
CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department Name: Department of Planning and Development

Equity Lead(s): Michelle Stahlhut

Date: 1/2/24

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN REPORT

Goal 1: Incorporate the consideration of equity in planning and development policies, plans, and processes.

1a. Incorporate equity analysis into review and update of the Comprehensive Plan Policy Plan

1b. Develop Equity Policy for Comprehensive Plan Policy Plan as appropriate.

1c. Implement equity impact assessment of all policy work where applicable

1e. Develop strategies to incorporate equity into DPD business processes, including supporting other agencies.

Goal 1 Progress:

The update of the Comprehensive Plan Policy plan, which includes equity analysis, and a separate equity policy is an ongoing process. To date this has included completing a language analysis of all elements of the policy plan, working with a Planning Commission (PC) liaison, presenting to the PC, providing additional training for policy plan topic leads, and completing staff analysis.

All Fairfax County Board items now require an equity impact assessment. DPD regularly submits policy items that include equity impact assessment and staff is working toward incorporating equity assessment into staff reports.

DPD is beginning to incorporate equity impact assessment at the beginning of new policy work. Staff has undergone training in using equity tools such as the Vulnerability Index for existing conditions analysis and the Inclusive Community Engagement Framework to develop broader ranging engagement plans.

Goal 2: Expand Community Engagement in order to ensure the breadth of interests, ideas, and values of all people are heard and considered.

a. Implement the inclusive community engagement framework into existing and new processes.

b. Continue expansion of language access for meetings, materials

Goal 2 Progress:

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Inclusive community engagement on land use issues is a priority for DPD, and new strategies are required to ensure that the quality of life and the opinions of the county's growing and increasingly diverse population are considered, and that all residents have an opportunity to participate in planning and zoning activities. To build a better understanding of the county's planning and zoning activities, DPD is expanding its capacity to provide more language translation services, which includes enhanced advertisements for translation and interpretation services. Some language access highlights for 2023 include:

- *DPD began tracking the number of requests for translation accommodations and the number of pro-active translation services provided.*
- *For new Site-Specific Plan Amendments, DPD hired 11 interpreters to provide interpretation at community meetings.*
- *For the Lake Anne Economic Visioning Study, the community survey was proactively translated into Korean, Spanish and Farsi. Survey responses were also translated and more than 500 people took the survey.*
- *For the Lorton Core Study, several materials were proactively translated, and six interpreters were hired to join two community meetings and provide interpretation in Spanish, Korean and Arabic.*
- *For the Centreville Study, a community survey was translated in Spanish and Korean.*
- *Several community meeting flyers were translated into multiple languages proactively as well.*

The inclusive community engagement framework continues to be used alongside DPD's community engagement planning process. County data on specific communities and native languages is also referenced to ensure we are reaching a wide range of people in the community and that community members can request or receive project information and access interpretation services in their native language.

Goal 3: Support County's work toward telling the history of communities of color in Fairfax County.

3a. Continue to provide staff with current and historical resources in support of equity goals.

3b. Lead Heritage Resources Survey work for Gum Springs Community

3c. Work with community to advance recommendations from the African American Heritage Resources Survey

Goal 3 Progress:

The Heritage Resources Team has supported the DPD Equity Lead in researching a Planning Commission presentation of the county's land use and development history by providing historic documents, supported One Fairfax Central Team's project in partnership with George Mason University to research the county's land use and development history by providing historic records and documents, and wrote text for 6 historical markers to commemorate the county's African American history as part of a Board of Supervisors initiative. The markers are currently being fabricated for installation in 2024.

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The Heritage Resources Survey work for Gum Springs has been ongoing and will continue into 2024. Major progress this year included working with a small group of community members and staff to issue a solicitation for a Heritage Resources survey of Gum Springs. Community members participated on the Selection Advisory Committee and contributed to the scope of work and staffing plan for consultants. This project is in the final stages of the procurement process. The community kick-off meeting is anticipated to occur in March/April 2024.

A virtual community meeting to discuss the Fairfax County African American Historic Resources Survey findings was held on Monday, March 6, 2023. Public input from that meeting is being incorporated into the final report. This report is being considered as a living document, as much of this history was previously unrecorded is still being uncovered.

Goal 4: Create an equity culture within DPD in order to implement One Fairfax into the work of the department.

4a. Review and revise as appropriate DPD hiring procedures to promote equitable practices and increase diversity of hiring pools DPD.

4b. Offer additional opportunities for land use and equity education (ex. newsletters, book clubs).

4c. EIA Analysis training for all staff involved in BOS policy work.

Goal 4 Progress:

DPD does not currently have access to centralized data on the percent of people of color at every hiring stage, although DPD has increased the overall diversity of its workforce from 28% to 32%.

DPD annually requests all new employees join a discussion of the Race - The Power of an Illusion video series. DPD has historically conducted these trainings in-house and in 2023, 16 new staff joined the training for all three videos. This training will be conducted externally by the county's Equity Ambassadors (trainers) for 2024.

In partnership with the One Fairfax Equity Ambassador program, approximately 15 policy plan topics leads were trained using "Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government," which was tailored specifically to the group and their current policy work.

Additional training in 2024 has included equity impact analysis training for relevant staff on an ongoing basis, and ongoing training and discussion with all divisions in the department regarding development and implementation of a land use language guide.

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Describe other equity-related work completed in CY 2023 (efforts that advance racial and social equity that your department was involved in within the department or countywide) not in the department's Equity Impact Plan.

A few major multi-year policy initiatives that have been led by DPD or that DPD has participated in this year were approved in 2023 and have contributed to the effort of advancing racial and social equity.

Parking Reimagined

In September 2023, the Board adopted the Parking Reimagined project which becomes effective beginning January 1, 2024. This is the result of a two-year process led by DPD and Land Development Services (LDS) staff with the goal of modernizing parking and loading requirements and creating greater flexibility in the provision of parking for current and future land uses.

Some notable changes include:

- *The implementation of a Tiered Parking Framework, which allows for lower minimum parking requirements in areas of the county with higher density and better transit availability;*
- *Expanded parking adjustment options allowing the Board or Director to reduce parking;*
- *Simplified and modernized loading requirements; and*
- *The implementation of new minimum bicycle parking requirements.*

Parking Reimagined aligns primarily with One Fairfax area of focus #11 as it promotes, in part, a quality-built environment that accommodates anticipated growth and promotes housing and services for all people. In older, underserved suburban communities, surface parking areas are a prominent feature of commercial and multifamily residential properties. By requiring older sites to add or retain unnecessary parking, outdated minimum parking requirements can limit the ability to improve these buildings or provide additional reinvestment opportunities that would benefit the community. Providing appropriate auto parking requirements and establishing minimum bicycle parking standards creates opportunities for more walkable, bikeable, transit-accessible communities, benefiting those who do not own a vehicle or wish to drive. Lower parking requirements allow these communities to be planned and designed with greater connectivity and accessibility by non-auto modes. Simplifying administrative requirements and providing more flexibility where appropriate can reduce costly technical burdens to demonstrate parking supply conformity, which helps small and disadvantaged businesses reduce both the administrative and physical costs of providing parking.

Reston Comprehensive Plan

Fairfax County's Reston Comprehensive Plan, the guiding document for land use and development decisions in Reston, was approved by the Board in September 2023 after a multi-year community task force process. The plan includes updates to guidance for topics like affordable housing, open space, and community health. The plan amendment was informed by input from county staff, a community task force and public feedback in more than 50 task force meetings and seven post-task force public meetings.

Highlights of the new Reston Comprehensive Plan:

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- **One Reston:** *encompasses both urban and suburban sections of Reston.*
- **Community Health:** *Introduces new language to encourage consideration for the health and well-being of the Reston community with land use and development decisions.*
- **Equity:** *Introduces new language to encourage consideration of equity with land use and development decisions.*
- **Neighborhoods:** *Preserves Reston’s existing neighborhoods and enhances the transit corridor.*
- **Affordable Housing:** *Maintains focus on providing affordable housing in new developments and preserves existing affordable housing in Reston.*
- **Open Space:** *Preserves Reston’s forests, lakes, and stream valleys, and provides additional open and recreational spaces.*

Housing

DPD staff were members of the Workforce Dwelling Unit (WDU) for-sale task force, convened from April to October 2023 by the Board of Supervisors. The group evaluated such topics as income levels served in the program, the number of units produced and sold, sales prices of those units, financial impact on shifts to affordability ranges, resale best practices, term controls, and geographic applicability. The task force considered options to maximize the potential of the for-sale WDU program to serve low- and moderate-income families while maintaining project feasibility. The task force reached consensus to recommend shifting the affordability level of the program from up to 80% to 120% AMI to a new range of up to 70% to 100% AMI, proportionality of bedroom counts between the WDU and market rate units (with all 3+ bedroom-units considered family-sized units); extending the geographic applicability to properties that are zoned and planned for medium to high-density outside of development centers; and adjusting the WDU pricing model and resale requirements.