

MVCCA Resolution 2016-02 (Environment and Recreation)

Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations' input to the 2016 Update of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors' Environmental Agenda

- 1. WHEREAS** the Fairfax County (FC) Board of Supervisors (BOS) adopted the Environmental Agenda on June 21, 2004; this was revised on March 26, 2007 and is being updated at this time;
 - 2. WHEREAS** BOS guidance documents, especially this Environmental Agenda, should influence decision-making throughout Fairfax County (FC), and be widely disseminated for use;
 - 3. WHEREAS** the implementation of recommendations from the Route 1 Multi-modal Alternatives Analysis is an important opportunity to improve environmental conditions in the Mount Vernon District;
 - 4. WHEREAS** the environmental impact from all development projects, including the implementation of recommendations from the Route 1 Multi-modal Alternatives Analysis, should be minimized in all cases;
 - 5. WHEREAS** while environmental impacts are described separately in the Environmental Agenda they are inextricably interconnected and should be mitigated in order to improve environmental conditions, a healthier environment, healthy people and healthy communities, all stakeholders want this;
 - 6. WHEREAS** as a priority FC should pursue balanced growth agenda that sets improvement of environmental conditions as a priority; this will result in a higher quality of life for current and future residents, increase property values, and, create a highly desirable area that will attract future residents and businesses to locate in the Mount Vernon District;
- A. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the MVCCA supports the update of the Environmental Agenda of the BOS as long as it includes the recommendations described herein,
- B. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the MVCCA requests that the Mt. Vernon District Supervisor deliver to these recommendations to the Fairfax County Environment Coordinator for inclusion in the update of the BOS' Environmental Agenda;

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- i. The goals, objectives and audience(s) need to be clearly described for the Environment Agenda,
- ii. The concepts of protect, conserve, enhance, manage sustainably, and restore should be incorporated throughout the Agenda,
- iii. Stormwater management regulations as they address stream reclamation and infill lot development must include the role of trees in water and soil retention. Tree retention is not sufficiently credited in state and county storm water management regulations;
- iv. Incorporate trees, landscaping and green spaces in all county human health, sustainability, and economic development policies and initiatives, this is particularly important in revitalization areas like the Richmond Highway corridor;
- v. Trees, landscaping, and green spaces improve the quality of life for low income residents and increase environmental justice;
- vi. Strengthen the education components of the Agenda to include education of the next generation of environmental stewards and education of the general public;
- vii. Invasive species need to be addressed as a threat to public health (e.g.: zika virus/Asian tiger mosquito link), the environment (due to ecosystem degradation), and the local economy (e.g. public and private costs associated with removing trees killed by emerald ash borers in residential areas).
- viii. Potential environmental quality investments should be compared based on their environmental cost-effectiveness, i.e.: benefits gained per dollar invested.
- ix. Deer need to be recognized as a potential source of environmental degradation and property damage in areas of Fairfax County where their populations exceed the carrying capacity of the wild food resources, and those deer populations should be managed to reduce the risk of that degradation and damage.
- x. The targeted County tree canopy should be 40% on average, and no magisterial district should be below 35%.
- xi. County agencies should take all available steps to constrain developers from removing trees.
- xii. The average age of County watershed plans should be no more than five years old, and no individual watershed plan should be more than eight years old. Watershed plans should include the benefits and costs for all contemplated projects. Watershed restoration projects should be viewed as opportunities for public-private partnerships.
- xiii. Re-development in older parts of the County should include provisions for a net increase in pervious surfaces.
- xiv. Encourage the business community to sell native plants for landscaping and discourage the business community from selling non-native plants.
- xv. County facilities, including Fairfax County Public Schools, should be models of sustainable and environmentally friendly practices both in their operations and associated construction activities;
- xvi. Articulate and create plans that acknowledge and build on the documented impacts of trees, landscaping, and green spaces on mental health families and community building;

- xvii.** The following topic areas should be added and discussed:
- a. Climate Change,
 - b. Biodiversity,
 - c. Invasive species as a threat to public health, the environment and the economy,
 - d. Renewable Energy: Solar- include timeline for adding Solar on rooftops of FC buildings, schools, parking garages,
 - e. Actions required to improve environmental conditions,
 - f. Measurements for evaluation and success,
 - g. Dissemination and Reporting,
 - h. Accomplishments, including dates and specific actions completed dating back to the initial Agenda of 2004,
 - i. Air Quality – include strategies for encouraging use of low-emitting vehicles and encouraging increased usage of public transportation, installing vehicle charging stations at FC properties (including schools), include priority parking spaces for low emitting vehicles at FC properties and schools.
- xviii.** The topic areas while discussed in detail individually are inextricably linked, this linkage and interdependence should be described;
- xix.** Describe collaborative partnership team(s) or working groups at all levels that have been established to implement this Agenda including (a) FC Advisory Committees and Commissions that advise the BOS on environment matters (including EQAC), (b) FC Agencies, (c) Non-governmental organization partnerships, (d) Neighboring County (or State) Agencies whose activities indirectly (or directly) impact FC’s environment, and (e) State and County Agencies beyond our region (including internationally) to share and gain expertise from best practice projects and strategies from outside FC (such as through the 8 80 cities initiative found at www.880cities.org), leverage both technical expertise and capacity across agencies, and, budget for maximum impact of County-wide efforts;
- xx.** A clear strategy and timeline for dissemination and implementation of this Agenda is needed;
- xxi.** Growth should not be pursued just for the sake of growth rather it should be pursued so as to effect improved environmental conditions. We know that a healthier environment leads to healthy & attractive community for current and future residents, and this will create a community that is a highly desirable place for future residents and businesses to locate;
- xxii.** A technical edit of the full document is needed.

End proposed MVCCA E&R Resolution #2016-02.