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# Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee, Tuesday, July 23, 2024

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**[00:00:03]** Okay. All right. Good morning again, everyone. Welcome to our July 23rd, 2024 meeting of the 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

**[00:00:41]** are any changes to that we'll consider that summary adopted i also want to share and 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

**[00:01:21]** faith communities. 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. 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

[00:01:55] 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. We have Chris Harrington and Joni Kahnbacher 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. We're also joined by Tergai Dabak, who is the

[00:02:31] Lake Akateng Project Manager. So yes, we're here to provide an update on the DPWS Lake Akateng Project efforts. These are selections from Lunatech's Discovery Report and the Lake Akateng Task Force Findings Report, which were finalized in November and December 2023, respectfully.

[00:02:57] The findings in these documents were key to informing the actions outlined in the subsequent board matter. 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 23rd, 2024, directed the county executive and DPWES to take the actions outlined on this

[00:03:31] slide. 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 Akatank that would continue to benefit park visitors. 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

[00:04:06] findings, and a dam assessment. Since the dam is owned by the Fairfax County Park Authority, 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 to ensure these efforts are prioritized and move forward in a timely manner dpwes has successfully repurposed and recruited a staff position that is dedicated to the daily coordination and management of these

[00:04:44] efforts. Turgay 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. 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

[00:05:21] the appropriate professionals are involved in implementing and supporting the significant work. Collaboration and discussions continue with the team members so that all parties have a comprehensive understanding of the project needs and requirements.

[00:05:39] The Lake Akatang project team has been working diligently to determine the appropriate approach, define scope, and complete negotiations for this important next phase. A status update for Lake Akitank was provided in a not-in-package memorandum dated June 26th.

[00:06:01] 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 Akitank.

[00:06:17] 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.

[00:06:34] 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.

[00:06:54] 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 yesterday.

[00:07:10] 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.

[00:07:32] In regards to the dam assessment, Park Authority with support from DPWES are actively coordinating the scope of work with a selected consultant team supporting the dam assessment.

[00:07:48] 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.

[00:08:09] The team has identified a consultant who specializes in community engagement to serve as a neutral facilitator that informs methods, techniques, and strategies while bolstering outreach and engagement for the concurrent efforts.

[00:08:28] 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.

[00:08:46] For the feasibility preservation study, the Akateng team is working on final scope refinement to assess, evaluate, and identify feasible options to preserve Lake Akateng as a smaller lake as identified in the task force findings.

[00:09:06] Once the scope is acceptable to the Akateng 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. Initial feasibility study results based on the first year of sediment monitoring data are anticipated to be published in late 2025.

[00:09:38] Additional updates to the preservation study may be necessary with updated USGS monitoring and data analysis through 2027. Since these efforts are occurring concurrently, Hours have been allocated for coordination and collaboration among the different consultant teams.

[00:09:59] This includes periodic meetings to ensure shared understanding of status and needs across the teams. The ACUTENC project team recognizes the significant interest in this work and the urgency to commence these efforts.

[00:10:18] To ensure responsible and effective use of funds, it was necessary to confirm that the scopes of work were fully understood and accurately defined. 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.

[00:10:44] We are excited to be wrapping up the necessary scoping and contracting efforts to begin this important next phase of work. That concludes the presentation. Okay. Thank you. And I just want to start

by thanking staff for their work on this. There have been times where I've expressed frustration at the pace, but as you've heard, there are a lot of moving pieces here, and it's been important to get it right.

[00:11:15] I just also want to share, and board members probably know this, but, you know, throughout the history of these Lake Akatink efforts predating my time on the board, for the most part, it has been staff managing the process in addition to all of their other responsibilities.

[00:11:37] And 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 issue. And he's already doing a great job with it.

[00:11:54] 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. 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 consultant's scope of work and the questions that the expert

[00:12:32] consultants we're answering alongside the task force. It's going to be important to take a similar approach here where the community 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? So the public engagement, the community engagement that's going to begin soon will help ensure that we accomplish that.

[00:13:08] 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 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

[00:13:44] 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 what's happening.

[00:14:10] 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 time frame 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.

[00:14:29] 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 Akatee.

[00:14:55] 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.

[00:15:18] 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.

[00:15:36] 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?

[00:15:55] 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.

[00:16:12] 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.

[00:16:33] 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 Akateng, 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, thank you

[00:17:08] all. Let's go ahead and turn it over to our next presentation on solid waste. Okay, we have Mr. Adams

[00:17:57] 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. Mr. Adams. Good morning, everyone. 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'm joined today by Chris Harrington, the Director

[00:18:34] of Public Works and Environmental Services, and we are here today to provide a second update on the 20-year solid waste management plan. 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. 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,

[00:19:10] I'll provide a reminder of the strategies being considered and the criteria being used to evaluate said strategies. 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.

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

[00:19:45] 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.

[00:20:03] 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. This will inevitably require new funding strategies. This should not deter us, however, but this should drive the process forward

[00:20:41] 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. 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

[00:21:19] menu of options for the Board of Supervisors to review and approve within the Zero Waste Management plan. 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, you know, send those comments in. Strategy packages. The solid waste management plan, the solid waste management program has begun the process of putting the strategies together in preliminary diversion focused packages.

[00:21:54] 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.

[00:22:14] The previous number was the Department of Environmental Equality's regulatory mandated formula. this formula places caps on certain 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 green washing. 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

[00:22:50] 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 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

[00:23:25] 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 strategy has a clear diversion advantage based on early models. That said, there are strategies that build a fundamental support for all other efforts.

[00:23:46] The Unified Sanitation District 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.

[00:24:10] This strategy 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.

[00:24:27] This strategy provides the best available path under existing authority to positively 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.

[00:24:47] A unified sanitation model has 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.

[00:25:07] 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 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

[00:25:46] 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, 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.

[00:26:20] 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.

[00:26:38] Individuals that participate in our programs and minimize their waste pay the exact same as individuals who do not. This sentiment was significantly prevalent in single and multifamily feedback sessions. Multifamily particularly wanted to expand services and alternatives to their current waste systems.

[00:26:59] Food waste and organics collection has been a topic of consistent discussion. 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.

[00:27:16] 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. As they're not requested, they're required. So finally, as an update to the public input campaign, 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

[00:27:55] 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, 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

[00:28:34] concerning the public input campaign and further details on the strategy bundles. 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. All right. Thank you, Mr. Adams. Just a couple of quick thoughts and a question.

[00:29:04] Obviously, as we've had these two presentations, it demonstrates the path to meet the CCAP goal, but also the challenge. 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

[00:29:37] changes around waste that can help us to get there. 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. I'll share a quick just anecdote, and I said this a couple years ago when we were talking about the prospect of unified sanitation districts. I live on a

[00:30:16] cul-de-sac, and until about a month ago, we had three different haulers serving our cul-de-sac. 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.

[00:30:40] 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. It is, quite frankly, asinine that we have this system where we have that many trucks going up and down 90% of the neighborhood streets in Fairfax County.

[00:31:06] So, you know, folks, I think, know where I stand on this question of unified districts. 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. 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

[00:31:41] sanitation districts because for some board members this will be a new a new conversation hello this is matt adams a 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 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

[00:32:19] inequitability or there's a pricing issue or if there is a nuisance to the community or if there's a need. There's 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 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 county-wide collection model okay all right mr chairman yeah

[00:32:54] i you know this is frustrating and and for those hearing it you know for the first time we've known um about this five-year issue and i and i would just say to add to what uh chairman walkenshaw 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. 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

[00:33:32] them and also gives our constituents and consumers another avenue of complaint or challenge, 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.

[00:33:55] 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 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.

[00:34:21] Okay. So number two, we might want to pursue at least an ask legislatively to come up with different period of time because that that seems like i mean realizing some of the reasons behind why that period of time is 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 can that be expedited at all and then my follow-up question on that is the five-year clock begins

[00:34:59] 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 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, 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

[00:35:36] window, you have a stronger case of making that if you're already in the pipeline, as opposed to 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 an item to the board to begin that. We can come back with an estimate on that. We'd certainly want to coordinate with the county attorney and make sure that we understand all the legal processes 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

[00:36:15] 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 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.

[00:36:43] 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. 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, Harity. Thank you. First of all, very much

[00:37:18] 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.

[00:37:43] 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 barring any hurtful legislation that could come from us going that route.

[00:38:04] 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.

[00:38:22] 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.

[00:38:41] Matthew Adams with the 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.

[00:38:59] I mean, 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.

[00:39:16] 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, but maybe there is opportunity or certainly expertise that we could mine, so we will reach out to the health department.

[00:39:39] 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 weight all of I'm seeing all the plastic plastic film a lot of it is related to health requirements right and so just understanding that and then my other question so it seems that that we're talking about the residential just to clarify the districts would be for residential no they were everything residential and commercial and commercial okay so yeah I definitely if it includes both support is looking at

[00:40:15] that 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 at this alternative i may be throwing an axe in your plans but i think as matt presented

[00:40:51] 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 countywide collection district then dramatically expands our ability to require 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

[00:41:30] 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 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. Okay. No. Okay. I want to try to move on to our next presentation by 1.05 or shortly thereafter. So, 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

[00:42:05] discussion. 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?

[00:42:24] 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?

[00:42:40] um 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 um direction from the board in terms of what are the strategies that are appealing to you assuming that we move down any of these uh options other than the status quo step one i think would be

um the countywide collection district because 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. It is built for us to achieve the CCAP goal by the CCAP deadline. Okay, that sounds

[00:43:20] good. I would, for some of these, for example, when we're talking 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. 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

[00:43:57] 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 be an opt-in?

[00:44:17] Or would there be a transition, or could there be? All options are on the table. Okay, great. Thank you. Okay, Smith? Thank you. The 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?

[00:44:40] I take it it will be, you know, online that people will do it. Matthew Adams of the Solid Waste Management Program. So the survey is roughly 15 questions that, you know, should take people 10 minutes to do.

[00:44:59] 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 will 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 important to them.

[00:45:28] Okay. Thank you. You wish I was done. 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 of where we get and how we go.

[00:45:49] 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 system.

[00:46:07] I look at, you know, a family, you've got a single person, two adults, how much trash they have. You've 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.

[00:46:37] I will not commit to that without knowing the cost, the impact, how many staff do we have to hire, 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.

[00:47:03] 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.

[00:47:20] Thank you. okay thank you i guess i'd say that's exactly why we've had these two presentations to have have that conversation and be completely open and transparent about the strategies necessary supervisor harry thank you for that because that was a lot of what i was going to say 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 um i mean i just said uh well were you filling them up in in the sink there you go you fill them up at sink or at the home yeah i was gonna say i mean there

[00:47:57] are 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 murph you know what what percentage that we count as recycled actually gets recycled uh 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

[00:48:34] the beginning of the day actually go through the recycling process. 20% turns into, goes back into incineration. So 80% actually gets into a recycled product. Roughly. Approximately. Okay. That's higher this higher than i thought it was going to be obviously we eliminated class because that was the heaviest number the biggest number that wasn't getting recycled so um let me go to uniform unified sanitation districts absolutely for residential i i private haulers agree uh i think it makes a lot

[00:49:07] 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.

[00:49:28] 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, to go to your point, you know, there's equity issues and everything else with that um 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

[00:50:06] 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 it instantly.

[00:50:22] Okay. All right. That would be good. I think I'll stop it there so you can end up before 105. All right. Thanks. Supervisor Lusk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is very quick.

[00:50:39] On the survey, in terms of the questions, are they all closed-ended, or are there any open-ended questions? This is Matthew Adams with the Stolow Waste 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. 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

[00:51:13] from that survey result as well. Thank you. Okay, Supervisor Stork. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And 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.

[00:51:33] 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 ultimately the residents to do in 2040 or thereabout. 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.

[00:51:58] 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. 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.

[00:52:17] Appreciate your providing it for us. And then my last comment is I believe in the marketplace. I believe in businesses. I believe in their creativity. I believe in their flexibility. I believe in the opportunity that they have.

[00:52:34] 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. 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.

[00:53:12] 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.

[00:53:36] 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.

[00:54:03] 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 the county executive and see if we can either get a nip or come back to a future environmental committee meeting because if

[00:54:39] 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

[00:55:16] 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

[00:55:52] against the other. And I don't think our residents should have to do that just to get 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 you.

[00:56:29] Okay, our final presentation, we have Jay Cole from the Park Authority, Brian Kightley from UFMD, and John Burke from the Park Authority.

[00:56:52] 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 are 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.

[00:57:11] 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. 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 our constituents and our residents, the environmental community, everybody.

[00:57:30] 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.

[00:57:48] 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.

[00:58:05] That's 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 along forest edges, those places where we've removed trees or developed an area and we've increased sunlight, which allows them to thrive.

[00:58:25] 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 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.

[00:58:54] The impacts to ecosystems and wildlife are broad. 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.

[00:59:10] 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 ecosystem, and they can make it so that food sources, again, are homogenous or unavailable.

[00:59:26] 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.

[00:59:44] Good morning, members of the Board of Supervisors. My name is Brian Kately. 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.

[01:00:00] It was funded through the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund with our nonprofit 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 NEXT, I-66, and then just general development.

[01:00:21] So you can see from your screen, we arrived at a small increase of 3%. 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

[01:00:59] mass in the county was unsuitable. Think of that as the built environment, roads, buildings, sidewalks. And then about 18% was available 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. So we think that there is a potential to meet you know the current ccap goals which as a reminder um are 60 tree canopy

[01:01:35] by 2050 and then interim goals of 40 tree canopy in each census block by 2030. next slide so where did it come from um that's a good question so we have three hypotheses of where we think uh you got it? You got it? Everyone got it? All right. But our number one hypothesis is that it's from existing tree canopy. You can see a young man here on the left.

[01:02:08] Tree growth is subtle, but continuous. You can see that over a six-year period, our native trees do grow a significant amount. The example shown is grown from an acorn of southern red oak which is a moderately growing species so that's a good indicator of how quickly tree growth occurs um if you think about the radius of tree can of of that shoot growth and you add it up on the uh 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 um but this also emphasizes the

[01:02:47] to conserve our existing tree canopy second hypothesis is from land use conversion and you can see here you know since 1900 the majority 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 it's as development pressures you know are exerted on the forest so we see we've been seeing like the

[01:03:22] remaining small farms and horse farms in the county slowly converting over to tree canopy and this could probably contributes to a minor amount of the overall canopy increase but it adds up over 406 square miles next slide and And then finally tying it back to the invasive species talk, lastly we 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.

[01:03:59] 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 this canopy is made up of only really two species and the dominant species is

[01:04:36] invasive autumn olive 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 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 always reflective of the quality of that canopy and oftentimes we do intervene which

[01:05:13] may result in what appears to be in that canopy loss 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 like the resources to combat these issues. 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

[01:05:48] property. Climate resiliency is something to talk about as well because they form a monoculture 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.

[01:06:10] Another example here of those impacts to park property, open space, and access, this is Laurel Hill Park. This is kudzu, which was the vine that was introduced and valued by the government and 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 assure you

[01:06:47] is also encumbered by this vine so again this requires intervention we step in we may remove large swaths 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 lot of fence line and you have to constantly monitor that fence

[01:07:26] 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 re-establishing and reintroducing native plants where appropriate throughout Fairfax County I assure you I haven't captured all of them here but these are some of the major players in the game

[01:08:03] with some of the major programs that were 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 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 they survive very well to browsing and to removal they can resprout often a systemic means of control is required sometimes that can be

[01:08:39] prescribed burn where we 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 herbicides are a systemic means of controlling invasive plants which means they are often the most cost-effective and means of killing invasives and reestablishing 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 occasionally and for and in the case of park authority complete intervention is required through the form of restoration which basically means hitting the

[01:09:18] 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 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 you know gains in suppressing invasive plants

[01:09:58] establishing restoration work and then now working to ecologically if you will maintain those systems the ongoing regional concerns and again this pro this this problem is not restricted to Fairfax County are broad we have many management areas that are outside of park authorities control and and the county's control more broadly things like VDOT areas easements right-of-ways utility right-of-ways things like that 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 with again public and private

[01:10:38] groups that are broader than just fairfax county aimed at suppressing invasives mitigating this problem and working to restore native native habitats 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 re-establishing native plants but there's also been some higher level work both the capital region the capital region partnership for invasive species management or prism which is working together with counties in maryland you know dc

[01:11:13] virginia to get together on strategies for control and appropriate management of invasive plants on a regional basis 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 we all understand what the impact to both parkland private lands

[01:11:48] and other public land because we're not the only owner of 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. What we don't really have as a county is a one-stop sort of group-focused approach to targeting non-native invasives. Some examples of large-scale approaches.

[01:12:18] The federal government has dedicated $826 million to eradicate or attempt to eradicate non-native invasive species. National Parks just did a $5.5 million investment in non-native invasive species. As John had mentioned, the Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan is a $4.9 million goal of treating non-native invasives. And for local parks, Mecklenburg County just committed $1.5 million per year to try to target non-native invasive species.

[01:12:53] So what do the next steps look like? 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 kate lee 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

[01:13:28] 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 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 the composition, 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,

[01:14:05] whether that's incentives or studies, that remains a need. While park authority is 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 categories of potential study or potential future investment or opportunities, we break it down into three basic areas.

[01:14:26] The ecological priorities, which is where park authority is focusing most of its efforts currently, but also in 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 an invasive plant management perspective and with that i will take any questions okay thank you um

[01:15:01] Let me just start, and probably all of us 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 makes you feel a certain way about the scope of this challenge. Personally, yeah, yeah, you know, as someone who spent two hours trying to remove vines from one tree, you realize how challenging this is. And even when you zoom out and start to look at it at a macro level, it still feels

[01:15:39] 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 would be very valuable. I also think there would be value in taking a look nationally or maybe even

[01:16:17] 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 similar with respect to invasives if they're in a high-risk area or on a heavily forested

[01:16:54] 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. $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.

[01:17:21] So, you know, that's kind of how I come at this issue. I also, it's important to point out, We spend a lot of time on this in the legislative committee meetings over the last couple of 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.

[01:17:46] There was legislation last year that we supported that was very modest 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.

[01:18:02] 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.

[01:18:18] Honestly, we do need a unified approach to this. On the point of sale issue, though, we all know, we've seen, we experience kudzu. We appreciate you offering that. I guess the question is, are there unique species that we see in Fairfax County or in our region that are different?

[01:18:37] 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.

[01:18:54] And so we do need a lot more help from Richmond. But that doesn't mean we can't, you know, be doing a lot more education on our side, as the chairman mentioned. But is there something – are we seeing a unique type of species or group of species in Fairfax County that have us very concerned locally?

[01:19:10] And how do we recognize those? So let me just clarify. Are you asking that we see in stores currently or on the ground? There are some that we see in stores still?

[01:19:25] 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. We still need to deal with it.

[01:19:40] But the impact of Japanese diltgrass isn't necessarily going to pull trees down like a kudzu or out-compete other, thank you for the question, I get to dust off my ecology thing, as other species are, autumn olive, those kind of, but John, go ahead.

[01:19:56] Yeah, there's two that come to mind when, so the ones that Jay just mentioned are especially problematic from, broadly speaking, within the region and within most, a lot of the United States, unfortunately. Regionally, there's two that are of particular interest. So water chestnut, Trappa bispinosa, is an aquatic invasive plant that was for management in this area and ID in this area started about a little more than 10 years ago.

[01:20:24] And it was only in a few ponds here and there. And now it's spread to more than 80 ponds regionally. So that one is a particular concern, not only from Fairfax County, but other groups as well, including uh like the prism group that i mentioned are focusing on it the northern virginia soil and water conservation group are focusing on it um 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 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

[01:21:03] 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 are only a few locations where it was found in fairfax county in the region and we call that an early detection rapid response species so even though we identified it as being new we we took action as quickly as we could and despite that and despite the efforts of our volunteers and despite you know 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 more than that at

[01:21:41] 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 Alcorn, Beerman, Smith.

[01:21:57] 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 reasons why we've seen tree cover improve.

[01:22:12] 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.

[01:22:28] If you look at Springfield there, that has the highest tree canopy. 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.

[01:22:55] 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

[01:23:32] price out the volunteer hours that we're getting. I think actually the audit committee on our work plan, it's either on the primary or the secondary work plan, was auditing, you know, pricing out our volunteer hours throughout the county. So we're already looking to do that, but would love to see what that total cost 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

[01:24:10] about 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 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 in which there is unusable land that in doing non-invasives actually makes it usable to the public. Okay. And I think, Supervisor Behrman, I mean, there's kind of two pieces here. You know,

[01:24:45] there may be a 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 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 seriously address the issue.

[01:25:15] So it's kind of a two-step process, I would say. Fair enough. Supervisor Jimenez. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you all for this report and the findings.

[01:25:31] 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?

[01:25:48] But it does take partnerships. It does take, you know, money from the state and the federal government. So real quick, I'd like to just thank all the volunteers in Fairfax County who've spent tireless hours working on this. I know Kathleen Brown and some of her friends are here today who have been helping on this issue.

[01:26:05] 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. 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 that money's coming in on the federal level was i incorrect to say breaking down the 826 yeah that the federal i don't have that but i can get it to you okay that'd be awesome um again it's going to take all of us working together just to try to start working on this massive issue but um i do appreciate all the volunteers and fairfax we're working on this and all of you so thank you

[01:26:43] supervisor patrick uh thank you mr chairman thank you so much well all three of you um love the picture brian i assume that's your kiddo and they're growing with the tree uh it's a great way to measure growth and 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. I'm trying to look at your map and our districts, mine has certainly changed since 2012.

[01:27:21] 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. A huge shout-out to Sarah in our district who leads so many groups.

[01:27:38] 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. 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. 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

[01:28:15] 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 resources. And with limited resources, we tend to focus on protecting those irreplaceable natural resources that we have.

[01:28:35] 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.

[01:28:50] So we want to make sure there is a puzzle piece for that that does not compete or take away from, you know, 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.

[01:29:13] 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, it looks just as good on some roads as it does in other roads.

[01:29:31] 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? And just to follow up on that, Brian, Kate Lee, UFMD, with our tree planting program and our non-profit partners, we have focused, used the one Fairfax lens as a way to prioritize where our tree planting efforts are going.

[01:29:56] So we recently signed an MOU with Park Authority. 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.

[01:30:19] 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.

[01:30:36] 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.

[01:30:54] Thank you. And I want to thank you all for bringing this forward and 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.

[01:31:15] 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.

[01:31:40] 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, so, but we, 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.

[01:31:56] 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.

[01:32:11] 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. Thank you, everyone. Thank you.

