

city scene

FEBRUARY 2023



New Division Created to Advance Environmental and Sustainable Practices



Environmental Sustainability Committee at Fall Festival



City Hall Composting Center

The city updated its organizational chart last fall to include the new Environment and Sustainability Division within the Public Works Department. The division is responsible for developing, implementing, and supporting initiatives that achieve environmental, social, and economic goals within city operations and the community. The division coordinates with city departments and community stakeholders to enhance citywide sustainability initiatives, with a focus on five core areas:

- Climate mitigation and adaptation
- Energy efficiency and renewable energy
- Waste reduction and recycling

- Resiliency
- Protecting the natural environment

Communities are facing unprecedented challenges such as climate change, rapid urban growth, stressors on environmental resources, etc. The city recognizes that practicing sustainability will help us tackle these tough challenges and enable us to find harmony between people, prosperity, and the planet to create a better future for all. **"The creation of the Environment and Sustainability Division elevates and streamlines the work the city is doing and shows the city's commitment to sustainability,"** said Stefanie Kupka, sustainability coordinator and division chief.

The division has developed a series of actions to achieve each of the following objectives:

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CITY NEWS

City Government Offices Holiday Closures

Monday, Feb. 20 (*President's Day*)

- Closed: city government offices, DMV Select, General District Court
- Open: Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center
- CUE Bus: modified weekday service

Holiday Refuse and Recycling Collection Schedule

- Feb. 20: no service
- Feb. 21: Monday & Tuesday routes collected

Please note: there may be a delay in yard debris collection citywide Feb. 21-25. Please leave items at the curb until they are collected. Info: fairfaxva.gov (search "Refuse Holiday"), 703-385-7837

General District Court Services: Feb. 21

On Feb. 21, Fairfax City General District Court will not hold court, but court offices will be open in Fairfax City Hall. *Info: 703-385-7866*

FY2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report Available

Read the city's *Annual Comprehensive Financial Report* for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2022. The Code of the Commonwealth of Virginia requires all local governments to be audited each year with a report to the governing body; the ACFR fulfills this requirement. The FY2022 ACFR report is available at fairfaxva.gov/budget.

Nominate Women of Influence Through Feb. 17

The City of Fairfax Commission for Women is seeking nominations for the 2023 Women of Influence Award. This gives you the opportunity to recognize and celebrate outstanding women who live in the city and have made a significant impact on the lives of city residents.

Nominations are accepted through Feb. 17. For eligibility requirements and to submit a nomination, visit fairfaxva.gov (search "Women of Influence"). To request a paper ballot, call 703-385-7894.

2022 Business Recycling Report Due March 1

City business owners must submit their annual commercial recycling reports to the city electronically between Jan. 1 and March 1 using a form on the city website. The report details actual or estimated weight or volume of recycled materials provided by the business's recycling vendors. *Info: fairfaxva.gov (search "Commercial Recycling Report")*

Home Heating Assistance Available Through March 15

City residents who need help with heating bills this winter may apply for Fairfax County Family Services Crisis Assistance through March 15. Crisis assistance can be used to pay bills for utilities that are in danger of being disconnected. *Info: fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/public-assistance-employment-services*

Be Visible on Roads, Sidewalks

Fairfax City drivers, riders, and pedestrians, stay alert for your fellow travelers using all modes of transportation: cars, bicycles, motorcycles, e-scooters, and pedestrian-power. No matter how you travel, be visible. If you have lights, use them properly. Use reflective safety gear and lighting as appropriate. Remember to keep your eyes on the road and avoid distractions. Obey traffic laws and look out for others on the road. Walk, ride, and drive defensively.

Fairfax City Plastic Bag Tax in Effect

Remember, Fairfax City shoppers: the city has implemented a 5 cent tax for disposable plastic bags provided at the point of sale at city grocery stores, convenience stores,

and drugstores. To avoid paying this tax, keep reusable bags on hand, or skip bags altogether, when shopping.

Several neighboring jurisdictions have enacted a similar tax, including Fairfax County, Arlington County, City of Falls Church, City of Alexandria, and Loudoun County. *Info: fairfaxva.gov (search "plastic bag tax")*

Winter Weather FAQs

Winter is a fact of life in Fairfax City. Here are answers to frequently asked questions about inclement winter weather — and check out the city's winter weather information flyer at fairfaxva.gov (search "Winter Weather").

Park Cars Off-Street. When snow and ice are forecast, park off-street when possible, in driveways and community parking lots, so crews have easy access to treat and plow the roads.

Clear Sidewalks for Safety.

Remove snow from sidewalks on your property promptly to help pedestrians, including school-children, travel safely to bus stops and around the neighborhood. It is not a law, but it makes the community safer.

Driveway Shoveling Tip. Pile snow off the street, to the left of the driveway (facing the driveway from the street). If possible, wait to shovel the driveway apron until after plows clear your street (and in front of your driveway) to avoid shoveling any snow unintentionally moved by plows.

Clear Hydrants. Please clear a 5-foot area around your neighborhood fire hydrants so firefighters can access it immediately in an emergency.



CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR DOG

COUNCIL REPORTER

PLEASE NOTE: summaries have been edited. To read the full Council Reporter, visit fairfaxva.gov and click on "City Meetings."

COUNCIL ACTIONS OF DEC. 6, 2022

- Approved, 5-0, remote participation by Councilmember Yi.
- Approved, 5-0, to authorize the city manager to execute the joint Willard/Sherwood redevelopment phase II design and construction agreement as presented, provided that it is approved by the city attorney. *(Councilmember Yi was absent.)*
- Closed meeting to discuss personnel matters. *(No action taken.)*

COUNCIL ACTIONS OF DEC. 13, 2022

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

- Approved, unanimously the adoption of the agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approved, unanimously, consideration of: authorization to extend the Dockless Mobility Scooter Pilot Program; non-resident purchase of a city cemetery site; agreements between the city and the city constitutional officers (commissioner of the revenue and treasurer); an amended and restated establishing resolution for the Environmental Sustainability Committee; approval to extend the Residential Permit Parking District to include Linden Street between Cleveland Street and Darby Street; an award of a construction contract for stormwater outfall restoration.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- Approved, unanimously, the request for a special use permit to allow upper-story residential/mixed uses in the CR Commercial Retail Zoning District and Architectural Control Overlay District, at

9640 Fairfax Blvd., with conditions. Adopted the resolution with amendments to approve the request for four special exceptions to modify maximum density, minimum lot area, minimum required yards, and maximum building coverage standards (minimum parking requirement, cross access requirements, and street tree requirements.) Approved the request for major certificate of appropriateness, with conditions.

- Approved, unanimously, to enact an ordinance amending City Code Chapter 10 pertaining to the residential rental inspection program, as presented.
- Approved, unanimously, to defer public hearing and council action to Jan. 10, 2023, on an ordinance authorizing "quick-take" condemnation of a right-of-way dedication and various easements at 4040 Jermantown Road.
- Approved, unanimously, to enact an ordinance amending City Code Chapter 90 pertaining to tax exemptions for the elderly or disabled.
- Approved, unanimously, an appropriation resolution for \$103,000 to fund and implement a commercial driver's license bonus program to help the city promote, hire, and retain qualified commercial drivers.

ITEMS NOT REQUIRING A PUBLIC HEARING

- Approved, unanimously, to accept the City of Fairfax FY2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Approved, unanimously the Oct. 25, 2022, regular meeting minutes.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

- Approved, unanimously, to appoint: Larry Kobayashi, Rusty Russell, and Amanda Stamp to the Environmental Sustainability Committee.

CLOSED MEETING

- Approved, unanimously, the City Council concur with the city manager's appointment of Juan Carlos Martinez as the new chief financial officer.

Take the Housing Assessment Survey

City leaders would like to hear from YOU! Fairfax City is conducting a Comprehensive Housing Assessment and Strategy, and we need your input to help identify priorities for the future of housing in the city.

The overall housing assessment, which is recommended as part of Fairfax's *Comprehensive Plan*, will examine the types of housing that are most in demand across a full range of household incomes, and that will best support growing sectors of the local economy.

The study will also explore recent trends and development patterns – all of this information will help staff recommend future housing policies. The

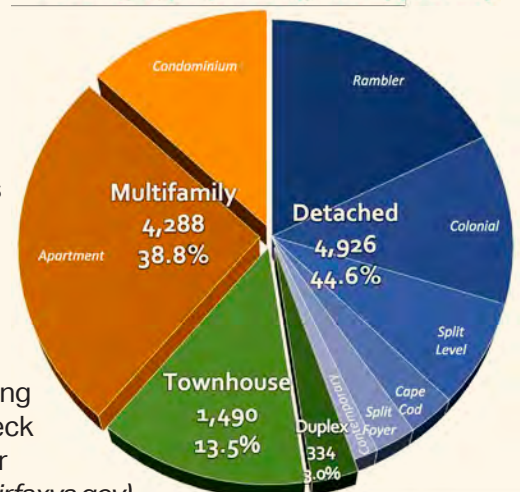
report is expected to be completed later this year.

As part of this study, the city is conducting a survey to make sure we hear residents' perspectives on the variety of housing-related topics that are being explored.

To participate in this survey, look for a postcard arriving in the mail soon, or simply go to fairfaxva.gov/HousingSurvey.

For additional information regarding the housing assessment, please check fairfaxva.gov/HousingAssessment or contact Eric Forman (eric.forman@fairfaxva.gov) at the Community Development and Planning Department.

FIGURE 18:
Housing Type (existing and approved)



Source: Fairfax City Real Estate Assessments, January 2022
Includes units under construction or approved as of January 14, 2022



**New
Division
Created**
*continued
from page 1*



- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from city operations and the community as a whole
- Minimize energy demand from city operations and the community as a whole with the application of energy-efficient design features, technologies, and best practices
- Increase use of renewable energy sources and advanced sustainable technologies
- Remain in compliance with state regulations pertaining to solid waste and recycling
- Reduce waste and increase diversion by city operations, residential properties, and businesses
- Reduce risk and improve preparedness to meet the challenges associated with natural and man-made hazards
- Support a diverse population of native vegetation and restore and preserve natural open spaces and contiguous greenway corridors that provide natural habitats for plants and wildlife
- Protect and improve the health of the city's water resources

and watersheds

- Reduce exposure to pollutants and hazardous chemicals in the environment

The division's efforts to make the city more sustainable are having an impact. The city now requires yard waste to be set out in paper bags or reusable containers, which removed plastic from the waste stream. The city created a composting center at City Hall where residents can drop off food waste 24 hours a day. Glass containers, which are not accepted in curbside recycling collection, can be dropped off at the purple container on Page Avenue. The city actively participates in Solarize NOVA campaigns, which provide property owners with free energy and solar site assessments and discounted prices on solar installations and electric vehicle (EV) chargers. The city waived fees for building electrical permits for solar energy systems and adopted a solar energy equipment tax exemption so property owners can receive a property tax exemption on solar energy equipment. **"The city is committed to encouraging solar energy growth, which will improve the resilience and economic competitiveness of our community," said Kupka.**

The city will assess all public properties this year to identify the best locations to install solar energy systems. Once the report is final, sites will be prioritized for solar energy installations.

The city is in the process of converting electric streetlights to LED technology – reducing energy use, providing cost savings, and enhancing streetlighting safety and quality.

A nationwide shift to electric vehicles is coming in the near future, and Kupka said becoming an "EV-ready city" is important. She said more charging stations throughout the city are needed to prepare for the increased demand for EVs, supplementing the free EV charging stations installed in 2021 at Old Town

Hall and City Hall.

Kupka said almost 50% of the city's greenhouse gas emissions are associated with transportation. "To reach our goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050, we need to support the transition to alternative fuel vehicles, reduce single occupancy vehicles, and encourage people to walk, bike, carpool, and ride the free CUE Bus," said Kupka.

"The city is making sustainability a priority, and we're working with regional partners to advance a sustainable future for our community," said Kupka. "Meeting our sustainability goals requires bold solutions that will require sustained leadership and partnerships."

One example of this is the city's partnership with George Mason University's Virginia Climate Center, which has \$2M to support Northern Virginia communities with increasing their climate resilience. "The Virginia Climate Center will support our efforts to assess climate vulnerabilities and risks, and develop climate resiliency strategies to protect infrastructure, property, lives, businesses, and urban functions in the city," Kupka explained. "They will work to identify immediate and long-term strategies that will have positive impacts in our communities."

The coming challenges of climate change may feel overwhelming to some, but Kupka said, "Every little bit counts; no action is too small." Some examples of actions residents can take now include choosing reusable products over disposable ones, planting native plants and trees, adding a rain barrel to collect rainwater, using multimodal transportation, and reducing waste by recycling and composting food scraps. Residents also are encouraged to conduct an energy audit on their homes to make living spaces more efficient, comfortable, and cheaper to maintain. The city website includes new and creative ways to "recycle right" and reduce waste, and free compost caddies are available for collecting food scraps in the kitchen.



For the Love of Chocolate

The Parks and Recreation Department takes pride in organizing large community events throughout the year for residents and visitors, and canceling one event after another during the pandemic was very dispiriting.

One event sorely missed by everyone is the annual Chocolate Lovers Festival, held the weekend before Valentine's Day in Old Town Fairfax. The festival kicks off the city's events season with a three-day celebration of everything chocolate.

People may disagree about many things, but sharing a chocolate treat transcends differences and brings people together. Fairfax City is looking forward to bringing the festival back in 2023, sweeter and richer than ever!

At the center of the festival is The Taste of Chocolate. Chocolatiers from near and far gather inside Old Town Hall to share samples and sell their confections. Even on the coldest days, the line to get in stretches from the columned entrance down the block and around Old Town Square. Dip a strawberry into a fountain flowing with melted chocolate!

One of the most popular activities during the festival is Liquid Chocolate. This event was added several years ago to provide something for adults to do on a weekend evening. Inside the heated tent, attendees can quench their thirst with a fizzy chocolate soda, sip on intoxicating cocoa whiskey, and relax with a soothing cup of chocolate tea. Enjoy the warm and festive atmosphere as people explore new chocolatey concoctions and indulge themselves.

Other activities are spread throughout Old Town Fairfax, including a cake walk, a tour about the history of chocolate, and traditional festival activities such as balloon animals, magic shows, jugglers, live music, and photo opportunities. City historic sites will be open for tours. Bundle up and explore!



Friday, Feb. 3

Liquid Chocolate
6-8 p.m., Old Town Square

**The Hot Lanes and
Bobby J. Concert**
8 p.m., Sherwood Center

Saturday, Feb. 4

Taste of Chocolate
10 a.m.-5 p.m., Old Town Hall

Liquid Chocolate
1-6 p.m., Old Town Square

Sunday, Feb. 5

Taste of Chocolate
Noon-4 p.m., Old Town Hall

See complete schedule
of events at
chocolatefestival.net



LIVE LIFE IN THE ARTS

Legally Blonde: The Musical

7 p.m. Feb. 3, 4, 9, 10
2 p.m., 7 p.m. Feb. 5, 11
Fairfax High School
etix.com/ticket/v/15651

ArtScreen:

Jazz Fest—A New Orleans Story

7:30 p.m. Feb. 10, Sherwood Center

Old Town Hall Performance Series:

Bobby Blackhat Band

8 p.m. Feb. 17, Old Town Hall

Main Street Community Band:

Heroes and Villains

4 p.m. Feb. 26,
Katherine Johnson Middle School

Old Town Hall Performance Series:

Gerson Lanza

8 p.m. March 3, Old Town Hall

New Central Traffic Control System Installed

The city's Sign and Signal crew wrapped up a large capital improvement project at the end of 2022 that will make driving in the city safer and more efficient. A new traffic control system was installed at intersections throughout the city. Some of the replaced signal cabinets were more than 25 years old and had exceeded their useful service life.

The new Kinetics signal system includes 20 new cabinets based on modern software platforms with enhanced security. The system is supported by active updates and upgrades, and the communication between the central system and individual signals has been enhanced.

Advanced functionality includes integrated cameras, vehicle detection, automated counts, and transit priority. The system is programmed for quicker transitions between signal plans and recovery after emergency vehicle preemptions. City staff will be notified sooner if issues occur, and the system includes remote monitoring and repair capabilities.

To report traffic signal issues, please use *Fairfax City Resolve*, the city's 311 system, at fairfaxva.gov/resolve, or download the *Ready 311* app.



Young at Heart Senior Center Advisory Council

Craft & Flea Market

at **Stacy C. Sherwood
Community Center**

March 4, 2023

9AM - 2PM



Craft and Vendor Flea Market

Attend the City of Fairfax Senior Advisory Council Craft and Vendor Flea Market from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 4, at the Sherwood Community Center.

Young at Heart Senior volunteers have planned a fabulous event! Bring your family and friends to shop, eat, and enjoy friendly company while supporting this Green Acres fundraiser.

Many vendors and clever crafters already have reserved their spots, so consider cleaning out your household items and goodies and booking your own table.

There are 8x8 spaces available, with a rectangular table and two chairs for \$35.

For information and applications, contact patzeiss3@gmail.com or call the Green Acres Senior Center, 703 273-6090.

**For Information: patzeiss3@gmail.com or
Green Acres Senior Center: 703-273-6090**



CITY OF FAIRFAX
STORMWATER
MANAGEMENT

SWU Credits Extension

Fairfax City extended the Stormwater Utility credit application deadline to March 1. The extension provides an opportunity for city property owners to apply for credit for the 2023 billing cycle. The extension is a one-time only exception to provide relief to property owners who did not anticipate the new Stormwater Utility fees or were unaware of the creditable activities provided in the *Stormwater Utility Credit Manual*.

Approved credits received by the original Oct. 1, 2022, deadline remain in effect through 2023. Credit applications submitted from now through March 1, will be considered for the 2023 billing cycle. The deadline for Stormwater Utility credit applications for the 2024 billing cycle is Oct. 1.

Shop Local
with Fairfax City's
NEW eGift Card Program

fairfaxcityconnected.com/flexcard

Why Shop Local?

- More money stays in your community.
- Create local jobs.
- Invest in entrepreneurship.
- Local businesses give back to their community!

FAIRFAX CITY
Economic Development

SWU Credits may be earned cumulatively, with no set maximum percentage, except that regardless of how many credits a property earns per year, each property will be charged at least one billing unit per year.

The Stormwater Utility credit application, credit manual, and other information are available online at fairfaxva.gov/stormwaterutility. For questions, call 703-385-2578 or email stormwaterutility@fairfaxva.gov.



HELPING HANDS

THE CITY NEEDS PEOPLE LIKE YOU

SERVE ON CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Board of Architectural Review (one vacancy for a business representative, and one city resident); **Board of Building Code Appeals** (one mechanical or plumbing vacancy); **Environmental Sustainability Committee** (one vacancy for city business rep.); **Human Services Committee** (one vacancy); **Economic Development Authority** (one vacancy for city resident); and the **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board** (two vacancies).

To apply, visit fairfaxva.gov and search "boards and vacancies," or call 703-385-7935.

The average American family uses 1,500 plastic bags a year...

DON'T FEED THE BAG MONSTER

Bring Your Own Bag!

5¢ Plastic Bag Tax Effective January 1

Disposable plastic bags provided at point of sale to consumers at grocery stores, convenience stores and drugstores in Fairfax City will be subject to a 5-cent tax. Keep your change, bring a reusable bag!

FREE reusable grocery bags will be available to residents while supplies last. Pick up a bag at Fairfax City Hall Atrium, 10455 Armstrong St., weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

For more information, visit fairfaxva.gov.

City Hall • 10455 Armstrong St. • Fairfax, VA 22030

Cityscene is produced by the city's Communications and Marketing Office

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MAKING History

Traveling Exhibition: A Material World: Photographs of the 1980s, Feb. 3 through May 7

The Eighties are remembered as a time of excess and extremes — but this materialism was not embraced or experienced by all Americans, and many pushed the boundaries of what was conventional. Photographs from the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* featured in this exhibition on loan from the Virginia Museum of History and Culture help us understand today's culture, which is being shaped by '80s kids who are bringing back that decade's values, worldviews, and attitudes. See this exhibit for free from Feb. 3 through May 7 at the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, open 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. *Info: fairfaxva.gov (search "Material World")*

Beyond Slavery's Shadow: Free People of the Color in the South, Feb. 12

George Washington University Professor Warren Milteer will discuss his latest book, *Beyond Slavery's Shadow: Free People of the Color in the South* — which analyzes how wealth, gender, and occupation intersected with white supremacy and discrimination to reveal a wide range of social interactions and life outcomes for the South's free people of color, and how societal contradictions continue to appear in the modern United States. The book will be available for purchase and signing at this free event, which begins at 2 p.m. Feb. 12 at the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center. *Info: fairfaxva.gov (search "Milteer")*

Twenty Dollars and Change: Harriet Tubman and the Ongoing Fight for Racial Justice, Feb. 25

Taking up the debate over Harriet Tubman's image on the \$20 bill, political scientist and author Dr. Clarence Lusane examines with discussion moderator Mayor Catherine S. Read how racist historical narratives and pervasive social inequities are inextricably linked — and that changing one can transform the other. His book, *Twenty Dollars and Change: Harriet Tubman and the Ongoing Fight for Racial Justice*, will be available for purchase and signing at the free event, which begins at 2 p.m. Feb. 25 at the Historic Blenheim. *Info: fairfaxva.gov (search "Lusane")*

