

**CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION**  
**c/o Department of Environmental Services**  
**2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 705**  
**Arlington, VA 22201**

January 24, 2022

**TO:** Katie Cristol, Chair, Arlington County Board  
**FROM:** Joan McIntyre, Chair, Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission  
**SUBJECT:** Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission 2021 Annual Report

**CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION**  
**2021 ANNUAL REPORT**

The Commission appreciates the opportunity to present a review of its 2021 activities and actions.

The Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission (C2E2) had a productive and busy year as it worked to advance its mission to advise and assist the Arlington County Board in meeting Arlington's commitment to climate action; helping to identify and address risks to the community created by climate change; protecting Arlington's environment; and ensuring that energy is generated, transmitted, used, and stored in a responsible and efficient manner. The Commission tackled an ambitious agenda laid out in its 2021 Priorities and Work Plan, ranging from overarching issues as a whole of government approach to climate change and sustainability and environmental equity to more specific issues such as energy infrastructure, green buildings, transition to electric vehicles, stormwater management, and biophilia.

The Commission experienced considerable turnover in its members as it bade farewell to several dedicated Commissioners this year: Teresa Leonardo, Gabriel Thoumi, and Mike Mesmer. The Commission thanks these members for their service and commitment. The Board appointed seven new Commissioners in 2021: Emily Emory, Gilbert Campbell, Joshua Griset, Mikaila Milton, Majdi Shomali, Linda Delgado, and Liliana Duica. The following other members served on the Commission: Joan McIntyre (Chair), Timothy Effio (Vice Chair), John Bloom, Stephen D'Alessio, Jonathan Morgenstein, Shawn Norton, Carrie Thompson, and Kevin Vincent. As a group, the Commission is diverse and includes members with a range of expertise and skills. The work of the Commission was supported through efforts of its Energy Committee and Solid Waste Committee, composed of Commissioners and other dedicated Arlington Community members.

The C2E2 continued to meet virtually throughout 2021 as required by the County due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. Through these monthly meetings, the Commission was able to maintain an ongoing and fruitful dialogue with County staff on progress in addressing energy, stormwater, solid waste, natural resources, and other sustainability issues. In addition to working collaboratively with the Rethink Energy team as it underwent multiple changes in staff, C2E2 held discussions with DES Director Greg Emanuel, OSEM Bureau Chief Demetra McBride, Chief Race

and Equity Officer Samia Byrd, and, other staff from CPHD, Parks and Recreation, Solid Waste and other county departments on a range of sustainability topics. The Commission also appreciates the support of its County Board liaison, Takis Karantonis.

Major issues addressed by the Commission during the year include the following:

**A Whole of Government Approach to Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability--**

Throughout the year the C2E2, with input from the Energy Committee chaired by Jonathan Morgenstein, highlighted the importance of adopting a whole of government approach to addressing climate change and other environmental challenges and meeting Arlington’s CEP goals for carbon neutrality and renewable energy. The Commission recommended that the County create a Chief Climate Change and Sustainability Officer to coordinate climate action, develop a robust roadmap for CEP implementation, take steps to align county plans, policies, and regulations with its climate goals, and ensure transparency in tracking progress toward these goals. These themes were reflected in multiple comments and letters to the County Board on the CEP Implementation Framework, the FY 2022 Budget, the FY 2022 – FY 2024 CIP Plan, its legislative priorities, and similar matters before the County Board.

**Environmental Justice and Equity--**The Commission explored how to best apply an equity lens to meeting its mission objectives and tailor recommendations to correct historical inequities such as excessive energy burdens, heat island effects, and access to parks and open spaces, and ensure that all communities in Arlington share the benefits of the transition to a more sustainable and resilient community. The Commission met with the Chief Race and Equity Officer for an overview of Arlington’s strategy for addressing racial equity and held discussions with CPHD on the review of the Affordable Housing Master Plan and the ongoing Missing Middle Study.

**Green Buildings—**C2E2 commissioners participated in multiple Site Plan Review Committees— Land Bay C, RCA, Crystal Plaza 1, Marbella Apartments, 2025 Clarendon (Wendy’s site), and PenPlace. Commissioners assessed these projects for their consistency with Arlington’s sustainability goals, with particular attention given to CEP carbon neutrality goals. Our assessments have highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of projects as they relate to energy efficiency, building electrification or planned use of onsite fossil fuel combustion, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and onsite or offsite solar or other reusable electricity commitments. To support our efforts, the Commission adopted a checklist to ensure a consistent approach to evaluating projects, which we will share with the Planning Commission and the County Board when commenting on these projects starting in 2022. The Commission is applying these same standards when reviewing proposed new County facilities and major building retrofits.

**Solid Waste Issues—**The Commission strongly supported the County’s launch of curbside collection of food waste for composting and the adoption of a plastic bag tax as important steps to reducing waste and moving toward the County’s zero waste goal. The Commission's Solid Waste Committee, chaired by Carrie Thompson, has been working with the Solid Waste Bureau to prepare for the launch of a robust public engagement process to draft a Zero Waste Plan to replace the current Solid Waste Master Plan.

**Stormwater and water treatment--**The Commission received regular updates from staff on ongoing and planning for stormwater projects and funding and discussed with representatives of the Civic Federation potential collaboration on advancing the County’s effort to address its deteriorating

stormwater system and the growing impacts of intense storms and resulting flooding. The Commission, along with the Energy Committee, has been monitoring the ongoing planning for the renovation of the solid waste treatment plan, which is currently considering options relating to the use of the natural gas byproduct of the planned new facility.

**Open Space and Natural Resource Issues**--The Commission weighed in on priorities for the Forestry and Natural Resources Master Plan, currently being drafted and C2E2 representatives to the Joint National Resource Advisory Group and the Forestry and Natural Resources Commission have contributed to ongoing discussions on natural resources management. The Commission called for increased spending on forest management in the FY 2022 Budget and allocations of funds for park acquisition in the FY 2022 – FY 2024 CIP. The Commission explored options for addressing the noise and air pollution resulting from the use of gas-powered landscape equipment and recommended to the County Board that the County government phase out the use of such equipment at County and APS properties.

**Transportation Issues**—The Commission has been a strong voice in support of a rapid shift to electric vehicles. The Commission called on the County Board to provide guidance for phasing out the purchase of combustion engine vehicles in the County and ART bus fleet and to allocate funding in the FY 2022 Budget and FY 2022-FY2024 to develop the charging infrastructure necessary to support the transition. The Commission has also highlighted the still-limited inclusion of EV charging infrastructure in proposed development projects, especially multifamily residential buildings.

**The Commission wrote 11 letters to the Board regarding:**

- Phase Out of Gas-powered Lawn Equipment on County Property
- Declaration of Climate Emergency and Guidance on the Arlington County FY2023 Budget
- 2022 Legislative Priorities
- Proposed FY 2022 – FY 2024 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
- C2E2 Comments on the FY 2022 Budget
- Potomac Yard Land Bay C
- RCA SPRC
- 2001 S. Clark St – Crystal Plaza 1
- CEPIF Recommendations Letter to County Board
- C2E2 Letter on Climate Sustainability Officer
- C2E2 2020 Annual Report and 2021 Priorities and Work Plan

**Commissioners served as C2E2 representatives to the following County advisory commissions, committees, or other groups:**

- Energy Committee
- Solid Waste Committee
- Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group
- Forestry and Natural Resources Commission
- Transportation Commission
- Public Facilities Review Commission
- Solids Master Plan Working Group
- Various Site Plan Review Committees of the Planning Commission
- Chesapeake Bay Ordinance Review Committee

- Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Public Spaces Master Plan Update Advisory Committee

The Climate Change, Energy, and Environment Commission will continue to prioritize comprehensive action and environmental justice as it explores options and opportunities for addressing climate change and other environmental challenges in 2022. We expect our work to again encompass a range of issues on energy, natural resources, stormwater management, and transportation. We also hope to identify opportunities to expand our engagement with the public in support of our mission. For more details, see our 2022 Priorities and Work Plan attached. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues while continuing the Commission's work and taking on new environment and energy issues that face Arlington in 2022.

Respectfully,



Joan McIntyre

Chair, Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission

CC: Mark Schwartz, County Manager

Greg Emanuel, DES Director