

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

January 22, 2024

**TO:** Libby Garvey, Chair, Arlington County Board  
**FROM:** Joan McIntyre, Chair, Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission  
**SUBJECT:** Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission 2023 Annual Report

**CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION**  
**2023 ANNUAL REPORT**

The Commission appreciates the opportunity to present a review of its 2023 activities and actions.

**Key Accomplishments**

- *C2E2 continued to advance a whole of government approach to addressing the climate crisis and other environmental challenges and ensuring a rapid and equitable transition to a sustainable and carbon neutral community by weighing on the FY2024 budget and participating in planning processes for Langston Blvd. and the Forestry and Natural Resource Master Plan.*
- *Through its consistent participation in the site plan review process for numerous private sector projects and use of a standardized checklist for evaluation, the Commission has highlighted for the Planning Commission and County Board the strengths and weaknesses of project designs in meeting the County carbon neutrality and other sustainability goals.*
- *C2E2 urged the County Board to accelerated efforts to decarbonize transportation by committing to replace existing compressed natural gas buses to battery electricity buses as the best current option for zero emission buses and to adopt a more ambitious approach to make transit more convenient to community members to support a shift away from single occupancy vehicles and reduce associated GHG emissions.*

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 2023 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 green buildings, improved transit, transition to electric vehicles, sustainable transit-oriented development along Langston Blvd, zero waste planning, and adoption of the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan.

The Commission experienced considerable turnover in its members as it bade farewell to several dedicated Commissioners this year: Gilbert Campbell, Joshua Griset, Timothy Effio, John Bloom, Shawn Norton, Stephen D'Alessio, and Carrie Thompson (Vice Chair). The Commission thanks these members for their service and commitment. The Board appointed five new Commissioners in 2023: Douglas Snoeyenbos, Robert Sandoli, Elizabeth Whitney, Suzanne Swink, and David Evans. The following other members served on the Commission: Joan McIntyre (Chair), Jonathan Morgenstein, Mikaila Milton, Majdi Shomali, Mark Greenwood, Cindy Lewin, Eric Gibbs, 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.

Through 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. C2E2 held discussions with the Climate Policy Coordinator Bill Eger, OSEM Bureau Chief Demetra McBride, other staff from CPHD, Parks and Recreation, and Solid Waste Transportation on a range of sustainability topics. The Commission also very much 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 Doug Snoeyenbos, has continued to be a strong voice urging the adopting of a whole of government approach to addressing the climate crisis and other environmental challenges and implementing the County's Community Energy Plan goals for carbon neutrality. The Commission and Energy Committee met several times with Bill Eger, the County's Climate Policy Officer, to discuss progress in establishing his role in fostering climate coordination across the government and community. C2E2 has supported County efforts to expand its EV fleet and charging infrastructure and explore opportunities for a Green Bank and Community Choice Aggregation. C2E2 expressed disappointment in the FY-23 budget's lack of attention to programs and policies to reduce GHG emissions in building and transportation. During the public engagement on the Langston Boulevard Plan, C2E2 urged that the plan incorporate climate solutions as a key element throughout the plan with clear guidelines for buildings, transportation, and open spaces to align with County goals for carbon neutrality and biophilia.

**Environmental Justice and Equity**--The Commission routinely considers environmental justice and equity and tailors its recommendations to the County Board to correct historical inequities such as excessive energy burdens, heat island effects, and access to parks and open spaces and to ensure that all communities in Arlington share the benefits of the transition to a more sustainable and resilient community.

- Our letter on the FY 24 Budget called on the County to include funding to advance decarbonization of buildings and transportation and prioritize comprehensive building retrofit pilots targeted to low-to-moderate income households and underserved communities to improve energy efficiency; electrify HVAC systems, hot water heaters, and appliances; and install rooftop solar and EV-charging infrastructure.
- Our support for the transition to zero emission buses have noted that delaying this transition not only undermines the County's goal for carbon neutrality but continues to expose vulnerable populations to pollutants from CNG buses.
- C2E2 strongly endorsed the recently-adopted Forestry and Natural Resources Plan and consistently highlighted the importance of prioritizing identification and action items to address inequities in the tree canopy coverage.

**Green Buildings**—C2E2 commissioners participated in multiple Site Plan Review Committees—Crystal Plaza 5, Joyce Motors, the Americana Hotel, Crystal Towers 3, ARVA, Bingham Center, Ballston Holiday Inn, South Glebe Sunrise, and Red Lion. Commissioners assessed projects for their consistency to Arlington's sustainability goals with particular attention given to CEP carbon neutrality goals using its evaluation checklist. The checklist has been particularly effective in calling attention to the strengths and weaknesses of projects for 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 at SPRC, Planning Commission, and County Board meetings.

**Solid Waste Issues**—The Commission's Solid Waste Committee, chaired by Carrie Thompson, worked with the Solid Waste Bureau to draft the update to the Solid Waste Master Plan and incorporate the County's Zero Waste goal as a key component. C2E2 provided detailed comments to the County Board and Solid Waste Bureau on the draft released in September, recommending that the plan be more forthcoming with Arlington residents about the current state of waste management and recycling within Arlington and nationally and its implications for climate and the environment and also that it be more comprehensive, focusing on reducing waste first and foremost, or at least as much as on 'recycling right.'

**Stormwater and water treatment**--The Commission received regular updates from staff on ongoing and planning for stormwater projects and assessed stormwater management elements for development projects as part of its participating in the SPRC process. Commissioner Stephen D'Alessio participated in the Advisory Group for a Stormwater Utility and the Commission sent a letter to the County Board endorsing the project but urging adjustments to the credit program to encourage expansion and protection of tree canopy on private property. The Commission also sent a letter to the County Board recommending that plans for the Gulf Stream Resiliency Project incorporate stronger measures to capture stormwater before entering the Gulf Branch Stream system and limit the removal of existing tree canopies during construction.

**Open Space and Natural Resource Issues**--The Commission weighed in throughout the year on the development of the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan (FNRP) through discussions with staff at C2E2 and the Joint National Resource Advisory Group (NRJAG) meetings, letters to the County Board, and public comments at the Planning Commission and County Board meetings. C2E2 called for greater urgency in describing the challenges faced by our natural resources, better and more specific metrics and reporting mechanisms, and more attention to addressing management of deer and other invasive species. Our contribution contributed to a strong plan that recognizes our tree canopy and natural resources as natural capital and will pave the way for coordinated policies and investments to reverse declining tree canopy and improve the health of our natural resources throughout the County. C2E2, working closely with other NRJAG members, successfully pushed for revision of the County's Conditions of Property (aka Weed) Ordinance to clearly distinguish between lawn area and weeds from managed landscapes, aligning this ordinance with broader County goals and policies to incorporate native plants and natural landscaping practices as part of its stormwater management measures and biophilic goals.

**Transportation Issues**—The Commission has been a strong voice in support of a rapid shift to electric vehicles and more ambitious efforts to improve transit to meet a broader range of community transportation needs. The Commission met with Transit Bureau staff and contractors twice over the year on the ART Zero Emissions Bus Study and reviewed available documents. Based on its review of the Study, the Commission assessed that the study overstated challenges to transition to battery electric buses (BEBs) and understated those of hydrogen fuel cell electric buses. C2E2 called on the County Board to reject the request for a FCEB pilot and begin the transition to BEBs as directed in Board FY2022-2024 CIP guidance to replace CNG buses starting in 2023. C2E2 also reviewed the draft Transit Strategic Plan and recommended in a letter to the County Board that the County move to a more ambitious approach to make transit more convenient to community members to support a shift away from single occupancy vehicles and reduce associated GHG emissions.

**[The Commission wrote 22 letters to the Board regarding:](#)**

- Red Lion Project
- ART ZEB Study
- Solid Waste Management Plan
- Gulf Stream Resiliency Project
- Forestry and Natural Resources Plan
- State Legislative Priorities
- Sunrise South Glebe (716 S. Glebe Rd)
- Arlington Transit Strategic Plan
- Proposed Updates to Conditions of Property/Weed Ordinance
- Draft Forestry and Natural Resources Plan
- Langston Boulevard Area Plan
- Ballston Holiday Inn (4600 Fairfax Drive)
- Bingham Center/Silver Diner (200 Wilson Blvd)
- ARVA (2201 Arlington Blvd.)
- Crystal Towers 3 (1600 S. Eads St.)
- Americana Hotel Site (1400 Richmond Highway)

- FY24 Budget Letter
- ART Bus Zero Emissions Feasibility Study
- Stormwater Utility Letter
- Joyce Motors Letter
- Arlington Career Center Letter
- Crystal Plaza 5

**Commissioners served as C2E2 representative 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
- BioSolids Advisory Committee
- Various Site Plan Review Committees and Public Facilities Review Committees
- 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. We expect our work to again encompass a range of issues on energy, natural resources, stormwater management, and transportation. For more details see our 2024 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 2024.

Respectfully,



Joan McIntyre

Chair, Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission