

**CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION**

**c/o Department of Environmental Services  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 705  
Arlington, VA 22201**

May 20, 2025

Honorable Takis Karantonis, Chair  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: MTP Vision and Goals

Dear Chair Karantonis:

**Introduction**

The Climate Change, Energy and Environment (C2E2) Commission overall approves of the proposed Vision and Goals for the updated Master Transportation Plan. The emphasis on creating a transportation network that is safe, inclusive, connected, and convenient and allows everyone to meet their transportation needs without relying on their car is a critical component in meeting the County's goals for addressing the climate crisis. Easy access to frequent and affordable transit, safe pedestrian and biking infrastructure, and various multimodal options will improve mobility and increase opportunities for the most vulnerable members of our community and result in cleaner air and healthier communities.

Nevertheless, C2E2 would prefer that the Vision and Goals be more clearly linked to the County's climate goals and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in the transportation sector, which accounts for about 36 percent of the County's emissions. To meet these goals, the updated Master Transportation Plan needs to serve as the Climate Action Plan for Transportation. While the vision includes sustainability and Sustainable goal specifies climate protection, resilience, and adaptation these references are vague. Specific reference to reduced GHG emissions, vehicle electrification, cleaner air, and enhanced access to nature would make the sustainable goal more concrete and measurable.

As the County moves toward developing the policies and strategies that will serve as the meat of the updated MTP, we encourage the County Board to convey its expectation that the updated MTP will serve as the Climate Action Plan for Transportation. C2E2 fully supports the proposed vision of providing a range of transportation options to reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicles and reduce vehicle miles travelled but also considers the transition to electric or other zero emission vehicles and other decarbonization measures to be essential elements of a comprehensive plan.

## **Recommended Policies for Electric Vehicles and Decarbonization**

Key policies and strategies to meet these latter objectives of the plan should include:

- Continuing to advance the transition to electric vehicles across County fleets – sedans, emergency vehicles, ART and APS buses, and heavy trucks – establishing timelines in line with replacement cycles.
- Promoting the development of charging infrastructure to support the transition to electric vehicles in the private sector, leveraging recommendations in the [Carbon Neutral Master Transportation Plan](#) and exploring programs to provide technical and financial assistance for charging infrastructure to commercial and multifamily buildings similar to the [Plug In Alexandria program](#).
- Updating procurement policies for transportation projects to prioritize the purchases of low carbon concrete and steel and overall reduce the carbon emissions associated with these projects.
- Requiring assessment of the climate impacts of transportation projects at every stage of the process, encompassing reductions in GHG emissions and estimated vehicle miles travelled, improved air quality, and other goals established in the MTP to be incorporated in the budget and Capital Improvement Plan.
- Establishing robust metrics and regular reporting to track the progress in meeting transportation and climate goals.

## **Recommended Policies for Transportation System Transformation**

Furthermore, the County Board should expect that the updated Master Transportation Plan set the stage for a transformation of the transportation sector inline with the goal to move more people with less traffic and improve the livability for Arlington residents and commuters. C2E2 recommends these policies and strategies to remake Arlington's transportation system.

- Integrate microtransit and transit as a service technology into the transit network to better serve residents underserved by existing transit options while available routes go underutilized. C2E2 is excited about the proposed microtransit pilot expected to begin later this year and looks forward to following the progress and lessons learned from this effort.
- Expand the use of ART and Metrobus to meet the transportation needs for middle and high school students and prioritize safe routes for students to walk or bike to school. The Walking School Bus pilot at Oakridge shows that organizing groups to walk to school together gets younger elementary school students out of their cars and into their neighborhoods, with benefits all around.

- Use empirically-based approaches for calming traffic, making streets safer for pedestrians and bikers, and adding tree canopy and nature-based designs for dealing with stormwater runoff from roads.
- Embrace the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission's proposed [Bus Rapid Transit Action Plan](#) to provide more transit options for Arlington residents with the wider metropolitan region and to reduce the amount of pass through traffic in Arlington.
- Establish guidelines for identifying opportunities for repurposing existing road and parking real estate to other purposes such as better sidewalks, protected bike lanes, tree canopy coverage, and the potential to close streets to traffic and repurpose space in parking garages or lots.

## Conclusion

C2E2 greatly appreciates the robust efforts and extensive public engagement the Transportation Futures team has put into developing these goals and visions. The vision and goals have evolved into a good starting point for the next phase of this effort. Their work clearly demonstrates the strong community support for accelerating the County's shift away from car-centric design to allow people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to move safely, comfortably, and seamlessly in Arlington without having to depend on a car.

Sincerely,



Cindy Lewin  
Chair, Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission