

1. **Trees** are Nature's simplest carbon sequestration device, but they are sacrificed every day in favor of asphalt. Even when done in the name of other worthy goals, tree loss is real and cumulative and results in compounding the impacts of climate change. The Comprehensive Plan commits the city to protecting its trees. What will you do to reverse the trend of tree cover loss?

Comprehensive Plan Outcome

NE1.4 <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/12382/636867034235100000> pg 107

One thing I would like to do as mayor is replenish the city's tree canopy by planting new trees, especially trees native to the environment of northern Virginia. We should invest the funds necessary to maintain them and keep them healthy so we have significantly less loss each year. We need to do an inventory of the trees we have so that we understand what we need to maintain in the city. I also think it is critical to attract top talent to work in the city, so I will do what I can as mayor to attract a good city arborist and help that arborist promote tree conservation in the city.

2. **Invasive Plants** are rapidly overtaking our woods. They crowd out native species and make access a struggle for both citizens and wildlife yet the City does not have a plan or staff in place to address this growing problem. What is your strategy for ensuring we have staffing, public outreach, and professional removal to stem the tide of invasive plants?

Comprehensive Plan Outcome NE1.4

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I would support the creation of a citizen board which works on the issue of increasing native plants in the city and gives recommendations for removing invasives. We already have so many talented and dedicated conservationists and gardeners working on this issue, so we can bring the city together with them to create policy around removing invasives and planting native species. The need to maintain native plant growth should be one of the yardsticks we use when determining how and what we plant on city-owned property. We should invest adequate funding to maintain those native plantings and help our residents understand how and why they too should do this in their own gardens. I have been learning about this from local activists and it has become something I'm passionate about. I would love to use my existing platforms on public access and YouTube to make a series of videos about that process to promote this concept to the residents of Fairfax City and the wider region.

3. **Resource Protection Areas (RPAs) and floodplains** help to protect our streams and reduce the impacts of flooding on built areas. Yet in recent years

Council has approved projects that encroach upon and even destroy these protected areas. How will you use your leadership position in the City of Fairfax to maintain and enlarge these buffers that protect the headwaters of the Accotink and Pohick Creeks and reduce flooding impacts?

Comprehensive Plan Outcome NE1.1

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In general, my aim as mayor would be to make environmental sustainability a priority in any new development we undertake in the city - that is the right thing to do for the present and it helps us prepare and protect the city's future. We have to look at the science and the recommendations from experts in sustainability and conservation and where possible, make accommodations that protect these important ecosystems. We need to continue to bring on staff and attract top talent (arborists, sustainability experts) so that we have the right people advising us about environmental concerns. We also need to coordinate with regional representatives from adjacent counties and the Commonwealth, so that requires a mayor who has longstanding relationships with those officials (as I do), to make sure that what happens around the City also protects the environment. And finally, a big focus for me would be on communication and education for City residents, about what they can do to help us protect the environment in their own yards and gardens - through stormwater management, planting native species, installing porous surfaces to control flooding, etc.

4. Urban Runoff is eroding our streams. Under the TMDL plan for Accotink Creek, the City has a program of stream restoration projects to stabilize stream banks and manage flow. However, the source of urban runoff is the water from our roads, driveways, walkways and roofs, which gets collected into our stormwater pipes and from there piped directly into the streams. What will you do to reduce runoff throughout our city?

*See: https://www.accotink.org/2017/Vol_II_Final_SED_TMDL.pdf

Comprehensive Plan Outcome NE1.1

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My first priority would be to use the mayor's platform to increase education and community outreach to residents and the surrounding communities about the importance of installing porous surfaces for driveways, parking lots, patios, decks and so forth. I think it is also critical that we require any developers coming in with new proposals to incorporate innovative techniques to control runoff and keep stormwater drainage to the stream system as clean as possible

5. The stormwater utility is a new funding mechanism approved by City Council for meeting the state and federal requirements to reduce the impacts of storm water on our streams and ultimately on the Chesapeake Bay. The stormwater utility charges a user fee pegged to the amount of impervious area on each lot,

much the way our water meter is used to charge us for the amount of potable water we use. As presented to Council by staff and our financial advisor, Davenport Public Finance, the stormwater utility provides the City with an innovative mechanism to leverage money to fund its stormwater management program in a fiscally responsible manner. Unfortunately, many residents mistakenly believe that the stormwater fee is a tax being imposed on them and see it as an additional financial burden. How will you communicate to citizens the overall fiscal impact of the stormwater utility and how do you envision it being best used to serve the community's needs?

The Fairfax City staff continues to put out information on multiple platforms including YouTube, the City Scene, via emails and in public forums about the importance of the stormwater utility. As mayor I would continue that focus on public education about the benefits and the impact of this program. I think we can expand to more platforms - social media like Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, information tables at city events, at farmer's markets and outdoor gatherings, and we can ask our business owners to post informational posters providing details and outreach. The stormwater utility is part of preparing the city for present and future needs and it's critical that we educate our residents and businesses about why it matters. Part of the mayor's role is in being the public advocate for these programs, so as someone who has hosted public policy television programs, I feel particularly prepared to tackle this issue and lend my abilities.

It's my hope that raising awareness would reduce the amount of nonporous surfaces in the city. I also think we should consider expanding the incentives for businesses and homeowners to implement proven methodologies for mitigating stormwater. Finally, we also need to communicate more with our residents about the technology we are using to map our stormwater system. Those maps are available online and they are being used to create an archive that will help us improve stormwater management, both now and in the future.

6.Road salt contaminates our streams, aquifers and drinking water. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality has recently developed a Northern Virginia road salt management strategy to reduce salt runoff and an Accotink TMDL for salt. How will you reduce the use of road salt in the City?

Link to DEQ Salt Management Stakeholder Advisory Committee:

https://www.accotink.org/2021/SaMS_Toolkit_Summary_final.pdf

What Fairfax County has done provides a good model for this issue and I would be interested as mayor to do something similar. As better alternatives are available, I think it's important that we consider adopting them. The current Virginia Salt Management Strategy (SaMS) and its accompany toolkit is something we need to adapt and use within the city - both in terms of educating residents about how to reduce salt use and also in terms of partnering with Fairfax Water to monitor current trends to see where we can reduce salt use to impact runoff

7. Light pollution impacts wildlife by disrupting mating, migration and feeding patterns of many species of birds and insects. It also takes away citizens' joy of viewing the heavens and the displays of fireflies. While the City has taken some initial steps, such as using dark sky compliant fixtures in some locations, very few people are aware of the environmental costs of lighting up the night. How can you use your leadership position to ensure the City reduces its contribution to light pollution (such as 'Dark Sky' lighting, removing lights, and insect-friendly wavelengths*)?

Comprehensive Plan Outcome NE2.2

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* More about Dark Sky Lighting here: <https://www.savingourstars.org/#milkyway>

More about insects and light wavelengths here: <https://www.selux.com/int/en/extended/insect-friendly-lighting>

As mayor, this would be one of the environmental issues I'd be interested in raising awareness about. The impact of street lighting on insects, birds and bats is one that I think our residents do not know enough about, so outreach and education are prime first steps. Using my skills in policy television, I would like to bring in information about good models in other communities so we can learn about what that looks like and how we might implement some of those best practices here. Starting that conversation with residents is important, but we also have to balance the needs of safety as we consider our lighting with environmental concerns. Citizens are equally concerned about lighting as it impacts criminal activity on their streets and about making safe pathways as people walk their pets or ride their bikes after dark. We should consider what resources we already have to implement and how we can balance the two concerns. Asking a citizens group to review our lighting and analyze what lights we can adapt to insect-friendly systems would be a great way to get that process started.

8. Plastic trash that litters our roads and trails is washed into our streams with every rainfall. How will you use your leadership position to help the City eliminate single-use plastics at City facilities and functions? What other solutions will you propose to address this community-wide problem?

Comprehensive Plan Outcome SI1.3

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This is a global issue as well, so I would seek out resources from around the world to help me find best practices for eliminating single use plastics. I will attend conferences like the United States Conference of Mayors, which has an Environment Committee that has been pursuing resolutions to expand waste and recycling markets. Finding partners in other cities facing the same issue would help us to identify new innovations and products that could address this issue in a forward-thinking way. I also think outreach to our residents about the need to reduce single use plastics while trying to encourage the use of recyclable or compostable items instead is an ongoing concern. We can and should expand our composting program to a curbside pickup system so that

we make the practice of composting as accessible and as easy as possible. We should provide information about alternatives to single use plastics that residents can obtain and use in their homes

9. **Natural Landscaping**, involves foregoing fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides that are detrimental to soil health, wildlife, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay, using native plants, and reducing lawn areas. Many practices will need to change to transition to natural landscaping methods. What strategies will you use to transition the City's land management policies to natural landscaping? How will you encourage private landowners to do the same?

Outcome NE1.4.3; NE2.2

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It's important to strike a balance between current community standards and practices like including more native plants, foregoing pesticides or removing lawn space. There are certain expectations that residents currently have about the landscaping on city land and we need to move the conversation forward before we can make big changes. Therefore, the first step we need to take is one of outreach and engagement. We need to be talking as a community about these practices and how they impact the environment. We need to offer workshops and training opportunities for local homeowners and for businesses that have landscaped areas. And we need to choose small areas of city land to try out pilot programs that are clearly marked as such, so that residents can understand what we're doing and have time to adapt their thinking before we commit to larger projects

10. How will you use your leadership position to provide effective funding and expertise for the new Urban Forestry Program and environmental responsibilities of the City in general?

A city budget reflects that city's priorities. And I think we should be centering the environment in everything we do - it's the right focus as we move forward. To that end, I think it's important to use the mayor's leadership to get the council on board with allocating resources to urban forestry and our other environmental responsibilities. The environment should be central as we think about every development proposal and every small area plan for the city. To my mind, there is no real downside to doing that - it is absolutely critical to the future of the city so it should be a primary concern. The mayor should be the ambassador and the spokesperson for that issue in our community. If elected mayor, I can assure you that would be my position.