

NRJAG Discussion—October 2, 2023

Initial Input for a 2024 Update to the 2019 Community Energy Plan

Background

Arlington's 2019 CEP will be updated in 2024, and the process will begin soon with emissions indicator data review and new concept development. With the current plan, many of the core goals for energy use and efficiency have established a foothold and serve as a platform for future progress. However, because of the importance of focusing on those, the 2019 CEP did not include substantial content on an assortment of themes and topics that are often found in the Climate Resilience Plans of other jurisdictions. The update process will be an opportunity to incorporate some of those and foster a web of policy and plan integration with other Comprehensive Plan elements that to reinforce the goals and enhance effectiveness and efficiency of investments in many areas.

As noted with regard to the FNRP, there are many areas in which our Comp Plan elements can support, reinforce, and leverage each other's goals and actions to improved effectiveness and efficiency. The CEP will benefit from enhanced recognition of the links to other plans with regard to heat island effects, dark sky prioritization, human behavioral modification with respect to local travel and outdoor activity, and an array of building design and materials choices.

Looked at holistically, the potential range of issues for an updated CEP go beyond the current sourcing and efficiency goals. We now should incorporate the broader context to help support both recognition and functional improvement in how we live and build, to use every means possible to reduce energy requirements.

Likewise, the new energy plan should be about more than energy, which is now well-articulated in the current plan. So while that portion is updated, the new plan should include an expanded scope of topics that support the energy goals and also help interconnect and leverage other Comp Plan goals.

It is recommended that the title of the next version of the Community Energy Plan be updated to reflect a broader scope as well. Potential alternatives might include: the Community Energy and Resilience Plan (CERP); or, the Climate Resilience, Energy and Sustainability Plan (CRESP), the Climate Resilience Plan (CRP) or something similar.

Ideas for Theme and Recommendation Expansion

One way to look at a broadened scope for the CEP is to consider an alternate basic outline:

Title: Living Resiliently in Arlington

1. Energy-sources, uses, impacts (similar to current plan)
2. Role of Nature in Resilience and Equity
3. How we live, work, build and travel, and how to align those for optimal resilience

Another way to look at options is to list topics that are relevant and often found in the climate plans of other cities. Some may be addressed in some ways in other Comp Plan elements, but most good approaches to natural and equitable solutions have multiple means of contributing, and multiple benefits.

- Dark sky
- Safe and efficient glass
- Building materials, including wood structural elements
- Green roofs, terraces, balconies and plazas
- Solar roofs, pergolas and walls (especially in conjunction with greened space)
- Pollution, including air, noise, water and light
- Heat island-materials, design and countering impacts
- Rainwater-as a stormwater resilience issue and also a resource
- Recycling, composting, trash, green repurposing
- Biophilic planning, design and experience
- Equitable approach to all of the plan content
- Transportation corridors-mitigating impacts, leveraging solutions by design
- Local farming and efficiency in commerce

Some sources:

TerrapinBrightGreen Publications page:

- The Economics of Biophilia, 2nd Edition
- Biophilic Design and Climate Change

American Planning Association:

- PAS Report 602. Brown and Fink. Planning for Biophilic Cities

County Media Announcement on LEED Platinum Certification for 2023 Announced 10/2/23

Arlington County was among 54 American and international jurisdictions to submit applications this year, and one of only four applicants certified at Platinum level. Arlington remains the only such recognized community in Northern Virginia and among just 7% worldwide that have attained Platinum status.

Arlington LEED-certified buildings include schools, community centers, libraries and office buildings.

LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is the world's most widely used rating system for building design, waste generated, water and energy use, and related factors. The County was named the first Platinum level community under the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) as part of its LEED pilot program in 2017, but the criteria for this year was much higher.

Expanding on the industry-leading grading standards, LEED for Cities and Communities helps local governments measure and manage progress in their sustainability portfolios, in pursuit of a more sustainable, resilient and equitable future including becoming carbon-neutral.

"Achieving the highest level of LEED certification acknowledges Arlington County's commitments and successful outcomes toward sustainability, resilience and social equity," said Christian Dorsey, Chair of the Arlington County Board.

Through the certification program, Arlington was evaluated on its open-space planning, solid-waste management, stormwater management, affordable-housing planning and public schools — the key areas measured for social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Arlington County achieved LEED certification through long-time policies, programs and initiatives that created its acclaimed and thriving "urban village" environment.

"The work of cities and communities such as Arlington County is a driving force in ensuring a more sustainable future for all," said Peter Templeton, President & CEO, USGBC. "Local governments that achieve LEED certification are lowering carbon emissions, creating a healthier environment and striving to improve the quality of life for their residents. Arlington

County is setting a standard for what it means to be a high performer and their efforts and achievements should be an example for all."