the urban forest as i'm sure you are all very well aware engage seeks to strengthen the community's involvement in the urban forest through stewardship private tree care involvement of boards and commissions and improved transparency together these five objectives capture the needs and desires for fairfax's urban forest based upon input from staff stakeholders and the community while capacity and budget can be limiting factors the master plan creates an opportunity to maximize efficiencies by looking at the urban forest operations and needs as a whole even before any additional staff are brought on board the table

[02:35:36] on the screen indicates the existing positions that will have a role in the urban forest management plan implementation and with updating their roles and responsibilities can play a larger role in implementation by identifying key implementation partners in these roles the master plan can be implemented step by step through incremental changes this means that work can be done more efficiently and plan components can begin being implemented in the near term without immediate changes to staffing or budget this plan addresses a broad range of urban forestry needs identified by staff stakeholders and community while not all actions may launch on schedule due to staffing

[02:36:12] or budget constraints the adaptive management approach allows for flexibility with updates every five years to realign priorities and respond to changing needs we'll discuss the five-year updates in more detail in a few slides so challenges for implementing implementation largely arise from staffing budget timeline and communication considerations the master plan does recommend hiring several new positions as you can see here on the screen however it's important to note that these positions do not need

to be hired all at once in order for implementation of the plan they can be brought on as funding becomes available which will improve efficiency and

[02:36:51] support the urban forest master plans implementation the fourth and final step in the adaptive management process is to ask, how are we doing? This step focuses on assessing progress and measuring success using key performance indicators, or KPIs, which are included on the next slide.

[02:37:11] The 12 KPIs are tied to the plan's three goals. Goal one is to champion and sustain a resilient and equitable urban forest. Goal two, to increase the Fairfax's capacity to care for trees. And three, to strengthen community support and involvement. The full list of KPIs are shown here on the screen. In the plan, there's a larger table that links the KPIs to the plan goals along with information about existing baseline, target metrics, and current status of each KPI. Example KPIs for goal one include increasing citywide tree canopy cover and increasing tree canopy coverage

[02:37:47] in low canopy neighborhoods specifically. Example KPIs for goal number two include percent of newly planted trees receiving establishment care, number of full-time forestry staff, and amount of annual funding secured for urban forestry operations and for goal number three include number of volunteer hours served annually and number of community outreach events held importantly metrics are also provided at the strategy level to ensure that success is being evaluated at the plan scale and for each strategy being implemented not just at the goal level for example a strategy metric

[02:38:23] includes acres of natural forested areas actively actively managed annually or the number of trees planted through capital projects annually. From these examples, you can see how the overall KPIs address broader plan goals while strategy metrics creates a measurable way to monitor success of specific plan recommendations.

[02:38:46] Public comments frequently indicated a desire for more transparent communication related to urban forests. With this in mind, public communication is a major component of the plan's implementation and evaluation process. This chapter recommends routine assessments to evaluate plan progress on one-year and five-year schedules.

[02:39:05] After each annual assessment, the city should prepare a State of the Urban Forest Annual Report to provide residents with an update about accomplishments and next steps. Every five years, the city should perform a formal review of the Urban Forest Master Plan's goals, objectives, and strategies, and assess progress.

[02:39:23] Following the five-year review, the city should produce a five-year progress report and plan update addendum, documenting the findings and importantly realigning the plan to address changing conditions of the city. These reports will enable the community to see the progress being made and demonstrate the city's commitment to improving urban forest related communications and the annual and five year reports progress towards the KPIs shared on the previous slide will be tracked and reported strategy strategy metrics which are provided for each individual strategy will be used as working guidance, primarily for internal use on work plans and day-to-day tasks.

[02:40:01] The strategy metrics are not intended to be formally reported, but the KPIs will be included in tracking and reporting processes. And I'm going to turn it over to, I know that was a lot of information, happy to discuss in a moment. I'll turn it back over to Anna to discuss next steps. So again, tonight we're looking to get your all's feedback.

[02:40:22] We do have a similar update going to planning commission next week, And then we plan to incorporate both your and Planning Commission, as well as any other final edits to the plan, into a final draft. And then we are scheduled for, at least tentatively, a presentation to you all in late January, January 27th, for public hearing and consideration of adoption.

[02:40:46] And so with that, I will open it up for questions and discussion. All right. Thank you very much for that. do we have questions on the council member peterson questions comments thank you guys lots of good work and certainly a wonderful platform for things that we can and should do and i think my biggest question which is a selfish one on the part of the body here is what is the best way for this to be translated

[02:41:26] into actions that we take here to be supportive of what you have developed. It means functionally this needs to get on a calendar. It needs to turn into a budget decision, a policy decision, a zoning decision, et cetera.

[02:41:43] But it needs to become operationalized and it's a lot of things. I mean, I'm really appreciative. I got to page 90 of the plan while you were speaking. I didn't get through the whole thing. But in all seriousness, I mean, it has many very specific recommendations that come out of the procedure here, which was quite robust.

[02:42:11] And it's great that there are so many, But it does, to me, mean we have to find a way for those to be translated into action here and for that to be boiled down in some way for us to do that.

[02:42:27] And so this doesn't just get lost. And again, there's only so many weeks, months, days in the calendar and et cetera. I don't know how we go through that translational process, but I think it's critical that we map that out. I think it starts out with the public hearing and council adoption.

[02:42:48] the 27th excuse me of January from that point then Miss Stafford will work through the master plan when it comes to the request for staff that will be bundled in with all of the requests that we have for staff and that will be part of the budget presentation that goes to you what has been included in the managers proposed budget possibly what hasn't been included in the managers

[02:43:18] proposed budget i can tell you right now we have 30 plus requests for staff and that is not unusual for the city to have those requests we have in the past maybe been able to fund one or two conversations about this forestry plan the implementation of it will take longer without the additional staff but it doesn't mean that the plan doesn't happen um

[02:43:55] This is obviously a several-year plan anyway, even if she had a full division working on it. And so I think it's really helpful to hear that. And if I'm understanding, a certain amount of this will be addressed in our next budget consideration.

[02:44:18] I'm sure that this will be picked up again in subsequent years, subsequent budgets, because this is a multi-year ongoing thing. But when we get past budget, we still will have policy issues, if you will, zoning, et cetera. And it seems to me it's really important for us to map these recommendations into some sort of an action-based calendar of consideration for us for those things.

[02:44:44] And I don't know exactly how that happens. We will need assistance because it's a large stack. It will need to be prioritized. It will need to be timed out and what have you. I would like to be sure this is an action-based plan and not a shelf document.

[02:45:01] It's a great knowledge-based document, but I think it needs to be more than a knowledge-building exercise. I think this needs to be an action planning platform. Sorry, I didn't mean to cut you off. Go ahead. I think Ms. Safford has an implementation plan or there will have an implementation plan once it's.

[02:45:19] Yeah, so, I mean, Appendix F is the starting point of an implementation table that identifies the, again, the lead and supporting roles of existing staff. The idea was the appendix would act with the intent of just working with existing capacity as well as existing organization structure.

[02:45:40] I will say one of the actions identified in the plan, I believe in the engage section, recommends engaging with boards and commissions, potentially creating a subcommittee to help with this initial implementation so that we're engaging PRAB, ESC, planning commission, all the boards and commissions that have a role in urban forest management, in addition, of course, to the staff and the staff liaisons that work with those boards and commissions, recognizing I am only one person, but at the same time my role is partly to develop and implement the Urban Forest Master Plan.

[02:46:19] And so there is capacity built in there that I would be working towards with other staff on this. So I do see, I'm so sorry I didn't make it to Penix F, but it's very helpful to see that you have this mapped out.

[02:46:38] Again, I would just be really supportive of the continuation of a procedure to ensure that we are actively trying to translate this into consideration. And I'll stop now. I have some more detailed questions perhaps in a moment, but I'll let others speak.

[02:46:55] Questions or comments? Council Member McQuillan? Shockingly, I don't have any questions, just comments. The first one is about the outreach. Holy smokes, I am so thrilled with the outreach you guys have done. Honestly, just the creativity with the photo contest and just being out in different ways of being out there and in front of people.

[02:47:16] Really, really good job. Really appreciate that. I also appreciate you explaining the metrics and the timeline of how you're going to and when you're going to do those measurements. I really appreciate the information behind that. And I think that's really important to convey when we discuss this to the public is exactly just how you've been doing.

[02:47:36] the story, the background, and then also how you're measuring and when you're doing that. I think that's really key. So thank you so much for all of your work. Council Member Peterson? In terms of next steps, if you could clarify one piece of that, I think you indicated that this would be going to boards and commissions, including, for instance, Planning Commission.

[02:48:05] I'm curious to know when, who that will go to, and what the result of that is. Is that feedback then that becomes substantively incorporated in this? I'm also curious in knowing how much of that has already happened. So, for instance, has this plan already cycled through review, for instance, with the Environmental Sustainability Committee?

[02:48:30] Yes. So we went to the Environmental Sustainability Committee in September as we were preparing to release it for the October public review period. We also went to PRAB with the draft. And then next week we will be going to planning commission for their feedback.

[02:48:48] And so kind of through the fall, we have been going to each board and commission. And I believe one of the slides I've laid out the full timeline of when we've most recently gone to all of those boards and commissions as well. We presented to the planning commission, when was that, October?

[02:49:09] We went to them in July before August recess to provide an overview of the implementation plan. And I think it will be important with all of those review loops to understand whether any barriers to implementation emerge from that, and particularly things that the council perhaps could be helpful with to ensure that if there are barriers, we can try to address them.

[02:49:36] So I guess I will look forward to that and being able to understand whether or not the feedback results in anything like that that we need to be aware of. I also want to just echo the comment on the public engagement.

[02:49:55] So I think it's very critical for the city to have gone through an exercise that is expert and comprehensive in terms of public engagement and involvement on a big issue area.

[02:50:15] And, you know, in this case, you had roughly three tiers of that. In parallel, there's the public outreach, which is a combination of information and education. stakeholder participation, which literally resulted in shared decision-making, joint fact-finding, joint policy recommendations, and then conferrals with boards and commissions all in parallel.

[02:50:38] And so it's a strong multi-component approach. And I think that's what the doctor ordered here for this issue, but not just this issue. This is an example of what the city can and I think should do in other issue areas when it's dealing with something, you know, of this scope.

[02:50:57] And so I really want to applaud what you did here to demonstrate how this can be done. And it looked like it was very productive to have that kind of engagement. Councilmember Hall. Thank you for the presentation. I didn't get as far as page 90.

[02:51:15] So if some of these are, my questions are answered elsewhere, you can just let me know where to go. But I wanted to ask some questions about slide 8. You referenced that there, you looked at peer cities, and I understand one of the considerations was 25,000 to 50,000 people.

[02:51:30] So obviously we're on the very, very bottom end of that. You mentioned similar roadways and things like that. I'm curious about if you looked at like similar square miles versus, you know, like you mentioned that Vienna has five full-time employees, Falls Church has four, whereas we have 2.9.

[02:51:52] What other considerations or similarities or differences, I guess, are being considered with these other peer cities? So when I looked at the report, and so in that population group of 25,000 to 49,000 and change, square mileage, we were smaller in terms of square mileage.

[02:52:16] In terms of acres of green space, we exceeded the average of acres of green space for that population size. And in terms of number of estimated trees managed or city-owned public trees managed, we also exceeded those numbers.

[02:52:33] and roadways were similar. And so based off those metrics, we actually fell more squarely into that 25,000 to 49,000 peer group compared to the one below it. We exceeded all of those. And so I think it was a good comparison. Of course, Vienna, four square miles, and Falls Church is two in change.

[02:52:58] And I would say we probably have a bit more natural areas than both of those as well. Okay, and thank you for that. Sorry, I'm going to just jump right in. With that comparison too, do you know like

how their number of park and rec employees or other types of public works number of employees compares to ours, not total employees, but employees that would be doing some similar jobs that let's say maybe some of their, I'm throwing things out there, some of their five full-time employees in Vienna would be doing or are they all just dedicated arborists and urban forestry people or are they

[02:53:37] you know kind of pulling double duty in some ways so for the most part they do have them separated i was speaking with recently the urban forest manager in vienna and they have gone through a similar process in terms of trying to build out more dedicated staff separate separate from their parks maintenance workers they are in the the parks department in Vienna and so there is overlap particularly I know their staff flex over during their events and things like that similar to our

[02:54:10] how our staff do but all of their staff are arborists they have two tree workers a I think it was like a supervisor slash plan reviewer and then their their manager and so I think it has similar models and they're kind of like the step at which we're hoping to go to but there will always be crossover i think especially again events emergency work those sort of responses for city services i just wanted to add that when looking not just at the local peer cities but

[02:54:48] more broadly when that study is looking at you know who's devoted to or whose job primarily focused on the urban forest some of those are in cities where those people sit in a in multiple um you know multiple different divisions and some are consolidated so they don't necessarily make that distinction they're just looking at how you know what number of ftes are focused on the urban forest regardless of how they might be organized within a city okay and does it take into consideration any contractors consultants things like that that are performing similar duties as

[02:55:22] well not in the FTE count like that's not included within the FTE count I would have to go back through some of the other portion of the study to see if they dive into contractor work I do believe that that is covered in the in the budget portion but not obviously in the in the FTE portion but we can dig further into that and get specific just curious I don't know if it matters here or there I just was curious but you bring up the budget part so I was on my questions is the number for pure cities it's really from 2014 it's 10 years old okay 2016 yes and that's I think that's due

[02:55:59] to the lag in the the census data that they use and then when they simply put out their next report so I think as as mentioned another report will come out next year that's based on 2020 census data okay so a little old yeah okay um I think so I do have one other question and I don't mean this to be antagonistic in any way to anyone who's listening or is in the room right now I'm just curious. You mentioned on slide seven what we currently have, the air pollutants removed,

[02:56:38] the carbon sequestered, etc. Have these numbers been modified if the George Titor Trail is constructed and those acres of green space go away? And in combination with that, what then would be the additional projected tree canopy that would grow over the time in which the trail would be constructed to kind of give it a benefit of both sides? So these numbers, it's taking straight from our acres of tree canopy area from our land cover data that we have from our most

[02:57:15] recent tree canopy assessment. And so I would say I would, when looking at ecosystem service benefits, treating it similarly to tree canopy studies of using caution with making adjustments or even comparisons over time, because both, of course, tree canopy is going to change, which would influence the numbers because of projects like you're talking about or otherwise.

[02:57:45] But the other component that could change these values is these are based off of market value for, let's say, a gallon of stormwater management. It uses the national market rate for how much it costs to manage stormwater, similar to carbon.

[02:58:05] iTree updates those on some sort of basis, on a regular basis of some kind. And so, of course, those numbers would also change. And so even from our tree canopy assessment report, these numbers, even though it used the same land cover data, these numbers have increased since we did that assessment simply because the market rate has increased for those services that trees are providing and so it's hard to to necessarily compare and like change um based off of specific other data input okay okay i think i'm good for

[02:58:42] now thank you very much council member amos yes uh just wanted to say this is incredible work Greatly appreciate everything you've done, and thank you. Super excited to see where this plan goes and support these initiatives along the way. I wanted to echo Council Member Peterson's comments about being more action-oriented. I understand that there was discussion about the implementation plan, so it's possible that my question I was about to bring up is kind of a mute point. But my main question and my only question is really about how we assess these

[02:59:19] timelines for certain goals. One thing that really stood out to me, and I think it was on page 48, was specifically with the conservation fund. We had that set out for 10 to 20 years out, and that seems rather long. So I would like some clarification on why that is. Is that related to staffing challenges? Is it lack of options for dedicated funding? Is it current budget climate? And as we look at setting up an implementation plan, how we plan on kind of reevaluating our priorities and goals and what can be put on the back burner and what

[02:59:57] should probably be moved faster so it can set up for future success. So when it came to the timelines, we certainly went in circles with this as to do we do it based off existing capacity, do it based off of growing capacity.

[03:00:15] I would say ultimately, though, we've largely looked at what initial steps need to be taken prior to being able to get to other outcomes that we want. So for the conservation fund specifically, we are looking at what actions have to happen prior to that that need to be completed, and that's what started to bump things to a longer timeline, even though it on paper might seem like a low-hanging fruit or an easy thing to do.

[03:00:43] Implementation-wise, it's kind of like you need the baseline assessment. How are you going to actually implement it once completed and prioritized? And so there were all those, that was kind of like the main driver, and we tried to set aside the capacity question to a certain extent.

[03:01:00] Thank you. Council Member Peterson. Yeah, I want to come back, if I might, to a question that I think is just at large around analysis capacity and measurement.

[03:01:19] And it's important for this issue area, but this is an important thing across the board for the city. You can't measure it. You can't manage it. you know, et cetera. A couple of questions, and if they're in the work plan, if you could just tell me where, so I'll know over my cup of coffee exactly where to be looking for them, but one of them is the forecasting question. Where did this land in terms of putting in place the capacity

[03:01:51] to forecast trends going forward and do sensitivity analysis around it, scenarios, et cetera, right? So we kind of did it in a few ways, I would say. One, we kind of incorporated it topic specifically.

[03:02:09] And so forecasting in terms of pests, forecasting in terms of storm, emergency management, without it necessarily being a comprehensive look. But then we also included it in regards to climate action and making sure it's getting integrated in a more city high level city goal setting component.

[03:02:32] as well as then forecasting in terms of analyses specific for the city of Fairfax. I think there's a lot of efforts to look at regionally, specifically with COG, and making sure that I think this plan sets us up into a position where we can adapt quickly once regionally we start doing those sorts of efforts.

[03:02:57] but I don't think it's necessarily an analysis that makes sense to do city-specific in some sort of comprehensive way. And I know, again, even with COG, they're looking at tree canopy assessments of doing that on a more regional level versus at the locality level because the urban forest being such a regional resource, as well as even just the data and the work that goes into it is pretty applicable to all the localities.

[03:03:27] And so we incorporated strategies and actions related to regional partnerships and things like that. I want to add that the adaptive management kind of component and the regular review processes create the opportunity not just to figure out, you know, what are the best sources of the data or what is the new data,

[03:03:52] But potentially, you know, what are better ways to measure a certain thing that either become apparent in five years or I think we've talked about this with the planning commission, you know, the timeline on which data is available.

[03:04:11] So, like, for example, LIDAR data, the state does, you know, more regular captures of that data that currently the city of Fairfax doesn't buy into. so it doesn't get that data as soon as they could. So better, faster data.

[03:04:27] There's opportunities to improve the measurements based on those types of decisions or the types of data that becomes available. So I think it's helpful to hear that, but I'm maybe asking a slightly different question, which is our ability to predict changing conditions and the impact they have on important metrics like how much forest land do we have, how much forest canopy, and those are different things, for instance.

[03:05:02] How much open space? And I'm presuming that we made a little bit of progress in clearing up the definition of that. But, you know, when you look forward, where are we headed business as usual? Are we looking at open space or whatever forest land just static and it's going to stay the same?

[03:05:22] Are we looking at it declining business as usual because of land use decisions, because of infrastructure activities, et cetera? Those are things that we could do on our own, I think, without the need for additional data collection systems.

[03:05:39] This is probably something we could do crosswalking to other activities in the city. We just sat through a long discussion about housing, and what's embedded in that are forecasts, demand forecasts and supply forecasts. So we forecast in a lot of different ways.

[03:05:56] It seems like this is one that ought to be a part of that as well, because if we don't do that, we don't really know how well we're doing in terms of protection and management and growth and all that.

We don't know whether these are things that would happen anyway. So is there more that possibly we could do in this area before this is put to bed?

[03:06:21] And if so, how would we go about that? So some of the, I would say, initial actions in the plan are even, like, we needed to do a few steps before we can even forecast. So, like, for example, we, I think 1.1 is to do a natural areas assessment.

[03:06:40] We need that information before we can, we have to understand what the composition of our natural areas are before we can start forecasting an overall picture for our urban forest. And similarly, we have to be looking at what pests and disease threats are emerging in our area.

[03:06:59] And so those sort of initial steps need to happen first before we can start forecasting. And so it doesn't preclude it. And I think I need to go back to look. I think we do reference the concept of forecasting, urban forest change or management over time.

[03:07:16] I think the plan, though, focused on there's still data and assessments that need to happen before we can get there. Can I jump in real quick? Yeah. So as Anna mentioned, some of that baseline data that was unfortunately outside the scope of the master planning effort is certainly necessary, not just for forecasting but even just on a basic like annual or five year how do we measure you know what we have been trying to do but some of the things you mentioned particularly like scenarios i think that could easily be done with like some of the some of the action items particularly

[03:07:55] related to planning zoning and land use and say if we do this if we don't do this you know what would the trajectory be you know if development occurred at x pace those kinds of things and that's exactly the kind of capability that it seems is essential to have and that it would pick up underlying drivers of change which would include things like pests and climate threats but also things like infrastructure development land use development a series of things that are drivers of change and then you can forecast forward in scenarios with and without and what if but it

[03:08:32] also enables you to going back to the trails question here to do project-based analysis which would be the the crafting of a scenario with a project and then without a project and looking at the delta the measurables between the two which i think is a pretty mainstream thing to do it seems to me we ought to be doing that or at least preparing to do that is it my understanding from what you just said that's sort of embedded in the capabilities that we're suggesting here and it could happen with their implementation.

[03:09:06] Yeah, I would say that is embedded in the metrics for certain action items that that would be captured in LE. The only thing I was also going to add was as a part of this project, we did invest in some components of initial activation or implementation, including what we're calling BMPs or best management practices, one of which is a decision-making tool of trying to create a systemized form that you work through to understand what urban forest impact would happen from xyz um it you

[03:09:43] could insert whether it be a specific project or land use decision or um and and so it's it's just trying to create a framework that you can look at impact to the urban forest and so that is something that um we have been drafting as a part of the the project which is impact analysis writ large So you're drafting up something that would describe how we would expand our capacity for doing impact analysis on the forest, if I'm hearing that correctly.

[03:10:23] Yes. And the goal of that is so that it could be used to translate across a variety of different impact drivers, you know, so that something from another plan, a housing plan versus stormwater or

stream restoration, any of these types of things could be inserted into this and then could potentially be compared.

[03:10:51] I just think this is a really important area perhaps to follow up on and learn more about because there's the impact of an individual action, whether it's a project or something else, that could impact the number of acres and their health, et cetera, for forest, whatever the metrics are. There's also cumulative impact analysis. And we have a lot of little things happening at the same time over a long period of time. And you add them up and they're big.

[03:11:21] And this is really the heart and soul of environmental impact analysis is doing the cumulative impacts and doing project-based stuff and being able to forecast changing conditions. So I'm really interested to hear how we are planning to expand those capacities so that council and others in the city can do evaluations of impacts that occur when we're making decisions in various areas, whether it's an infrastructure activity, whether it's a land use action or whatever.

[03:11:56] So I would be curious to just maybe have a little bit more clarity around that and where that would leave us in terms of what we could be doing here to be helpful. So, I mean, again, I do go back to, I think there's a component of that at the regional level that makes more sense. And then I think there's a framework at which then we can digest that information in a way that can be consistent across different, again, impacts and understandings of how we're making decisions.

[03:12:31] And I think, again, a lot of these actions kind of come together to start putting that information together of how we assess impact. Yeah, I think looking at the variety of metrics that are used to measure the various actions gets to what you're trying to get us to.

[03:12:59] And so I think those combined are, you know, used to measure that impact and success along with the draft form that Anna's talking about. But I think your point on forecasting is well taken.

[03:13:15] I think we primarily focused on using those measurements to sort of review the actions of the previous year as opposed to, you know, because the idea is that each of these actions would have a positive benefit, and we want to measure, you know, if we've made progress on that benefit or not in that given time frame.

[03:13:39] But I think there's an opportunity to highlight the value of forecasting in seeking to prioritize a particular action or having potentially a more specific goal to measure against as opposed to simply progress and success.

[03:14:00] And so I think that's something that we can look at expanding more explicitly in the plan. I'll leave it for later, except to say in the event that the city progresses to the stage where it is developing a climate action plan, whether it's for mitigation or adaptation, by definition, that will require forecasting.

[03:14:31] And forest carbon on the mitigation side is bread and butter, whether it's decadal forecasting, whatever. That's a very mainstream practice that presumably would be included in an action planning effort.

[03:14:50] And on the adaptation of resilience side, when you're evaluating risk and vulnerability, it will be the same thing because you'll be looking at potential threats to a system, but those are forecasted threats. And so for forestry, again, unless I'm missing something, If you do an action plan, a climate action

plan, you will need to do forecasting of this type, which will have a great benefit then of providing forecasting capability in other areas.

[03:15:17] That won't be limited to forestry. It will be energy. It will be transportation. It will be commercial development. It will be across the board. This is one of the great values of climate action planning is it really helps you evaluate these forecast scenarios and their impacts and have the capability of responding to them.

[03:15:35] So I would look forward to further discussion about the climate action plan and how that possibly could be a helpful avenue for picking up some areas here for further development and implementation. Other comments or questions?

[03:15:53] Councilmember Bates. Thank you for the presentation. I certainly look forward to supporting the adoption of the urban forest plan, master plan. And I certainly also agree that making sure that these plans, that efforts are made to implement these plans is important.

[03:16:16] And that goes for this as well as the Affordable Housing Strategic Plan, the Comprehensive Plan, City Bike Plan, what have you. Each of those also have certain aspects that are relevant to sustainability and even to the urban forest.

[03:16:35] And I think it's important to make sure that we're coordinating, you know, efforts, you know, in terms of those multiple plans that, you know, and how they kind of overlap.

[03:16:52] And I also think it's important to point out that certainly forecasts and projections would also be, you know, worth exploring if possible. But on the other hand, there's also the aspect that you can only go so far in kind of predicting what actions we will take here on the dais.

[03:17:16] Even, you know, as mentioned, you know, development and the potential for that to decrease the urban forest. But on the other hand, you know, certainly some projects would result in a net decrease in the 10-year tree canopy, but some projects result in an increase, you know, at least as planned.

[03:17:35] And, you know, we've seen some of those have been approved and, you know, some such as Sunrise and Courthouse Plaza that were not approved that would have led to an increase as planned in the 10-year tree canopy. So, you know, it's certainly important to project to the best of our ability where we are and how close we are to being on track, what else we need to do.

[03:18:00] And, you know, there are also other aspects of that that are sort of more nuanced. For example, if you have a project that, you know, may lead to a net decrease on that lot in tree canopy, but then, you know, let's say it's a multifamily building that's still consuming less land that might otherwise be, you know, accommodate tree canopy compared to, say, a single family neighborhood further out of the area.

[03:18:34] And additionally, you have the other aspects of sustainability more broadly that this plan is, I think, sort of meant to help address, such as carbon emissions more broadly and perhaps even health.

[03:18:53] I mean, health is a big part of why we need to take care of the environment, but there are other things that go into that as well. So I certainly look forward to seeing what else comes of this and look forward to the public hearing from the community on this.

[03:19:11] Thanks. I just want to say thank you for the presentation and for all the work. This is an extensive body of work, and I think you've been exhaustively comprehensive in putting it together and also the outreach to the community, which I think is really important.

[03:19:30] And talking about forecasting, you can only go so far because we can't control for blight, insect infestations, or wildfires and you know all things being equal it's a great plan and I think we should have great plans but when you talk about the environment and when you talk about trees there are things we can't control for for like the spotted lanternfly and so we have to understand that there's going to be a lot of things and there will be a constant review process as things happen in our region regionally it will not just happen to our city it will happen to our region when things impact

[03:20:07] the tree canopy that that are beyond our control but having a good basic plan having the resources having the staff having a process and constantly reviewing and updating what we can do about the things we can control for i think this is an enormous investment the city needs to make and so i am fully supportive of your urban forest master plan and look forward to hearing what comments the planning commission has to make and then to moving forward with adoption with this so I thank you all for the presentation. I will, I think we are done here,

[03:20:43] so I am going to adjourn this work session at 1024 p.m. on Tuesday.



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