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Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee, Tuesday, February 25, 2025

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- Official meeting video (Fairfax County): https://video.fairfaxcounty.gov/player/clip/3693
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[00:00:00] Okay. Good afternoon, everyone. Good afternoon. Welcome to the February 25th, 2025 meeting of the Environmental Committee. And I wanted to start just with one piece of non-environmental committee business, make one legislative committee announcement that we will not have our legislative committee meeting on Friday afternoon.

[00:00:24] So the session has concluded. I will, though, share both of our initiatives passed and are on their way to the governor's desk. So big successes there, and we'll continue to engage on the budget negotiations, but no meeting Friday.

[00:00:44] Back to the environmental committee meeting. You all have the summary of our December 10, 2024 meeting. if there are no changes to that summary we'll consider it accepted and we have a great agenda today we're going to have a presentation from equac on their annual report we're going to have a comprehensive update on our operational energy strategy and a quick demo of an exciting new app that we are rolling out so we will start with equac and the presentation of their 2024 annual

[00:01:22] report, and I'll turn it over to Larry Zaragoza, our chair of EQUAC. Larry. Thank you very much, Supervisor Walkinshaw. It's always a pleasure to be here and have this opportunity to meet with you and have a few minutes to discuss our annual report and any other issues that might come up. I think

relationships are always important, and this is one of those opportunities where we can have some of that back and forth to make things a richer what I'd like to do today is focus on our annual report on the

[00:01:52] environment primarily and give you some highlights out of our report so we basically have two mechanisms to provide you feedback on things that we employ one is our annual for the environment the others memos the board which were put together and and sent to you periodically and then we testify at times

[00:02:20] as well thank you thank you so it's our intention to provide you with a useful document to advise the board on the environment we hope it's useful not only for the board but also useful for the community and in order to try to make things a little bit easier to assimilate we've separated out our priorities in the

[00:02:56] two groups and we have the last couple of years one is our budget limited priorities which seem to be priorities that could be solved if more money were available and then there's other priorities which basically tend to involve a need for some discussion in order to make sure that the issue is properly framed and scoped so that it will be efficient and and work well terms of our budget priorities from this last year we had I've grouped them in a couple we have climate related ones which were really the majority of the

[00:03:33] recommendations we had funding for C cap and resilient Fairfax adequate resources to support active Fairfax transportation planning in a timely manner and increasing funding for the stormwater program to address flooding and the consolidated countywide flood reduction program we also highlighted setting the the fee rate collected for wastewater treatment to meet the document needs and necessary maintenance requirements and finally to get more

[00:04:12] stable funding for the Fairfax County Park Authority which has been a frequent recommendations we've made it seems like there's always a need for more funding for the parks then we had other priorities on these priorities included adopting a climate priority strategy for public consumption that would be easily understood by the public see cap is is a it's a big program it's complicated and and I think it's important if people be able to relate to it and I also want to

[00:04:51] commend staff because they have done a lot to improve that over the last couple of years it's gotten better and better I think that the goal is to get it to a point where people look at it and say this is this is important to our community i can relate to this and and we we've moved a lot a long way in that direction another recommendation was meeting periodically perhaps every three months uh to convene business leaders in the climate and energy space to share successes and expertise uh it's clear that a lot of the

[00:05:26] businesses we have in fairfax county are really knowledgeable very successful and know a lot about what to do about climate and energy uh and so we know that and and and we think that it's not necessarily going to be what we know as a uh maybe it's a staff level but you know bringing together what you have at a staff level with the expertise of the of the industry sector because for them it's it's going to be money it's going to be satisfying shareholders it's going to be a a lot of interest

[00:06:03] and they have a strong economic incentive to be knowledgeable about these things. Planning and implementing an EV charging network so that residents of buildings without EV charging and travelers will have the options for charging. I also appreciate we're making significant progress along this

area as well, and I'm a little concerned about what happens with federal funding, But I'm delighted to see that the county is putting some good plans together to make this happen.

[00:06:38] Also, improving our policy plan language to prioritize protection of fragile lands and enhancing environmental benefits of redevelopment. And finally, addressing illegal dump sites. I also want to thank the board, you in particular, Supervisor Walton Shaw and Chairman McKay, for for the board matter that you put forward recently on illegal dumping that seems like exactly the right step to move this forward so one of the things you'll probably recall is last year

[00:07:15] we sat here and chairman mckay looked at me and said i want you to focus on the policy plan review this is important and so we have made that a priority and we have also thought about trying to do some coordination with other entities advisory boards in the county that focus on environmental issues we're doing we've normally done this but we're doing a little bit more now and i think that's good because we're trying to harmonize our language and be consistent where we articulate things looking for areas of agreement and trying to build on those because we think

[00:07:54] that's going to be useful i also really want to thank the board for helping us fill out the vacant positions it was just a matter of weeks ago then I believe we had five vacant positions now we're down to one and and we really do appreciate it have you know having a full EQAC is important to getting all the work done I also want to highlight the fact that you've done an incredible job of appointing people that

[00:08:32] are qualified and knowledgeable. A lot of the folks that we have on E-CLAC, they have not only great accomplishments in working in your districts, but they also have had a very successful career working on national policy issues. And so they bring a wealth of experience to help us advise

[00:09:00] you on different things. I'd like to highlight a few topics that we're planning on on focusing on this this next year we do try to be flexible about topics but we also try to plan things out so that we're not so that we hit the things that we think are most important but we also capture things that might come up that maybe weren't planned obviously we're going to continue our

[00:09:39] work to comment on the on the comprehensive plan we also think that climate is another important element that we need to focus on they're seeking CAP AND RESILIENT FAIRFAX AND A LOT OF COMPONENTS THOSE SUCH AS THE ZERO WASTE EFFORT THAT'S GOING TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY DPWES THIS YEAR. WE THINK THAT'S ANOTHER REALLY IMPORTANT THING.

[00:10:03] I'D LOVE TO SEE MORE RECYCLING AND I THINK EVERYONE ON EQUAC WOULD. BUT TRYING TO FEAR OUT HOW TO DO IT SO THAT IT'S FEASIBLE, SO THAT IT WORKS CAN BE CHALLENGING BECAUSE Part of it involves getting other partners so that you can have efficiencies in the process.

[00:10:23] And I know that Director Harrington and his staff are on top of that. Water. Water is always a big issue for us. There's a draft floodplain ordinance that we'll be looking at. We'll continue to follow stream restoration work.

[00:10:39] Stream restoration work is something where Fairfax is clearly a leader in, and I think we really appreciate that work. Obviously, every year we put together budget recommendations. budget's very key to all the work that we do, and we hope our recommendations provide you one more piece of advice that helps to inform your decisions that you go through in trying to make difficult budget decisions.

[00:11:07] We're looking forward also to getting an update on wildlife services. EQUAC has tracked wildlife services for decades, and we think that we've had a great program and and and some great staff and so we just look forward to seeing that continue following following up on the issues of trash and trees particularly in the VDOT right away but we also realize that it's not just the VDOT right away sometimes it could be other other county lands as well and so trying to

[00:11:42] coordinate so that we're focusing on things and can make progress I will say that I'm very pleased that VDOT is going to be updating their landscaping guidance that is going to be an opportunity to improve the plantings in the VDOT right-of-way and maybe change some of their policies to make it a little bit easier so that volunteers could contribute to helping to maintain vegetation that right away and and maybe doing more to deal with trash and of course I see us following the data setter issues because data setter issues I

[00:12:20] think are going to continue to be of interest they can be a significant significant source of revenue personally I think that data centers they could be they could be good good for the county in terms of having another positive so another positive business in the county where where they're bringing in revenue and doing other things but I think that having the right kind of coordination is going to help to minimize the the impacts i think the data centers want to be good neighbors i would

[00:12:57] like to think so and so i think trying to work these issues so we can find that sweet spot is is worth the effort i also wanted to take just a minute to say give a special thanks the staff that we have had this year have been absolutely outstanding um maggie is our has been our primary point of contact. I call her more often than probably anyone else. She deals

[00:13:30] with everything with ease and is wonderful to deal with. Kelly is her partner in all of this and together they form just an incredible team. Matt Myers, he's our division director and Matt is also great to work with them. Of course, John Morrow. John is kind enough to advise us on things, especially when he sees something that's particularly important, and I'm always grateful for that.

[00:14:02] I also very much appreciate Supervisor Walkinshaw, your efforts, and Andrea Lewis. And Andrea's always been absolutely great. EQUAC members put a lot of time and energy into the efforts, and I think they have some ownership for trying to make the environment a better place in Fairfax County and in their work and advising the Board of Supervisors.

[00:14:26] I also want to highlight Ken, Ken Lampier, he's vice chair. He also is the photographer that provided all the slides for this. And I knew that he was a nationally well-known scientist within USGS who is now retired.

[00:14:46] But he also does just incredible pictures. And finally, I want to thank you for the time that you spend. And I also want to note that we've had some meetings to go around and meet with individual offices. Recently, we met with Supervisor Alcorn, Supervisor Lesk, and every one of those meetings helps to give us a little more insight as to how to better communicate and things that we might be doing okay or things that we should improve on.

[00:15:18] All right. Thank you, Larry. Great presentation. I want to just start by expressing my appreciation that the report this year opens with a great memoriam to Diane Hoffman, this incredible environmentalist in the county, long-time executive director of the Soil and Water Conservation District.

[00:15:45] It surprises me that she was never a member of EQAC. I guess she was kind of ex-officio member and advisor, but thank you all for recognizing her. Also, appreciate the work this year to really improve the executive summary. I think it's a very useful tool.

[00:16:03] I know all 10 of us read all 134 pages of the full report, but our staff are very busy, so sometimes they need the summary. So thank you for beefing that up. Just a couple of the recommendations. One, I want to ask Mr. Morrill to respond to.

[00:16:24] The recommendation to convene business leaders in the climate, green energy sector, in your view, to what extent does our existing Green Business Partners program meet that recommendation or how can it be improved to better meet that recommendation?

[00:16:46] Thank you. I'm John Morrill from OEEC. I think the Green Business Program does a good job of that. The Green Business Partners Program now counts over 50 members, leaders, and allies. And in addition to firms that are specifically active in energy or climate, they're also the firms that are in business for one reason or another who are interested in greening their operation.

[00:17:17] And I feel like that is part of the critical mass that we're trying to mobilize the private sector. Even if you're not specifically in like an ICF or a consulting firm working on energy and climate or a solar installer, for example, the firms that want to green their operations.

[00:17:41] And so they have a number of webinars and meetings. And so I think we're meeting the spirit of that recommendation, if not the letter in how it's phrased. Okay, thanks. And I was able to attend one of those events last year and was very pleasantly surprised by the number of people there, the different kinds of businesses who were represented there.

[00:18:07] But certainly, and this is a charge for all of us to help in recruiting new businesses to join that program so we can build on it, just wanted to express my appreciation for, I appreciate all the recommendations, But especially since this one is timely, the support for the Unified Sanitation District concept and proposal, that would be a new recommendation, I think, this year since it wasn't an issue that was really on our radar last year.

[00:18:41] But thank you all for tracking that and expressing your support for it. And finally, I know the policy plan engagement work has been a lot of work from EQUAC, from the staff who are doing the day-to-day work to bring together all that feedback and draft the updated policy plan.

[00:19:02] So thank you to everyone who's put in the time to do that coordination. I think we'll get a better outcome and better document as a result of it. So with that, let me open it up. We maybe could do another five, do five minutes on this, and we've got two more presentations. Mr. Chairman. I'll be very quick, because you raised a lot of issues I was going to raise, which is great.

[00:19:21] First, you know, obviously, thank EQAC for their work. The last slide, and mentioning them there and the amount of time that they put in is apropos. And, Larry, you didn't list yourself on that, and I know why, but we thank you. I guess two comments. One, having also been to the Green Business Partner events, I do think that now is a really important time to not only recruit more attendants in that, but also to elevate the stories of the businesses who are engaged in that.

[00:19:51] Because I feel like most businesses in Fairfax County are doing the right thing. They just don't know where to tell their story or where to share that and how we can market that because, you know, this

has become a good business practice. It saves money, saves a lot of things for the businesses that are impacted, but it's also from a public relations standpoint where the business community wants to be.

[00:20:15] They want to be seen as a green partner, and we need to make sure that, you know, maybe we have some more aggressive ways to go out in the field and identify these folks. And you all know, members of EQAC, you go to some of these businesses, some of these locations. If you see ones out there that we're not highlighting, we should be elevating them.

[00:20:35] And that relates to the, you mentioned this, Larry, in your presentation, but I think a giant elephant in the room for all of us related to budget is what's happening at the federal level. And I think we're going to need to be looking at creative other sources of potential revenue to fund some of the environmental programs that we have in place at the county.

[00:20:56] You're not going to see any retreat from this board on our green initiatives, but there might be gaps that need to be filled where we might have relied on or thought about a federal grant opportunity that is no longer there. I know anecdotally we're already hearing that jurisdictions have been told there is no environmental money at the federal level.

[00:21:15] And so I think we need to be cognizant of that and use the expertise of EQUAC and the different organizations that you work with to also help make available to us other ways to generate revenue, whether that's some nonprofit groups that have environmental grants or other things that we might want to look at to try to fill that gap.

[00:21:35] We'll do the best job we can because it's a priority of this board and the county. But that's something I think is going to be with us here for a couple of years. And I appreciate you mentioning that challenge, and I think it's all of our responsibility to try to not take our foot off the gas, literally, in our environmental program, but look for other ways to help continue to sustain it and support it in that environment.

[00:21:56] So I appreciate that being mentioned, being cognizant of it, and we can use any help and expertise that you all have on that front at any time. So thank you. Supervisor Palczyk and then Stork. Thank you. First of all, thank you to both of you.

[00:22:13] And sadly, perhaps because of what's happening at the federal level, I've never had so many applicants for EQUAC before. It's always hard to find people in Providence who have time and the ability to serve and the expertise. So I hope you'll really appreciate.

[00:22:30] Catherine seems wonderful, the new member. And we had so much interest in EQUAC, more than we've ever had. So appreciate all the work there. When it comes to green business partners, I couldn't agree more. I've been watching the Arctic Tree Care as a video spotlight right now.

[00:22:46] And thanks to you, I actually reached out to them as a new homeowner last year to get some tree service. And so I know that there are many businesses, and you have many here, at least 15, I think, between Tyson's and Merrifield in my district. And any time that you all do the work or spotlights or community member meetings, please share them out with us because we do share those out as well and have people know that we have these businesses, including spas and salons, that are on that list.

[00:23:14] So very much appreciate your work there. And finally, I met with some six-year-old Girl Scouts on Monday, and they had two concerns. We talked about one of them this morning, which was sidewalks.

Number two was the environment. And their main recommendation was maybe OEEC as a name is a little bit challenging.

[00:23:38] So I may have added to that. But perhaps between you and EQUAC and our offices, you have so many great initiatives, like not Clean Fairfax, but all of the charge Fairfax, the same Fairfax. The more we can do to help do our outreach to our businesses and also to our young people, because we know they're the ones who are going to go home, like many of us did, and tell our parents how to support the environment for the future.

[00:24:06] So thanks for all that great work, excellent work, and just so many acronyms out there. We want to help highlight what excellent work you do. Supervisor Stork. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And Mary, thank you for your decades of service as vice chair and now chair, and frankly, your decades of service with the federal government, you know, doing important environmental work, which I know many here may not know of, but you clearly are one of those public servants that has been so challenged in the last few months.

[00:24:39] and to do the right thing, and you did it for so many years, and I know you retired honomly, but we're happy to have you in our community and happy to have you in a leadership role which helps us to do the right thing and to do better things. So, again, my great honor to work with you and appreciate your decades of service for all of us.

[00:25:00] One of the key things I thought I would focus on is proposed topics for EQUAC review, And I know one of my passions, because we, the board spent really six, seven years on this, which is to try to identify how best to not only get the county and county government, schools, et cetera, to do better and to, if you will, be greener with our JET Joint Environmental Task Force, but even more importantly is how do we get the overall county, all the businesses and individuals in the county with our CCAP goals.

[00:25:34] And I particularly see that as an opportunity because of Equac's role in having not only representation from around the county but with other experts as well to take a look at what we're doing and how do we do more, better, faster.

[00:25:52] This isn't a negative comment on anybody, but the topic is huge, and our goal is huge, and the opportunities to get there are huge.

[00:26:03] And I think for the EQAC to take a look at that and say, you know, what we're doing, we're doing most of what we should be doing, or if there's some other areas that you see, particularly where we can leverage leadership and champions, I'm convinced that the core of our success will be environmental champions, you know, whether it's Fairfax Alliance for our community, you know, for our Fifth Alliance folks.

[00:26:35] But, I mean, obviously we have lots of other environmental groups that are here and I wanted to just see how are we engaging them, involving them. Obviously, OEC is clearly a part of that, Toronto Public Works, Environmental Services, et cetera. So taking a look at that as, if you will, more outsiders, but still people that are inside in terms of seeing what the county has been doing for decades and how we can do more and, if you will, better, faster.

[00:27:01] So that would be my particular urgency. And then, as the chairman mentioned a little bit earlier, the work that we're all doing as a board right now on waste management and looking at how we should change those services, clearly that's one of our CCAP goals, if you will.

[00:27:20] So that's a naturally aligned goal to what the board is doing right now. So that would be maybe a key part of that. But I would say don't limit yourself to that. Obviously, energy, transportation, facilities, those are all key parts of that. And the next presentation here today, we're going to be talking about all those things as part of our operational energy strategy.

[00:27:40] And I think those lend themselves, particularly with the dashboard that we have and looking at whether or not we're on track or not on track and having that look and sense of whether or not we're getting where we want to go. So thank you.

[00:27:56] MR. Supervisor Jimenez. MR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I'm going to start off by saying, you know, Chairman McKay is correct as far as what's happening at the national level. You see foundations are currently holding back. They're actually not giving right now the way they used to.

[00:28:13] This is impacting nonprofit organizations, which makes it a lot tougher for grants to come through. And I think that now more than ever, we need to look at state and local funding options because right now big traditional foundations are saying our heads need to stop spinning for just a moment before we even figure out how to move forward, especially with the push against DEI and other issues, obviously. They're trying to be as careful as they can, which unfortunately really impacts the work the nonprofits nationally and globally are doing to try to help us become

[00:28:51] sustainable the way we need to i've got a quick question um how do you if you do do you all work with the planning commission when when it comes to recommendations are you are they part of the process throughout or is it something that at the end you you go and and you know chat with them about so generally we have not had routine coordination with the planning commission there may be a specific review of an ordinance or something like that where we comment on in which case we have historically copied up the planning commission. The thing that has changed though is

[00:29:27] the review of the comprehensive plans policy, the environmental element in particular. So as a result of that review, we've had a lot of coordination with the planning commission. I talk with, as some of you know, I talk with Mary Cortina on a regular basis and they have been absolutely wonderful to work with. My biggest regret is that we weren't talking to them more before.

[00:29:57] And I'm actually trying to figure out what is, you know, what is the best way to continue that dialogue and perhaps broaden it. And maybe not even with just them, but also with some of the other groups as well. Well, thank you. As a former planning commissioner, I know that they would really appreciate kind of working more closely with you all, especially around, you know, the rollout of recommendations.

[00:30:19] And lastly, what I'll say is, and I've been talking about this for over a year now, really take a look, please, at weekend trash pickup in parks. I've been talking with parks nonstop about this, but we really need to make sure that we are making these spaces accessible and clean for everyone in our community.

[00:30:38] Thank you. Mr. Chairman, just really quickly on the note that Supervisor Jimenez brought up about the policy plan, and this is one of the reasons why I appreciate you, Larry, remembering, I wanted us to make sure EQUAC was focused on that because there's a lot of environmental groups in the county who all do really good work, but many of them are very specialized.

[00:30:59] And I think one of the values of EQUAC is bringing together those folks to help the Planning Commission, frankly, come up with the right policy plan language with regard to the environment. And the one thing that we talked about this before with the policy plan, I think we all are challenged with is not being overly redundant and not having conflicting statements in there that then staff has to try to tie break or the planning commission has to try to interpret.

[00:31:26] And so we know, you know, for example, public health, the public health piece we're looking at is largely driven by some of the environmental initiatives. So where you put those things and make sure they're all in the right place so that, you know, for readers, one of our hopes, I think, with the policy plan is to make the document more user friendly, clearer, more concise, and more comprehensive when it comes to environmental issues that are of concern.

[00:31:52] And so I really appreciate that EQAC is engaged in that, and my hope is that you can help bring together a lot of those environmental concepts into a more condensed, focused area on the environment. And, you know, my concern was, as you're developing this policy plan, it would be easy to have, you know, one very engaged environmental movement group focused on one specific element of the environment that ends up being an important thing to all of us, but ends up being overly dominant in the policy plan.

[00:32:27] And I think that's where EQAC can play a real benefit in helping the Planning Commission, ultimately helping us come up with new policy plan language that is focused and concise and easy to understand and easy for our staff to implement. So thank you. Okay.

[00:32:43] Larry, Ken, thank you both so much and all of EQAC. Larry, any final word? No, I just want to thank you all. And Chairman McKay, I also want to tell you that we are trying to take a broad look as we undertake our review just as you're suggesting. I think you're absolutely right. Thank you.

[00:33:03] All right. Thank you both. And let's turn over for our next presentation, which is an update on

[00:33:09] our operational energy strategy implementation. Okay. Ready? Thank you. And good afternoon,

[00:33:52] Mr. Chairman and members of the Board of Supervisors. I am Kevin Smith, a division manager for energy programs in the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination. My primary role is to lead the implementation of the Operational Energy Strategy, OES, and so today I will be presenting on the progress towards our targets primarily in the building sector with additional notes on the waste sector.

[00:34:17] Staff leading the operational zero waste goal will provide a more in-depth report before this group in May. So today I'll start off the presentation with FY 2024 progress updates toward our OES targets, as well as highlights from the past year.

[00:34:35] Then I'll dive into the future direction of programs for energy efficiency and solar. Finally, I'll touch upon operational zero waste. This chart illustrates progress as of FY 2024 toward our OES targets related to the building, solar, and waste sector.

[00:34:55] The stars indicate the final goals at FY 2040, except for zero waste, which is 2030, and the pentacons indicate interim FY 2030 goals. For greenhouse gas emissions, which also includes our vehicle and transit fleet emissions, we are making steady progress towards carbon neutrality.

[00:35:13] This progress is driven by efficiency gains, electrification, and reduced fossil fuels in the electricity grid. Likewise, we have seen consistent progress toward our building energy efficiency targets,

which I will expand upon in the next slides.

[00:35:30] The renewables percentage for FY 2024 is lower than the other focus areas, And part of this is because the first county solar installations weren't complete until the middle of FY 2024. I will expand on solar progress as well later in the presentation.

[00:35:46] Finally, the county is approaching 30% waste diversion from landfills at county facilities. Note that zero waste progress is reported on a calendar year basis, whereas the other metrics are reported on a fiscal year basis. The value displayed here is for 2023, and the zero waste team is compiling data right now for 2024.

[00:36:08] More on zero waste at the end of the presentation. I want to reiterate that progress towards all of the OES targets has been and will continue to be a whole-of-government effort. As part of our coordination efforts, OEEC has organized interagency climate group meetings since 2023.

[00:36:26] Group 5 is specific to facilities and operations, and we continue to meet quarterly to discuss successes and challenges related to OES progress. The county continues to produce impactful energy efficiency and solar projects at our facilities, and even collect accolades for these projects.

[00:36:49] Many of these projects are whole-building energy retrofits implemented by our Energy Services Contractor, or ESCO. In these projects, multiple energy improvements are identified, designed, and installed by the ESCO under an energy saving performance contract.

[00:37:05] These energy improvements can include LED lighting upgrades, heating and air conditioning system improvements, enhancements to building envelopes, and rooftop solar photovoltaics, solar PV. The ESCO guarantees annual energy savings associated with the project and every year verifies that the savings were achieved.

[00:37:24] The largest project to date under the ESCO program in terms of energy reduction in total cost was completed at the Park Authority's Spring Hill Rec Center in July 2024. The scope included a geothermal heat pump system providing heating, cooling, and hot water to much of the building, upgraded pool dehumidification units, advanced equipment control strategies, LED lighting upgrades, envelope weatherization, and a rooftop solar PV system.

[00:37:52] The project is contractually required to reduce energy use by 24%, and it is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 36% and result in $85,000 in annual avoided costs. Another project completed in October 2024 at Reston Community Center, Hunters Woods, originated just as a solar PV installation more than two years ago.

[00:38:18] When RCC reached out to OEEC to express their interest in solar, we connected them to the county's ESCO, who performed an energy audit. RCC and ESCO identified many energy efficiency measures in addition to solar. Ultimately, the project's scope included a rooftop solar PV system, hot water plant and control system upgrades, and lighting upgrades to LEDs.

[00:38:42] Being a special tax district, Reston Community Center self-funded the project, and as a result, they will enjoy the energy savings on their utility bills. This project is a great case study for the private sector and other community organizations wishing to follow suit. And in fact, McLean Community Center is pursuing an energy performance contract at their facility as well after completing an energy audit last year.

[00:39:05] I would also like to point out two awards that our projects recently won. First, an ESCO project at the Department of Housing and Community Development's Pender Building won an Energizing Efficiency Campaign Award in October 2024 from the Virginia Energy Efficiency Council.

[00:39:23] The project, which included upgraded heating and air conditioning units, LED lighting, and rooftop solar PV, will reduce energy use by 22% and is expected to result in $44,000 of annual avoided costs. Second, an ESCO project completed in 2022 at Cub Run Rec Center won a 2024 Technology Award from the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers, known as ASHRAE, first at a regional level in August 2024, and more recently at the national level in February 2025.

[00:39:59] The project scope included pool heat recovery unit enhancements and building controls upgrades. In the year following implementation, the building achieved a 60% reduction in energy use, and the work has led to more than $300,000 in annual avoided costs for the park authority.

[00:40:17] Just to illustrate the magnitude of the county's energy program, here on the left is a list of all completed energy retrofits since the 2021 OES was adopted, and on the right is a list of projects that are in progress right now.

[00:40:35] I also wanted to make the board aware that the OEC has recently built out web pages related to the operational energy strategy. OES focus areas such as energy use and reduction now have their own dedicated pages with information related to county efforts and project status.

[00:40:56] Shown here is a map tool which allows users to see where ESCO projects are being completed around the county. Projects highlighted in this presentation and other efforts all contributed to the steady progress shown here. This chart shows the total portfolio energy use for county government facilities on an annual basis since the FY 2018 OES baseline year.

[00:41:21] Included are county-owned buildings as well as non-building facilities such as streetlights, radio towers, and stormwater pumping stations. In FY 2024, we achieved a 19% energy reduction versus FY 2018, good progress towards the 25% FY 2030 OES target.

[00:41:41] We celebrate the reduction we have achieved so far and are encouraged by the steady, sustained downward trend in energy use. This reduction has resulted in approximately $8 million in annual avoided energy costs. Especially noteworthy is the continued decrease after the pandemic.

[00:42:00] At the time, there was general concerns about a rebound or increase in energy use as the county restored normal operations. It's also worth noting that the 19% energy reduction was achieved despite a net increase in building floor area since FY 2018.

[00:42:17] Now, while we have made good progress, it's important to understand that the last 6% reduction needed to achieve the 25% target will be more complex and potentially more costly than the 19% achieved thus far. The energy retrofits, which I have just touched on, plus one-off equipment replacements have made a positive impact.

[00:42:37] But much of the reduction we have already achieved came from taking advantage of lower cost, quick payback upgrades, such as the streetlight LED program and building lighting and controls upgrades. To achieve the next 6%, we will need to continue implementing impactful energy retrofit projects where opportunities present themselves.

[00:42:58] We will also need to look at broader efforts throughout the portfolio so that we achieve the energy reductions in more of our buildings. I'll talk about these types of efforts next. To date, since the adoption of the 2021 OES, the county is primarily focused on implementing energy retrofits, here at the top of the diagram shown, as a primary means to achieve energy reductions.

[00:43:26] These projects have produced positive results, but as you can see on the diagram, energy retrofits are at the high end in terms of cost and complexity. Furthermore, opportunities can be limited to buildings that have major equipment at or nearing end of life. Building recommissioning and continuous commissioning are two other energy conservation approaches that complement energy retrofits with lower cost and complexity.

[00:43:53] Whereas energy retrofits involve replacing aging equipment with modern, highly efficient equipment, the commissioning programs involve optimizing the operation and use of equipment we already have. Recommissioning is a tune-up for a building, involving diagnostic tests to ensure systems like heating and cooling are operating optimally and at proper schedules, which verifies that temperatures are not maintained unnecessarily when spaces are unoccupied.

[00:44:21] Similarly, continuous commissioning is a low-cost systems check where software analyzes continuous streams of performance data from buildings. Improvements can be implemented quickly, and once in place, the continuous commissioning software will monitor performance to make sure the improvement stays implemented.

[00:44:40] Therefore, continuous commissioning allows energy savings to be maintained over time and avoids what is called energy drift, a gradual increase in energy use due to unexpected operational deficiencies. To continue making progress towards our OES targets, it's imperative that we continue to complete successful retrofit projects at our current pace, but adding recommissioning and continuous commissioning programs will be a lower cost option to help ensure we actually achieve the

[00:45:10] targets. Switching gears now to solar, this graph illustrates the trajectory of on-site solar PV capacity installed at county buildings, with reference to the FY 2030 and FY 2040 OES targets.

[00:45:27] The first six solar PV projects at county buildings were completed in FY 2024, representing about 600 kilowatts in total capacity. By the end of this fiscal year, we expect to nearly triple that value with seven new installations. However, as this graph shows, we are on pace to fall short of our 54-megawatt FY 2030 target.

[00:45:51] OEEC recognizes that the OES renewable energy targets are not feasible through rooftop installations alone. To make up the rest of the gap to our targets, OEEC will pursue another solution, large-scale off-site virtual power purchase agreements, or VPPA.

[00:46:10] The OEEC director, John Morrill, briefed the board of supervisors three years ago on this concept, and a nip from that presentation is attached in your packets today. In a VPPA, Fairfax County would enter a contract with a renewable energy developer for a fixed rate, which allows the developer to build the project.

[00:46:31] The renewable generation system could be solar PV, wind power, or another renewable source. Once built, the developer sells electricity to the electric grid at market rates, and Fairfax County receives renewable energy credits. Depending on whether the market rate is above or below the fixed contract rate, the county would either receive revenue or pay the renewable developer.

[00:46:55] The fixed rate is set such that the county breaks even or is cash flow positive over the course of a year. Meanwhile, the county would continue to purchase electricity for our facilities from a local electric utility at retail rates. Because the payments to the renewable developer are the net of the market and the fixed contract rates and are again designed to break even over time, the ongoing costs of the program are essentially zero.

[00:47:23] The only cost would be a small upfront fee to procure a consultant to aid the county in identifying a renewable developer and negotiate the power purchase agreement. It is important to note that the electricity generated by this renewable system does not flow to the county buildings physically.

[00:47:41] We only receive renewable credits for the generation of this electricity, hence the virtual nature of the PPA. These renewable credits offset grid electricity consumption at county buildings, thereby lowering the county's effective greenhouse gas emissions. Now I'd like to highlight some of the successes of the operational zero waste and sustainable procurement programs in the past year.

[00:48:07] In zero-waste updates, 82% of departments submitted 2024 action plans and annual reports, and the zero-waste team is working towards 100% submission from agencies this year, with plans and reports due in mid-March. There has also been a concerted effort to minimize the use of single-use items with reusable alternatives.

[00:48:30] For example, reusable foodware was used at more than 60 events, including Earth Day 2024, and reusable towels and bulk fluid containers are now used at one of Department of Vehicle Services maintenance facilities. Efforts to encourage staff and visitors to recycle continued in 2024, with additional signage and bin updates at facilities across the county.

[00:48:52] Some unique recycling programs, like batteries and cigarette butts, were also launched. Many of these programs are supported by the plastic bag tax, highlighting an example of how those revenues are being put to good use. Unlike all of our OES programs, Zero Waste is a whole-of-government effort, so I'd like to thank the many county agencies that sustain these initiatives.

[00:49:15] Significant progress was also made with respect to sustainable procurement in 2024. The Department of Procurement and Material Management completed a Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions analysis with the help of staff from other agencies. Scope 3 includes emissions generated by the county's supply chain but are not included in our OES greenhouse gas emissions inventory.

[00:49:37] These Scope 3 emissions are real, however, and their impact on the county and the environment just as our operational Scope 1 and 2 emissions are. Furthermore, sustainable procurement is addressed directly as a focus area in the OES.

[00:49:54] The Scope 3 analysis identified potential opportunities to reduce Scope 3 emissions, which county staff are currently exploring. Along those lines, 110 major suppliers joined the Fairfax County Supply Chain Corporate Social Responsibility Program.

[00:50:11] The program, started in 2019, encourages county vendors to volunteer their operational data, which is scored in four areas. Environment, labor and human rights, ethics, and sustainable procurement. This data allows staff to better understand the operations of county vendors, including their own climate and energy-related efforts, which link to the county's scope 3 emissions.

[00:50:34] As I conclude this presentation, I wanted to remind the board of some upcoming dates. First, at a future Board of Supervisors meeting, OEEC will provide an Apply Accept Agenda Item for the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant, a federal grant which subsidizes electric vehicle charging stations at publicly accessible county parking lots.

[00:50:58] Fairfax County was awarded this grant as part of a cohort led by Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, MWCOG. OEEC will provide the Apply Accept Agenda item at a future Board of Supervisors meeting once the subaward agreement from MWCOG has been reviewed by staff.

[00:51:15] And finally, in the May 2025 Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee meeting, OEEC will provide a status report on the climate action implementation as it relates to the Community Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan, CCAP, and the Resilient Fairfax Plan.

[00:51:33] Additionally, the Zero Waste team will provide a more in-depth update, including future initiatives. Thank you, and I'd be happy to answer any questions at this time. All right. Thank you, Kevin. I just want to go back to slide four, and I'm a brokered record on this, but $8 million in avoided costs.

[00:51:52] And that should say $8 million annually. Yes. Right. I think that's an important point. And in fact, we probably should start adding, including the cumulative number because we've had now six years of the strategy in place.

[00:52:08] And obviously, that number is growing each year and will continue to grow. But that is just a huge, huge success that taxpayers will benefit from in perpetuity. They will benefit from. Along those lines, slide five, I just wanted to drill down on the retrofits.

[00:52:25] And there are 23 facilities on the slide here. And you said, I think I'm maybe paraphrasing, that we have already done kind of the low-hanging fruit. I just want to press on that because there's 23 facilities here.

[00:52:45] We have, I don't know the number, we have FMD here. The total number of facilities, is there not more opportunity for retrofits at other facilities that are not among the 23 here yes there is and I don't mean to say that we've taken care of all of the low-hanging fruit kind of the emphasis is a lot of the savings we've achieved thus far is from low-hanging fruit and the further we go the less of that opportunity there will be but yes we will still explore any lighting upgrades for example that at buildings where we don't already have

[00:53:25] LEDs. And I guess I'm just trying to understand of all of the facilities that we have, have we analyzed and evaluated each one to determine how much potential there is to save energy via a retrofit? So on an annual basis, we look for kind of our next tranche of projects, buildings to undergo energy audits that could potentially turn into larger retrofits

[00:53:57] So we do a portfolio-wide analysis where we look for the buildings that could have the most potential for energy savings. So each year we analyze a certain number of facilities. We didn't start by analyzing every facility.

[00:54:15] Correct. John Morrill with OEEC. We have a database where we have detailed data on energy use in every single building. And so we're always scanning that to see where the outliers are.

[00:54:35] And so if a building seems to be performing well, then we're not digging deeper. And so what Kevin's referring to are the ones that look, as we benchmark, look a little out of place, and then we ask our

auditor to go in and audit those.

[00:54:56] I'm just trying to understand the constraint on doing more of these. Even a building that's performing well, presumably, could perform better and achieve savings over time. So what is the primary constraint on doing more facility retrofits?

[00:55:16] It's a combination of funding, for one. And also, when we look at buildings, a lot of buildings, and Jose can speak to the ages of the buildings, where we see a building that's aging and realize that, well, that's going to be replaced in an investment time frame.

[00:55:39] And so that also helps sort the pecking order. I just want to make sure that we are full speed ahead and we're not leaving money on the table. Obviously, if it's going to cost $100 to save $1, it doesn't make sense. But if it costs $1 to save $1, we should be doing it, because that's the dollar that we get in perpetuity.

[00:55:59] And if there are constraints or anything that's holding that back that requires action from this board, I certainly want to know about it. And just jumping forward to slide 8 with the commissioning, Mr. Smith, and you talked through it, But give me the response to somebody who hears that, and it sounds like you're just talking about turning the thermostats down lower to save a little bit of money, which isn't a new concept and some people have mixed views about.

[00:56:32] So what is different about this? So previous to joining the county, I come from an energy engineering background in the private sector, and that's really a common misconception. You don't have to affect thermal comfort, thermal conditions to save energy.

[00:56:51] There are a lot of what you could call behind-the-scenes strategies of controlling equipment. For example, taking advantage of favorable weather conditions in the spring and fall. Instead of recirculating air locally where you have to cool down warmer air, you can bring in air that's already at the right temperature and avoid some of that cooling.

[00:57:13] So there's strategies that happen at the back end, in the mechanical rooms, that the occupants out here in the space don't notice any difference that can achieve significant energy savings. So those are really the areas that you focus in on.

[00:57:32] You never want to sacrifice occupant comfort. Okay. All right. Thank you. Mr. Chairman? Yeah. First, I don't want to underestimate the amount of work that's been done here. Because it's a lot, and we appreciate it, and we know that there's a lot of factors that intervene that, you know, you can't control your own destiny here.

[00:57:55] A lot of, as you said, this is a team sport, and we recognize that. A couple questions. First, I think not only do I agree entirely with the $8 million figure and sharing that widely, but I can't ignore, and I'm glad you clarified this, the growth in our footprint as well.

[00:58:15] that this is a number that's happening as we're growing our facilities. And I go around and, you know, we celebrate the opening of new facilities all over the county, and we're still saving money. So I do think we need to amplify that a little bit better. The question I have, and this is part of the team sport part, and it's an uncomfortable question, especially since we have another meeting coming up in 30 minutes, which is I get no sense of what FCPS is doing or not doing to contribute to this.

[00:58:47] And it would be really helpful for us if when we're talking about our operational energy strategy, if we could get a couple pages at least from them to make sure, I mean, they were part of the jet. A lot of time and energy was put into this so that we were in the same place in looking at accomplishing our energy goals.

[00:59:05] And their footprint is a lot bigger than ours, just geographically. And so if we could get some data on what they're doing, you know, we increase their bonding capacity in part so that they could get caught up on some renewals to do some energy efficiency improvements.

[00:59:21] But I would sure love for us somehow to get from them some type of update, at least when we get this presented to us next time, just so that we know the work of the JET and others is happening with our partners on the school side of the operation as well. Thank you.

[00:59:40] John Morrill from OEC. Anticipating this question, I'd like to call Paul Scott up. He's from Fairfax County Public Schools. And he doesn't have a written report for you, but he can speak to this topic.

[01:00:01] The chair of this committee and the chair of this board are highly predictable. He's beating the same horses. And so, yeah, I'm delighted that you're here and just, you know, really want to get an update on what's going on. Because I know there are things happening, but I'm not sure we're talking about them. Yes, I'm Paul Scott, the Assistant Director for Energy and Sustainability.

[01:00:18] So we're doing the same thing. We have solar projects going on with Sun Tribe as well. We have nine in right now with 25 more kicking off by summertime. We're going to have the potential of 40 done by summer 2027. We have 220 buildings roughly, so we're pacing those as we go with roof replacements and renovations.

[01:00:40] As for the retrocommissioning, we're doing the same thing through ESCO contracts, using the same energy model, highest level of usage to the lowest. Our energy level now is right around 50. Our average is 50. We've got about 120 schools that are at 50 or below on the EUI level.

[01:00:58] So we're doing pretty good over the years. We've saved since 2014, we've saved about $100 million in energy costs. So we are making some progress. Yeah, I mean, that's great. If we can somehow incorporate that into our reports, because the public looking at these is not going to go two different places looking for the information.

[01:01:18] So if we could kind of team up together on this to present some elements of the school pieces I think would be very helpful to us. So thank you for what you're doing, and thank you for being here. The last question I have on slide 12, I think you mentioned the EV charging stations item.

[01:01:33] I think you mentioned the date. Was there a date that you mentioned, or are we still not sure when that's going to be coming forward? So the good news is that MWCOG signed the contract with Federal Highway Administration in early January before the administration changed, but they're still talking with FHWA, and MWCOG told us to expect the subaward agreement soon, but they weren't able to put an exact date on that.

[01:02:00] Okay, sounds like a good assignment for the chair of COG sitting here at the table to try to expedite that, And I say that humorously on one end, but on the other end, I mean, this stuff's got to get in the ground. And, you know, it's a lot harder to claw back something that's already been installed and is in the ground.

[01:02:19] And obviously, we're literally on new ground right now this month, and I think we all know that. So whatever we can do to expedite, this is a tremendous need. A lot of people, despite reports to the contrary, was talking to a couple of the big auto dealers recently in this area.

[01:02:36] They're selling a lot of EVs right now because people know the benefit to buying these financial benefit is going away. And so you've got a lot more EVs coming into the market, and they're going to be looking for these. And so I think this is really essential to try to get this done as quickly as we possibly can.

[01:02:53] It would be great if we were the first Virginia MCOG partner to use that money to cut the ribbon on the first one of these that are a result of that opportunity. So thank you. Supervisor Jimenez? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for this report. I'm not going to ask you to come back up here, Mr. Scott. Thank you for being here. I have a request, if possible. It would be great to see a list of projects, especially if we could get them divided by district. I think that could be really helpful. So if you could do that, that would be amazing. Thank you, and thank you for coming.

[01:03:27] And then one quick question, Kevin. For the VSPPA program, what hurdles do you see, if any, moving forward? So really, I think the hurdles are just kind of the upfront development and organization and procuring, one, a consultant who will then help us procure the actual renewable project developer.

[01:04:02] So it's just kind of that planning phase. John, I don't know if you'd like to speak more with your experience. With regard to the VPPA, we're at a bit of a dilemma. We can go it alone, but there are a number of our neighbors who are very eager to partner with us because there's smaller jurisdictions and they realize, hey, if they can glom onto this, and then that would be a bigger project, which should provide lower rates.

[01:04:37] So we're in discussions with other localities and looking to do a joint procurement for a contractor. And so the board will be apprised of that as that moves forward. And if we do that and we go that route, Fairfax County would be the lead there?

[01:04:59] Yes, we would certainly be the lead in terms of the volume of the purchase. Whether or not we would be leading the procurement is up in the air. Okay, thank you. Supervisor Lusk? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll go to page 8 on the recommissioning as well.

[01:05:19] And just wanted to clarify, so appreciate the points about looking at the systems and making sure they're improved to ensure their efficiency. I know we've asked this question before, but just making sure there's a tie-in. If the building has a LEED certification, say LEED Silver 10 years ago, In the recommissioning process, are we also looking to recertify the building to that silver designation, or are we just looking to improve its internal kind of HVAC and other mechanical systems?

[01:05:56] So, first of all, it's important to understand that there's several different LEED programs. Correct. We, in our OES, target the LEED for new construction or building design and construction. That is really a one-time certification for when the building's built.

[01:06:16] You get your certification, you get your plaque, it's done. They can't take it away from you. It does not impact operations. So there is a lead for existing buildings, operations and maintenance. That's not something that we have pursued.

[01:06:34] I will say it's much broader than just energy use. So it would be a much bigger undertaking than performing recommissioning, retrocommissioning, or continuous commissioning. The idea is just

optimize the building, try to find as much energy savings as we can, is really what it comes down to.

[01:06:58] Okay, understood. And then I think you made reference to some of the newer facilities that we're bringing online. And so as I think about in my own district, we're going to have a new police station, a new, you know, government center in the Kingstown area.

[01:07:15] We're leaving behind other buildings and facilities. So there's going to be some achievement of savings as we move into that new consolidated facility. Are we taking into account then those savings as a part of this OES target savings?

[01:07:33] How is that measured and considered? So in terms of the energy reduction and getting to 25% and 50%, we just look at really the utility bills from that year.

[01:07:49] So as the older Franconia district buildings go offline next year, the year after, there will be no energy use for that, just in the new complex that's being built. Okay. Okay. Thank you. I appreciate that.

[01:08:04] Okay. Supervisor Patrick. Thank you. Just a very quick clarifying question, And I won't make you come up either, I believe, Mr. Scott, but just so happy to see you here on the board. I know since 2015 and the work of the jet that there's a lot that's been happening in the schools. If you could, when you share the information with us, I believe the new Dunloring School is proposed to be very, very innovative, energy efficient, if I'm not mistaken.

[01:08:29] So I think if we could get additional information to look at there of new projects you all are proposing and just continue to encourage you to work together. It's really nice to see you sharing the table today. Thank you for your work. Okay. Supervisor Stork. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you all very much. I particularly still love the dashboard. I think it's a great way for us to see kind of where we are. I point people to it all the time because we get a lot of questions,

[01:09:04] particularly younger people wanting to know where we are. And it just gives them a view of where we are and frankly where we need to go. And that's a lot of your presentation today, so I appreciate that. We have goals for 2030. We set these goals almost a decade, I mean, in 2020 or so. And those goals were really based on minimizing any outside power purchasing because we recognize that a key part of this for all of us is to generate, you know, clean energy right here and recognize that

[01:09:41] probably won't be enough, never enough clean energy coming in. Although, again, what the state legislature did potentially would allow that. But now we're looking at data centers that might kind of turn all that upside down. So my focus is on what can we do, what else should we do, and what's the key barrier or barriers for us to maximize or optimize our generation of clean power right here?

[01:10:09] Thank you, Supervisor Stork. I will say we don't intend to slow down on-site solar that's already in the pipeline. Perhaps we're going to take a sharper look at the financials and ROIs, especially on the smaller scale projects and the trickier, more complex rooftops, and maybe consider shifting funding maybe towards other energy efficiency type funds.

[01:10:41] The big challenges that we have in terms of on-site solar, number one, you really only want to install solar on buildings where their roof has been replaced in the last five years or so. I understand. So that limits our available number of buildings off the bat.

[01:11:02] Then there's, when we get to larger systems, we run into costs and schedule challenges imposed by Dominion that we've discussed before at meetings. And we resolve the surcharge that

Dominion is wanting to.

[01:11:19] So I wanted to highlight that because it's one of our major irritants, particularly for schools, which are big projects and huge, obviously huge generation opportunities. And solar suppliers, you haven't mentioned that. I want to move along because I know others want to speak, but solar suppliers, are we getting, is it sufficient enough or where does that stand?

[01:11:41] Because that in the early days was what I kept hearing was one of our challenges was insufficient solar supply, you know, the actual equipment to put on the roofs, et cetera. That has not been a particular challenge for us.

[01:11:57] I will say one other factor, of course, is funding and potentially with Inflation Reduction Act, clean energy tax credits, depending on where the administration goes, what happens with that, that could potentially work in our favor.

[01:12:22] Lorton Community Center library no solar on there yet. It's been in operation more than two years We have the new county animal shelter police station. It's been an operation for more than a year Nothing there yet, and we have the I-95 landfill, which is our our big project And are they going to get done this year a supervisor stork?

[01:12:44] We are scoping everything as we speak again. I'm going through the budget process now in the CIP plan we will come back to everybody with a dedicated plan on how we want to move forward. There's not an answer for that now because those have been planned from the beginning. No, I do not have an answer for that today because I'm still dealing with some budget issues.

[01:13:03] Wow. I didn't realize that that hadn't been decided because the I-95 is listed to be done this year, so I'm assuming the other two are the other ones. Again, I will come back with an overview of all shortly. Okay. And if you could add to that the vehicle piece, too, from our last meeting, you were going to follow up.

[01:13:24] Yeah, absolutely. And we talked about that this morning, and I'm going to have that for you as well. Appreciate that. Thank you. Thank you. Okay, and the clean energy tax credits were referenced, and you said it depends where the administration goes. It would require an act of Congress to change the clean energy tax credits, as would a change to the COG-EV grants, by the way, which were in law, distributed legally across the country, but different, bigger topic, I guess.

[01:13:54] With respect to the virtual solar PPA, because I had kind of a question along the same lines as Supervisor Stork, speak to the distinction between this model and a different model that maybe had been discussed in past years, like purchasing renewable credits, right, which is kind of a get out of jail free card to meet a renewable energy goal.

[01:14:20] What is different about this? Thank you. John Morrill from OEEC. Anyone can buy renewable energy credits by writing a check. And that is essentially a cash outlay for something. And you have to keep going back and buying it over and over.

[01:14:36] What this virtual power purchase agreement does is it establishes a direct contractual relationship between the customer and the developer of the solar or wind farm, where the customer receives exclusive right to the renewable energy credits that are generated from that installation.

[01:15:03] exclusive, you know, if we end up sharing with Loudoun or someone or schools, you know, that's all agreed. But it's considered a high quality renewable energy credit because that development would not occur until we sign on as a contractor. The developer is looking for firm customers and then once they're identified, then they build it and so then there's that direct relationship.

[01:15:35] So it is considered a very high-quality renewable energy credit, and this is something that the Fortune 500 companies have been doing for a number of years. And it's just because they, you know, the data centers and then other Fortune 500s know that, you know, they want high-quality renewable credits for their own goals.

[01:16:03] Supervisor Jimenez asked about potential barriers, and one of them, obviously, is utility-scale solar development in Virginia is not getting easier, although it gets a little bit overstated in the media. There is a lot of utility-scale solar still being developed, local governments approving it, and farmers leasing their farms or portions of their farms to do it, in some cases saving their farms, but there certainly is opposition.

[01:16:27] Anything that we did via a utility scale solar developer would be approved by that local government, right? We're not going to impose it on anybody, but that is a potential hurdle finding the right site and location in Virginia or in the region.

[01:16:43] Supervisor Herdy. Yeah, just on that, since we're on that, so there are solar projects out there waiting for these purchase agreements, power purchase agreements? There's a queue of projects where they're not built yet.

[01:17:01] They're looking for firm customers, and the number of them in Virginia has gone down because Dominion is busy building the renewables to satisfy their own regulatory requirement.

[01:17:18] but there are other states in our electric grid region where wind and utility-scale solar continue to be developed. So we'd be, in essence, competing with Dominion for these sites? Dominion is compelled to build them in Virginia.

[01:17:38] So we could, Pennsylvania, West Virginia. Most of these might not be here. That's conceivable. Okay. All right. Appreciate the comment on it gets more expensive from here, and thank you, County Executive Hill, for reminding us we're in a very difficult budget situation.

[01:18:01] You know, as a CFO, I'm used to when I look at projects, and I understand they're getting harder. I like payback as a method. I don't see any cost information, obviously savings information, and payback period.

[01:18:17] That's just something, as I evaluate projects, that's certainly something as a CFO. on the private sector, I look at if there's any way we can get that. I think that helps you as much as it helps me identify what makes sense, and maybe you have it, you just haven't presented it here.

[01:18:33] Go ahead, Kevin, you sound like you want to talk. Yes, we track all the financials, and we can provide that. Okay, that would be very, very helpful. Do any of these projects involve taking natural gas offline? Yes, we do look at electrification as an option.

[01:18:56] where it's feasible on the project, and again, where the financials make sense. One example is the Spring Hill Rec Center, where we replaced some natural gas heating equipment with our geothermal heat pump system that provides heating from an electric source, a highly efficient heat pump system.

[01:19:18] And that generated a financial benefit? Yes. Okay. I'd like to see that one if I could. I mean, as we all should know, we are now the number one importer of electric in the country, the state of Virginia is.

[01:19:33] And a lot of that electricity is getting imported from outside of the state, which makes it more expensive and also means it's coming from coal. So as we start coming offline from, you know, Virginia sources and natural gas, we're actually using energy that's probably not being produced as cleanly as natural gas.

[01:20:00] And I think that's just something we need to keep in mind as we move forward looking at these projects. And I'd be very interested in any that you've got that you're looking at transitioning off a natural gas to electric, because that will be being powered partially by coal-produced electric.

[01:20:18] I think it's also worth noting at the Spring Hill project specifically that we did install solar. I believe it's the largest installation on county property to date. So that offsets a lot of the additional electric. And I do appreciate your work, too.

[01:20:34] Thank you. And I am looking forward to that payback. That would be very helpful. I'm glad you're using it. Okay. I think we're a long way away from the energy mix in northern Virginia being dirtier than coal. I think it's still 40% is nuclear of the electrons that come to this building and all of our buildings.

[01:20:51] And you have some natural gas and renewable on top of that. But nuclear continues to be the largest source here. That could change, but take a long time to change. All right. Thank you all. We're going to have one last quick presentation and demo on our Sustained Fairfax Challenge.

[01:21:28] Thank you. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the Board of Supervisors. I'm John Silcox, Public Information Officer for the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination. As Supervisor Palczyk noted, that name just rolls off the tongue. But in December last year, we shared a plan to deploy a marketing campaign to encourage a culture of energy efficiency and sustainability for Fairfax County.

[01:21:50] along with creation of a web-based app that would allow individuals, neighborhoods, organizations to track their climate actions and share their successes with each other. I'm here today to provide an update on the status of those initiatives. So the first I wanted to note is our public awareness campaign, Sustained Fairfax, still in progress and delivering good results.

[01:22:11] As a reminder, the goals of this campaign are really to raise awareness and increase participation in energy efficiency and resiliency practices and programs, particularly the resources that are offered by our county and to foster community responsibility towards sustainability and increase digital engagement of county resources. The campaign highlights key actions and promotes county resources and programs like our Charge Up Fairfax program and the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program to foster collective responsibility and community engagement.

[01:22:42] And the campaign includes social and digital advertising in both English and Spanish across a variety of platforms. It's delivered about 5.6 million impressions in the campaign so far since we launched in December and scheduled to run through the end of April 2025. Sustained Fairfax is working closely with community organizations, nonprofits, and other groups to amplify its impact. And by leveraging partnerships, the campaign can create a robust network of sustainability champions. To help on that front, we're excited to tell you today that we've launched our Sustained Fairfax Challenge, which is a web-based platform that will enable

[01:23:21] individuals to track their climate actions and share their progress. The Sustained Fairfax Challenge is designed to educate participants about the various climate solutions that are available to them and to encourage them to adopt very simple, impactful actions in their daily lives. It fosters community engagement, allowing residents to connect with their friends and neighbors, share tips, participate in a community challenge, and celebrate their successes together.

[01:23:48] With the app, you can explore activities that are customized for your community and tailored to your household, track your impact and progress over time, find a wealth of resources from rebates to how-to guides, including programs and resources that are available specifically to Fairfax County residents. We worked with a third-party vendor called Bright Action to build out and customize this application for Fairfax County with information that is localized in both English and Spanish. And now briefly, we'd like to just show you the app and how it works. So what you're seeing there is the main page, which is available to anyone who goes to that web URL. Whether you

[01:24:28] have an account or not, you can see a lot of the information that's in the app. But to use all the features of the site, you would have to start an account and set up a profile. To set up an account, you can simply click on that button, get started. It's going to prompt you to enter an email, a password, and create a household name for yourself. And then it'll then create your account and will prompt you to complete a brief household profile. By answering some simple questions about your energy use, your transportation habits, and your food and waste habits, it will give you a snapshot of your household's carbon impact and generate recommendations based on your footprint.

[01:25:06] Once you create that profile, then you'll also be able to start a group or a team, invite others to join you, and as a group, you'll be able to track your progress together and share your successes. Now, going back to that main site, the main page, I just want to briefly show you what you see in some of the action areas.

[01:25:25] If you scroll down, there's a number of tiles there. Let's just select one. Let's go to Be Energy Smart. If you go into Be Energy Smart, you'll see at the very top that there's information describing what that means. What does it mean to be energy smart? And as you scroll down, you'll see a number of tiles of actions that relate to energy efficiency.

[01:25:45] We can select one here. We can just select Weatherize My Home. You select on Weatherize My Home. You're going to open up a page of information about why weatherization is important, along with some recommended actions you can take. If you're logged into your account, you'll see information on the cost for you to take some of those actions, the savings that it will generate for you, and the environmental impact that it will have for you based on your household profile.

[01:26:12] If you scroll down to the resources section, you'll see information about programs and incentives that can support that action, including specific information about Fairfax County programs, such as our Energy Conservation Assistance Program, the library's thermal camera and conserve kit loan program, and other incentives.

[01:26:32] So in the interest of time, I'll just return to the main page and note that this is available now. It's live, and if you click on that button at the top right, if you are a resident who would want to access the app in Spanish, you can click that and get the same information in Spanish as we just showed you in English.

[01:26:58] So with that, we can return to the presentation, and I'll just note that you've seen the site now. and we'd like to encourage everyone to consider joining the Sustained Fairfax Challenge. Getting started is very easy. Visit that URL on the screen, create an account, and consider starting a team or group with your friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues.

[01:27:21] Over the next few weeks, we'll be developing additional resources, including instruction tips, sheets to help inform folks how they can create their profiles, how to join their teams and set up those teams, as well as integrating this challenge into our sustained Fairfax campaign and our community outreach efforts.

[01:27:42] We look forward to working with your offices to share this information with your communities as well, and together we can create a healthier, more sustainable Fairfax County. And with that, I'm happy to answer any quick questions before we wrap up. Thank you, John. I think we'll have to hold questions.

[01:27:58] Folks can just reach out to you. This is just exciting, something the board has been asking for for a while, way to give our community the opportunity to work with us to meet our CCAP goals. I've gone through the website. It's very accessible. No matter where you are in this journey, there's a way for you to contribute and get started. So great job. And I know all of us will be sharing it out to our community. So thank you, everyone.

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