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Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Economic Initiatives Committee, Tuesday, July 23, 2024

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[00:00:00] would move this thing along and make sure that we had 30 minutes for the EOR meeting. So I'm not trying to embarrass you, Rebecca, but it's a good reason to blame somebody else to make sure that we stay on time, right? So all good. Good morning. This Economic Initiatives Committee meeting will come to order, and we're going to get started.

[00:00:18] Good morning, everybody. We have lots of going on in the meeting this morning. I do want to wrap up from last Friday. I was not able to be there because James and I had a VRE meeting, but we had the MITRE Corporation hosted the second Accelerate pitch, which I think went very well.

[00:00:36] I heard very positive things about it. We had five companies, DMV founders, an AI-powered data-driven cybersecurity risk assessment tool, an automated government contracting back-office system platform, a self-service cloud management platform, the first non-invasive blood test that simplified the diagnosis for fatty liver disease and fibrosis, and a mobile robotics for remote work.

[00:01:02] So congratulations, EEIC, and all the folks in the area who helped put that together. But we are very appreciative of Supervisor of Loss brought this forward a year or so ago, and we're making it work, and I think we're making a difference. And also, I want to congratulate Supervisor of Loss for being recognized with the first Spirit of Accelerate Award for his 20-plus years of dedication to advancing entrepreneurship, innovation, and access to capital.

[00:01:29] Sir, thank you very much. And again, thank you, Rebecca and Wendy, for coordinating all this and moving us along. So with that, any changes to the March 12, 2024 meeting notes? Anybody have anything that they need to identify that needs to be changed, not hearing or seeing any of the comments?

[00:01:47] If there's no further comments or suggestions at the minute, stand as a record of the meeting. And with that, I'm going to move to the next item, which is the local economy and office market. The origin of this was really a presentation that I think many of you have gotten.

[00:02:03] I had gotten recently from an individual who will be nameless about how the office market is, I'm exaggerating, yes I am, dying in Tyson's and Fairfax County and how horrible a shape we're in. And the world is not coming to an end, but we need to work on to make sure that it doesn't come to an end.

[00:02:24] But it is an opportunity, as always, when you hear exaggerations, to make sure that you get the facts because we all need to be able to talk about what's really going on. And frankly, we know we can always do better, right? So this is an opportunity to do that. So bringing the facts together to discuss the office market accurately and show how the tools we have assess our challenges post-COVID and really our future opportunities is a key part of the presentation this morning.

[00:02:48] We've all recently seen presentations from many people about that. I know this morning we've got our opportunity to get the facts from our economic development team experts. Again, Rebecca Madre, we have Victor Hoskins, who's vacationing in sunny California.

[00:03:05] Hopefully it's sunny, and he will be joining us remotely, limitedly, but we have this great team here. So think about your questions. I've asked them to get their presentations done by 10 o'clock, so they've got about 25 minutes to do that. And then we will move to Q&A, and we will reserve at least the last 30 minutes from 1030 to 11 for the EOR, Opportunity Reserve Nomination Review.

[00:03:29] So with that, Rebecca, welcome Rebecca and Victor, I think by phone, and Steve, et cetera. Yeah. I will. Just Rebecca Mowdry, Fairfax County Department of Economic Initiatives. So there's two, three primary presenters today.

[00:03:47] So, Stephen Tarditi from the EDA team will provide the overview, and we will also discuss briefly some of our current actions to support economic growth in the county, and Clara Johnson from the planning department will also chime in on that point and some next steps.

[00:04:05] So, Stephen, please. Thank you very much, Rebecca. Stephen Tarditi, I am the Director of Market Intelligence here at the EDA. I wanted to thank you all for giving me the opportunity to provide an update on the state of the office market.

[00:04:23] As many of you recall, last year at July's EAC meeting, I provided an update of the office market. So some of you, this will be an update to those figures and sort of dissecting vacancy and trends. And for a couple of you, this will be our first deep dive.

[00:04:40] So before we get into that and where we are in our office market and where we might be heading. I think it's always important to do some table setting. We have our economic indicators dashboard. And you can see between workforce, business industry, these items really tend to translate to future office leasing decisions. And we are seeing steady growth in our employment numbers. The job opportunities are robust here in the county. You see some of the top occupations where those job postings reside. And we have a similar number of job postings as many of our

[00:05:14] peer counties that are of similar size population. The businesses, the employer establishments, that's businesses with payroll employees, continues to grow. And we're seeing a strong capital attraction. Supervisor Stark was just talking about the Accelerate Breakfast Series and the success of that. We're seeing strong dollars in a time when across the country, VC dollars are going down. So actually, 2023 was another record year. And many of the sectors that these dollars reside in, go in there within our defense tech, AI across some sectors like

[00:05:51] healthcare. In fact, we saw one company in the healthcare AI in Tyson's receive $100 million in Series A funding. So we're expecting and continue seeing that strong growth and we're all here to help foster that growth and make sure that they're here and happy and continue to grow in Fairfax County. On the real estate side, yes, the office vacancy rate continues to rise and and we expect it to continue to rise in the near term.

[00:06:21] But what I'd like to point out is the rate at which it is rising is actually slowing, which may be indicating that we're getting close to a peak on that and might be approaching the recovery status. So in 2021, we saw the vacancy rate rise 1.4%.

[00:06:40] 2022, we saw that go down to 0.7% rise. And this latest year, we saw that as a 0.5% increase in vacancy. And there's really a story to dissect that vacancy and where it is attributed to that I'll get into in a second.

[00:06:56] But again, really want to reiterate our economic stability here. Yes, we do not boom in the same way that some of the headline-grabbing markets and sunbelt markets do, but we also don't go bust when economic times and hardships come in.

[00:07:13] as you can see evidenced by the last 23 years of unemployment rates with some of our peer competitors. So that economic stability and having this environment that's created obviously translate and it's really credit to the work that you all do and the work of the Commonwealth to make sure that businesses know this is a place where my risk is greatly reduced. And recently, I think about, you know, less than two weeks ago, the CNBC report of the annual state rankings for best states for business came out, and Virginia was number one, which we're very proud of.

[00:07:48] And we all know that Fairfax County is the economic driver of the Commonwealth. In fact, we account for 20% of the Commonwealth's GDP. So really a testament, again, to your work here. D.C., when we're also looking at the employer side, that stability is just as important for the workforce side. And recently in a survey of college grads, they were asked, where do you want to land? Where are you really focusing your efforts on for finding a job? And what's most important to you when finding a job? And DC came in as the number two spot behind New York City as where

[00:08:26] these college grads want to land. And that's because of the top factor for finding a job was job stability. So again, I said it before when I was talking about the pulse. You know when you're going to come into this environment, you'll be able to find a job and find many opportunities. On the office vacancy rate side, this is a comparative from Cushman and Wakefield's Q2 2024 office market report. And while all of these markets that we consider our competitors are rising, we're not seeing the same rate of elevation as we're seeing in West Coast markets.

[00:09:00] Seattle and San Francisco both saw year over year rises of 6% or plus. Austin, which is considered hot sunbelt market. Also saw a 5% increase year over year, where the Northern Virginia region,

it was more about 1.4%. And we, again, attribute that to our economic stability.

[00:09:22] We also want to continue to track where we're heading in return to office measures. These are two barometers of that. One we're very familiar with, the Castle Key systems, and there's Placer AI, which tracks your cell phone when you are visiting offices. And both are showing steady, slow, but showing growth year over year, which is really important. At the same time, we have a softening labor market across the U.S. And then the number of remote job postings has been cut

[00:09:54] in half year over year. So it's 6.5% of jobs across the U.S. were remote only. And this year, it's down to 3.25 percent. So those opportunities to bounce around and the call back to the office, both acting together will hopefully drive that office occupancy. So I mentioned this before when we're looking at how we got here. A lot of times people think that, you know, tenants in the office market are just walking away from space, cutting it in half in large droves or some mass

[00:10:30] exodus. And really, when we look at where our office vacancy has been added, it's really because of the decisions that were made pre-COVID, before any of us knew what COVID-19 was. Capital One was already constructing their headquarter campus. Fannie Mae already signed on to go on to the new Reston Town Center project, as well as Volkswagen Group, and then ICF going to Reston Station.

[00:10:54] These decisions were made before we saw anything of a shutdown. And even an office building that was being constructed speculatively or without an anchor tenant started construction before the shutdowns happened. So when we break that down, that comes out to 2.1% vacancy rate added to our year-end 2019 figure, which was 13.9%, which we considered very healthy.

[00:11:19] So two-thirds of the vacancy added were because of those decisions. and it's just the consolidation in the space that's not being backfilled by the new incoming tenants because of that environment. But again, when our tenants have that decision, and I'd be remiss if I didn't add that we kept all those tenants in Fairfax County, right? They didn't leave for a new jurisdiction or go across the river. And we're seeing a lot of tenants, when they are given the opportunity to walk away or severely reduce their footprint, they're either

[00:11:55] keeping or even expanding on their footprint. This article that was posted by the Washington Business Journal citing two recent CBRE office reports states that over 75 percent of office tenants, over 10,000 square feet, when given the opportunity on their renewal, they either kept the space or they expanded on the footprint. We're seeing a little bit of a different story in some of our other markets. This from the San Francisco Standard also referenced a CBRE report and says their top 20 tech employers had about 16 million square feet of office space at the end of

[00:12:34] 2019. Now that is down to right around 8 million. So they cut that in half and those are COVID induced decisions of employees not returning to the office. So because of our industry makeup and our resiliency, we're, you know, yes, it's the vacancy rate is rising. That's happening everywhere, but it's happening at different rates. So yeah, you know, 17.2% is not a healthy office vacancy rate. That is a reality. But one thing that we're looking into and that we've been keeping track of

[00:13:09] of years is office buildings that are slated for demolition. So this is where a developer came in and said, this office building has gone in through its life cycle and now we want to take it down. Nine times out of 10, they want to put residential or mixed use, including substantial multifamily, but sometimes it's higher density office. And, you know, this is really the market telling you, I think there was a question

posed last year at the AC meeting saying, you know, which buildings to save which buildings should we take a deeper look at this is the market telling you these are the buildings that are positioned for so you know we've seen this number grow though it's

[00:13:46] last year it was about 6.5 million square feet that was slavery demolition and that bumped up to 7.1 million square feet so figuring out or further or doing a further investigation of why those office buildings that are sitting there you know half vacant or more than half vacant are not coming down to make way for that newer product, again, it's worth further investigation.

[00:14:08] And also, 60 out of these 70 buildings were built before 1990, so you know the type of product that needs to come down or has ran its building life cycle. I'll briefly go through this because Clara's going to talk a little bit more about adaptive reuse, a smaller piece of the pie, but again, a growing trend that we've seen over the years.

[00:14:27] again, the office that's been identified for another use. And then we took a look at office buildings that aren't planned for demolition or adaptive reuse, don't have a plan for those, but are larger than 50,000 square feet, but less than 33% leased. And this really comes down to about 3% of our office inventory. And when you think about it, those office buildings that I mentioned that are being demolished or reused, a lot of times they still have some tenants in those buildings at varying, they're going to need space when those buildings come down. So we want to be able to place them in some of the high vacancy office buildings or some of our

[00:15:07] existing vacant product. All in all, this comes out to what we consider actionable office product and makes it about 10% of our market right now where we need to take a deeper dive and figure out what the real story is and even including interviews of current property owners. We're also looking at ahead, we don't really, at the EDA, we don't really like to speculate on when the office market recovery will begin. So we leave it to the experts at some of our largest office brokerage firms in the Northern Virginia region. I won't read through all of these,

[00:15:43] but a couple that stood out to me, right sizing. So we're seeing our office construction come down. Before COVID, we were consistently over 2 million square feet of office under construction. we're now under a million square feet. So as that comes down, it puts a little bit of pressure on what options that tenants have for newer trophy office building. And at the same time, the older office inventory is being demolished. We've had over 3 million square feet of office that's been demolished since 2020. This will sort of right size the market as it tries to find that equilibrium.

[00:16:17] And then the big topic that's on all the commercial real estate's roads is when the Federal Reserve is going to cut interest rates. And, you know, it's, well, we're not saying this is an absolute certainty. It seems like the consensus is we're looking at September for a Fed rate cut due to some of the cooling inflation. And this will bring much reprieve to the commercial real estate market going forward and it might bump up that office, those office leasing numbers. So what are we doing in the meantime to combat some of this rising office vacancy. We're looking at emerging industries, high-growth industries that will take that

[00:16:55] office space. I mentioned that company received a large amount of funding in AI. Across various industries, we're looking at where the AI is being integrated. We're the number two metro in the U.S. for job postings for artificial intelligence, number one on the eastern seaboard.

[00:17:13] So, really, we consider that a strong foothold for artificial intelligence. From space commercialization, we're seeing a lot of interest in space that includes some of that light industrial, but sometimes that light industrial can be used within existing office buildings.

[00:17:32] In fact, we're looking at a potential space conference in 2025. And then quantum computing. We have Quantum World Congress coming up in September. And we see that as, again, planting our flag as a place to be when companies want to establish their footprint here.

[00:17:49] Additionally, we're looking at some of that older office inventory that has ran its lifecycle and what other uses are zoning compliant on that. That could be anything as multifamily, buildings to support digital infrastructure like data centers, and then light industrial space or R&D space and innovation space where it's properly zoned.

[00:18:09] And I provided this slide last year and just want to show the update. When you have the right opportunity from the office repurposing side, we really see the impact on assessed values. If you want to look at those buildings where there's that continued depreciation of office, but it also has the other right characteristics ready to convert into an additional use.

[00:18:32] And you can see that continued year over year's rise in the assessed value and thus the tax revenue that's generated. Now I'm going to pass it over to Rebecca. Thank you, Stephen. Very briefly, Rebecca Mowdry, Fairfax County Department of Economic Initiatives. So I'm going to build a little bit on Stephen's points about current actions to support economic growth. And the board has recently supported several initiatives that are directly support business development in our most innovative sectors, as well as job development. This includes the Fairfax Founders Fund, which is a program that provides

[00:19:09] pre-seed capital to our most promising tech companies, our local startups, and also the Accelerate Breakfast series, which Supervisor Stork started the meeting by discussing the most recent breakfast series just last week, which brings together local entrepreneurs and startups together with our investment community to stimulate deal making, but also help foment or develop this very important ecosystem to create and develop and keep local capital here. These programs also

[00:19:44] have the added benefit of really promoting Fairfax County as a place for business and for entrepreneurs that would like to come here, start here, and grow here. In addition, as you know, we are engaging in our department, the Department of Economic Initiatives Blueprint for the Future.

[00:20:05] This will include a competitiveness analysis to really review our strongest emerging sectors and our positioning in those sectors, as well as recommendations on how our department can best help those sectors thrive in the county and continue that economic growth and diversification.

[00:20:26] And then finally, under the leadership of this committee's chair, as well as the chair of the board, we are establishing the Council for Economic Opportunity. And this economic council will bring together private sector leaders, economic development leaders, as well as the board to really consider and address the most pressing economic development challenges and opportunities in our county. So we continue to move forward and look forward and be progressive in our actions to continue our economic growth. And one of those pieces, very important, is on the land use side.

[00:21:05] And Clara will discuss current actions there. Thank you, Rebecca. So Fairfax County has been examining conditions related to office obsolescence for some time, at least since 2015, probably longer than that. So in 2018 and 2019, the board adopted the new comprehensive plan policy, the guidelines for

commercial building repurposing. Those guidelines have facilitated the conversion of vacant, partially vacant, and underutilized commercial office retail service buildings to alternative land uses that were not already envisioned in the comprehensive

[00:21:45] plan. Proposed commercial building repurposing projects that meet those guidelines can occur more quickly and at lower costs because a plan amendment isn't necessary before that zoning approval. I know you all received the DPD white paper on the status of office building repurposing that was published this just this year this was informed by research from both the department of economic initiatives and the economic development authority and it highlighted office vacancy rates within county sub markets the repurposing activity in the county and it identified success factors

[00:22:22] as well as challenges for those conversions and those categories were those factors included location and the land use that was planned in the area architectural features of those buildings and other financial conditions also now with the adoption of zmod the zoning ordinance provides additional flexibility for office and commercial uses several individual uses have been combined into one general use new uses were created and in some cases by right permissions have been expanded

[00:22:57] flexibility for special events and parking lots empty retail buildings those provide placemaking opportunities in those instances and finally parking reimagined has right-sized parking standards and streamlined the process for change in existing buildings so over the past 10 years the board has approved rezoning requests for 12 office built buildings to be repurposed that's That's resulted in 2,194 new residential units.

[00:23:32] There are two site-specific plan amendment nominations that were filed in 2022 with proposed options to allow for the conversion of three additional office buildings. These have the potential for 1,144 new residential units.

[00:23:48] So I'll highlight three approved repurposing projects. Two of these are in Skyline. includes the conversion of five Class A and B office buildings into 1,230 units in Bailey's Crossroads. Those were approved in 2020, Buildings 1 through 3, and in 2023, Buildings 4 and 5.

[00:24:13] Those took approximately seven to eight months from acceptance of an application by DPD to board approval. Both projects were also approved under the Economic Incentive Program. Buildings 1 through three have received their first real estate tax abatement in 2024, and the developer has cited the EIP program as making the difference in the feasibility of converting those office buildings into live-work units. Another example in Tyson's is the Madison Live-Work Lofts project. That

[00:24:47] includes the conversion of one Class A office building into 250 residential units. That project was approved in 2023 and it took approximately one year from acceptance to board approval that's somewhat consistent with other zoning applications um in that example there was extensive coordination with between county staff and vdot that was needed to ensure a high quality of res high quality residential and a pedestrian friendly design that could occur at a location right

[00:25:20] there adjacent to the Beltway. Next. Part of the comprehensive policy plan amendment that's currently underway, DPD is working with a consultant on additional land use trends research related to office to be used to inform updates to the policy plan, including the repurposing guidelines. Some things that that could include, it could include expanded criteria

[00:25:56] for repurposing projects to meet other goals like affordable housing, workforce housing. It could include the addition of new uses, perhaps hotels, projects that can be repurposed into housing, and also new criteria for retaining and planning for office. I heard earlier mention of this persistent question, where do we keep that office? Where is it appropriate to keep planning for office so that's that's additional research that could have informed that policy plan update dbd anticipates that this paper will be published in the fall at which time that will of course be

[00:26:36] shared with the board and then one possible item to consider something that uh we've been initially looking into there are our studies across the u.s uh in certain markets where they're taking a look at a priority list of office buildings that are best suited for repurposing.

[00:26:57] This gets very technical because we think about the bones of the office building, we think about the floor plate size, and then if you're able to bucket and prioritize those office buildings or put them into tiers, and then as a next step, see what could be the gap in getting a developer to move forward and repurposing that office building.

[00:27:21] seen that implemented, again, across a couple of markets. So something that we've been discussing and I'd like to consider. Thank you. I guess we'll open it up to questions then. All right. Well, thank you. And I'm going to turn to the chairman just a second. The appendix is also interesting, and folks can take a look at that. And we see that we're on the lower end, at least regionally, in the number of folks who are working from home, but also it's still fairly high, almost 30%. So That's what really has radically changed, I think, for all of us in the last many years.

[00:27:59] I particularly wanted to ask them to include Skyline because, to me, that's one of the biggest resurrections I've seen. And, Andreas, I know that you're very proud of that, and that's truly leading the way of how to repurpose and how to redo something to truly create a 21st century versus a 20th century focus.

[00:28:22] Also wanted to, I can never not mention this, is that we are so highly dependent on real estate, whether it's office or residential. That's frankly the way that our tax structure is designed. It doesn't have to stay that way. The state should clearly look at doing something different, modernizing that, and frankly letting us tap into the wealth that's truly in this area that we don't get to tap into by pretty much every measure.

[00:28:46] That money goes to Richmond. We get maybe 23 cents directly here. Maybe you get another $0.20 or $0.25 in other services, but when you look at 50-50 as a fair deal, it's not for our area. So to me, I'm going to always keep talking about that. I also wanted to thank Supervisor Smith for her chairmanship of the land use and all the, really, the last many, many years' progress.

[00:29:08] I mean, it's huge. We all know that, and we see that, and it's reflected in the presentation today. So I wanted to particularly highlight that, and kind of executive, I wanted to also our many conversations in your analysis and initiatives for how do we do reuse and adaptive reuse of our existing properties.

[00:29:26] So with that, I wanted to then turn it to the chairman. Thank you, Supervisor Storkin. Actually, you said a lot of things I was going to say. I mean, a lot of really good news here. A lot of instances where there's a national grain that localities have limited control over that has happened since COVID, and then there's going against the grain.

[00:29:47] And in a lot of circumstances here, we're going against the grain in part because of the work of DEI and, as you mentioned, others, including the land use changes that we made here, which are significant. I do have a couple of questions, but before I get to that, I do want to piggyback on something Supervisor Stork was alluding to, which goes back to this best state for business statistic that we have, and when you look at the main criteria for that, where we scored an A-plus in education infrastructure, it is important to remind folks that that A-plus in education

[00:30:22] is because of commercial growth and the decisions this board makes about funding education. In fact, as the state's JLARC study pointed out, the state absent counties funding for education would probably be getting an F in public education.

[00:30:40] Unless we consider being below Kentucky and West Virginia is better than an F, we would be getting an F. And so, you know, people ask me how you how you're able to look at that rating of A plus and the fact that the state is massively underfunding public education.

[00:30:59] And I tell them this presentation and others tell that story that continued growth in our economy in northern Virginia allows low counties, allows localities to do this state's job and fund public education. And we know that when we look at our tax structure, that we're behind almost $570 million per year in education funding in Fairfax County, according to the J. Lark study.

[00:31:26] And so we have to fill that almost $570 million invoice if we want a public education system in Fairfax County. And the way we fill it is by being responsive and spry on the things that are in this presentation. How do you reform your land use process to react to a national event that occurred that everyone is being affected by?

[00:31:47] And certainly this presentation shows that success. I do know that in 2023, Fairfax County reached a huge milestone, which was that we could say that more people were working and more businesses were operating in Fairfax County in 2023 than any other time in the county's history.

[00:32:07] And I am presuming that both those numbers and people working and new businesses being established are continuing to pace at that rate. I've not heard that we've slipped on those, but I do want to make sure that the net result of this is those numbers continue to rise so that we can continue to be able to have that standard for Fairfax County.

[00:32:30] And I just want to get a confirmation of that. Yeah, I can reference back on the Pulse and can also send out a link as it's an interactive dashboard. But you can see the trend lines. There's always the seasonality of the jobs added, but you can see that year-over-year climb is continuing into this year as late as May 2024.

[00:32:51] And I think that's important because office vacancy is one measure, but people working and number of businesses being established is another important measure for us to look at. I also appreciate in here the slide about the valuation of residential because the old thought of commercial is great, residential is bad clearly has changed.

[00:33:13] And we're at a point where we need to do that. And it relates to my one question, which is you have on the slide where you have 12 million square feet of office that we are considering to be actionable. Earlier when we looked at the, you had mentioned in the slide about proposed demolition, that these were people who had come to us and were suggesting looking at demolition.

[00:33:40] I just want to make sure on the 12 million figure, and it relates to the last thing you said, which is looking at a technical analysis of some of these old office buildings to try to get a real figure here. is that 12 million figure in here based on people coming to us largely or is it based on us going to them to try to understand the challenge because I think it's important for us to know where is the floor and where is the ceiling in this area and I know that we would have a dramatically lower office vacancy rate if we cleared out the old office inventory that's never going to be

[00:34:16] reoccupied the way it was before and I know a lot of that's tied to leases and so when someone comes through the door and says to us we're interested in doing something different with this building is probably when their lease is over and their their money stops coming in. I'm interested in knowing is that 12 million what people tell us or is that what we have figured out in our own analysis? Yes thank you for that question Chairman McKay. The 12 million is the aggregate of those three numbers. So it is the total of the actionable office. And really the point I want to make of

[00:34:52] that pie, the largest is the office or where the developers came to the county and said, essentially, we're going to, we plan on taking this down and we plan on putting something that will provide a higher tax revenue replacement. So that really is the lion's share of that 12 million aggregate. The 3.7 million is added in there, but that's because, you know, the landlord needs to decide what they're going to do with that office. Am I going to put a ton of capital into renovating the building and adding new amenities and really try to capture some of that

[00:35:26] new tenant demand or consider selling the building? So really, you can almost think of it as a breakout of a chai part leading up to that 12 million figure. Okay, that makes sense. And this is important for us and the planning commission and others to know because we're seeing these conversions, they're really positives for our economy, both on assessed value, but also equally important, a vacant building of any type is the worst thing for the local economy. And where we're seeing these vacant office buildings affects the retail and all the other business operations that relied on those office buildings being filled. And then you're starting to lose a lot of small

[00:36:04] businesses where you get people back into those buildings, whether they're working or living, inspires the ecosystem around there and a lot of the small businesses. And so this is really important for us because we want to be spry and respond to those as we have been doing as quickly and as rapidly as we can. But we also know that there's a lot of inventory out there that falls into this category. And so I think there's some concern some of us have, are we running into a situation where we're converting office too quickly? And one day we might regret that we did that. And I think what this shows is there's a ton of that out there still that still has to be

[00:36:42] dealt with. It's going to have to be decided. Do we do residential or do we hold on to an old vacant office building in perpetuity on principle? And, you know, I think the growth in the silver line and other places where people actually want to be in offices picks up the slack for that square footage we're losing in markets where it's unlikely there's going to be a successful office product back in those buildings anyway, so why let them sit vacant? And I think that's, you know, always a hard debate in our mind, but what this proves is there's plenty of space to be converting and using old office buildings for other uses that are needed in our community, including

[00:37:19] a huge demand for housing and support retail around those spaces while still being able to grow the office market in places where we know office wants to be in the long term. This has been really

great numbers, great presentation, and really appreciate the work that's been done by all of the different entities in the county working on this.

[00:37:42] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And we'll start with Supervisor Alcorn, and I've got you next. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To build on the chairman's comments just now, if you look at slide 11, this is the 12 million square foot slides.

[00:38:02] There's an interesting thing that I noticed in the colors there. You know, I know when the Silver Line Phase I opened in Tyson's in 2014, there was a lot of flight to quality in Tyson's in that office market.

[00:38:19] And I think what we're seeing there is just a few more of those old office buildings, you know, lined up for demolition. If you go out the corridor just a little bit, you see more green. So that transition in the rest in Herndon Corridor is happening, but it's just a few years behind what we saw in Tyson.

[00:38:40] So, you know, I like to say in terms of the vacant office building, if you have a vacant office building that's vacant for six months, that's a real problem for the owner. But if you have a vacant office building for six years, that's a community problem.

[00:38:59] And so, and we're coming to that point with some of the office buildings in the Dulles corridor, and we are seeing SSPA proposals to convert those to residential, to other mixed use. And those are moving forward, and I think they definitely do need to move forward.

[00:39:18] But let's not mistake sort of this, I would call it almost inevitable cycle that we're seeing where we have these 40 and 45 year old office buildings and office parks basically either changing or going away not all of them but but many of them while we're also moving towards our long-term strategy of transit-oriented development where you know we have the the Fannie Mae and you know the miters and every everybody basically around our metro stations yes this is going to

[00:39:57] be very painful for, for some, um, for some landowners and, and, uh, we're working through that process, but I think this is a great report. This is really positive. Um, and I'll just point out one other thing that, um, that came up at the Accelerate breakfast the other day. Uh, and, you know, our, um, in Providence district mitre has, uh, some amazing facilities there. They put a little commercial out at the beginning of the breakfast talking about quantum computing and some technology.

[00:40:33] They're not allowed to commercialize because that's not what they do, but basically photonic photons in quantum computing and chip technology that they're looking for a business partner. So we have, I mean, that's just one little example, but we have so much potential and so much ahead of us on the AI side, on quantum computing, that I think we're going to see a balance of some of these old offices going to residential, going to other uses, but others are going to be refilled with some of these, you know, as the vacancy rates come down.

[00:41:10] And I appreciate your point that we may be hitting the top and then starting to see, because anecdotally, I'm sort of getting the similar impression as well. But thank you very much. This is excellent data and really appreciate it. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Lauskin, Supervisor Herdy, then Supervisor Palachuk.

[00:41:28] Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'll probably elucidate a couple of points that were made by the two previous speakers. First, I want to acknowledge the report, appreciate the format, and just the detail, the level of detail.

[00:41:44] It's very, very helpful. Personally, I feel intrigued by the capital investment number in that this is the highest I've seen at the $1.6 billion. When I worked for the EDA, I was the capital person for almost nine years, traveled across the U.S.

[00:42:03] I got that number up to $1.2 billion, which was the highest ever in 2000. But to look at what it's doing now is very, very important because what it's basically telling us is that our community is receiving very significant investment.

[00:42:20] However, we want to position our companies in the county to be able to get even more investment over time. We're competing with many different regions for these dollars, but this is a very encouraging sign. And what it also tells me is that this is a way for us to be able to lead to additional employment of individuals, additional opportunities for the leasing of space. And guess what? That's going to help us expand our tax base. That's going to help us get more revenues here in Fairfax County. So I just, you know, appreciate seeing this kind of this dashboard is a really good way to present this,

[00:42:56] but then to show that trend line is extremely helpful. Let me ask a couple of questions about the vacancy rate, and I got to admit here this one's tricky, and I do appreciate that we're not increasing at the rate of some of our other comparable jurisdictions, but I guess I do wonder in terms of the utilization of the space that the companies are taking. So there was a time when we would calculate a ratio of employees to square footage, and at one point that number was as high

[00:43:33] is 240 square feet per employee. So the question I want to ask here is, what is the current utilization? When you look at that ratio, what is it today? So thank you very much, Supervisor Lust, for those comments and the question. The number has been coming down since that figure that you reported. Sometimes it's more on a case-by-case basis or by industry. As you know, we have a robust number of corporate headquarters here, and they tend to have higher utilization

[00:44:09] rates just for the amount of space per employee from that perspective. And then from more of the tech or back office, you might see lower rates. So we do see that number is below 200 and continues to go down. One interesting thing is we all are in agreement that the overwhelming majority of employers want their employees back in the office. They're also dealing with, okay, if you want back in the office, I've been in this work from home environment. I want my own space. So we could see a pressure that actually reverses that as we try to bring more employees back into the

[00:44:48] office. But we have, looking over the last five years, we have seen that number continue to decrease. And that would make sense based on the comment you made about the new leases. I mean, Either you're going to see companies that are actually growing, but they're taking less square footage or just an appreciable increase, a small appreciable increase.

[00:45:11] So that tells you that utilization is down. But thank you for that clarification. Let me ask also on the vacancy rates and the comparison between you listed the northern Virginia and D.C. I'm just curious about Maryland. How do we compare when we look at what's happened, say, in Montgomery County from a vacancy rate standpoint versus Fairfax County?

[00:45:34] I'll have to go back and take a look at the suburban Maryland market, but as I do understand, it is higher than the Northern Virginia region. Okay, that's helpful. And then I did appreciate the high vacancy office buildings.

[00:45:51] It made me a little nervous as I looked at a number of dots in my own particular area. So I might say offline we can have a follow-up conversation just in terms of what that actually means. I think I know which buildings essentially, but just maybe want to get a little more feedback on that.

[00:46:09] And then the last point I'll make is I'm really intrigued by what we see on the industrial. So that reduction in the vacancy rates there are just phenomenal, having such a low percentage.

[00:46:26] What do you attribute to that? Who's taking that space currently? What's the driver for the industrial space currently? Yes, thank you. I'd actually say that the industrial market is overheated at this point, sort of bottoming out, And we're not able to accommodate some of the incoming tenant demand due to land constraints for available industrial land.

[00:46:53] And that's the fact. And, you know, we've seen a couple of factors. Some of it is government contractors who are doing some light manufacturing and want that space at Omos X is the sure you're familiar with flex space, you know, a little bit of that showroom and some back production space.

[00:47:13] Also, last mile distribution, especially following, you know, COVID-19, it was important to get those goods to, you know, and the discretionary income that we have in the region certainly supported that.

[00:47:29] So we saw demand in that sector as well. So those two have been put in pressure on the limited supply that we do have available. But it also probably makes the point that we have to preserve some industrial space here in Fairfax County.

[00:47:46] We've got to be careful about how we make decisions about the future use of that space. And then, I'm sorry, I did say I was my last, but this is my last. Looking at the point that you made about high-growth companies, artificial intelligence space, and quantum computing, thank you for, you know, clarifying that. I know we've heard Victor Hodgkins talk about that here even last year. I guess the question I have is thinking about how we can help you do the work to advance those areas. I mean, the opportunity for us is to expand the tax base by going after

[00:48:24] these sectors. I mean, I guess I'm going to put a challenge out, maybe you don't answer it here, But what can we do to support your work in being able to be more successful in attracting and growing these specific businesses here in Fairfax County?

[00:48:43] This is going to be the future of the county. This is going to be the way that we support critical services in the county. So we've got to be thinking about what is the strategy, what is the plan, how does that happen? Thank you. And I know Victor Hoskins is on the line, so I did want to give him an opportunity.

[00:49:01] to chime in or Alex on that question. Yes, this is Victor Hoskins. First, I just want to thank everyone for the opportunity to have our team present on this subject.

[00:49:19] And to your question, what can the county do? The county is, the Board of Supervisors, you guys are doing an incredible job of setting the stage for everything that we do. You know, with the funding of education, with the changes and being more flexible with the land uses, All of this is creating an environment where that is one of the reasons why we've been so attractive to these artificial intelligence companies, to these space commercialization companies.

[00:49:45] But I think one of the things that would really be helpful is if as we go through this process of really developing our brand, like the Quantum World Congress, for example, any participation that any of you can be there, that would be fantastic.

[00:50:03] And let me just say that the same thing with the space conference that we're planning for 2025, your representation there, your presence there really makes a difference to these companies. And when we do have these meetings with companies, I really appreciate the fact that you do make yourselves available.

[00:50:24] Can I add one item to that in response to your question, Supervisor Lesk? I mentioned the competitiveness analysis that will be conducted as part of our Blueprint for the Future study. And that will include a set of recommendations really for our department, but these will be likely considerations for countywide implementation.

[00:50:49] And so that analysis and those recommendations, of course, will be coming back to the board and we'll have a chance to discuss those in the future. Thank you. And I don't want Rebecca nor Supervisor Beerman to be really mad at me. So I'm going to make sure we stop about 1030, which means we've got a few more people. So if you could keep your questions, comments really close or pointed. I have Supervisor Herity, Supervisor Palchuk, and Supervisor Walkinshaw, and I saw Supervisor Beerman raise his hand.

[00:51:17] My usual introduction. So I think we still have a couple more years, obviously, a tough commercial. Your utilization rate that you were talking about, I just see so many office buildings that are fully leased but empty parking lots. So are you really looking at that and looking at those? Are those included in the utilization rate or not that you mentioned? I mean, how do you do a utilization on a building that's fully leased but an empty parking lot? Yeah, that's a great

[00:51:50] question, Supervisor Herity. It is a little bit of a hairy subject to tackle. You're interviewing companies, finding out to what degree their employees are coming into the office. Sometimes you're relying on some of the research community in the Northern Virginia region on that aspect.

[00:52:12] I think, honestly, the biggest indicator to tell is even if some of those companies have been seeing that lower utilization back to my earlier point about they get the chance to cut back on that space and and they're keeping it for the you know three three times out of you know more than 75 percent of the time um for the leases that cbr was cbre was tracking on that so that tells me something that either they're they may push further to get those employees back in the office and they're making that commitment or uh they're they're being used at various you know varying

[00:52:48] rates maybe day to day you see different rates of utilization which we all know that Wednesday is Wednesdays and Tuesdays are the are the higher ones for sure or Mondays and Fridays are are certainly lagging in that regard we have too much parking are you are you uh are you tracking leases that were signed pre-COVID and when they you know the expiration dates on those over the next three or four years because that's that's really where I see the challenge people that have included, you know, signed the five-year, eight, ten-year leases pre-COVID, and it's a different

[00:53:25] world post-COVID, and we've got a couple more rough years. Do we have any idea the magnitude of that issue? Yeah, we certainly are not only tracking that, but we're keeping in touch with those companies as that comes along, especially within the next three years. So we'll be...

[00:53:43] Do we know how many square feet of leases are expiring in each of those three years? Yeah, you know, we can get to the general idea. I will say that it's not as high exposure. Yeah, that would be good. And I would do real quick on my point and then a question.

[00:54:00] I think what the board did in 2018, 2019 on office building repurposing was, you know, absolutely the right thing. The right could have been at a better time and a good thing because it's allowing us to do all the stuff we need to do.

[00:54:16] Interesting question that Supervisor Lust brought up on industrial. And I think our challenge is going to be, and it's a tough challenge, is how do we not end up in the same place on the office market not being able to fulfill the demand?

[00:54:32] Because I think it's going to drop off here for a while and then probably zoom back up. I don't have a better crystal ball than anybody else. But how do you make sure we still have enough office at the end of all that's going to be interesting? Because we don't have enough industrial. Last question.

[00:54:49] Retail is a much smaller piece of our tax base. Have we done this kind of, and I know the board did a little bit on retail repositioning, but have we done, or is anybody doing a detailed look at retail? Because you talk about empty office buildings, empty retail buildings could be even.

[00:55:08] We will take that up in a future DEI. I think that's a great question, and let me move on if there's anything else, sir. I just, I'll be happy to make that part of the next DEI meeting. Well, it might help answer some of that industrial question in some cases.

[00:55:27] It might, the last mile especially, because I know a couple of retailers are looking at being able to use retail space to fulfill last mile, and I don't think we can do that now. And it gives a question of how we do it, can we do it, if we do it. So anyway, thoughts?

[00:55:44] We will definitely take that up in a future meeting. I have Supervisor Palchuk, Walkinshaw, Bierman, and Jimenez has the last word. And please keep your comments very, your questions very tight, please. Thank you. Thank you. I'll be very tight. Thank you. First of all, thank you so much.

[00:55:59] I think the team here, including those that have helped make this happen, continue to really help us not just maintain what is a strong market in comparison to what's happening, but help us a little about the future. So I appreciate that. I think a couple of questions that weren't brought up or comments.

[00:56:19] Number one, when we talk about, we've heard a lot about repurposing, and I've had conversations with most of you about this, is repurposing comes in very different forms, right? So we've heard a lot about the residential, office to residential. But when it comes to repurposing buildings for other commercial uses, right, and how we sometimes need to help coordinate, I know all of your offices have helped in different ways.

[00:56:44] But are we tracking a little bit? I mean, I'm thinking that two of the biggest headquarters we've been able to attract or bring to Tyson's have turned or turning older office buildings into modern amenities, right? Guidehouse, Hilton is in the process, Clark Construction has recreated that building.

[00:57:04] So I don't, I guess I'm wondering, is that something we're tracking? Because it's not all going away from office, it's just often being used, and I know EDA and others have helped. That's an area where I'd love us to invest more and how we make those even more attractive or easier to convert to what the modern offices are looking for.

[00:57:27] Yeah, I think what you're talking about there are some of these very, very strong office locations that are close to those amenities, the infrastructure that the county has invested in. They don't want to move, but they need an improved or higher amenity space where they are, and the employees like being there.

[00:57:42] The company's happy, and we can get figures on which companies have invested in their own buildings or had landlords do investments for them when their leases have come up, because as you pointed out, it certainly is happening. Some of them are attracting new. You're helping us attract new.

[00:57:58] And so how we help move in that direction is I think it kind of builds that momentum. And then the other one, I have a lot of buildings, but it was brought up about industrial types of buildings. And I have all sizes and types of industrial buildings in my district. I think we have them across the country.

[00:58:14] Some of the smaller ones and being repurposed to great things like Crescendo Studios or Caboose Cummins, right? And then we're talking about bigger industrial. So maybe as a follow-up, as we talk about the need for industrial and ensuring we continue to have what we are looking for, if you're able to break that down for us a little bit more of what we're talking about so when we have applications come forward, we understand, okay, maybe this is supposed to be preserved or this makes sense to have it be repurposed.

[00:58:43] That makes sense? Yeah. But thank you, and I appreciate the numbers. And the last caveat is in both your report and the DPD report we received, the numbers are not reflecting, right, what we know is changing. ICF headquarters are an SSPA to become a residential space.

[00:58:59] And so the percent of -- the 20-ish percent we're talking about, we know the reality is probably changing as those footprints are changing as soon as we're able to get updates on the reality of projected office vacancies moving forward based on those DPD or other changes, that would be helpful.

[00:59:22] I haven't been able to find that. Thank you, Supervisor Patrick, for your comments. And industrial and retail, I think that's definitely good follow-ups for this committee. And I have Supervisor Walkinshaw, Bierman, and Humanis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just real quick on slide two, the pulse, the capital investment, the $1.6 billion.

[00:59:41] dollars. So that's just private sector venture capital investment. Okay. Are we tracking investment from the world's largest venture capitalist, which is the federal government? We are. And we're actually the number one jurisdiction for dollars coming in. It's over $35 billion to Fairfax County based companies. Okay. I think that's good to include in these kind of presentations. And, you know, well, that's a longer conversation, but on the office market question, and I'll follow up on this one, but I do think for us, we want to understand,

[01:00:20] you know, when we turn that corner on vacancy rate, presumably at some point, rents start to rise. Have you seen a decline in average rents per square foot in the commercial office market or is it state steady? It's for the most part a state stable. Okay. Okay. From us, from a budget perspective, you know, our commercial office revenue presumably is kind of a lagging indicator of where the market is. And it's, you know, there are other variables there, but I think it would be important for us to understand how long is that lag? Is that a one-year lag, a two-year

[01:00:56] lag, a five-year lag, or a 10-year lag? And that's something maybe as part of, you know, this year's budget presentations we can start to think about. Obviously, we're in for a few more years, but how

many could that be if the market continues to improve? And last point I'll just make, and Ms. Mowdry made the point of, you know, some of these commercial property owners not quite making the leap to repurpose or redevelop their site. One of those, which I think one of those in red there that's in the Braddock District not far from here. I've met a number of times with the

[01:01:33] owner of that commercial office building. And I can tell you right now, he does not plan to repurpose or demolish the building because, and I think this is taking place around the county, his hope is that somebody else in that sub-market does it first. So somebody else repurposes and then those tenants will move into his building. So there's a little bit of a game of chicken being played across these sub markets where the best case scenario is you don't have to make the huge investment and the huge risk to repurpose or redevelop your site, but your neighbor will.

[01:02:04] And then you could just take all those tenants. I don't know whether there's something we can do to help that along, but that is a very real dynamic. If you can afford to stay afloat, the best case scenario is stay afloat until one of your neighbors can't. And then they're out of market, and that vacancy, their vacancy rate becomes your new tenant and your hopefully full building. Thank you. Thanks, Chief Advisor Wachersaw, Chief Advisor Bierman. You're holding this up from your next presentation, sir. I know that's important to you. So I'll move as quickly

[01:02:41] as possible. You said that 60 out of 70 buildings being slayed for demolition were built before 1990. I just would love, as a part of the analysis, I think the key question for all of us here is trying to disaggregate what is cyclical and what is COVID related. What is what you would expect to see versus what is the way it is because of the world changed in March of 2020.

[01:03:09] And so a question going forward is looking at to what degree are we expecting to see some of these changeovers in office buildings simply because they're getting old versus what are we expecting to see because the nature of work is changing. And that would be something to look into further. And I'm done. Wow. There you go. All right. Supervisor Jimenez, you get the last word, sir. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I just want to say thank you to all of you for this report. Extremely informational. And Stephen, thank you for that detailed run through. Your

[01:03:45] deep dive was really well explained, and I really appreciate it. Thank you so much. Just really quickly, slide 17, as mentioned, Mr. Chairman, thank you for putting the skyline up there. It's really important to note what's happening there with the repurposing, and I think it's a great opportunity, and it shows what this county can do when it does it right with the timing, the land use, the space. I think it's a great opportunity. Looking forward to more of that, especially in mason district and the idea of that we could actually house our workforce here make sure that they're actually living in the county they're serving is extremely important so i just wanted

[01:04:20] to say that thank you thank you mr maz and thank you panel for your presentation and i know we have a few more things that we'll probably be coming back to in a future meeting but i think we've learned a lot and hopefully you will be able to continue to support our our questions and efforts and look forward to the follow-up.

[01:04:38] Thank you. And while they're getting reset, I've got the next item is the Economic Opportunity Reserve Nomination Review. And really, I wanted to have this presentation about office repurposing ahead of the next one, which is the nomination review because the two really tie together.

[01:04:59] They segue very nicely. We're now going to address, in this particular case, an office vacancy in McLean and how to adaptively reuse that space. And we've got a couple of folks here that are going to do a great job of presenting it to us, Scott Sizer and Lori Carboneau, who's the Executive Director of the McLean Project for the Arts.

[01:05:17] And with that, take it away, Scott. Thank you, Chairman Stork. I'm Scott Sizer with the Department of Economic Initiatives. And briefly today, I want to talk a little bit about the Economic Opportunity Reserve. I think this nomination is the first nomination for this board of the Economic Opportunity Reserve.

[01:05:32] So provide a little bit of an opportunity to overview that process that the board approved and established back in 2016. And then we'll review the specific proposal of the McLean Project for the Arts in downtown McLean. So, real briefly, the proposal that you'll hear today is to create an arts venue in the heart of McLean.

[01:05:54] Primarily going to be led and managed by the McLean Project for the Arts. I'm very happy to have Lori Carboneau here to talk more about the project in a moment. But it's going to take active... You are the only participant. All right. Victor has left. It will take vacant retail space in a structure and really turn it into an active, vibrant arts center, contributing to the placemaking efforts in McLean and really enhancing the fiscal viability and sustainability of the McLean Arts Project.

[01:06:28] So real briefly, the Economic Opportunity Reserve was established in 2016. It's critical to mention this is part of our countywide reserve policy, where we have 10% of the total expenditures of the county in reserve. This is 1% of the total county expenditures, or about 10% of our total reserve policy.

[01:06:51] So we have a three-step process that the board adopted in 2017. The first is a project nomination, which this board approved less than a month ago, just on June 25th. Today we'll be doing the project screening which is an opportunity to see if this project fits within the Gord The board's adopted policies for the economic opportunity reserve and then evaluate the details of the project There won't be any decision as this board knows there's no decisions made today if the board Does hear about the feedback here about the economic benefits of this project does decide to move forward with it Then staff will answer any questions come back with additional

[01:07:29] feedback or answering Additional information and bring back for a funding action at a future Board of Supervisors meeting most likely as an action item later this year if supported so Real briefly and it has been a tremendous opportunity to work with McLean project for the arts They have really been a great partner. They are extremely well organized financially They have done their due diligence having done a number of the economic opportunity review projects in the past both with nonprofits and with private companies.

[01:08:02] Their due diligence on this project really made our job a lot easier. And you can see much of the information that they provided for us, the project pro forma, the five-year projections for income, a detailed estimate and bid from a contractor to do the work, as well as five years of audited financial statements reflecting their fiscal management over that period of time.

[01:08:24] So it's been a tremendous amount of information they provided to us and really made our evaluation easier. And so those are the items that are really informing the evaluation that will come.

Again, the board in 2020 revised your policy for your principles of investment for the Economic Opportunity Reserve.

[01:08:43] The key items are listed here on the slide. Really what the Economic Opportunity Reserve is intended to is invest in projects that come outside the typical process. This is not meant to fund projects that would come through the normal capital improvement program or other kinds of county funding programs.

[01:08:59] They're sort of opportunities outside the typical process. They are required to be one-time expenditures, not only from the expenditure, but then there's no liability to the county by this investment or implication of future obligations. And the primary purposes are listed there.

[01:09:16] Really, this property probably best matches the capital development and some of the programming goals of the county. And so because of those characteristics of the project that we've seen, we do think this meets the criteria for evaluation and investment from the Economic Opportunity Reserve. A key component of that, which we'll mention, is that this is an acquisition. The McLean Project for the Arts is anticipating purchasing this retail condominium. So this is not a leasing opportunity where there's an ongoing obligation or a leasing underwritement.

[01:09:49] This would be them purchasing that property and having it in perpetuity. So before we talk to the details of where the project is, just wanted to highlight geographically where we are in McLean, and this project is located within the McLean Revitalization District and really in that downtown McLean Center. You see, number one, this is a retail condo in the base of a primarily residential condo building called the Signet. There's other adjacent condominium buildings next door. You've got the McLean House and also within the CBC, the Palladium at McLean.

[01:10:25] It's also an area that is growing. The board has just recently approved at the end of last year couple of projects including the mars headquarters expansion and the astoria which is another residential product and again in this whole corner of mclean where there's this opportunity for place making and parks you've got key public spaces such as the mclean central park the mclean community center which is where the mclean project for the yards currently operates and then you've got a half acre park directly across the street from this site with the elm street park which is not currently programmed but this is a tremendous opportunity to work with mclean revitalization

[01:11:03] corporation mclean project for the arts and other community groups to really activate and create some vibrancy at that location so with that i'd like to turn it over to lori carbonow to talk about our partner scott thank you very much chairman mckay and chairman stork it's really a privilege to be here we so appreciate the nomination supervisor beerman and we are honored to be here. I have great affection for this group, not only professionally, and appreciate what you do. The first time I had the opportunity to present here was with your father, and it's, having grown up in Vienna, going to Oakton High School, it has set my standards high for what community is,

[01:11:43] and I am here today with community leader and our chairman, Pamela Danner, and my colleague and director of finance and operations, Fali Adu, and we each feel called to make a difference in our community. The MPA organization, hopefully you know, but I would love to share that we were founded in 1962, which for context is right between the building of the Berlin Wall and the Cuban Missile Crisis. So we're long in the tooth and we have been well managed since that time. We have a three-part mission. We exhibit work of local regional mid-Atlantic artists. We've

[01:12:21] shown the work of more than 4,000 artists at this point. Highly regarded curatorial program that is at the center of our education and our outreach programs. We're the partner to the McLean Community Center by an action of this board 30 years ago where we are in residence there and we will continue to be in residence there where we will lead our outreach program. Our outreach program has been recognized at the state level of MPA outreach. We work with Fairfax County public schools very closely. We work with, in particular, we raise the money to bring

[01:12:56] schools in for us if their circumstances are such. We work with individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities, including Spark Solutions, Service Center, and then we work very closely with seniors, including places like the Wellness Center for Older Adults.

[01:13:14] We are a robust organization that has strong fiscal management, strong fiscal performance, and really a solid set of partnerships in the community. We, as Scott shared with you, we've chosen to purchase this space to be a long-term asset for the organization.

[01:13:34] It's what we envision is a purpose-built space that will have two fantastic galleries. It'll have two state-of-the-art studios. We've chosen ceramics for that space, largely because of the economic model that it provides. We'll continue our drawing, painting, and mixed media work in the studio at the McLean Community Center.

[01:13:53] which we raised the money and paid to have built 30 years ago. But this space, because of the concept of having capital equipment in arts instruction, it really is a magnet. And there's some very solid economics around ceramics, where you both have classes as well as a membership program.

[01:14:12] And there's strong demand for it in the region, with the closest ones having up to 500 individuals on their wait list. So we're very excited about that demand. Based on the great work that the Virginia Commission of the Arts has done and the Arts Fairfax in their strategic planning, we've been able to base this effort on placemaking principles where we will create a space that will be that magnet in what is a vacant space.

[01:14:37] We'll welcome residents, we'll attract visitors, and we will also work hard to host our community partners, the Chamber of Commerce, the Clean and Vitalization Corporation. And then finally, by purchasing and not renting this space, we're creating a long-term asset for the organization, increasing value in the area, as well as providing for the long-term strength and economic diversity of our own organization. And then finally, in terms of the program, we are going to have the opportunity to create six new elements of operating revenue. I bring

[01:15:15] a corporate consulting background to this arts leadership. My colleagues tease me for bringing the art of the spreadsheet. And so I very much value the opportunity that this provides for economic diversity. And there are six new elements of operating revenue that come from this space that will contribute to us and obviously accrete to the county. Thank you, Lori. So as staff reviews the economic benefits of the programs and the proposed project, we typically look at both direct and indirect benefits to the county and the community. And our estimates are conservative.

[01:15:51] We tend to underestimate potential growth, or not underestimate, conservatively estimate potential growth to ensure that the county's investment is wisely managed. So direct revenue revenues that are received by the county, as were mentioned earlier today, are primarily through increased commercial real estate property tax revenue.

[01:16:12] There are some additional local tax revenues through business personal property tax or local sales tax revenues that are directly to the county from sales of goods at the sites. The increased property value for this site, we've assumed that there would be about a 40% increase in the value with related increase in real estate tax revenue. This site and Supervisor Alcorn, I'm going to steal your comment from earlier this morning. This site is currently valued at about $1.6 million, which is a 28% decline since 2020. This site was delivered as

[01:16:50] a retail space in 2018 and has never been occupied. It has been vacant for five years, which has definitely been a problem for the building owner. To use your comment earlier this morning, Supervisor Alcorn, that may be an issue for the community. But there are indirect benefits as well that do iner to the county and the community, but don't necessarily result in direct revenues. There could be induced revenues, but typically due to some of the variations in modeling assumptions, we want to acknowledge those and bring those forward to the board to decide

[01:17:27] but not quantify those. So most of those are new jobs. There is anticipated to be an increase of three to five full-time equivalent employees. Those jobs benefit us in the community, but as mentioned earlier today, the primary revenues from jobs are income tax, which are collected at the state level and not at the locality level. But then there are those community goals and outcomes for that programming and then they do have an innovative structure to partner with cafe monet to add some additional retail sales coffee shop vibrancy to this space as well to augment

[01:18:03] the arts use of the site as well as to help to diversify their organizational revenues so the total project estimate is 7.2 million the mclean project for the arts has negotiated a 2.3 million purchase price for the site. They've currently raised $1.8 million to that. They anticipate that they will raise that full closing cost in order to purchase the property. And so then there's the additional $5 million that are outstanding, that requires additional funding and donations to help build that space build out. And so staff is recommending an investment of $500,000 from

[01:18:40] the Economic Opportunity Reserve to the project. Again, the direct benefit of the revenue from the county is probably $150,000 to $300,000 over the 10-year period. So it's not quite that $500,000 number, but there is those indirect benefits of creating those three to five new jobs, taking this vacant commercial property. I was struck in looking at the appraisal that they provided. The retail vacancy in McLean is at 0.1%. Not 1%, it is at 0.1%. McLean has dropped from about 5% to 0.1% in the last three years.

[01:19:19] Their retail absorption over the last year was about 5,000 square feet. So I think it's pretty clear that the market has spoken that this site is not really suitable for a traditional retailer because those market economics are there. And so therefore, it's fantastic to have the McLean Project for the Arts and trying to redesign that site and reutilize it to better meet a need that the market has determined that this is really not, does not seem to be meeting that retail demand that's in McLean.

[01:19:49] And then again, it would provide that permanent home for the arts in McLean through the purchase and acquisition. It's not a temporary leasing. They would own it. They've been in McLean for 60 years, and this would give them a home for the next. So with that, I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you, Scott. And I'm going to turn to the chairman. Do you have any?

[01:20:07] Yeah, great presentation. I think this is a wonderful proposal. I have no problem with it at all. I guess the two questions that I have, one is you mentioned the zoning interpretation. I'm assuming that was a confirmation that the proposed uses are in conformance, and so there's no additional action that's

going to be needed by the Board of Zoning Appeals or the Board of Supervisors. Is that right? That is correct. Okay. And then secondly, we know, you know, I'm looking at the renovation cost being the cost driver of this whole scenario, and I'm just I'm just curious because the building is pretty new. It's only, you know, what, six years old and

[01:20:46] it's never had a tenant. So a lot of times we see renovation costs are huge because you've got a really old building or you've got to decommission an existing use. And so I'm just curious as to the driver of the renovation costs, not knowing what the current condition of the space that we're looking at is. Thank you, Chairman McKay. I've spent a lot of time thinking about this. There are three cost drivers to it. And the first is I'd like to acknowledge that it's going to be a beautiful space that is designed as an art gallery with appropriate lighting and appropriate HVAC etc but there's other there are two others that drive almost a million and a half dollars

[01:21:22] of that and that is that it's a dual story volume and so all the walls need to be twice as high the amount of HVAC that goes in has to move twice as much volume it's also on the first of a seven floor building and so the duct work that goes up through that infrastructure significant there's a really huge challenge that we have that somehow this space wasn't left quite even as a cold dark shell. There's not even a breaker box in there. So we need to go back to the core of the building to pull all the utilities. And while it was envisioned as a restaurant and there's great

[01:21:56] kind of channels, chases for duct work, there was no anticipation for grease relief. So we actually even have to plug through the slab in order to complete the space. And so while it was envisioned and proffered as restaurant and retail, it wasn't finished quite as such, which I think has contributed to the six years of vacancy and no delivery on that restaurant space.

[01:22:25] Okay, that's very helpful. And I'm assuming those factors were also the driver in the acquisition price. I have no idea how this relates to what the assessed value of that space is, but I'm hoping and I'm assuming that that's all been worked into the acquisition cost, because obviously those are costs that you have to bear to put the space in a usable configuration.

[01:22:48] And, you know, a lot of times those are shared between the owner. You're not signing a lease here, so you're becoming the owner. So I'm assuming that some of those that, you know, this acquisition cost is consistent with the fact that you have to do all of that, and that was factored into the proposal.

[01:23:06] That is part of it. I think there's also an interesting divergence in this property itself, whereas this has decreased by, what was your number, 20-some percent over five years. The other two commercial mixed-use properties that Scott mentioned, one, if you look at the basket of units that has traded over the last five years. Their tax valuations, one has increased the Palladium by 18 percent and the other has increased by 25 percent at the McLean House. So we think that this is a specific depressive rating on this building and may not

[01:23:43] be an actual market read. Yeah, I think it's a great opportunity. I think our timing is here is good. And then lastly, just to compliment you, Lori, on what Scott complimented you on already, which is having all of this in order and such a professional organization to deal with. So thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. President Palachuk.

[01:24:05] Thank you, Mr. Stork. First of all, I just want to follow and say thank you for your work, for this proposal. Agree that it's a great location for many things. And number one, as you know we talk about

spaces for the arts and we recently had a roundtable with so many of our arts organizations and Stuart the new head of Arts Fairfax about how we look at spaces right and there are so many existing spaces and I appreciate that you are really showing us a good model for how to have a community-based space for the arts hopefully that one that we can steal and borrow

[01:24:41] across the county and your expertise on how to bring those and the build-outs have them make sense for the community my only question for you or Scott is really you mentioned the key aspects being the direct revenue my assumption is the surrounding properties and perhaps some on that main site I assume will this will help them with their evaluations as well with their assessments which we maybe don't have those numbers but I would assume it's going to be more than that if you look at everything around it being supported by this amenity.

[01:25:21] Yes, again, I think that would be an indirect benefit, but we do anticipate that taking a vacant retail space, programming it, creating the kind of liveliness, and not only is there the indoor space, but there's almost 1,700 square feet of outdoor patio space that they get as well for outdoor programming to bring community members in.

[01:25:37] And so we do think bringing that liveliness and that activity just to the placemaking opportunities that you talked about will contribute to the value for the existing residential new residential and new construction that's planned in that area and finally i believe there's a small park across the street i don't know if it's public or private but hopefully you'd have access to do some public uh things that has lain uh fallow for two years or for excuse me for for six years but uh there are two partners and we would be the third and they were delighted by the idea that we would help program it we're going to be working specifically this summer with mclean revitalization corporation who's doing a movie night in the park and we can one of the things that we're excited

[01:26:15] about this having restaurant capabilities in-house is the opportunity to do picnics in the park and other activations. I'll see JJ and Sivan. We'll have some joint dates out there with our kiddos. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Palachuk. I have Supervisor Herity, then Supervisor Lost, then Supervisor Beerman. Certainly this will be a valuable addition to the community and I think to the surrounding buildings too. So I believe in that, but I'm just looking at the numbers.

[01:26:48] And I'd see that it was valued at 1.6, but we're paying 2.3. The difference between those two numbers? It is, it's a market of one at this point. It is, there's, when we brought in brokers to look at the valuation, they ranged wildly from 1.7 to 2.9.

[01:27:13] and we ended up in a negotiated outcome that we believe is going to provide decades of value to the organization. If you do time value of money based on what we think is going to resolve to accrete to the organization, it's going to more than pay over time, pay out. We believe there's probably a 10% premium for this space, not the 20% that's shown based on the references that I was make into the other spaces. It was not a motivated seller. The seller saw it at, we spent seven of

[01:27:50] our eight months of negotiation talking him out of renting, and the final month, and he conceded that, okay, this won't be generational wealth that he's passing on because it's not actually moving. And so I think it's a bit of a calculated risk on our behalf. Another numbers question, I add up the the the total project budget 7.2 million and you've raised 1.8 million um so my kind of question is is if we commit this 500 and you don't get enough to do this what happens to the 500 does

[01:28:27] it come back do we do it on a contingent basis do we because that's a that's a 6.4 million dollar hole we'll make up 500 so it's it's about a 600 or 6 million dollar hole the 7.2 million is the overall project cost the organization has been working towards this for about five years and so some of those costs are uh are personnel most of which has come on in this past year we're probably three fte ahead of where we would be because it's important to us to be sure we're in a situation

[01:29:01] where we could operate uh operate the space once we get it and so i can break out that number it's about $600,000 of it that we've already either spent out of operations or will be spending out of operations. There is some of this which is anticipated interest. However, we also with where we are right now, we anticipate a very low loan rate. And then finally is that we've got a number of donors who are queued up who are ready to give as soon as we close. But like you, they want to make sure that this is a real thing yep no I assumed that the last

[01:29:39] piece I certainly assumed that you had a bunch of people lined up did you want to say something Scott I'll just state that in other economic opportunity reserve projects the county has either made our funding contingent or time to maybe you know closing or acquisition or permit approvals etc so we can bring a specific timing recommendation forward to the board if this doesn't you really answer the question when you said that you were going to get a loan on this and spread it out over future. We're appreciative to trust our bank, who very much has seen the value of what we're going to contribute, and they in particular are interested in the asset, of course

[01:30:13] as collateral, but they are looking at our donor list and the commitments as people that they already bank with, and so they're comfortable with that. So that's a good answer on that, and the last thing, I know we've established this, part of this area is an economic revitalization area. I mean, I would hope we look at if we do anything in there, they're getting some tax breaks that some surrounding development looks at proffers to this to kind of reduce the cost of this project to our taxpayers. Last question, there's $500,000 we're going to have to replenish at the

[01:30:53] next budget cycle. So this is going to compete with the 10% cuts and all that. I just mean I'm not going to support it. I just want to remind board members it's going to compete with those. Thank you, Supervisor Herity. Yeah, money's got to come from somewhere. Yes, Supervisor Lost and Supervisor Beerman.

[01:31:10] Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm excited about the project. I'll say I understand why it's necessary as a person who has a revitalization area that we are looking to make some changes in. Catalytic activities are so important, and leveraging the assets that you have, the things that are happening, recognizing Mars just down the street and the park and all the other amenities, this makes a lot of sense.

[01:31:38] I just had maybe one question because you've answered one with Supervisor Herity's comments. The $500,000, how did you arrive at that number? I'm just trying to understand what the ask, how you got to that ask.

[01:31:54] Yeah, so there were two key components. Again, the guidance from the board in terms of evaluating economic benefits It looks at the direct return of revenues back to the county over a 10-year period. For this project, that's that $150,000 to $300,000 number. There are indirect benefits as well that have not been quantified.

[01:32:12] But in addition, the board has a policy for the economic opportunity reserve for capital development projects. Of a minimum, capital development projects are recommended to have a minimum of $500,000 up to no more than 50% of the total project cost. So with the economic revenue being, again, on the conservative end, say $300,000, and then with the minimum of being $500,000, in addition, one of the things that the board really wanted to do with the Economic Opportunity Reserve is to help be maybe a tentpole investor or to be a primary, not a primary investor, but be an early investor to help incentivize and leverage those dollars.

[01:32:49] And so this $500,000 investment from the county would be about 10% of the total $5,000 additional. So that seemed to be a similar number to what we've done in other places, about that sort of 10% to 20% sometimes. Okay, that helps.

[01:33:04] And then on the economic benefit, I just wanted to maybe understand in terms of metrics, we have metrics for this project, and I'm assuming those could be derived from what we're describing as the economic benefit. so if you want to clarify that for me absolutely so we would track um the direct revenues that that were modeled for this so both the increase in real estate value um business personal property tax and the local sales tax that would generate from the site we track the number of employees that came from the site as well as additional sales that maybe their partners may be adding into the site that would generate additional revenues and then what we've talked about today

[01:33:43] again maybe we'll just have this reference rather than a direct metric but also track what is the impact of this investment to some of those surrounding properties. It is tough to know whether the economy is lifting, Mars is investing, you've got the Astoria that's investing. So not all of that new revenue would be attributable to this, but we could track that to show how the placemaking and how this investment has made in the community.

[01:34:09] Okay. And then one last question. I should know the answer and I don't. Do we have a report for the previous investments that shows their return on investment? Do we have some way to we do track those um i actually talked to supervisor stork or chairman stork who'd like to bring a more fulsome discussion about the economic opportunity reserve back because in my own head and i'm not saying that i have a problem i just want to understand because this is really critical i think the idea that we can make a relatively small investment that could turn into really significant output for the community is significant but thinking about all the projects

[01:34:44] that we funded what has been that return well we i've asked for that we'll bring that to a next to a future meeting and i i we're cutting into sure to i'm done mr chairman thank you very much and we are cutting into uh supervisor walkinshaw's times in the environmental meeting mr bierman our supervisor bierman last words please try to be quick uh the quote from walter earlier was that when a bill building sits vacant for six months it's the owner's problem when six vacant for six years, it's the community's problem. That's true of this building. I brought a prop with me.

[01:35:18] This is the community business center plan that was approved by this board in 2021. It's the product of John Faust, but it's also the product of all of you. And I just wanted to point out, to answer Dahlia's questions earlier, there is a public park right here. This is going to be the Mars headquarters. This is going to be the Astoria project, which itself has retail on it in that project. This is the signet right here, and this is where the McLean Project for the Arts would go.

[01:35:49] This building right here is actually up for sale at the moment. This area right here, which would potentially involve, to Supervisor Herity's point, if there were parcel consolidation there, there would be a tax break. But in order to even redevelop that area, you would want to be able to show developers that putting in mixed use could work in this portion of McLean. This park right here where our kids are going to play one day currently sits empty a lot of the time. But if it doesn't sit empty, that's actually going to help your property values for the Astoria project.

[01:36:24] It's going to help your property values for the Signet. It's going to make things better for the Mars Incorporated folks. And it's going to create more potential in this area at the center of our center business district in our commercial revitalization district in McLean. So I'm really excited about this project. I'm going to quit while I'm ahead, I think, and say thank you to Laurie, to Scott, to Chairman Stork, Chairman McKay, and I appreciate all of you. Thanks.

[01:36:54] Thank you. And thank you, Laurie and Scott, as well. And I'm going to move on. Just the last summary is that we have an Economic Ignitions Business Support Program Mid-Year Update, NIP, which you all got. So take a look at it, please. We also have a few events coming up. We have the Talent Up Virtual Career Fair on July 26th. We have the Talent Up In-Person Career Fair on July 31st. There's a flyer that's available, as well as we have the virtual information session for employers on August 6th, as well as we look forward to our first, really our first formal new CEO Council for Economic Opportunity launch on September 17th. We're going to host a morning

[01:37:33] reception followed by the meeting so I'm going to ask everybody to take a look and make sure they're here on time for that at nine o'clock and with that I thank you all very much in this just real quick before we close because you mentioned I just want to reiterate for people watching we did not approve uh this item this comes back to the board for for final approval and I just want to make sure we know what the timeline is on that Mr. Sizer this will come in the board package do we have a date yet for that no um i anticipated it'd be later this year perhaps at a september or an october item there were a couple of questions i think that were raised by board members that we want to make sure we're clear on um and then we would prepare it for later

[01:38:13] this year excellent thank you thank you mr chairman this committee meeting is adjourned

[01:40:29] okay all right good good morning again everyone uh welcome to our july 23rd 2024 meeting of the

[01:41:35] Environmental Committee. Supervisor Stork said that his meeting was cutting into my meeting's time, but actually it's likely to cut into everyone's lunch because we do have a robust agenda today, three important items to get through. I want to start just to direct the board's attention to the meeting summary that was distributed from our May meeting. And unless there are any changes to that we'll consider that summary adopted I also want to share and

[01:42:10] board members have at their place our climate action snapshot for the summer with some really exciting updates new communities accepted into the charge up Fairfax program including a couple that have their installations beginning this summer so really exciting progress made there I also want to highlight our energy conservation program, $784,000 in improvements in partnership with faith communities.

[01:42:44] And you can see the list of four faith communities across the county that have partnered with us to make those improvements. So congratulations to staff for great work on those accomplishments. And with that, we will start with our first presentation of the day.

[01:43:01] and this is an update on our efforts to preserve a lake at Lake Akatink, and I'll note for board members, if you've been diligently reading the updates that you've been receiving by NIP or if you're a very diligent reader of the Braddock Beacon, nothing here will be new to you. This is primarily an update, but we wanted to bring it here. We have 20 minutes for this presentation and any questions or discussions that we have from board members.

[01:43:34] We have Chris Harrington and Joni Kambacher to give us a presentation, as well as one new member of the team that I'm sure Mr. Harrington will introduce. Yes, thank you.

[01:43:49] We're also joined by Turgai Dabak, who is the Lake Akatang Project Manager. So, yes, we're here to provide an update on the DPWS Lake Akatang Project efforts.

[01:44:08] These are selections from Lunatec's Discovery Report and the Lake Akateng Task Force Findings Report, which were finalized in November and December 2023, respectfully. The findings in these documents were key to informing the actions outlined in the subsequent board matter.

[01:44:26] We would like to acknowledge and thank the members of the task force for volunteering their time and lending their expertise to the creation of the findings report. The preservation of Lake Accutane joint board matter, presented and approved by the board on January 23, 2024, directed the county executive and DPWES to take the actions outlined on this slide.

[01:44:53] As we discuss the project, I would like to clarify that the use of the term preservation refers to maintaining a smaller lake that would preserve much of the aesthetic and recreational value of Lake Accutane that would continue to benefit park visitors.

[01:45:14] As requested by the board matter, the project team is moving forward with three concurrent efforts, a sedimentation study, a preservation feasibility study for a smaller lake option, as identified in the task force findings, and a dam assessment.

[01:45:30] Since the dam is owned by the Fairfax County Park Authority, the assessment of the dam is being led by Park Authority with the support of DPWES. All efforts will be supported by a robust and inclusive outreach and engagement plan.

[01:45:48] To ensure these efforts are prioritized and move forward in a timely manner, DPWS has successfully repurposed and recruited a staff position that is dedicated to the daily coordination and management of these efforts.

[01:46:07] Tergai Dabak joined the team in March with decades of engineering and management experience in the water resource and environmental fields. This work requires engineers, scientists, and other professionals with expertise in a variety of technical fields.

[01:46:27] As a result, we have leveraged an interdisciplinary team of county staff to support these efforts. In addition, the team has been meeting with several consultants as well as support agencies like USGS to ensure that the appropriate professionals are involved in implementing and supporting this significant work.

[01:46:51] Collaboration and discussions continue with the team members so that all parties have a comprehensive understanding of the project needs and requirements. The Lake Akatank project team has been working diligently to determine the appropriate approach, define scope, and complete negotiations for this important next phase.

[01:47:16] A status update for Lake Akatank was provided in a knot-in-package memorandum dated June 26th. Progress has continued and in several milestones have been achieved over this past month. For the sedimentation study, the developed scope of work will refine our understanding of the material moving through and being captured by Lake Akatank.

[01:47:39] USGS and consultant support are being leveraged to establish an additional gauge location, perform expanded physical survey, and complete additional analyses to refine our understanding of both the existing system and the proposed alternative lake configurations.

[01:47:56] At the July 16th Board of Supervisors meeting, authorization was approved to move forward with a joint funding agreement with USGS for quantifying sediment mass balance in Lake Akatank and identifying sources and sinks of sediment in Akatank Creek. USGS monitoring work will extend through 2027. Additional analyses and modeling will be done with the support of a specialized consultant. This task order has been authorized and notice to proceed was provided

[01:48:32] yesterday. This work will provide critical data and modeling deliverables in conjunction with the preservation study through 2025 and include updated data and analyses and modeling as necessary through the USGS monitoring period, which extends through 2027. In regards to the dam assessment, park authority with support from DPWES are actively coordinating the scope of work with

[01:49:04] the selected consultant team supporting the dam assessment. Work is anticipated to begin in fall 2024 and then be finalized in early 2025. Regarding the outreach and engagement, the Akateng team is committed to having a robust and inclusive outreach and engagement plan for the project to include increased transparency during this project phase. The team has identified a consultant who specializes in community engagement to serve as a neutral facilitator

[01:49:40] that informs methods, techniques, and strategies while bolstering outreach and engagement for the concurrent efforts. This task order has been authorized and notice to proceed was provided yesterday. It is anticipated that consultant support will be heavily utilized through the first year of the preservation study and continue through the completion of all associated tasks through 2027.

[01:50:11] For the feasibility preservation study, the Akatank team is working on final scope refinement to assess, evaluate, and identify feasible options to preserve Lake Akatank as a smaller lake as identified in the task force findings.

[01:50:28] Once the scope is acceptable to the Akatank team, we will post the scope of work for public input and comment before authorization. Work is currently anticipated to begin in fall of 2024. Interim deliverables will be provided periodically.

[01:50:47] Initial feasibility study results based on the first year of sediment monitoring data are anticipated to be published in late 2025. Additional updates to the preservation study may be necessary with updated USGS monitoring and data analysis through 2027.

[01:51:10] Since these efforts are occurring concurrently, Hours have been allocated for coordination and collaboration among the different consultant teams. This includes periodic meetings to ensure shared understanding of status and needs across the teams.

[01:51:32] The Akateng Project team recognizes the significant interest in this work and the urgency to commence these efforts. To ensure responsible and effective use of funds, it was necessary to confirm that the scopes of work were fully understood and accurately defined.

[01:51:50] Since the January 23rd board matter, staff have dedicated hundreds of hours to discussing tasks, coordinating with consultants and internal stakeholders, and reviewing materials to ensure comprehensive scopes of work. We are excited to be wrapping up the necessary scoping and contracting efforts to begin this important next phase of work.

[01:52:16] That concludes the presentation. Okay, thank you. And I just want to start by thanking staff for their work on this. um uh there have been times where i've i've expressed frustration at at the pace um but as you've heard there are a lot of moving pieces here and it's been important to get it right i just also want to share and board members probably know this but you know throughout the history of uh these lake akatink efforts predating my time on the board um for the most part it has been

[01:52:52] staff managing the process in addition to all of their other responsibilities and that's that's still the case but i'm really excited that we have mr debach on board now to help coordinate the various efforts and wake up every single day focused on this very important important issue and he's already doing a great job with it i want to thank the board for their support last week of the sedimentation study and the agreement with USGS. As you heard and read in the board packet,

[01:53:27] it's a really key piece of this. With respect to the preservation study, the study of the feasibility of the smaller lake option, one of the things that is very important to me is that, like we did in the task force's work, where the task force actually helped to shape the expert consultants scope of work and the questions that the expert consultants were answering alongside the task force, it's going to be important to take a similar approach here where the community

[01:54:03] is in a two-way dialogue with us and with the consultants so that the consultants are asking some of the right questions that we hear from the community. We don't want to get to the end of the process and have folks in the community say, why didn't we ask X or why didn't we ask Y?

[01:54:21] So the public engagement, the community engagement that's going to begin soon will help ensure that we accomplish that. So thank you all for the work that you've done. I also want to thank everybody in the community who has continued to be engaged and passionate on this issue and who are bearing with us as we work to fulfill and deliver on a lot of the questions that the task force asked us to try to answer as we move forward to preserve what

[01:54:55] is a really important recreational and environmental asset for Fairfax County. So with that, I'll turn it over to the chairman. Yeah, thank you. I want to support everything you just said, including the emphasis on communication with the community, which I think is absolutely vital. I do want to just get one thing just on the record clarified because I know the sedimentation rate study that we just supported and approved that there's a it's a three-year period of time of collection and we believe that to be a valid period of time in order to draw conclusions about quantities and

[01:55:31] what's happening and I'm not an engineer so I'm not going to split hairs over that time frame but I do want to get a confirmation that over that timeframe that we're doing this, that we're not foreclosing on any other possibilities of what the ultimate determination is in terms of the lake and the lake's future.

[01:55:51] In other words, you know, there were some concerns about the speed at which things were happening and whether we would reach a point where our options would be more limited. And I know I've talked to staff about this, but I just want them to confirm, you know, for the community and for the board that that period of time is not going to substantively change the menu of options that we might have available to us in terms of the permanent situation that we're dealing with at Lake Akateek.

[01:56:17] So, with the preservation study, we anticipate that to use the information for the first year of sediment monitoring provided by USGS, and then as the data continues to come in, there may be refinements that are necessary as we obtain that additional information to inform the feasibility preservation study.

[01:56:40] Right. I get that point. But I guess my question is, if at the end of that three-year period of time, we do this sedimentation analysis, that taking that three-year period of time to do that does not change the options that the board might have at the end of the study in terms of ultimately what we do with the lake.

[01:56:58] Because there's some concerns in the community that, as Chair Walkinshaw mentioned, you know, timeliness is important here. And there's some concerns that we're doing these studies, taking all this period of time. Meanwhile, things are happening at the lake. And are we going to limit our options at the end of the study as to what we can do moving forward?

[01:57:17] And I've confirmed with you that's not the case. I just want to make sure that still is your sense that all this analysis, all this study, that when we're done with this and we have all this data, we're not going to look back and say, geez, if we hadn't taken it three years to collect this, we could have done X with the lake.

[01:57:34] That's what I'm wanting to get a confirmation of. Chris Harington, Director of Public Works and Environmental Service. That's absolutely correct, Jeremy. Yes. Okay. Thank you. Yeah, and certainly it's my hope that those initial one-year results from the sedimentation study will give us as a board what we need to move forward with the preservation decision.

[01:57:55] But it's also important to have that information coming in after we make a decision to move forward because important to me here is preserving Lake Akatink not just for the next five years or the next 10 years, but developing a plan that is truly sustainable long-term and having that ongoing sedimentation data is going to be really important to do that. Okay, let me open it up to other board members to see if there are any questions. I don't see any. Okay, well,

[01:58:29] thank you all. Let's go ahead and turn it over to our next presentation on solid waste. Okay,

[01:59:18] We have Mr. Adams here, and this will be a familiar topic to board members, but we have some additional information and points to consider, so I'll turn it over to Mr. Adams. Good morning, everyone.

[01:59:37] Mr. Walkershaw said, my name is Matthew Adams, and I'm the division director in charge of the Sustainability, Engineering, and Environmental Compliance Division inside of Solid Waste Management Program in the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services. I'm also the lead

for the 20-year Solid Waste Management Plan update efforts, I am joined today by Chris Harrington, the Director of Public Works and Environmental Services, and we are here today to provide a second update on the 20-year Solid Waste Management Plan.

[02:00:06] Please note, I provided a copy of the recent waste characterization study that characterizes the waste generated in Fairfax County for the Board of Review. If you have any questions about that study, we can discuss it at the end of the presentation. So we have a lot to cover.

[02:00:21] So this is a quick outline of the topics that I'll be covering today. First, I'll give a quick overview of the CCAP plan and its outlook. Next, I'll provide a reminder of the strategies being considered and the criteria being used to evaluate said strategies.

[02:00:39] Next, I'll provide an overview of the strategy package proposals. This is the system with which we are using to bundle the strategy options together. Next, I'll be discussing one of the most decisive and impactful strategies available within our authority, which is the unified sanitation districts.

[02:00:56] Then I'll transition to an update on our public engagement activities, both focus groups and our public input campaign. And finally, I'll provide an update on timeline and leave room for the board for input and to ask questions at the end. So some of the key points that I believe are important to review and they're critical to remember when discussing the community-wide 20-year solid waste management plan and its CCAP policy-driven goal of zero waste by 2040.

[02:01:24] The strategies associated with the solid waste planning effort gives the community economically viable and environmentally sustainable options that provide resilience to our current disposal strategy. These benefits, however, do not come for free. These strategies are progressively more challenging to implement due to the size and scale of the community, as they are rooted in behavioral change of the residences and businesses, which can be challenging to enforce and are more expensive the closer the community moves towards the CCAP goal.

[02:01:56] This will inevitably require new funding strategies. This should not deter us, however, but this should drive the process forward knowing that each strategy that we implement is something beneficial to the community's long-term health. To put it flatly, if it was inexpensive and easy to do, we'd have already done it.

[02:02:15] As a quick recap, on the left are strategies that are currently being evaluated, and the evaluation criteria are on the right. These evaluation criteria are the metrics the Solid Waste Management Program are using to evaluate the pros and cons of each of these strategies, determining their viability and at what level they can be effectively implemented so that we can present an accurate menu of options for the Board of Supervisors to review and approve within the Zero Waste Management Plan.

[02:02:47] We are soliciting feedback from the board. If there are any evaluation criteria that we have omitted, or if you require further information concerning any of the criteria, we can discuss those options. Please reach out to me at the end of the presentation or send those comments in.

[02:03:06] Strategy packages. The Solid Waste Management Program has begun the process of putting the strategies together in preliminary diversion-focused packages. These packages are separated into a low, medium, and high category based on their diversion potential and the symbiotic relationship between strategies. Now you may notice our diversion rate is a little different from my last presentation. This is due to our efforts to provide an accurate number of what is actually being diverted today. The previous

number was the Department of Environmental Equality's regulatory mandated formula. This formula places caps on certain

[02:03:45] material that reduces our diversion rate. We're still in the process of sharpening that diversion rate number, but we believe we are getting closer to a true diversion rate that is both transparent and defensible to use, defensible against greenwashing. It is also important to note that we would be amongst the leading jurisdictions in the Commonwealth of Virginia with a low package, with the low strategies. The medium package would place Fairfax County as one of the top communities in the United States. There are only a handful of communities that have gotten to the

[02:04:19] 70% mark. The high package would make Fairfax County a leader in the world. However, the high package would achieve the CCAP goal of zero waste by 2040. So what does being a leader in the world look like? This is a breakdown of the high package based on full implementation of all the strategies being evaluated. This is everything necessary to reach the CCAP 90% diversion goal regardless of time or cost. As you can see, there's no singular solution or silver bullet for zero waste. No one

[02:04:57] strategy has a clear diversion advantage based on early models. That said, there are strategies that build a fundamental support for all other efforts. The Unified Sanitation Districts is one of those fundamental strategies. It is a county-managed waste system through which the county engages and manages waste collection contracts directly with the collector instead of how it is done now where residents, businesses, property owners, HOAs begin making those arrangements themselves. This strategy

[02:05:33] is not without its challenges, but this grants Fairfax County the authority through contractual obligation with the collector to offer services not available with current legislation and provides equitable and cost-effective access to said services across the county. This strategy provides the best available path under existing authority to possibly affect diversion. Unified sanitation districts are critical for pay-as-you-throw models for food scraps, organics recycling, enforcement, multifamily and commercial programming, among others. A unified sanitation model has

[02:06:11] several options for implementation which could be utilized for maximizing diversion and strengthening our strategies. A full implementation of this strategy of single-family, multi-family, and commercial contracts would provide the most benefit to the county and its residents. Specifically, commercial collection contracts would have a profound effect on the commercial recycling contamination rates that are currently estimated at 15 to 25 percent. This is not a new concept either. New York City recently adopted commercial waste zone contracts as of January 2024. As a

[02:06:49] result of a very similar need for expanded services. Shifting topics slightly, we've started a conversation with the community through our targeted focus groups discussions. The Solid Waste Management Program sustainability team has worked in collaboration with our partners in neighborhood and community services to reach out to our highly vulnerable communities and begin soliciting their feedback. We have made a very deliberate effort to meet these communities where they are and to listen to their feedback. Additionally, we've reached out to collectors, both residential and commercial property managers, large health care providers, schools,

[02:07:29] tourism in the hospitality industry, single and multi-family residents. We are still waiting to hear from our small business partners, but we've contacted just about everyone else. Here are some of the high-level feedback that we heard from the communities. We specifically heard from several focus groups about the current inequitability of the free market system we have today. There's no consistency in

pricing, services, or alternatives. Individuals that participate in our programs and minimize their waste pay the exact same as individuals who do not. This sentiment

[02:08:09] was significantly prevalent in single and multifamily feedback sessions. Multifamily particularly wanted to expand services and alternatives to their current waste systems. Food waste and organics collection has been a topic of consistent discussion.

[02:08:26] Multiple focus groups have asked that Fairfax explore options for these services. People in the community supported the plastic bag tax, bottle bills, and material bans. Finally, something we heard from the business community is updated code requirements from the county make it significantly easier to implement sustainability programming in large businesses and organizations.

[02:08:51] as they're not requested they're required so finally as an update to the public input campaign we are scheduled to we're scheduled to launch our community-wide survey starting august 1st and going to october 1st we are collaborating with the office of public affairs our public information officer the neighborhoods and community services among others to get this information out and get the survey out to as many community members as possible our goal is to gather as much information as possible about what the community wants, what's important to them,

[02:09:28] and how we can best serve them. We're considering purchasing ads and other marketing tools to maximize that participation. Finally, this is an updated milestone timeline that currently reflects where the Solid Waste Management Plan is in its development and what the upcoming critical dates associated to its delivery. Important things to note, Solid Waste will be requesting to provide an update at the October Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee concerning the public input campaign and further details on the strategy bundles.

[02:10:02] A final update will be provided to the Board of Supervisors at its December Environmental Committee meeting with the results of these evaluations, recommended levels, and an implementation timeline for these strategies. That's what I've got. Thank you. Are there any questions?

[02:10:18] All right. Thank you, Mr. Adams. Just a couple of quick thoughts and a question. Obviously, as we've had these two presentations, it demonstrates the path to meet the CCAP goal, but also the challenge.

[02:10:35] I mean, this is a very challenging undertaking. And I will just say, from my perspective, having spent a fair amount of time looking at this, in order to meet the goal or be on track to meet the goal, similar to our broader CCAP goals, we are going to have to have more support from both Richmond and Washington, quite frankly, in terms of fundamental policy changes around waste that can help us to get there.

[02:11:07] I do not believe that this is something that we can do on our own without those very fundamental policy changes. So some critical strategies here that I do think we can implement, But a big part of this is going to have to be over the next year, five years, 10 years plus, really engaging both in Richmond and Washington to get those fundamental policy changes.

[02:11:28] I'll share a quick just anecdote. And I said this a couple of years ago when we were talking about the prospect of unified sanitation districts. I live on a cul-de-sac. And until about a month ago, we had three different haulers serving our cul-de-sac.

[02:11:45] So that meant every week during yard waste season, nine diesel-powered trucks roaring up and down the cul-de-sac. About a month ago, a new entrant to the private market came by on a scooter and signed up some other people on the cul-de-sac. So now we have four private haulers serving the six homes on the cul-de-sac. And unfortunately, I do not think that is rare in Fairfax County.

[02:12:15] It is, quite frankly, asinine that we have this system where we have that many trucks going up and down 90 percent of the neighborhood streets in Fairfax County. So, you know, folks, I think, know where I stand on this question of unified districts.

[02:12:33] I also think we have proven with the new districts we've created that we can partner with private haulers to effectively serve those districts and provide very high quality service and hold them accountable for the people that we represent.

[02:12:49] We have a model for that now that's successful that I'd like to see us build upon. But I just want to have Mr. Adams or Mr. Harrington talk through the process to get there in Virginia right now based on the statute to get to unified sanitation districts.

[02:13:04] Because for some board members, this will be a new conversation. Hello, this is Matt Adams of the Solid Waste Management Program. So the steps currently to franchising is that it is a legislative process where we have to give notice to the hauling community, give them five years' notice.

[02:13:26] And then we have to justify that move to privatization, I mean, to franchising through a series of criteria that have to be met, whether it's, you know, there's inequitability or there's a pricing issue or if there is a nuisance to the community or if there's a need.

[02:13:47] There are several criteria that you have to meet to strengthen your case to move towards a franchising model, and this has to go through litigation. And who makes that determination as to whether we meet that threshold, DEQ or a court?

[02:14:05] So Chris Harrington, Director of Public Works and Environmental Services. The board, after a public hearing, would have to make that finding to initiate the five-year process to move to a countywide collection model. Okay. All right. Mr. Chairman? Yeah, you know, this is frustrating, and for those hearing it, you know, for the first time, we've known about this five-year issue.

[02:14:24] And I would just say to add to what Chairman Walkinshaw mentioned about, you know, the number of trucks, even worse is they can be every day because they're not coordinated even to come on the same day. And so we have neighborhoods throughout the county disrupted on a daily basis because of this.

[02:14:44] And so I do think that the Unified Waste Management District is absolutely the way we have to go. It keeps private haulers in businesses, but organizes them and also gives our constituents and consumers another avenue of complaint or challenge.

[02:15:02] And we can manage these by contracts. I guess the frustrating point is the five-year waiting period and when the clock starts on that. because, in my opinion, we should have done this a long time ago, and we discovered some of these delay challenges that are in code.

[02:15:17] And so, you know, I guess two things. One, there's no way around the five-year waiting period that applies to every jurisdiction in Virginia under every circumstance, and there's no way to streamline

that process. Let me ask that question first. Chairman, absent modification to statewide legislation, that is true.

[02:15:36] Unless we were to, we could accelerate the process, but we would have to pay. And it would be a significant amount that we'd be paying the private hauler community. Okay. So number two, we might want to pursue at least an ask legislatively to come up with a different period of time.

[02:15:51] Because that seems like, I mean, realizing some of the reasons behind why that period of time is not there, that's a long time to wait when we're trying to get to some of our other CCAP goals and trying to address even things that are in our CCAP that have nothing to do with waste collection but have to do with things like air quality and the amount of diesel-powered trucks that are out there. And so I do think we need to be asking that question, can that be expedited at all?

[02:16:17] And then my follow-up question on that is the five-year clock begins ticking when, and what do we have to do to begin the clock? It would probably be helpful for us to have some consultation from our friends in the county attorney's office, but my understanding is the board would basically make a finding that meets the criteria that initiates the five-year process.

[02:16:37] we would provide the notice to the private hauler community and then we would wait the requisite time period and i forgot the other part of your question no that that was it um i i just you know i do think we need to be doing that now uh recognizing that five years is an incredibly long period of time i also think that if we were to pursue a legislative change to expedite that window um you you have a stronger case of making that if you're already in the pipeline as opposed so we're just kind of waiting around to start the five-year period and so to me that's important knowing that if the board supported that route how long do you think it would take our staff to get

[02:17:16] an item to the board to begin that we can come back with a estimate on that we'd certainly want to coordinate with the county attorney and make sure that we understand all the legal processes that would and notices that would have to be provided and so i'm hesitant to give you a clear timetable but i'm hearing that that is your interest and we will explore that sir and come back. I think it's really important for us to know that, what steps have to be taken to get to that board determination and what is a reasonable time frame to do that. Because if it takes us years

[02:17:49] to get to the point where we even are able to start the five-year process, that's not acceptable. And so that's where I think it's helpful for us to know that period of time. And then simultaneously, can we be working on the legislative piece? I think it's absolutely true.

[02:18:05] We're going to need help from the state, help from our federal partners to meet our CCAP goals in a lot of different areas. But the immediate one here is the thing we can do, begin now, that will have the biggest impact, as you've outlined, is getting to this unified plan, getting to this unified district.

[02:18:23] In my mind, we need to be doing everything we can to try to expedite that and move in that direction. Okay, I have Palchik Alcorn Smith-Harrity. Thank you.

[02:18:39] First of all, very much appreciate not just the detailed plan, but your engagement and then all of your information, statistics, and really detailed information for each type of waste. I mean, those of us who know enough to be dangerous have all kinds of opinions, and I think it's very important for us to have this sort of strategically organized information and proposals.

[02:19:05] I have two questions really looking at this a little bit. I mean, that to me seems like plan A, right? We've got the top plan to be able to get there. But at the same time, I'm also borrowing any hurtful legislation that could come from us going that route.

[02:19:26] That's what I'm a little bit afraid of, is other things that we are continuing and can do while pursuing that. So one of those being the commercial work. And my initial meeting for you is in the focus group in the work with our businesses.

[02:19:44] I'm wondering if we've engaged with the health department because having grown up in catering, I know a big part of it is trying to help our small businesses both meet all of their requirements and health requirements while also trying to help them reduce waste. So I don't know if that conversation has happened or could happen soon.

[02:20:03] Matthew Adams with Solid Waste Management Program. We have not directly engaged with the health department as of today, but that is another pathway that we would definitely be willing to go down to make sure that we interact with as many people in the community as possible.

[02:20:21] The goal is to get this plan out and to work through and make sure that everyone understands the concepts and that we find small businesses and making sure that they understand what we're trying to do. So that's absolutely something we would look into. I would just add, we all know rules are only as good as the monitoring enforcement that goes along with it.

[02:20:38] Enforcement is a key component to many of these strategies. And so that's something we've been evaluating, the degree to which we would increase enforcement and the associated financial impacts and staffing impacts that would occur. We haven't, I think, to Matt's point, we haven't engaged directly with the health department because we haven't been expecting the health department to carry that load for us.

[02:20:55] But maybe there is opportunity or certainly expertise that we can mine. So we will reach out to the health department. Okay. Yeah, and I'm thinking more about the impacts and how to make it easier, right, for businesses to both meet their health requirements as well as help reduce waste. Because a lot of the way, I'm seeing all the plastic film, a lot of it is related to health requirements, right?

[02:21:17] And so just understanding that. And then my other question, so it seems that we're talking about the residential, just to clarify, the districts would be for residential? No, they would be for residential and commercial. And commercial. Okay.

[02:21:33] so yeah i definitely if it includes both uh support is looking at that um and i guess if there are any other alternate ways that we can expand the ability to do more i know i don't want to put this out there but we have our residential program that i know never has enough staffing but it's really i think the gold standard of any of the waste management programs i've seen so i don't know if there are other ways for us to look at sustainable ways to expand while also looking

[02:22:07] at this alternative i may be throwing an axe in your plans but i think as matt presented on that slide with the different strategies broken out under the high option each of those strategies yields some benefit to diversion so removing waste from incineration and so i think it's really just whatever the board's preference is and the any combination of those strategies can be you know tethered together I think to the chair's point because our we have significant authority but there are limitations on our existing authority and having the power of the contract through the county-wide collection district then dramatically expands our ability to require

[02:22:44] source separation some of these things that would achieve the higher rates of diversion I'm not sure if I'm answering your question I think so right because your plan shows all the different models right we're talking about the one contract way to address a lot of that I think We think that that is the key entry point that enables us to have more authority to implement more of these strategies absent additional authority granted by the General Assembly or a really significant change on the federal model, which we don't see on the horizon.

[02:23:11] Okay. No. Okay. I want to try to move on to our next presentation by 1.05 or shortly thereafter, and I want to try to avoid the last questioners only having 10 seconds left, so we'll go to Supervisor Alcorn, but we'll try to keep it as soon as we can. Very quickly, great discussion.

[02:23:28] I totally support the unified sanitation model approach. I'm glad we're moving in there. And by the way, thank you for the waste characterization study. That's fantastic data, really, really excellent stuff. On slide seven, how does that relate to the timeline that was just up there?

[02:23:46] And I guess this builds on Chairman McKay's question, too. Like, when would we need to decide on an implementation level? And would that be before the five-year clock starts ticking? Or are there questions like that that we could figure out during the five years?

[02:24:04] Yes, to all of the above. And so I think all options are on the table at present. And so I think we are seeking direction from the board in terms of what are the strategies that are appealing to you. Assuming that we move down any of these options other than the status quo, step one I think would be the countywide collection district, that has the longest or that has a long lead time for us just to sit and wait basically yes under the current so it would depend on the strategies the other strategies the board would like us to pursue then um under the high timeline uh it is built for us to achieve the ccap goal by the ccap

[02:24:40] deadline okay that sounds good i i would for some of these for example uh when we're talking about about a sanitation district that would include commercial, include multifamily. I mean, I would like to have a little bit more information on that because, you know, commercial is such a broad category.

[02:25:00] You know, the catering restaurants are going to be different, you know, from big box retail. So, you know, understanding how it would apply to different situations. And the other thing I would ask for is maybe the next time you come back or in a NIP. How would this also apply to people like me that live in a community where there is already an association hiring a trash and recycling hauler? And basically, would it have to be that those associations would let go of their contracts, or could it be set up in a way where there would

[02:25:38] be an opt-in or would there be a transition or could there be all options are on the table okay great thank you okay smith thank you um the uh survey that's going out to the public if you could just provide like a quick overview of what you're looking for how long do you think the survey will take people i take it it will be you know online that people will do it all right matthew adam

[02:26:13] the Solid Waste Management Program. So the survey is roughly 15 questions that, you know, should take people 10 minutes to do. It will be online through the public input software that the county currently uses. You know, it will be accessible through QR code, through, you know, there'll be multiple ways to interact with this survey. And we'll be asking questions about you know what people currently pay how much waste are they generating you know the demographics of the community you know just general questions trying to figure out what's

[02:26:50] important to them okay thank you um i you wish i was done um you know i think when we talked about going to this franchising it does make sense for a lot of reasons we do have another polar in our neighborhood now too. The devil is in the details and where we get and how we go. And, you know, Chris, I heard you say that we can get to the point of level of implementation. Equity, cost, issues for families. And I don't need it today, but I want to understand more the pay-as-you-go

[02:27:28] system. I look at, you know, a family, you've got a single person, two adults, how much trash they have. You got a family like I raised with four kids, you're going to have more trash. I'm very concerned about equity and where we go. I think the thing that is out there that I have to put up a flag that I have a concern, and I know there's an expectation from the community that we're going to meet this CCAP goal by 2040. I will not commit to that without knowing the cost, the impact, How many staff do we have to hire?

[02:28:07] What is it really going to take? Can we change communities' behavior? We have all these goals in CCAP. And I have been very frustrated from the beginning that we don't have a real sense and purpose of where our limited, and they are limited, dollars need to go.

[02:28:25] We have a community that is stressed by all the things we want to do here, which are great things. And so for me to say, yeah, let's keep going full steam ahead for this goal, I think we have to be aware of the consequences and the outcomes of that.

[02:28:42] Thank you. Okay. Thank you. I guess I'd say that's exactly why we've had these two presentations, to have that conversation and be completely open and transparent about the strategies necessary. Supervisor Herdy? Thank you for that, because that was a lot of what I was going to say.

[02:28:58] because, I mean, and I think you look even here where our water coolers disappeared for a budget cut and now we're back to these plastic bottles. I mean, I just said, well, were you filling them up in the sink? I had blue can water.

[02:29:14] There you go. You filling them up at sink or at the home? At sink. Yeah, I was going to say, I mean, we had water coolers. But let me get back to, I had a couple of questions last time. I haven't seen those answers of what goes to the MRF. You know, what percentage that we count as recycled actually gets recycled?

[02:29:37] So, sorry, this is Matthew Adams. Roughly the contamination rate at the MRF, which is, you know, what we submit to the MRF that gets recycled, roughly 20% of what's submitted in is contamination. So 80% of the recyclables that you put in your blue bin at the beginning of the day actually go through the recycling process.

[02:29:59] 20% goes back into incineration. So 80% actually gets into a recycled product? Roughly. Approximately. Okay. That's higher than I thought it was going to be. Obviously, we eliminated glass because that was the heaviest number, the biggest number that wasn't getting recycled.

[02:30:17] So let me go to unified sanitation districts. Absolutely for residential. Private haulers agree. I think it makes a lot of sense. What I don't think makes a lot of sense, to go back to your question, is taking CCAF and having our private haulers as a part of unified sanitation districts get to zero waste by adding a bunch of costs onto our residents to do all these things that are under the associated strategy.

[02:30:50] So my concern is we're basically going to shift the costs of those strategies to our residents through their trash bill that we are then going to go to your point.

[02:31:07] You know, there's equity issues and everything else with that. I think that's the other question that I had asked is the other jurisdictions that we were comparing with that were up at 60. do they include glass and have we looked at whether they're the amount that actually gets recycled and whether they included glass or not this is matthew adams of solar waste management program i believe inside of the waste characterization study there are uh inside of the report there are multiple jurisdictions that we compared up against that that data is found inside of that report okay and we'll highlight incident okay all right that that would be good

[02:31:47] I think I'll stop it there so you can end up before 1.05. All right, thanks. Supervisor Lusk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is very quick. On the survey, in terms of the questions, are they all closed-ended or are there any open-ended questions?

[02:32:10] This is Matthew Adams with the Stalways Management Program. Most of the questions are closed-ended. They're multiple choice, but there are some open-ended questions where individuals can put information in it. Okay. Because the thought is it might be helpful. We might get some ideas, suggestions from the community that could be low-hanging fruit. Just getting to this point about cost that we just heard, there might be some opportunities for some gleam, some ideas from that survey result as well. Thank you.

[02:32:41] Okay, Supervisor Stork. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a reminder to everybody, we've set a jet goal for all the county operations and school operations to be at essentially 90% by 2030. So that is intended in my mind, and I think always in the conversation is the way to lead this process for the county itself to do what it's asking only the residents to do in 2040 or thereabout.

[02:33:09] So we need to stay focused on achieving that goal by 2030 because that will, in turn, I think, give us a sense of how difficult or easy or whatever it is we're going to be able to do by 2040. So that's, I don't want anybody to forget about that. The second thing is that the zero waste impacts, it's pretty curious at how many of them are very similar in terms of the impact.

[02:33:31] There's no one huge item, if we went after, would make a big difference. And so the information provided here today, I think, is very helpful in that conversation. Appreciate your providing it for us. And then my last comment is, I believe in the marketplace.

[02:33:49] I believe in businesses. I believe in their creativity. I believe in their flexibility. I believe in the opportunity that they have. So contrary, at least to a couple of you here, I think we can do this. Now, how hard that will be and how easy it will be, I don't know. But we do have time, in essence, to get there.

[02:34:06] The key of that, in my mind, is for government, for all of us, if you will, to define exactly what we want, in this case, environmental standards, environmental expectations, environmental enforcement, things that we're going to enforce, what this process is, define what that is, not define it in a method, define it in an outcome that they have to achieve, and then use that definition of the outcome to get folks to be creative and come up with maybe new approaches, new ways of doing that.

[02:34:34] The other part of that, in my mind, is we have to provide an opportunity not to have some huge, in my mind, some huge unified sanitation district for the whole county. We need to have a small and

optimum level area that we can to provide lots of these individual companies out there to experiment and to try something.

[02:34:58] We have the new scooter folks that came and soliciting. I don't want another third or fourth truck going down your road, but having a defined area of a neighborhood of maybe 200, 500,000, whatever that number is, defining that and giving opportunities for smaller firms to economically compete and prove their concept is, I think, the essence of what we should be thinking about and focused on and, frankly, work on realizing.

[02:35:25] I know we're going to need the state to support that, but I think those are our challenges. Those are our opportunities, and I think we can be absolutely a leader in this process if the state gives us, frankly, the flexibility to do that. thank you okay great questions and comments you know it sounds like um there's there's a consensus to to move forward and at least get the information about the process to move toward the unified sanitation district so maybe i'll work with mr harrington and and the county executive and see if we can either get a nip or come back to a future environmental committee meeting because

[02:36:00] if we want to if we want to go in that direction we need to start the clock and work on a parallel path in Richmond. So I think we will work toward that and continue the larger dialogue here. One thing I will just point out about in terms of cost to residents, you know, when I was on the Ravensworth Farm Civic Association, we went down this path of trying to figure out how we could make trash collection easier and less expensive for people. And when I started asking my neighbors what they were paying to private haulers. As we know, there is a very wide range and there are

[02:36:38] many, many, many people in Fairfax County right now who are paying private haulers significantly more than their next door neighbor and significantly more than what we charge in our collection districts. So this has a potential before we talk about any policy changes to save a lot of money for a lot of people. I also think we should be in the business of making people's lives more convenient. And the only way to get a good deal out of your private hauler is if you are willing to spend hours every year calling, trying to get one of them on the phone, negotiating, playing one against the other. And I don't think our residents should have to do that just to get

[02:37:18] a fair deal to get their trash picked up. So I look forward to getting the information back from staff. And with that, we'll move to our final presentation on tree canopy and invasives. Thank

[02:37:28] you. Okay, our final presentation, we have Jay Cole from the Park Authority, Brian Kitely from

[02:38:11] UFMD, and John Burke from the Park Authority. And a team of us have been working over the last several weeks to try to pull this together. And this is an interesting and exciting presentation. I think there's some things in here that are a little bit counterintuitive, but I know this is an issue that all of us hear about, and there's a lot of folks in the community who are interested in so i will turn it over to jay are you going to kick us off i will thank you for the introduction jay cole executive director of the park authority um supervisor walkinshaw just said all of the sentences that i was about to say as you all know this is something that we hear about a lot from

[02:38:47] our constituents and our residents um the environmental community um everybody and so we just wanted to come and give you a comprehensive look at what we're doing now and talk about where we should go thank you i'll turn it over to good afternoon my name is john burke i'm the branch Manager of Natural Resources with Fairfax County Park Authority. So we're going to start from square one with

invasive plants. You know, what are they? USDA defines them as introduced plant species that have been introduced to an environment where they are likely to cause harm to the ecosystem or, in some cases, even to human health. You can think of them as a playground bully who moves into a new neighborhood and excludes everyone else from using that playground. That's

[02:39:27] basically the way that we look at them. They can get here through a number of means, either commercial residential agricultural and in the past government introduction they tend to be really dominant in along forest edges those places where we've removed trees or developed an area and we've increased sunlight which allows them to thrive but they can also thrive because they are spread by humans and wildlife they remain in the soil or seed bank if you will where they can sustain and pop up sometimes five years later ten years later depending on the species and further there are

[02:40:02] other pressures on our native plants and our native natural communities such as an overabundance of deer and native plant pathogens which also pressure our native plant species and further give invasive plants the edge the impacts to ecosystems and wildlife are broad you can another analogy you can think of is if you go to a grocery store and imagine that your variety of foods that you usually like are no longer there there's only one food it's not your favorite you might not even recognize it as being food. That's essentially the role that invasive plants will play in our forested ecosystems. They reduce biodiversity, which is the variety of life in a particular habitat or

[02:40:42] ecosystem, and they can make it so that food sources, again, are homogenous or unavailable. They can out-compete native plants and rare species, and they can suppress the growth of native plants in some cases. So they're very detrimental to our forests, our meadows, and our natural habitats. But further, and what we're going to be looking at next, is how they can degrade tree canopy as well. Good morning, members of the Board of Supervisors. My name is Brian Kate Lee. I am the Director of the Urban Forest Management Division in the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services. We recently completed a tree canopy study. It was

[02:41:22] funded through the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund with our non-profit partner, Casey Trees. The results were a little bit surprising compared to some of the anecdotal observations that we see going around the county. You know, projects like the VDOT, you know, 495 NEX, I-66, and then just general development. So you can see from your screen, we arrived at a small increase of 3%.

[02:41:50] you know, this is from remotely sensed data from the USDA. It's leaf on, but that data cannot decipher between types of vegetation. It's just basically we can tell what's a broadleaf tree or vegetation that mimics trees. We can't differentiate between turf, but that's pretty much the extent of that data. So you can see from here, 27% of the land mass in the county was unsuitable. Think of that as the built environment, roads, buildings, sidewalks. And then about 18%

[02:42:28] was available for tree, you know, for potential canopy, let's call it. But please keep in mind that within that potential canopy, there are other land uses such as or cover types such as meadows and turf grass our recreational fields are contained within that um so we think that there is um a potential to meet you know the current ccap goals which as a reminder um are 60 tree canopy by 2050 and then interim goals of 40 tree canopy in each census block by 2030.

[02:43:04] next slide so where did it come from um that's a good question so we have three hypothesis of where we think uh hypothy hypothy you got it you got it everyone got it all right um but our number one hypothesis is that um it's from existing tree canopy um you can see a young man here on the left um tree

growth is subtle but continuous um you can see that over a six-year period our native trees do grow a significant amount um the example shown is grown from an acorn of southern red oak

[02:43:42] which is a moderately growing species. So that's a good indicator of how quickly tree growth occurs. If you think about the radius of tree canopy, of that shoot growth, and you add it up on the, if you add up that radius of shoot growth over the 15 million trees in the county, it really adds up to a significant amount of canopy growth. But this also emphasizes the need to conserve our existing tree canopy second hypothesis is from land use conversion and you

[02:44:19] can see here you know since 1900 the majority of of the county was in dairy production but by 1945 most residents were no longer living on farms that continues today as abandoned agricultural fields revert to native forest over time. And this process continues as development pressures are exerted on the forest. So we've been seeing the remaining small farms and horse farms in the county slowly converting over to tree canopy. And this probably contributes to a minor amount

[02:44:55] of the overall canopy increase, but it adds up over 406 square miles. Next slide. And then finally tying it back to the invasive species talk. Lastly, we have hypothesized that much of the leaf surface area, as shown in the tree canopy study, is actually from invasive trees, such as tree of heaven and calorie pear, or invasive vines smothering and covering existing tree canopy.

[02:45:21] So you can see from this that we cannot differentiate between tree canopy and invasive vines we cannot distinguish right now from native canopy and invasive species so with that i'll give it back to john so there are many examples of what brian's talking about when it comes to invasive canopy i'm going to provide one to you here this is poplar ford park on the west side of the county and you can see in the red circle here what looks to be a fairly significant canopy and it is but But this canopy is made up of only really two species, and the dominant species is invasive autumn olive.

[02:45:59] So while it appears to be healthy canopy, it is in fact not and does require intervention. So when we lose canopy in some cases, when we do intervene through restoration, it's not always a negative thing. Because what we're actually doing in those cases when we are removing canopy for restoration is establishing more appropriate, more biodiverse, and healthier habitats.

[02:46:20] And again, there are multiple examples of this throughout the county where we have invasive canopy or invasive vines dominating the canopy visible from the air, but it's not always reflective, those aerial imagery, it's not always reflective of the quality of that canopy. And oftentimes we do intervene, which may result in what appears to be a net canopy loss.

[02:46:39] We talked about the ecological impacts of invasive plants. There's more to the story than just that, though. They can overtake parks, trails, and other public spaces. They can often disproportionately affect marginalized communities, especially on their private property, and those folks may lack the resources to combat these issues.

[02:46:57] You can see on the right here we've got a park with a trailhead that's totally encumbered by invasive vines, blocking access and providing communities access to those parks. There's also other implications for having invasive plants, not only in parks but on public land and private property. climate resiliency is something to talk about as well because they form a monoculture or or a single species ecology in a certain system that system can be less resilient to climate change and the impacts of it from

extreme weather and things like that so having a more robust and diverse ecosystem allows open spaces to better withstand these challenges another example here

[02:47:33] of those impacts to park property open space and access this is laurel hill park this is kudzu which was a vine that was introduced and valued by the government and the public alike for its ability to spread and control erosal slopes however without management it jumped beyond the intended boundaries and quickly became known as the plant that ate the south and here you can see an example here we have no access for residents this area of park we have a homogenous natural community and we have in impacts to albeit abandoned utilities utilities nonetheless there at that power pole in the middle further you can see the canopy in the back which i can

[02:48:09] assure you is also encumbered by this vine so again this requires intervention we step in we may remove large swathes of invasive plants and re-establish appropriate native habitats but we also provide access to the public to parkland and speaking of parkland you know we are the biggest manager of invasive plants in the county we're the largest landowner and we have about 17 000 acres of open space further we have about 1800 miles of edge habitat remember that edge habitat is where these invasive plants thrive the most so you can think of it as having a lot of neighbors a

[02:48:45] lot of fence line and you have to constantly monitor that fence line to prevent encroachment and that's what we're dealing with so we spend a lot of effort monitoring our forests for the levels of invasive plants and use that monitoring work to prioritize our actions and management strategies on parkland we're not the only people and we're not the only agency in fairfax county doing this work there are of course a number of governmental agencies non-governmental partners that are engaged in invasive plant management, mitigation, as well as engaging in reestablishing and reintroducing native plants where appropriate throughout Fairfax County.

[02:49:21] I assure you I haven't captured all of them here, but these are some of the major players in the game with some of the major programs that we're engaged in. When we're talking about that management and mitigation, there's a number of strategies that both Fairfax County Park Authority and other agencies as well as private property owners might engage in.

[02:49:38] The biggest one you'll hear about is mechanical manual removal. That can be effective in small areas. It's what a lot of our volunteers do to great effect. However, there are certain plants, certain species, and certain systems where that will not be sufficient because these plants survive very well in disturbed habitat.

[02:49:54] They survive very well to browsing and to removal. They can re-sprout. Often a systemic means of control is required. Sometimes that can be prescribed burn where it can burn an area to promote fire-adaptive native species. That's often not appropriate for many areas of Fairfax County. What this means is we often have to use herbicides as an intervention.

[02:50:13] Herbicides are a systemic means of controlling invasive plants, which means they are often the most cost-effective means of killing invasives and re-establishing a native habitat, but they are themselves occasionally expensive, depending on what species you're targeting, and can be controversial at times in the eyes of the public.

[02:50:34] Occasionally, and in the case of park authority, complete intervention is required through the form of restoration, basically means hitting the reset button on a natural community or ecosystem often

these are forest restorations and meadow restorations where we are required to go in and clear out expanses of parkland that have been totally over encumbered by invasive plants and spend multiple years working to re-establish those habitats you can see the numbers here on the slide these do not account for the long-term maintenance and follow-up that is often required to support these initiatives

[02:51:05] That's happening through the Landscape Legacy and Sustainability Program, and that program is very new, and we're currently monitoring the success of our restorations as well as evaluating the overall costs for the long-term maintenance where we've made gains in suppressing invasive plants, establishing restoration work, and then now working to ecologically, if you will, maintain those systems.

[02:51:27] The ongoing regional concerns, and again, this problem is not restricted to Fairfax County, are broad. We have many management areas that are outside of park authorities control and the county's control more broadly, things like VDOT areas, easements, right-of-ways, utility right-of-ways, things like that.

[02:51:48] Also, invasives continue to be introduced and reintroduced through commercial sales, occasionally agriculture and by other means. And there are numerous regional initiatives in place, both, again, public and private groups that are broader than just Fairfax County aimed at suppressing invasives, mitigating this problem, and working to restore native habitats.

[02:52:10] This includes many impressive volunteer efforts, which are doing a lot of work on parkland and more broadly, to remove invasive plants, as well as stakeholder groups who are focusing on reestablishing native plants. But there's also been some higher-level work, both the Capital Region Partnership for Invasive Species Management, or PRISM, which is working together with counties in Maryland, D.C., Virginia, to get together on strategies for control and appropriate management of invasive plants on a regional basis.

[02:52:43] But also recently as well, the Virginia State Invasive Plant Work Group in 2021, which was designated to provide recommendations for legislation involving invasive plants. So as you can tell by the multi-departmental approach here, we all understand what the issue is.

[02:53:06] We all understand what the impact to both parkland, private lands, and other public land, because we're not the only owner of land, large owner of land in the county. But we're the ones who do the majority of work, in part because of our stewardship focus and our mission of conserving the natural resources for the county.

[02:53:28] What we don't really have as a county is a one-stop sort of group-focused approach to targeting non-nave invasives. Some examples of large-scale approaches. The federal government has dedicated $826 million to eradicate or attempt to eradicate non-nave invasive species.

[02:53:50] National Parks just did a $5.5 million investment in non-nave invasive species. As John had mentioned, the Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan is a $4.9 million goal of treating non-native invasives.

[02:54:06] And for local parks, Mecklenburg County just committed $1.5 million per year to try to target non-native invasive species. So what are the next steps look like?

[02:54:23] Well, Brian's going to talk briefly about our additional canopy studies plan, and I'll just talk about potential opportunities for future investment in invasive plants and where we would propose going

next. Thank you, John. Brian Kately, UFMD. um just really quickly in the sake of time we we through our current uh grant with casey trees we will receive one more update to the canopy study we're expecting that the data was just released in june of 24 so give it you know six months to a year for them to process and we'll get that updated study we're also working in collaboration with virginia tech and the usda forest service

[02:55:01] to come up with new sampling protocols to really understand the quality and composition of that 55 percent right now there's a couple question marks of what what what the composition what what that's made up of and as far as invasive plants are concerned there remains a need for a unified strategy within the county for broader invasive plant management both on public and private property whether that's incentives or studies that remains a need while park authority happy to serve as the largest landowner and continue to manage invasive plants we recognize that there's a window of opportunity there as well that we could be meeting when we talk about

[02:55:41] categories of potential study or potential future investment or opportunities we break it down into three basic areas the ecological priorities which is where park authority is posting focusing most of its efforts currently but also on canopy loss which as you can see and as we've discussed remains an issue broadly within the county and when looking through the lens of invasive plants and then finally equity encroachment issues remain a challenge on park authority property and elsewhere when it comes to invasive plants we want to work to retain and provide more access to all members of the county and you know there's an additional need to further invest there from

[02:56:17] an invasive plant management perspective and with that i will take any questions okay thank you um let me just start and probably all of us have have been out with IMA volunteers to see the work that they do and we owe them a tremendous debt when you do that it it makes you feel a certain way about the scope of this challenge personally yeah yeah you know someone who spent two hours trying to remove vines from one tree you realize how challenging this is and even when

[02:56:55] you zoom out and start to look at it at a macro level, it still feels tremendously challenging. It is important to point out we have a lot of good work being done on this issue. As has been noted, what we don't have is kind of a unified, cohesive strategy because the work that's taking place is taking place in different agencies and with a lot of folks regionally and volunteers. So I do think having that unified strategy to guide our decisions

[02:57:33] would be very valuable. I also think there would be value in taking a look nationally or maybe even internationally to see what other jurisdictions have done and what successes that they have had on publicly owned land and on what we didn't spend a lot of time talking about today on privately owned land. We mail everyone who owns a property in RPA a postcard about the legal requirements of building in an RPA or adding a patio in an RPA. Should we be doing something

[02:58:10] similar with respect to invasives if they're in a high-risk area or on a heavily forested property? Is there more we can do in our A&F districts to work with those property owners? We already do a lot, but is there more that we can do? I think we would really benefit from taking a holistic view of that and seeing what are the targeted opportunities.

[02:58:33] $25,000 per acre is a lot, and we're going to need to do some of that, but that cannot be our only approach. So, you know, that's kind of how I come at this issue. Also, it's important to point out, we spend a lot of time on this in the legislative committee, meetings over the last couple years. You know, we are

spending a lot of time, energy, and effort to try to remove from our natural environment invasive species that Richmond continues to be unwilling to address. There was legislation last year that we supported that was very modest

[02:59:12] to have retailers just put up a sign noting that there are invasive species sold that passed with bipartisan support. Unfortunately, Governor Yunkin vetoed it. So we've got to do more in Richmond because we're trying to bail water out of a boat here, and Richmond is allowing water to continue to get dumped into that boat. Mr. Chairman? I couldn't have said it any better. Honestly, we do need a unified approach to this. On the point of sale issue, though, we all know, We've seen, we experienced kudzu, we appreciate you offering that.

[02:59:51] I guess the question is, is are there unique species that we see in Fairfax County or in our region that are different, that are, give me an idea of the growth rate of those, and I don't think most people, even to this day, sadly, on the private property side, most people have no idea what the difference between an invasive and non-invasive is, and they don't know that when they're standing at the nursery purchasing a plant either. And so we do need a lot more help from Richmond, but that doesn't mean we can't be doing a lot more education on our side, as the chairman mentioned. But is there something, are we seeing a unique type of

[03:00:26] species or group of species in Fairfax County that have us very concerned locally? And how do we recognize those? So let me just clarify, are you asking that we see in stores? I'm saying Currently or both are on the ground.

[03:00:44] There are some that we see in stores still. I just wanted to point out. Oh, I absolutely know that. That's separate. I would love to give you a list of those things at a later time. And I can turn over to John as to what are the most pervasive. There are a lot of species that we see. There are some that don't have the impact.

[03:01:01] We still need to deal with it. But the impact of Japanese tiltgrass isn't necessarily going to pull trees down like a kudzu or outcompete other. Thank you for the question. I get to dust off my ecology. think um as other species are um autumn olive um um those kind but john go ahead yeah there's there's two that come to mind when um so the ones that jay just mentioned are especially problematic from in a broadly speaking within the region and within most a lot of the united states unfortunately regionally there's two um that are of particular interest so um uh water chestnut trap of by

[03:01:36] Espinosa was is an aquatic invasive plant that was for management in this area. An idea in this area started about a little more than 10 years ago and it was only in a few ponds here and there. And now it's spread to more than 80 ponds regionally.

[03:01:53] So that's that one is a particular concern, not only from Fairfax County, but other other groups as well, including the prism group that I mentioned are focusing on it. The Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Group are focusing on it. And there's been some conversation with the Corps of Engineers for some potential opportunities to get additional support for that species, just that one species.

[03:02:16] The other terrestrial species that I'll call out, and there are many, and I'm sure our volunteers and our ecologists all have one they want to throw up for consideration or for mention. But wavy leaf basket grass is a great example of one that's occurred in this region. And again, 10 years ago, 15 years ago, there were only a few locations where it was found in Fairfax County in the region.

[03:02:37] And we call that an early detection rapid response species. So even though we identified it as being new, we took action as quickly as we could. And despite that, and despite the efforts of our volunteers, and despite using consultants and contractors to apply herbicides and getting crews out there to remove the stuff, it is still spread and it's becoming much more ubiquitous in Fairfax County where we now have 30, 40 sites probably probably more than that at this point where we've got this particular grass species to contend with there are many more examples I'm not covering all the bases for sure but those are just you know two for the sake of time that I would just like to highlight okay thank you okay we'll go

[03:03:17] Alcorn Biermann Smith thank you very quickly first of all support the next steps thank you all great presentation I did want to just go back on the tree cover on slide four and I know you talked about the different different reasons why we've seen tree cover improve I want to underscore one thing that's not been mentioned and that's our land use policies in Fairfax County we have been following a land use policy of concentrating development we are not allowing development all over the place if you look at Springfield there that It has the highest tree canopy.

[03:03:56] So let's don't forget of the relationship and that 27% of unsuitable planning area. I bet you if we looked at that in 2012, that's probably not changed because our hardscape, what we have that's the built environment, we're doing redevelopment and we're concentrating development in many places where there's already development.

[03:04:17] But let's don't forget that as we think about our land use as well. So thank you. Okay, Supervisor Beerman. um so uh director cole said uh 1.5 million in mecklenburg per year um what what i would love to see and you can't probably can't offer this off the top of of your head right now but we're going back into budget season budget season really never ends um would be sort of you know we talk about a unified strategy so what is a what is a real unified strategy cost per year how many full-time equivalents? How do we get, you know, how do we price out the volunteer hours that we're

[03:04:56] getting? I think, um, I think actually the audit committee on our work plan, it's either on the primary or the secondary work plan was auditing, uh, you know, pricing out our volunteer hours throughout the County. So we're already looking to do that, but would love to love to see what that total costs would be. And then the other thing to price out though, is what the actual benefit on the other side is how much money are we saving because we aren't you know seeing this park go up in you know be unusable to our people uh so so you know it's great we talk about a

[03:05:32] unified strategy in the future uh and and would love to see that sort of exactly priced out both on the cost and the benefit side uh going into budget season we would absolutely love to come back um and provide you with that i will say that this is probably the i say a lot we're not growing any more land in the county this might be the only situation where we are um in which there's unusable land that in doing non-invasives actually makes it usable to the public okay and i think supervisor beerman i mean there's there's kind of two pieces here uh you know there there may be a

[03:06:08] modest cost to get the expert support to help us develop that unified strategy and maybe a series of tactics a menu so to speak for the board to to choose from so i think until we do that in partnership with our tree commission and other groups in the community who are doing this work until we do that it would be impossible to put an overall price tag on what it would take to to seriously address address the issue so it's kind of a a two-step process i would say fair

[03:06:41] enough. Supervisor Jimenez. Wow, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you all for this report and the findings. Obviously, this is, you know, quite the project, right? And sometimes you don't even know where to begin. I used to work in the ocean world, and we were looking at animals in the ocean and how to take them out like lionfish, and it's tough, right? But it does take partnerships. It does take, you know, money from the state and the federal government.

[03:07:16] So real quick, I'd like to just thank all the volunteers in Fairfax County who spend tireless hours working on this. I know Kathleen Brown and some of her friends are here today who have been helping on this issue. So that's extremely helpful to have that engagement from the community. But we also, as mentioned by the chairman, need dollars from the state and from federal.

[03:07:36] You mentioned that there were dollars coming in from federal. Is there, do you have a kind of like a display of where that money is coming in and how much of that money is coming in on the federal level? Was I incorrect to say? Breaking down the 826? Yeah.

[03:07:52] That the federal, I don't have that, but I can get it to you. Okay, that'd be awesome. Again, it's going to take all of us working together just to try to start working on this massive issue, but I do appreciate all the volunteers in Fairfax who are working on this and all of you, so thank you. Supervisor Palchuk? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[03:08:09] Thank you so much, all three of you. Love the picture, Brian. I assume that's your kiddo in there, growing with the tree. It's a great way to measure growth in kids, too. So I think we've focused on a lot of it, and 100%, there are so many different strategies. I think one that's in here, but we glossed over a little bit, and on slide 11, the environmental justice and reduction of social capital, I think you addressed it a little bit.

[03:08:37] I'm trying to look at your map, and our district's, mine has certainly changed since 2012. We've lost quite a bit of land to other districts. But I know there are so many agencies involved, and EOC also looks at sort of the heat indexes and trying to make sure we focus so many great volunteers doing work.

[03:08:56] A huge shout out to Sarah in our district who leads so many groups. But in trying to get more support and more improvement in the tree canopy in a lot of our underserved areas, as you work with these agencies and with soil and water, I guess that's my question.

[03:09:14] If you can share a little bit more with all these strategies, how we're looking and focusing on the equity issues and the land issues in some of those parts of the community that we know have maybe less official parks and less official tree canopy?

[03:09:31] I think that that's one of the things when we're talking about a global or a county-wide approach that we want to make sure that we add in. Right now, we've got two different missions. We've got our equity mission, and we have our conserving natural resource. And with limited resources, we tend to focus on protecting those irreplaceable natural resources that we have.

[03:09:57] And we want to make sure that in looking forward that we parse out whatever commitment that we make to make sure that there's dedicated commitment, because a lot of that equity area, those places that we're talking about, might not give you an ecological lift, but are huge for the community.

[03:10:12] So we want to make sure there is a puzzle piece for that that does not compete or take away from work that we're doing in other instances. Bamboo is another example. When we came and presented

bamboo, the same situation, we want to eradicate the bamboo where it is and we need to prioritize based on the impact to, John wants to prioritize based on the impact to the ecology and the natural resources. However, there's another piece that really can't compete with that and shouldn't, but we want to make sure that we're carving out so that we're doing those areas in lower income areas. We're making sure that when you drive down the road,

[03:10:47] it looks just as good on, you know, I'm not going to name it, some roads as it does in other roads. That's an important piece to this also, because it does impact sort of the community's social capital and all those other things. Do you want to go anywhere? Go ahead. And just to follow up on that, Brian Kately, UFMD.

[03:11:06] With our tree planting program and our nonprofit partners, we have focused, used the one Fairfax lens as a way to prioritize where our tree planting efforts are going. So we recently signed an MOU with Park Authority.

[03:11:21] We'll be looking at Park Authority properties in those areas. Casey Trees won one of the IRA federal grants. We did not, but neither did any of the counties in the area. So Casey Trees won one for $10 million, and they're focused on schools in those, so Title I schools and schools in those vulnerable communities.

[03:11:41] So it's a start. It's not the answer to everything, but I think using that one for effects policy as a lens is the appropriate way to look at some of these proactive ecological things as opposed to some of the reactive things that park authority is dealing with.

[03:11:58] And let me just say, and thank you for that, because I think as I look at the major parks and tree cover in my district, the two major ones are the highest income communities. And so I appreciate that approach to bring in one Fairfax to this work. Okay, Supervisor Stork, we'll have the last word.

[03:12:16] Thank you. And I want to thank you all for bringing this forward, Chairman, as well as I wanted to make sure we thank the Tree Commission. They've done a huge amount of work on this, and I wanted to particularly highlight that work, as well as the Weed Warrior Task Force. And I know I've had multiple conversations, maybe some of you as well, with Northern Virginia Tree Rescuers.

[03:12:37] They've been knocking on my door on all of you because they recognize the need. They want to try to put together something, and they're out there literally pulling down vines and making a difference. So those are all critical elements. Something I would like to see if we could do, I've raised it before, and I really think it would make a difference to educate folks is to do a, I know we did a bamboo thing, but let's do an invasives virtual Fairfax County meeting, education piece.

[03:13:02] We did one on Saving Oaks that got, we had like 150 people. I think, Brian, you were part of that. Yeah, it was a huge number of people. This is all virtual, but if we could do something around invasives, I think we would get a lot of folks who would tie into that and would be greatly appreciative of having that part of it.

[03:13:18] And last but not least, I wanted to thank the OEC for the Climate Action Snapshot. I think this is a great piece that they passed out and shared with everybody, and all part of, I think, what we're trying to do to educate and communicate with folks. So, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Okay, thank you. Thank you all. I think we've heard strong support for the idea of developing a unified strategy and approach to this, so I'll follow up with staff and plan to come back to the board with something actionable along those lines.

[03:13:46] Thank you, everyone.