

# Strategic Linkages

## Context and Background

Over the past two decades, a number of countywide initiatives have been implemented to strengthen collective decision-making, and to adopt a more strategic and thoughtful approach to short and long-term planning. Examples include the Lines of Business project, which completed a comprehensive review and inventory of county programs and services; incorporating Performance Measurement and benchmarking into the budget process; and implementing a Workforce Planning initiative, to effectively coordinate the recruitment, hiring, and retention of key personnel countywide. Moving forward, the Countywide Strategic Plan framework will be used to “connect the dots” among a wide range of initiatives, improve the use of data, ensure a strong focus on equity through ongoing implementation of the One Fairfax policy, and continuously promote the direct alignment between county resources and top community priorities.

## Strategic Planning

To build on previous strategic initiatives and promote direct alignment between individual department missions and overarching community priorities, the County launched a comprehensive and intensive process in early 2019 to develop its first-ever Countywide Strategic Plan. The plan provides an opportunity to build upon past strategic initiatives, such as the Economic Success Strategic Plan, and to start to integrate emerging, related countywide work, such as the COVID Economic Recovery Framework and the Chairman’s Taskforce for Equity and Opportunity.

The goals of the plan are to:

- Set a community vision for the next 10-20 years
- Use the plan as a framework to align and integrate related countywide plans
- Provide a tool to prioritize county initiatives over the next 3-5 years
- Communicate progress to our community on achieving measurable outcomes

While the proposed plan was first presented to the Board in February 2020, the public process to adopt the plan and move it forward was temporarily paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This pause was used to seek additional community feedback, through multiple surveys and public engagement events, and to identify top priorities across the Ten Community Outcome Areas that serve as the foundation for the plan. These areas include Cultural and Recreational Opportunities, Economic Opportunity, Effective and Efficient Government, Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability, Environment and Energy, Healthy Communities, Housing and Neighborhood Livability, Lifelong Education and Learning, Mobility and Transportation, and Safety and Security. The plan was re-released concurrent with the [FY 2022 Advertised Budget Plan](#) in February 2021 and was subsequently adopted by the Board of Supervisors in October 2021.



One of the main drivers of the plan continues to be the integration of the One Fairfax policy, which provides a critical conceptual lens to identify, highlight, and resolve inequities within each of the Ten Community Outcome Areas. As these issues are repeatedly confirmed by data, the Countywide Strategic Plan provides the necessary operational framework to take collective action, and to ensure that county government is held accountable for achieving results.

The Countywide Strategic Plan will become increasingly integrated within the budget process, through the continued alignment of County departments with the Ten Community Outcome Areas, the indicators of community success, and the evolving strategies and metrics that provide a framework for countywide strategic decision-making. The 2023 Annual Report was released concurrent with the FY 2023 Advertised Budget Plan in February 2023 and summarizes how it has enhanced the value and vitality of the county for all residents, visitors, and employees through better communication, increased collaboration, and improving our use of data. The 2023 Annual Report, the Countywide Strategic Plan, as well as background documents and informational videos translated into multiple languages, are posted at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan).

### One Fairfax Policy

One Fairfax is a joint social and racial equity policy adopted by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County School Board. It commits the County and the school system to intentionally consider equity when making policies or delivering programs and services. One Fairfax is a framework—or “lens”—that is used to consider equity in decision-making and in the development and delivery of future policies, programs, and services. It helps the county and school leaders look intentionally, comprehensively, and systematically at barriers that may be creating gaps in opportunity. The policy identifies 17 areas of focus to promote equity, including community and economic development, housing, education, environment, and transportation.



Since 2017, the One Fairfax Office has been working with agencies to examine their programs and services and create annual equity plans. Each department director designated an equity lead in his/her department to advance this work. Equity leads are being provided with learning opportunities to build their foundational understanding of key concepts and are being guided through an equity impact planning process. Through this process, agencies are gaining a more equity-informed understanding of the context of their work, considering opportunities for impact, determining intended results in the community and outcomes to be achieved through the direct efforts of their organizations, and identifying metrics.

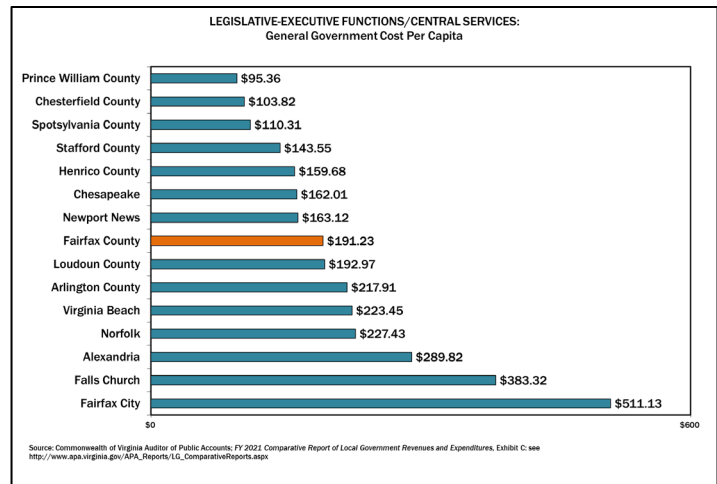
### Performance Measurement

Since 1997, Fairfax County has used performance measurement to gain insight into, and make judgments about, the effectiveness and efficiency of its programs, processes, and employees. While performance measures do not in and of themselves produce higher levels of effectiveness, efficiency, and quality, they do provide data that can help to reallocate resources or realign strategic objectives to improve services. Each Fairfax County agency decides which indicators will be used to measure progress toward strategic goals and objectives, gathers and analyzes performance measurement data, and uses the results to drive improvements in the agency.



In 2021, the most recent award cycle, Fairfax County was one of only 31 jurisdictions to receive ICMA's highest recognition for performance measurement, the “Certificate of Excellence.”

Fairfax County also uses benchmarking, the systematic comparison of performance with other jurisdictions, in order to discover best practices that will enhance performance. Cost per capita data for each program area, (e.g., public safety, health and welfare, community development) has also been included at the beginning of each program area summary in Volume 1 of the FY 2024 Advertised Budget Plan. The Auditor of Public Accounts for the Commonwealth of Virginia collects this data and publishes it annually. The jurisdictions selected for comparison are the Northern Virginia localities, as well as those with a population of 100,000 or more elsewhere in the state.



## Workforce Planning

The County's workforce planning effort began in FY 2002 to anticipate and integrate the human resources response to agency strategic objectives. Changes in agency priorities such as the opening of a new facility, increased demand for services by the public, the receipt of grant funding, or budget reductions can greatly affect personnel needs. Given these varying situations, workforce planning helps agency leadership to retain employees and improve employee skill sets needed to accomplish the strategic objectives of the agency. Effective workforce planning is a necessary component of an organization's strategic plan, to provide a flexible and proficient workforce able to adapt to the changing needs of the organization.

In FY 2008, Fairfax County added a Succession Planning component to workforce planning. The Succession Planning process provides managers and supervisors with a framework for effective human resources planning in the face of the dramatic changes anticipated in the workforce over the next five to ten years. It is a method for management to identify and develop key employee competencies, encourage professional development, and contribute to employee retention. Approximately 12.7 percent of current employees will be eligible for retirement by the end of FY 2024 and nearly 30 percent will be eligible to retire within the next five years. To address this challenge, the County plans to re-tool and strengthen existing succession planning and knowledge transfer efforts to build the capacity to support a "promote from within" when appropriate philosophy.

The County will recruit externally when strategically advantageous and will strengthen recruitment effectiveness by encouraging employee referrals and deepening the County Executive's leadership team's engagement with executive level recruitments. Shifting the performance evaluation focus from "the amount of the pay increase" to better communication and employee development will also help the County address the exit of many tenured County employees.

### Information Technology Initiatives

The County is committed to providing the necessary investment in information technology (IT), realizing the critical role it plays in improving business processes and customer service. Fund 10040, Information Technology, was established to accelerate the redesign of business processes to achieve large-scale improvements in service quality and to provide adequate enterprise-wide technological infrastructure. Consequently, the County is consolidating its investments to accommodate and leverage technological advancements and growth well into the 21st century. Constrained funding will impact the number of new IT projects that can be undertaken in the next year. However, the County continues to explore and monitor all areas of County government for IT enhancements and/or modifications which will streamline operations and support future savings.

In order to receive funding, IT initiatives must meet one or multiple priorities established by the Senior Information Technology Steering Committee and the County's IT project portfolio includes a mix of projects that benefit both citizens and employees and that secure and strengthen the County's technology infrastructure. It should be noted that, based on limited fiscal resources, no projects have received funding as part of the FY 2024 Advertised Budget Plan. It is anticipated that these projects will be funded with one-time balances and/or agency savings as part of a future quarterly review. Funding projects incrementally at quarterly reviews is an effective strategy that enables the County to optimize use of available dollars and align project funding with project budgets, plans and schedules.

### Strategic Planning Links to the Budget

The annual budget includes links to the comprehensive strategic initiatives described above. To achieve these links, agency budget narratives include discussions of agency strategic planning efforts; program area summaries include cross-cutting efforts and benchmarking data; and the Key County Indicator presentation in this section demonstrates how the County is performing as a whole. As a result, the budget information is presented in a user-friendly format and resource decisions are more clearly articulated to Fairfax County residents.

- ▶ **Agency Narratives:** Individual agency narratives identify strategic issues, which were developed during the agency strategic planning efforts, link core services to the Vision Elements and expand the use of performance measures to clearly define how well the agency is delivering a specific service. Agency narratives are included in budget Volumes 1 and 2.
- ▶ **Program Area Summaries:** Summaries by Program Area (such as Public Safety, Health and Welfare, Judicial Administration) provide a broader perspective of the strategic direction of several related agencies and how they are supporting the County Vision Elements. This helps to identify common goals and programs that may cross over departments. In addition, benchmarking information is included on program area services to demonstrate how the County performs in relation to other comparable jurisdictions. Program area summaries are included in budget Volumes 1 and 2.
- ▶ **Key County Measures:** For FY 2024, the existing Key County Measures outlined below have been aligned with Strategic Plan Community Outcome Areas to give the reader a high-level perspective on how the County is doing as a whole. The information included in future budget documents will continue to evolve as headline metrics and data for the Countywide Strategic Plan are defined and analyzed. In FY 2023, headline metrics and data were developed for the Economic Opportunity Outcome Area and that information is reflected in the documentation that follows.

- ▶ **Schools:** The Fairfax County Public Schools provide an enormous contribution to the community and in an effort to address the County's investment in education and the benefits it provides, a list of Fairfax County School Student Achievement Goals are included following the Key County Indicator presentation.

### Next Steps

The development of the County's leadership philosophy and emphasis on strategic planning is an ongoing process that will continue to be refined in the coming years. The County budget is extremely well-received within the County and nationally. As a measure of the quality of its budget preparation, Fairfax County was awarded the Government Finance Officers Association's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award by meeting rigorous criteria for the budget as a policy document, financial plan, operations guide, and communications device for the 38<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. The County will continue to build on this success for future budget documents in order to enhance the accountability, transparency, and usefulness of the budget documents.

### Ten Community Outcome Areas

Now that the Countywide Strategic Plan has been adopted by the Board of Supervisors, the priorities it includes will replace the current framework in setting a direction for the future of the County. FY 2024 marks the beginning of this transition and further changes anticipated for future budget volumes as reporting on more representative indicators is available.

#### Cultural and Recreational Opportunities

All residents, businesses and visitors are aware of and able to participate in quality arts, sports, recreation and culturally enriching activities

##### Indicators of Community Success:

- Access to Local Arts, Sports and Cultural Opportunities
- Satisfaction with Local Arts, Sports and Cultural Opportunities
- Awareness and Appreciation of Diverse Cultures
- Representation of Diverse Cultures

#### Economic Opportunity

All people, businesses, and places are thriving economically

##### Indicators of Community Success:

- Healthy Businesses in a Diverse Mix of Industries
- Economic Stability and Upward Mobility for All People
- Preparing People for the Workforce
- Promoting Innovation in the Local Economy
- Promoting Economic Vibrancy in All Parts of Fairfax County

#### Effective and Efficient Government

All people trust that their government responsibly manages resources, is responsive to their needs, provides exceptional services and equitably represents them

##### Indicators of Community Success:

- Customer Satisfaction with County Services
- Inclusive Community Engagement

- Effective and Representative County and School Workforce
- Effective Technology and Quality Facilities
- Financial Sustainability and Trustworthiness

## Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability

All people facing vulnerability are empowered and supported to live independent lives to their fullest potential

### Indicators of Community Success:

- All People Are Respected, Understood and Connected
- Services Are Easy to Access and Use
- Services Are High Quality and Coordinated
- All People Can Meet Their Basic Needs

## Environment and Energy

All people live in a healthy sustainable environment

### Indicators of Community Success:

- Promoting Air, Water and Land Quality
- Supporting Sound Environmental Policy and Practices

## Healthy Communities

All people can attain their highest level of health and well-being

### Indicators of Community Success:

- Access to Health Services
- Improving Physical and Behavioral Health Conditions
- Promoting Health-Related Behaviors

## Housing and Neighborhood Livability

All people live in communities that foster safe, enjoyable and affordable living experiences

### Indicators of Community Success:

- Affordable and Quality Housing
- Adequate Quantity and Availability of Housing
- Access to Amenities that Promote Healthy Neighborhoods
- Flexibility and Adaptability of Land Use Rules
- Preventing and Ending Homelessness

## Lifelong Education and Learning

All people at every stage of life are taking advantage of inclusive, responsive and accessible learning opportunities that enable them to grow, prosper and thrive

### Indicators of Community Success:

- Access to Early Childhood Education
- Supporting Academic Achievement
- Supporting Career-Based Training
- Participation in Learning Opportunities



- Access to Quality Technology
- Increased English Language Proficiency

## Mobility and Transportation

All residents, businesses, visitors and goods can move efficiently, affordably and safely throughout the county and beyond via our well-designed and maintained network of roads, sidewalks, trails and transit options

### Indicators of Community Success:

- Efficient and Varied Transportation Options
- Infrastructure Condition, Sustainability and Environmental Impact
- Improved Traveler Safety
- Increased Accessibility, Affordability and Equity

## Safety and Security

All people feel safe at home, school, work and in the community

### Indicators of Community Success:


- Following Laws and Regulations
- Timeliness and Quality of Emergency Response
- Effective and Equitable Administration of Justice
- Safety-Related Prevention and Preparedness
- Reliable and Secure Critical Infrastructure

## Key County Measures

The following Key County Measures communicate the County's progress using data compiled by a diverse team of Fairfax County senior management and agency staff. For FY 2024, pre-existing measures have been aligned to the ten Community Outcome Areas in the Countywide Strategic Plan. A process to incorporate metrics and data that better reflect the outcomes of the Strategic Plan was initiated in FY 2023. Headline metrics and data were developed for the Economic Opportunity Outcome Area and that information is reflected in the presentation that follows. This section of the budget document will continue to evolve to reflect the ongoing work for the nine remaining outcome areas.

The following presentation lists the Key County Measures for each of the Community Outcome Areas, provides actual data from FY 2020, FY 2021, and FY 2022, and includes a discussion of how the measures relate to the respective Community Outcomes. In addition, the Effective and Efficient Government Community Outcome Area includes FY 2023 and FY 2024 estimates in order to present data related to the current budget. For some measures, FY 2021 is the most recent year in which data are available, and FY 2022 Actuals will be included in the following year's budget document. All of the indicator data are for Fairfax County only, listed by Fiscal Year, unless otherwise noted in the text.

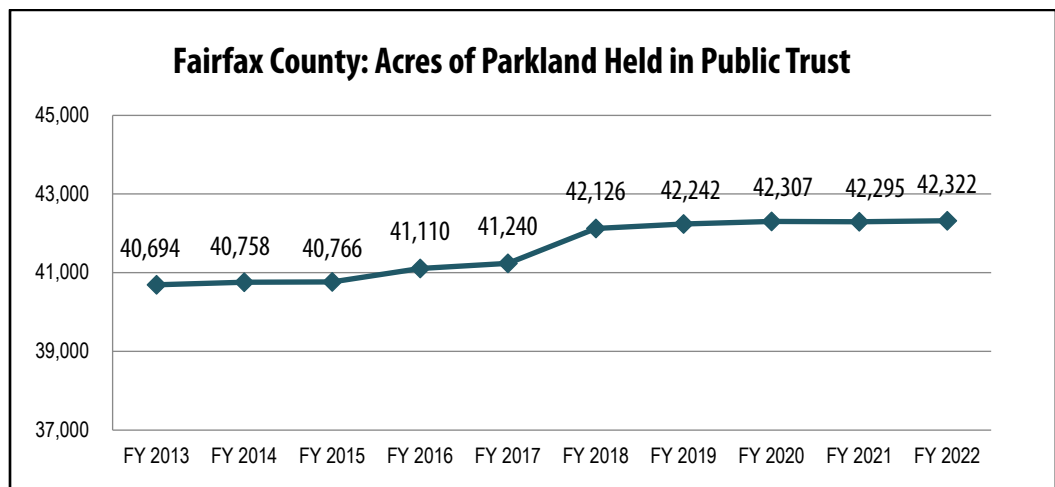
## Cultural and Recreational Opportunities

The availability of arts, sports, culture and recreation are foundational to the overall quality of life and well-being of Fairfax County residents and visitors and contribute significantly to our community's social connectivity and health. These programs also play a critical role in supporting the regional economy, through the sale of goods and services, employment and events revenue. The proposed strategies in this section seek to sustain forward momentum, with a 

focus on the need for well-maintained spaces and programs and services that constantly adapt to the needs of participants. The recommended approaches focus on quality programming, equitable access and broad inclusion and awareness of all options that are available throughout Fairfax County.

Key County Measures	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual
Acres of parkland held in public trust	42,307	42,295	42,322
Annual number of visitations to libraries, park facilities and recreation and community centers	7,807,849	6,971,646	6,784,667
Library materials circulation per capita	7.5	8.4	8.8
Percent of library circulation represented by materials in languages other than English	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%
Percent of Park Authority, Fairfax County Public Schools, and Community and Recreation Services athletic fields adopted by community groups	14.4%	14.5%	13.8%

The indicators above capture data related to cultural and recreational opportunities available in Fairfax County. The amount of **acres of parkland held in public trust** is a preservation of open space that enhances the County’s appeal as an attractive place to live and provides space for recreation. This measure tracks the parkland in the County held by the Fairfax County Park Authority, the Northern Regional Park Authority, state and federal governments, and other localities. In FY 2022, there was an increase in acres due to revised calculations related to the Fairfax County Park Authority. This adjustment brought the FY 2022 total acreage to 42,322.



Availability and **use of libraries, parks and recreation facilities** is often used as a "quality-of-life" indicator and is cited as a major factor in a family’s decision for home location and a company’s decision for site location. In the fall of 2020, the voters approved a bond referendum in the amount of \$90 million to support four priority library facilities. These libraries included Kingstowne Regional, Patrick Henry Community, Sherwood Regional, and George Mason Regional libraries. The Kingstowne Library site was previously purchased by the County to replace the existing leased space with a newly constructed library. The design has been completed on a Kingstowne Complex which co-locates the Kingstowne Regional Library with the Franconia Police Station, the Franconia District Supervisor’s Office, the Franconia Museum, an Active Adult Center, and a childcare facility in one



comprehensive facility on the library site. The design also includes garage parking and a County fueling station. The Patrick Henry Library renovation will support a proposed joint development project between Fairfax County and the Town of Vienna to renovate the library and provide additional parking structures for the library and the Town. Sherwood Regional and George Mason Regional Library renovations will support upgrades to all the building systems which have outlived their useful life, including major replacements such as roof and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) replacement. In addition, the renovations will accommodate current operations, provide for energy efficiency and a more efficient use of the available space, meet customers' technological demands, and better serve students and young children. The quiet study areas and group study rooms will be improved, with space to accommodate a higher number of public computers and wireless access. In FY 2022, the number of visits to all libraries, parks and recreation facilities decreased to 6,784,667 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For Fairfax County Public Library, FY 2022 was a return to 'normal' operations with new and additional hours of service. All library branches now have uniform hours Thursday evenings and an additional hour of service Saturday evenings. In addition, all regional libraries doubled their Sunday hours, adding both morning and evening hours of service.

Following two challenging years due to the global pandemic, the library met or substantially met 75 percent of its scored performance measures in FY 2022, including 86 percent of its outcome measures. With no disruptions to service the number of in-person visits to the library doubled to more than 2.4 million people. The number of items circulated from the library's collection increased almost 5 percent to more than 10.5 million items.

The use of electronic resources remains strong with database usage of more than 1.7 million views; circulation of more than 1.3 million eBooks, more than 1.1 million audiobooks, and nearly 67,000 eMagazines and eVideos. Total E-Circulation now accounts for 24 percent of all circulated materials.

Staff members continue to create popular online programming options, supplementing the growing volume of in-person events now rebounding following the pandemic. In-person program attendance grew 61 percent in FY 2022 and with both in-person and digital programming opportunities, continues to offer library users services through a variety of platforms for preschoolers, school age children, and adults.

For residents of Fairfax County who do not have access to a computer at home or at work, or who do not possess the technical skills or are not able to utilize technology due to language barriers, the county utilizes other methods and media to connect them with information and services. Libraries, for example, are focal points within the community, and offer a variety of brochures, flyers and announcements containing information on community activities and County services. To help those who need internet access for work or educational purposes, all Fairfax County Public Library branches provide WiFi capability with expanded hours of availability outside the buildings in library parking lots where patrons use the service regularly. FCPL cardholders are also able to checkout Chromebooks for use at home from five regional branches participating in a pilot program. Library users are able to seek guidance in conducting research, support using library databases, and information services via text. Library staff answered nearly 2,500 texts in FY 2022 sent to a central number in real time 10am to 5:45pm Monday through Friday.

One indicator used by the library industry to demonstrate utilization of libraries is library materials circulation per capita, which increased to 8.8 in FY 2022. This high circulation rate demonstrates the availability of an extensive selection of materials and a desire for library resources among Fairfax County residents. In addition, interest in library resources can be seen in the number of unique visitors to the Library's website, which increased 2 percent in FY 2022, totaling 1,883,873 visits. For

additional information on benchmarks, please refer to the Parks and Libraries Program Area Summary in Volume 1.

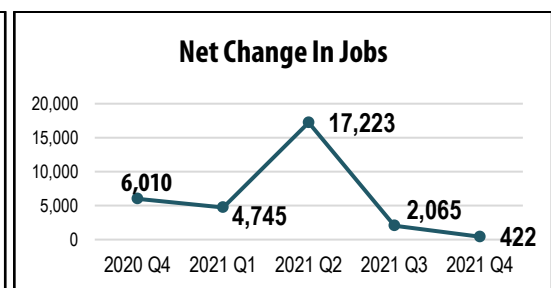
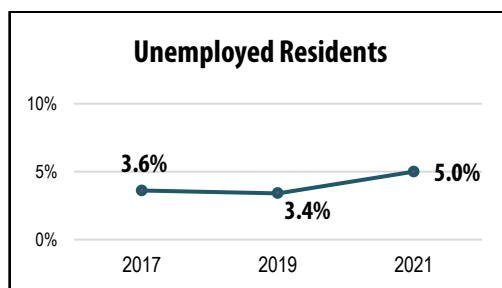
As previously mentioned, Fairfax County is becoming an increasingly diverse community in terms of culture and language. As of 2021, 39 percent of Fairfax County residents spoke a language other than English at home. In an attempt to better serve the non-English speaking population, the Fairfax County Public Library has dedicated a portion of its holdings to language appropriate materials for this portion of the community. With circulation of more than 10.5 million items by Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL) in FY 2022, the 0.9 percent reported for the circulation of non-English materials represents a significant number of materials being used by a multilingual population.

Athletic fields are an important recreational resource for the community and the County has sought partnerships with residents to improve and to maintain the facilities they use. Community groups have adopted 13.8 percent of athletic fields. Athletic field adoptions reduce the County's financial burden to maintain these types of public facilities and improve their quality. Analysis indicates that organizations in Fairfax County annually provide over \$4 million in support for facility maintenance and development. In addition to natural turf field maintenance, community organizations continue to develop synthetic turf fields by partnering with the County and funding the development independently. New incentives have recently been put into place to encourage groups to maintain and increase adoptions despite the current economic climate. The Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA), and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) continue to work with a very involved athletic community to design and implement the FCPS diamond field maintenance plan. This plan established an enhanced level of consistent and regular field maintenance at school softball and baseball fields. This benefits both scholastic users as well as community groups that are reliant upon use of these fields to operate their sports programs throughout the year.

## Economic Opportunity



Fairfax County is well known for its quality public schools, high median income, low unemployment rate, overall public safety, high concentration of both corporate headquarters and higher education institutions and other key measure of economic prosperity. With the recognition that future economic growth requires the full participation of all Fairfax County populations and places, the proposed strategies in this section focus on building the earning power of residents, supporting startups and small businesses, strategically investing in people and places with lower access to opportunity, and continuing to strongly support the favorable climate that has established Fairfax County as a truly outstanding place to build careers and grow businesses.



Metrics above are based on a calendar year. Unemployment data source is U.S. Census Bureau, 1-Year American Community Survey. Net Change Jobs data source is U.S. Census Bureau's QWI Explorer.

As economic conditions continue to evolve, following the COVID-19 pandemic, the changes reflected in Unemployment and the Net Change in Jobs suggest that resources continue to be necessary to support the economy.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, employment in the U.S. was greatly impacted for workers in food preparation, personal services and some health care occupations. Across the nation, a record number of workers left their employment during 2021. Reasons for leaving included better paying opportunities, personal business start-ups, early retirement or health insecurity or needs related to childcare.

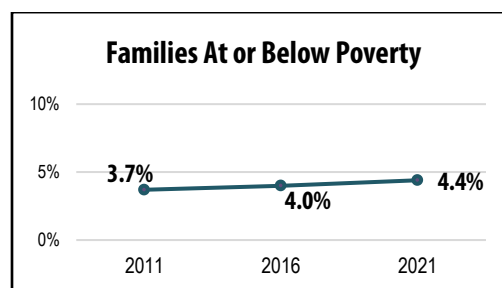
**Unemployment** rates in Fairfax County increased from 3.4 percent in 2019 to 5.0 percent in 2021. However, rates were higher for residents who identify as non-White. The rate of unemployment among Black or African American residents more than doubled between 2019 and 2021. Many workers lost employment or left the workforce between the 2019 and 2021 period, which included the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Net change in jobs** measures the difference between jobs gained at firms over the course of a quarter and jobs lost at firms throughout the same quarter. In Q4 of 2021, there were 422 net jobs created compared to 2,065 in the previous quarter and 6,010 in Q4 of 2020.

County unemployment rates per the Bureau of Labor Statistics have remained under 3 percent for the past year, which along with continued job creation, suggest positive signs of economic recovery. U.S. Census Bureau data will continue to be monitored to provide an ability to disaggregate the data and assess whether the recovery is equitable.

Multiple resources are being established in Fairfax County to facilitate opportunities for career advancement and new employment. Resources include:

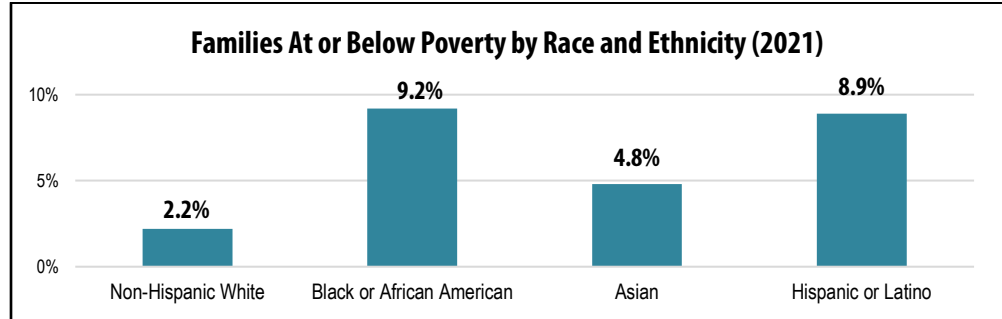
- New [Virginia Career Works](#) Referral Portal to connect job seekers to career, education and support resources.
- Expansion of virtual tools for [job seekers](#), especially persons who are laid off or very low-income.
- New Talent Attraction Program to market Northern Virginia as a premier destination for top talent: [www.workinnorthernvirginia.com](http://www.workinnorthernvirginia.com).



Metric above is based on a calendar year. Data source is U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year American Community Survey. Comparison at five-year intervals is recommended by Census for this dataset.

The overall percentage of Fairfax County **families living in poverty** increased to 4.4 percent in 2021, compared to prior years, and disproportionately affected the various demographic groups in Fairfax County. The number of families living at or below poverty increased by 25.8 percent (or nearly 2,600 families) from 2011 to 2021. By comparison, in this same period the total number of families in the county grew only by 5.8 percent. In this 10-year period, a greater **proportion** of Black or

African American and Hispanic or Latino families **consistently** experienced the **highest rates** of poverty. These two groups as well as Asian families had higher rates of poverty than White families.



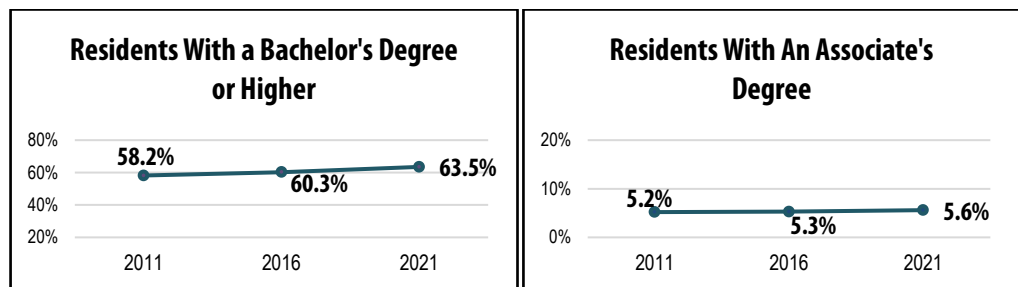
Metric above is based on a calendar year. Data source is U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year American Community Survey.

Fairfax County residents with moderate to low income may have little to no money remaining after covering essential expenses, such as food and housing. This limits a household’s ability to build savings and restricts economic competitiveness.

In 2020, slightly more than one in ten families (or 30,425) in Fairfax County had income below \$55,500. This amount is a common maximum annual income for a family of four for benefit programs that provide assistance in the form of food or housing.

Efforts and investments that address barriers to affordable housing, childcare and transportation for participation in employment and employment-related programs, include:

- The Board of Supervisors doubled its affordable housing goal to create 10,000 net new units by 2034 that are affordable to households earning up to 60 percent of the area median income.
- Committed \$34 million in available funds for preservation and new production of affordable housing.
- Expanded income eligibility and childcare subsidies for Child Care Assistance and Referral programs.
- Added new SACC rooms in multiple elementary schools, extending availability of childcare options to working parents in the wake of the pandemic.
- Opened the Workforce Innovation and Skills Hub (WISH) center, to help residents obtain skills and certification for in-demand employment.
- Allocated \$2.2 million for the Economic Mobility (Guaranteed Income) pilot project, expected to begin in 2023.



Metrics above are based on a calendar year. Data source is U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year American Community Survey. Comparison at five-year intervals is recommended by Census for this dataset.

Since 2011, the proportion of **residents with a Bachelor's degree or higher** has slowly increased with White and Asian residents having the highest rates, per 2021 estimates. The lowest proportion (one third) of this level of education was attained by Hispanic or Latino residents.

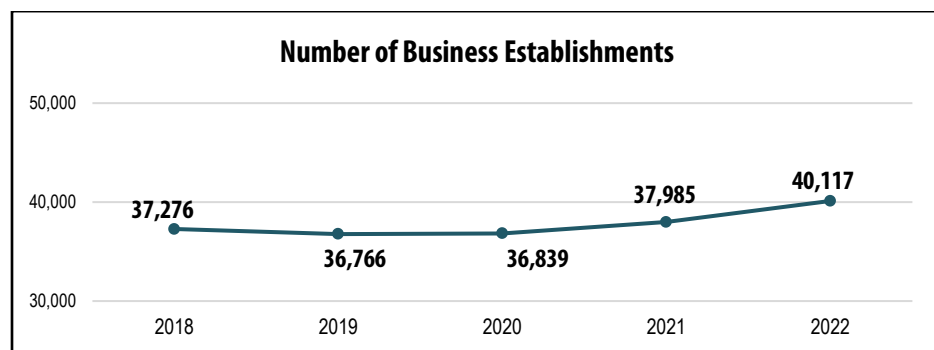
In 2021, 5.6 percent or 43,935 county residents had earned an **Associate's degree**. This level of education may offer certifications and training which often support an entryway for high-demand occupations in technology and health care.

For many Virginia residents, including some in Fairfax County, a college degree is increasingly unattainable. Attending college in Virginia costs more compared to the national averages.

- For the 2021-2022 school year, a two-year in-state college costs \$5,216 annually for tuition and fees.
- The figure for the same school year was \$14,121 for a public four-year in-state institution.

Following are examples of efforts related to promoting the impact of early childhood education as well as increasing access to career readiness and technical education:

- Awarded grants to over 250 childcare programs through the ARPA-funded Active and Thriving Community Grant program, with priority given to organizations who are serving children in the child care subsidy program.
- Partnered with Fairfax Futures (nonprofit) on two multi-year initiatives to improve the quality of early childhood education in Fairfax County by providing equitable offerings of high-quality early development learning experiences and creation of a mentorship program to support early childhood educators as they attain their Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.
- Implemented the Equitable Access to Literacy (EAL) plan, a comprehensive and equitable literacy program that supports student success across all grade levels and demographics, while also providing more opportunities for Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses.
- Launched cross-sector workgroup with Fairfax County Public Schools to develop recommendations to improve career readiness opportunities for youth ages 16-24 who are not in school or working, and high school students at risk of dropping-out.
- Formed My Brother's Keeper Fairfax initiative which focuses on improving advanced academic and career readiness opportunities for boys and young men of color.
- Provided free access to LinkedIn Learning and free access to on-demand courses that can be tailored to interests and career goals, and to earn industry certifications.



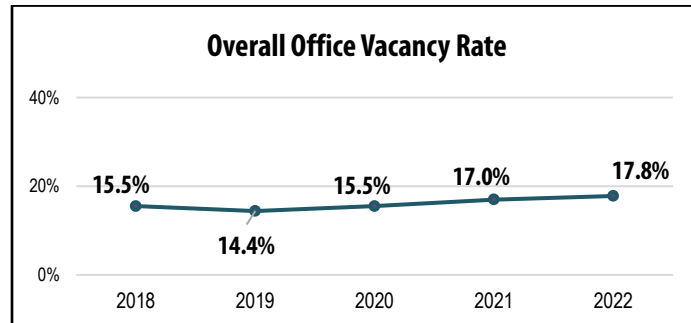
Data source is the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

The annual average **number of business establishments** in Fairfax County continues to increase, reaching 40,117 businesses as of Q2 2022.

National data suggest some of the persons who left the workforce went on to start their own business. The number of self-employed individuals as indicated through new applications for federal tax ID numbers and statistics from online marketplaces such as Etsy, all show increases when compared to pre-COVID figures. Business Formation Statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau show an increase in new annual business applications in Fairfax County from 2019 to 2020. Potentially, some of these applications will turn into organizations that could hire local workers in the future.

To support the business community in collaborative efforts to attract, retain, support and expand businesses as well as to advance the skills of new business owners, following are examples of ongoing work:

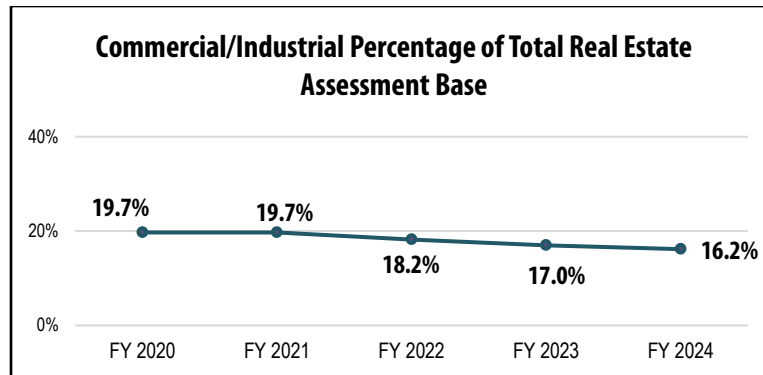
- Launched joint regional business attraction efforts through creating the Northern Virginia Economic Development Alliance.
- Created the Tysons Vision Work Group to generate recommendations for a public-private “anchor organization” to facilitate place-led economic development; ongoing work to implement pedestrian and business connectivity in Tysons.
- Approved Fairfax Founders Fund pilot program to provide capital to startup companies, targeting early-stage technology companies with technical assistance grants to help them prepare for later-stage investments. Targeted outreach will focus on recruiting women, people of color, veterans, and other underrepresented groups in the technology-driven business community.
- Launched Fairfax THRIVE small business technical assistance grant to connect small businesses experiencing negative economic impacts from the pandemic with necessary services to remain in business, retain employees, and address business goals.



Data source is the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority

The direct (excludes sublet space) office space vacancy rate reflects yet another aspect of the health of the business community. The direct office vacancy rate increased from 16.0 percent in 2021 to 16.7 percent as of year-end 2022. Including sublet space, the **overall office vacancy rate** as of year-end 2022 was 17.8 percent, an increase from the 17.0 percent recorded as of year-end 2021. The amount of empty office space stood at approximately 22.3 million square feet.





Data source is the Fairfax County Department of Tax Administration

The **Commercial/Industrial percent of total Real Estate Assessment Base** is a benchmark identified by the Board of Supervisors, which places priority on a diversified real estate revenue base. The target is 25 percent of the assessment base. The Commercial/Industrial percentage reached its peak level in FY 2010, when it stood at 22.67 percent. From there, the Commercial/Industrial percentage decreased to a low of 18.67 percent in FY 2016, mainly because of a steep decline in nonresidential values in the early part of the decade, and the gradual recovery of the residential real estate market. From its FY 2016 low point, the percentage increased for five straight years, including FY 2019, FY 2020, and FY 2021. However, this presentation does not reflect the COVID-19 pandemic-related economic disruptions that have affected many categories of commercial property in FY 2022, FY 2023, and FY 2024. The Commercial/Industrial percentage of the County's FY 2022 Real Estate Tax base fell to 18.17 percent, then 17.00 percent in FY 2023, and has fallen further 16.16 percent in FY 2024 the lowest level in at least 15 years. The share also fell due to a strong increase in residential real estate as a result of limited inventory and the lowest mortgage interest rates in history.

Fairfax County devotes considerable resources to attracting and maintaining businesses that will contribute to the revenue base through income and jobs, which helps to ensure a healthy local economy. It should be noted that income growth does not affect Fairfax County tax revenues directly because localities in Virginia do not tax income; however, revenues are indirectly affected because changes in income impact the County's economic health.

For more information regarding economic opportunity in Fairfax County, reference the [Economic Opportunity dashboard](#) and the 2022 Needs Assessment [Economic Factors](#) report.

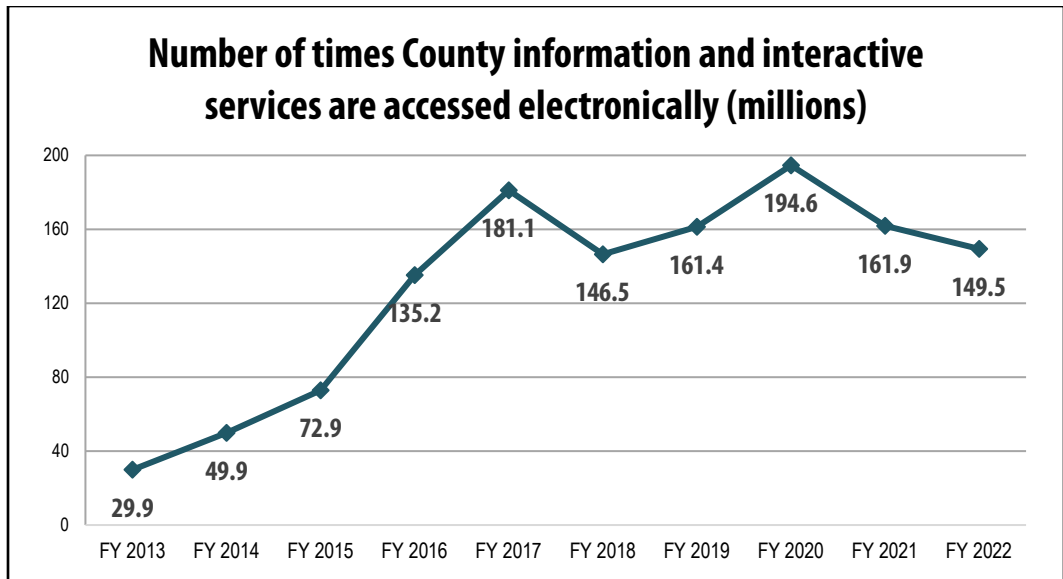
## Effective and Efficient Government

Fairfax County is widely recognized as a very well-managed county, which is routinely confirmed by multiple external oversight agencies. However, sustaining a record of excellence requires the county to constantly seek new ways to improve, becoming increasingly more proactive, adaptable to change and responsive to all residents. The county has a responsibility to ensure that resources are managed in a way that is transparent, and that taxes are affordable for residents and stakeholders who choose to live and do business in Fairfax County. The proposed strategies in this section focus on the elements of local government that will be the most impactful as Fairfax County looks ahead to the future, driving improved collaboration among employees, residents, community groups and other stakeholders. Where available, current and future year estimates based on the proposed budget are included for this Community Outcome Area.



Key County Measures	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Estimate	FY 2024 Estimate
Number of times County information and interactive services are accessed electronically (millions)	194.6	161.9	149.5	NA	NA
Total Volunteer Hours Reported in the Volunteer Management System (VMS)	930,125	987,699	815,643	NA	NA
Percent of registered voters who voted in general elections	44.3%	79.4%	60.0%	NA	NA
Average tax collection rate for Real Estate Taxes, Personal Property Taxes and Business, Professional, and Occupational License Taxes	99.57%	99.44%	99.41%	99.38%	99.39%
County direct expenditures per capita	\$1,381	\$1,408	\$1,408	\$1,707	\$1,560
Percent of household income spent on residential Real Estate Tax	5.04%	5.08%	4.96%	5.19%	5.42%
County (merit regular) positions per 1,000 citizens	11.27	11.34	11.58	11.61	11.52
Number of consecutive years receipt of highest possible bond rating from major rating agencies (Aaa/AAA/AAA)	42	43	44	45	46
Cumulative savings from both County bond sales as compared to the Bond Buyer Index and County refundings (in millions)	\$911.79	\$976.65	\$1,013.88	\$1,025.71	\$1,025.71
Number of consecutive years receipt of unqualified audit	39	40	41	42	43

Fairfax County has a robust and nationally known social media program that encourages interaction with and sharing of County information so residents can serve as information ambassadors to friends, neighbors and co-workers who may not otherwise have access (this was especially important during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic). By using tools like Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor, YouTube and an emergency blog, Fairfax County delivers a high-quality experience for residents on those platforms with relevant, timely and actionable information. As previous numbers reflect, these platforms were crucial to connect the community with COVID-19 information for the last three years. The FY 2022 data shows a return to pre-pandemic levels as interest and the breaking news nature of COVID has subsided. County efforts are paying dividends both for the exchange of information and improving awareness of County resources. For example, ongoing surveys of County Nextdoor followers showed that more than 80 percent of respondents were satisfied with Fairfax County's use of the platform. Evidence of the County's success in providing useful and convenient access to information and services can also be found in the FY 2022 measure of 149.5 million total interactions with key County online platforms (website visits, emergency blog views, Facebook daily total reach, Twitter impressions, YouTube video views, and SlideShare presentation views).



Volunteerism provides a measure of community engagement and is strongly evident across a wide range of volunteer activities. Fairfax County has a [Volunteer Management System \(VMS\)](#) that provides a single, searchable database of volunteer opportunities with County agencies. Volunteers complete a single application form for all agencies and answer a few supplemental questions depending on the opportunity to which they apply. Volunteer engagement leads to greater civic involvement and provides ways for residents from our diverse communities to engage and integrate. Research shows that volunteer engagement builds resilience, strengthens economic wellbeing, leads to better health and builds the capacity of agencies. Annual surveys of County volunteers indicate that 89 percent of volunteers feel more connected to their community and 93 percent feel they made a difference and 95 would recommend volunteers to others.

In FY 2022 **volunteers recorded 815,643 hours of service** which is a value of \$25,121,794 to the county based on data captured in VMS. During the majority of FY 2022, county volunteer programs began to restore in-person operations combined with virtual volunteer service opportunities to allow those volunteers who weren't yet comfortable returning in person to serve. Many of the volunteer programs developed virtual services – mentoring, tutoring, social visiting, and program presentations over video chat which they are continuing to be able to serve more clients. Outdoor volunteer activities have returned previous levels. Many of the county's favorite outdoor events came back in the spring and early summer – volunteers assisted with the Earth Day events, Easter Egg Hunts, 4-H Fair, and Fireworks Displays in several locations. The Fairfax Pets on Wheels program was able to start visiting assisted living center residents again.

Fairfax County has a civic-minded population. Voter participation levels in Fairfax County reflect a community that is well-informed, engaged, and involved with local government to address community needs and opportunities. The percent of Fairfax County residents voting in recent elections generally exceeds state averages. **Turnout for the November 2021 General Election** for state offices (FY 2022) was 60.0 percent; the decrease in voter turnout is typical for the state election cycle compared to the preceding presidential election cycle. A total of 440,511 citizens voted at the polls on Election Day or cast absentee ballots.

The County consistently demonstrates success in maintaining high **average tax collection rates**, which results in equitable distribution of the burden of local government costs to fund the wide variety of County programs and services beneficial to all residents.

**County direct expenditures per capita** of \$1,560 in FY 2024 represent a decrease from FY 2023. Recent budgets have continued essential county services despite significant challenges and disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic, striking a delicate balance between providing an appropriate level of services to residents while minimizing the financial impact to taxpayers who are navigating the same challenges at a household level. More cost per capita data, including data showing how much Fairfax County spends in each of the program areas, is included at the beginning of each program area section in Volume 1 of the [FY 2024 Advertised Budget Plan](#). The jurisdictions selected for comparison are the Northern Virginia localities as well as those with a population of 100,000 or more elsewhere in the state (the Auditor of Public Accounts for the Commonwealth of Virginia collects this data and publishes it annually). Fairfax County's cost per capita in each of the program areas is highly competitive with others in the state.

The **percent of household income spent on residential Real Estate Tax** is increasing slightly from FY 2023, due to growth in property values outpacing growth in household income. Fairfax County continues to rely heavily on the Real Estate Tax at least in part due to the lack of tax diversification options for counties in Virginia. In FY 2024, real property taxes represent **66.6** percent of total General Fund revenues.

The success in managing County resources has been accompanied by the number of **merit regular positions per 1,000 citizens** being managed very closely. Since FY 1992 the ratio has declined from 13.57 to 11.52 in FY 2024. The ratio has remained relatively stable since FY 2013 due to limited position growth while the County population, and demand for services, has also increased. The long-term trend shows a decline in the positions to citizen ratio, indicating the benefit of a number of efficiencies and approaches - success in utilizing technology, best management processes and success in identifying public-private partnerships and/or contractual provision of service.

The County is well regarded for its strong financial management as evidenced by its long history of high-quality financial management and reporting (see chart above for "**number of consecutive years receipt of highest possible bond rating**" and "**unqualified audit**"). The FY 2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report received an unqualified opinion from the County's audit firm.

### Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability



Fairfax County is fully committed to providing residents facing vulnerability with a safe place to receive necessary services, in a way that mitigates challenges through a holistic, streamlined, respectful and individualized approach. The role of local government is to identify people who need support in order to reach their personal level of "self-sufficiency," which is related to various factors including health (mental and physical), age and varying levels of personal ability. While there are basic human needs that must be met, individual circumstances may require a number of supports, representing multiple, overlapping challenges that may emerge, evolve and resolve over time. Therefore, it is critical to ensure a close connection with people facing vulnerability, so situations can be monitored and responded to in an effective manner. The role of caregivers should also be elevated when needed, so that people who want to empower caregivers to advocate for their needs can do so, to the extent possible by law. The proposed strategies in this section seek to improve the way people facing vulnerability are identified, connected with, served and supported over time.

Key County Measures	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual
Percent of seniors, adults with disabilities and/or family caregivers who express satisfaction with community-based services that are provided by Fairfax County to help them remain in their home/community <sup>1</sup>	NA	NA	94%

<sup>1</sup> Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, customer satisfaction services were suspended. As a result, accurate data for FY 2020 and FY 2021 is not available.

The County continues to be successful in **caring for older adults and persons with disabilities by helping them stay in their homes** as indicated by the 94 percent combined satisfaction rating for two support programs: Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) and Congregate Meals programs. As a result of the pandemic, the ADHC centers were closed and the Congregate Meals program provided emergency meals during senior center closures, therefore accurate annual satisfaction survey data was not available for FY 2020 and FY 2021. One of the services to help during these closures was the Home Delivered Meals program, which broadened the eligibility criteria attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and served 25.0 percent more meals in FY 2021. As the pandemic and the Governor’s stay at home emergency orders were lifted, participants who no longer needed to quarantine or self-isolate were able to return to their normal methods of obtaining food. The annual satisfaction survey resumed since all ADHC centers reopened in September 2021 and ADHC satisfaction was 95 percent in FY 2022. The Congregate Meals program continued as senior centers reopened with limited capacity until that restriction was lifted in December 2022, and client satisfaction remained high at 93 percent in FY 2022.

## Environment and Energy

Fairfax County is making progress through many of our environmental policies and practices that support air, water and land quality. It is important for people to have the opportunity to enjoy the natural environment, and that residents, businesses, county employees and visitors share in the responsibility to improve environmental outcomes (especially the reduction of greenhouse gasses). By continuing to make a wide variety of improvements, such as increasing the use of alternative energy, green roofs and stream restorations, as well as bike lane and pedestrian options, we will improve the long-term environmental well-being of our county.



The strategies in this section seek to protect, conserve and sustain environmental resources to promote clean air, water and soil. To confront the challenges posed by climate change, the county will improve the resilience of natural resources and community infrastructure and serve as a catalyst for community-wide action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Fairfax County residences and businesses.

Key County Measures	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual
Unhealthy Air Days as reported by Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (Calendar Year)	2	8	3
Overall Level of Stream Quality as a weighted index of overall watershed/ stream conditions on a scale of 5 (Excellent) to 1 (Very Poor)	2.6	2.5	2.2
Percent of Tree Coverage in County	54%	54%	54%

Key County Measures	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual
Number of homes that could be powered as a result of County alternative power initiatives	64,000	64,416	64,024
Municipal Solid Waste Recycled as a percentage of the waste generated within the County (Calendar Year)	49.6%	47.5%	TBD

The Environmental Stewardship Vision Element demonstrates the County's continued commitment to the environment. The Board adopted an updated Environmental Vision on June 20, 2017. As articulated in the preface, the updated Environmental Vision document establishes, *“an overarching vision to attain a quality environment that provides for a high quality of life and is sustainable for future generations. These aspects of a quality environment are essential for everyone living and working in Fairfax County. No matter what income, age, gender, ethnicity, or address, everyone has a need and a right to breathe clean air, to drink clean water and to live and work in a quality environment.”*

The updated Environmental Vision is premised on two principles. First, that “conservation of our limited resources must be interwoven into all government decisions”, and, second, that “the Board must be committed to providing the necessary funds and resources to protect and improve our environment for better quality of life now and for future generations.”

The Vision includes sections on Land Use, Transportation, Water, Waste Management, Parks and Ecological Resources, Climate and Energy, and Environmental Stewardship. The Environmental Vision is available online at: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/environment/environmental-vision>.

To support the Climate and Energy objectives in the Environmental Vision, the County oversees implementation of two major climate planning initiatives, the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) and Resilient Fairfax. Accepted by the Board in September 2021, CECAP includes goals, strategies, and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the causes of climate change. The County is working closely with the community to implement CECAP and meet its overarching goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. Adopted by the Board in November 2022, Resilient Fairfax is focused on the impacts of climate change on the County. Through implementation of the 11 goals and 48 strategies in the final plan, Fairfax County will be able to adapt and become more resilient to changing conditions and climate-related hazards such as extreme heat, severe storms, and flooding. More information about these initiatives is available at: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/climate-planning-action>.

Fairfax County is also committed to addressing greenhouse gas emissions from its own operations. In July 2021, the Board adopted the Carbon Neutral Counties Declaration, through which it pledges to be energy carbon neutral by 2040. To help meet this goal, also in July 2021, the Board adopted an update to its Operational Energy Strategy (OES), a policy originally adopted in 2018 to reduce overall energy demand, costs and consumption and promote an energy conscious culture in the County workplace. The 2021 update to the OES includes accelerated goals and targets across 11 focus areas, including targets to produce 50 percent of County electricity from renewable energy by 2050, electrify the County fleet by 2035 and be zero waste by 2030. More information is available at: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/energy-strategy>.

In support of the regional goal of attaining the federal ambient air quality standard for ozone levels, Fairfax County is committed to minimizing **unhealthy air days** as measured and defined by all criteria pollutants. Fairfax County has implemented air quality improvement strategies that include



reducing County vehicle emissions through the purchase of hybrid or electric vehicles, diesel retrofits and the use of ultra-low sulfur fuel, not allowing refueling of County vehicles except emergency vehicles on Code Red Days, encouraging County residents to use the Fairfax Connector bus on Code Red Days, teleworking, not allowing mowing of grass at County properties on Code Red Days, use of low Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) paints, promoting County building energy efficiency programs, tree canopy and planting activities, green building actions, community outreach and maintaining standards and procedures that promote healthy air. In addition, the Fairfax County Department of Transportation has a number of initiatives supporting transit and other forms of alternative transportation in Fairfax County, including transportation demand management strategies, ridesharing incentives, and infrastructure improvements to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and connectivity. Please see Agency 40, Department of Transportation, Fund 40000, County Transit Systems, and Fund 40010, County and Regional Transportation Projects, for additional information. Fund 30015, Environmental and Energy Program, established in FY 2021, also includes additional information on funding levels for Environmental and Energy Strategy projects underway.

Air quality monitoring in the County is conducted by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The EPA calculates the Air Quality Index (AQI) for five major air pollutants regulated by the Clean Air Act: ground-level ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide. The Air Quality Index for the criteria pollutants assigns colors to levels of health concern, code orange indicating unhealthy for sensitive groups; code red – unhealthy for everyone and purple - very unhealthy. The County uses the same color indicator on unhealthy air days. Air quality, although reported as a key County indicator, should be distinguished in a regional context. The number of unhealthy air days in the Metropolitan area in calendar year 2022 was 3, down from 8 in calendar year 2021, as reported by Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG). According to MWCOG, 2022 had the second lowest number of unhealthy air days and the region had its best three-year period (2020-2022) since it began tracking air pollution. The County continues to work with MWCOG and the Clean Air Partners, a volunteer, non-profit organization chartered by the MWCOG, and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) to examine the adequacy of current air pollution control measures and practices, education and notification processes, and codes and regulations to make further progress.

**Stream quality** in Fairfax County may affect residents' recreational use of streams and other water bodies as well as the quality of drinking water. Monitoring the health of waterways and preparing watershed management plans provide a head start for the County in satisfying the federal and state regulatory requirements as dictated by the County's MS4 (stormwater discharge) permit and the established Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for pollutants in several County streams. Since 2006, significant resources have been expended towards the watershed improvement program which implements water quality improvement projects such as retrofits to existing stormwater management facilities, new stormwater management facilities, low impact development (LID) practices and stream restorations. Fairfax County has taken significant steps toward meeting the goal of improving stream conditions countywide and contributing to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. As part of the watershed improvement program, over 20.5 miles of streams have been restored countywide from FY 2009 through FY 2022.

Since 2004, a stratified random selection procedure has been used to identify monitoring sites for assessing and reporting the overall ecological condition of the County's streams each year. Benthic macroinvertebrates are the aquatic organisms such as crayfish, clams and mayfly nymphs that live on the stream bottom are excellent indicators of stream health. A stream quality indicator (SQI) was developed from the annual benthic macroinvertebrate monitoring data to establish overall watershed/stream conditions countywide. The SQI is an index value ranging from 5 to 1, with the

following qualitative interpretations associated with the index values: 5 (Excellent), 4 (Good), 3 (Fair), 2 (Poor) to 1 (Very Poor). The SQI had fluctuated over the last nineteen years between 2.0 at its low and 2.9 at its highest level as the County strives to meet the goal of a future average stream quality index value of 3 or greater (Fair to Good stream quality). Fluctuations in the SQI score are to be expected as sites are selected randomly and could result in higher numbers of better or worse sites being selected year to year. Variability in annual weather patterns (i.e. drought or snowfall) may also affect these fluctuations. In FY 2022, the SQI declined from the previous year (2.5) to 2.2.

Fairfax County's urban forest is critical to enhancing the livability and sustainability of our community. Tree canopy (**Tree Coverage**) improves air quality, water quality, stormwater management, carbon sequestration, energy conservation and human health and well-being. Management of the trees within urban forests to maximize the multitude of benefits they provide to residents is an essential step in successfully reaching the commitments and goals of the Board of Supervisor's Environmental Vision, the One Fairfax Policy, the Tree Action Plan, the Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Initiative, and other County public health, livability and sustainability initiatives and programs. Tree coverage in the County is expressed as the percent of the County's land mass covered by the canopies of trees.

Tree cover data is not collected each year; high resolution satellite imagery studies were conducted in 2011 and 2015 and analyzed by the University of Vermont's Geospatial Laboratory. Analysis published in March of 2017 which utilized state-of-the-art urban tree canopy detection techniques estimated that the County has a tree canopy level of approximately 54 percent and estimated that the actual increase in tree canopy between 2011 and 2015 to be about 1 percent. Please note that prior conservative estimates of 50 percent tree cover for FY 2015 and FY 2016 have been revised to 54 percent tree cover based on the University of Vermont analysis. Tree cover is projected to remain at approximately 54 percent until updated data and analysis can be acquired by the County.

Alternative power initiatives highlight County efforts to contribute to pollution prevention through the use of cleaner, more efficient energy sources. These initiatives are expressed through the actions of the Fairfax County Solid Waste Management Program (SWMP) by its ability to generate or harness energy from municipal solid waste (MSW). Electrical energy generated by combusting MSW in an Energy-from-Waste Facility (EfW) and combusting landfill gas captured by decomposing MSW in reciprocating internal combustion engines can be expressed as the equivalent number of homes that could be powered by energy realized from alternative sources. In FY 2022, the equivalent number of homes powered by alternatively generated electrical energy was 64,024 homes, according to Covanta Fairfax. Landfill gas is also used as an alternative fuel to natural gas to generate heat for several County facilities and to operate pollution control equipment at the Noman Cole Pollution Control Plant. In FY 2022, that use was the equivalent of 157,000 therms of natural gas.

Solid waste management is a key environmental responsibility of Fairfax County. Fairfax County manages solid waste and **recycling** according to a solid waste hierarchy that prefers reduction, reuse and recycling over Waste-to-Energy or landfilling. The County's Solid Waste Management Program (SWMP) has responsibility for providing a system for municipal solid waste management as shown in the 20-Year Solid Waste Management Plan updated and approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2020. This plan, mandated by state law and administered by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), documents the County's integrated management system, and provides long-range planning for waste disposal and recycling for the next 20 years and must be updated every 5 years. The County's solid waste program provides opportunities for both residents and businesses to properly manage waste that they generate. Residents can recycle bottles, cans, paper, cardboard, motor oil, antifreeze, and used cooking oil at the County's two solid waste

management complexes. These facilities have multiple areas dedicated to waste reduction, diversion, and donation prior to disposal. Fairfax County continues to administer and enforce requirements to recycle paper, cardboard, glass, plastic and metal food and beverage containers from all residential properties. Non-residential properties are required to have paper and cardboard recycling.

The County’s recycling rate is calculated on a calendar year basis according to a procedure defined by state regulations and is due to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality on April 30 of each calendar year and data for 2022 will be included in the FY 2024 Adopted Budget document. In 2021, 47.5 percent of municipal solid waste was recycled, a slightly lower percentage than in 2020. SWMP is taking steps to reduce contamination and reduce rejections of recyclable commodities and promote waste source reduction. For example, Fairfax County operates two drop-off locations for Food Scrap Composting. Organics account for up to one-third of the trash generated daily in the County. Converting this material into compost is a more sustainable approach to managing this portion of the waste stream. The drop-off locations are at the I-95 Landfill Complex and the I-66 Transfer Station, and both locations are open seven days a week. In addition, food waste is collected at several Farmers Markets around the county. SWMP also offers food waste collection at County events and in office kitchens, in some libraries, and Board of Supervisors offices. To date, the Food Scrap Composting program has diverted over 74,000 pounds of food waste. Over the lifetime of the composting pilot, over 53 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions have been avoided.

## Healthy Communities



Fairfax County is committed to providing equitable access to affordable healthcare and healthy living opportunities, allowing all residents to attain their full health potential. Health and well-being are influenced by a wide range of social and economic factors, health behaviors, access to services and environmental quality. For some people, the essential elements for a healthy life are readily available; for others, the opportunities for healthy choices are significantly limited. It is important to recognize that disparities exist, and have been highlighted and exacerbated by the recent pandemic, especially for people of color who are at a higher risk of COVID-19 due to a multitude of related issues. These include a greater likelihood of underlying health conditions that make some residents more prone to contracting the virus, higher rates of employment in public-facing service jobs, and residing in high-density, multifamily living units which contribute to the spread of communicable diseases.

The strategies in this section seek to advance equitable health outcomes by examining what specific changes in the social determinants of health, the built community, and healthy living resources can be made to improve health and wellness for all, especially those who are most vulnerable and have been disproportionately affected, including older adults and children.

Key County Measures	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022
Percent of low birth weight babies (under 5 lbs 8 oz) <sup>1</sup>	6.7%	NA	NA
Immunizations: completion rates for 2-year-olds	67%	64%	77%

<sup>1</sup> Data on the birth weight is provided by the Virginia Department of Health, and 2020 is the most recent data available in time for budget publication.

The health and well-being of children in Fairfax County is evident in the low percentage of children born with **low birth weight** and the high **immunization completion rates** for two-year-olds. The

County’s 2020 incidence rate of 6.7 percent of low birth weight babies compares favorably against the state average of 8.3 percent. The FY 2022 immunization completion rate of 77 percent for two-year-olds increased as a result of efforts to bring children up-to-date on recommended and required vaccines missed in FY 2021. It is important to note that by the time of school entry, many children are adequately immunized, although they may have lacked these immunizations at the age of two.

## Housing and Neighborhood Livability



Reasonably priced housing and healthy, livable communities are critical to ensure a sustained high quality of life for the residents of Fairfax County. While no single action can fulfill the expectations of residents for affordable, connected, safe and walkable neighborhoods with necessary amenities, the proposed strategies in this section seek to promote equitable access to affordable housing, community assets and a variety of transportation options. The county is also focused on addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness and those who require short-term emergency shelter. The county must also find a balance between the desire to protect and preserve existing neighborhoods and buildings and to revitalize older business districts, while also building vibrant new mixed-use urban centers. It is also critical to carefully consider the environmental impacts of development and to ensure that any potential stressors are eliminated or mitigated in alignment with Fairfax County environmental policies and practices. Implementation of the proposed strategies in this section will also be fully aligned with the actions outlined in the Community-wide Housing Strategic Plan.

Key County Measures	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual
Percent of people in the labor force who both live and work in Fairfax County	55.8%	57.9%	61.5%
Number of affordable rental senior housing units <sup>1</sup>	2,701	2,707	2,707
Percent of homeowners that pay 30.0 percent or more of household income on housing (Calendar Year) <sup>1</sup>	24.9%	NA	24.5%
Percent of renters that pay 30.0 percent or more of household income on rent (Calendar Year) <sup>2</sup>	45.3%	NA	47.0%

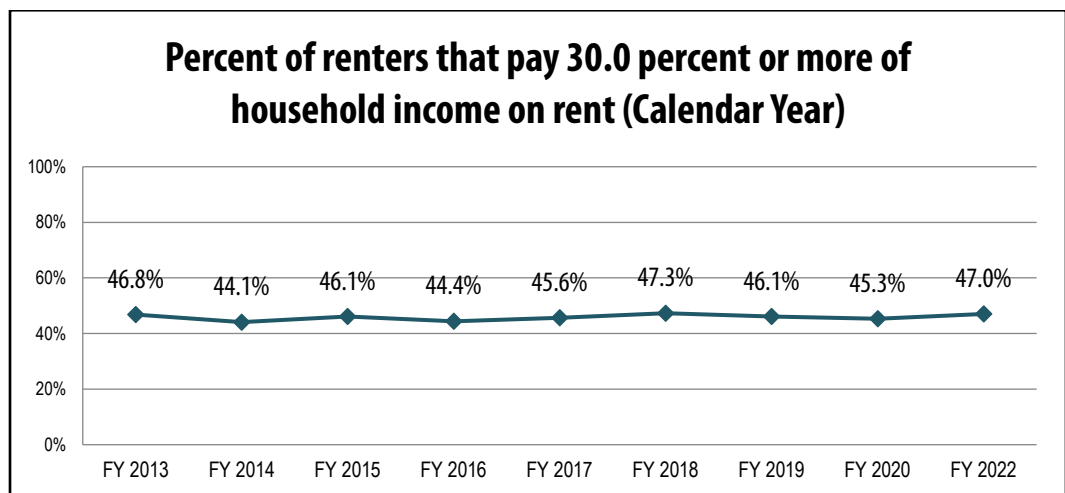
<sup>1</sup> The FY 2020, FY 2021 and FY 2022 Actual number of committed affordable rental senior housing units does not include properties that may be market affordable (ones that are privately-owned, do not receive a subsidy and do not have a restriction on their rent).

<sup>2</sup> The source of data for this measure is the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 1-year estimates, which were not published for CY 2020/FY 2021 due to the difficulty in collecting data during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The **percentage of employed people who both live and work in Fairfax County** is currently above 61 percent and may be linked to both quality of life and access to mixed use development in the County. Additional residential development in business centers also increases the potential for the members of the workforce to live in proximity to their place of work. In addition, the County is actively promoting the creation and preservation of affordable dwelling units to support those who both live and work within the County.

Continued production of affordable senior housing by the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) and others, as well as preservation efforts, are helping to offset the loss of affordable senior rental units on the market. Currently, there is an inventory of approximately 2,707 committed affordable senior housing units, including both publicly and privately-owned rental units. This figure does not include rental units that may be market affordable (ones that are privately-owned, do not receive a subsidy and do not have a restriction on their rent).

The **percent of homeowners that pay 30 percent or more of household income on housing** and **percent of renters that pay 30 percent or more of household income on rent**, relate the cost of housing to income and provide an indication of the relative affordability of living in Fairfax County. That capacity has an effect on other aspects of the County's economy. For example, if housing is so expensive that businesses cannot attract employees locally, they may choose to relocate from Fairfax County, thus resulting in a loss of jobs. In FY 2022, 24.5 percent of homeowners paid 30 percent or more of their household income on housing, while a substantially greater number of renters, 47.0 percent, paid 30 percent or more of their household income on rent. (Note: Census data are reported based upon the calendar year rather than the fiscal year and are typically available on a one-year delay. FY 2020 data represent CY 2019 data. Due to pandemic related difficulties in information gathering, the FY 2021/CY 2020 data were not published by the Census Bureau.)



## Lifelong Education and Learning

Fairfax County is the home of world-class learning institutions, including an outstanding public school system, the second-largest community college in the country and excellent university programs. These institutions, along with many county programs and community-based providers, support the education and learning needs of a large and diverse population.



Many adult residents are highly educated, employed in well-paying jobs with the potential for future career growth and have broad access to digital and in-person learning programs to continue to build their skills over time. Others have less access to well-paying jobs and the learning opportunities needed to successfully compete in the regional job market, which affects both individuals and families. There is also a tremendous need for quality early childhood education, which supports school readiness and is an essential component of success later in life. Finally, older residents need to be connected and engaged, especially through increased digital access and literacy, but also through in-person opportunities that teach new skills and offer a sense of inclusion and connection.

The goal of this community outcome area is to ensure that lifelong learning opportunities and the achievement of educational goals are readily available to residents at every stage of life, regardless of age. The proposed strategies in this section are focused on addressing existing disparities in learning outcomes, while expanding and integrating Fairfax County learning opportunities in a wide variety of educational and community settings.



Key County Measures	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual
Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) On-Time Graduation Rate	93.0%	94.6%	94.1%
Residents completing educational programs about local government (includes Citizens Police Academy and Fairfax County Youth Leadership Program)	30	95	115

In addition to the outstanding public school system (please see the end of this section for additional information about Fairfax County Public Schools), Fairfax County funds numerous programs to help children stay in school and provides recreational activities in after-school programs. These services contributed to the County's FY 2022 **Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) On-Time Graduation rate** of 94.1 percent.

Fairfax County has also designed several programs to educate citizens about local government. The **Community Police Academy (CPA)** (formerly Citizens Police Academy) is an educational outreach program designed to provide a unique "glimpse behind the badge" as participants learn about police department policies, procedures, and the men and women who compose an organization nationally recognized as a leader in the law enforcement community. Participants learn about the breadth of resources involved in preventing and solving crime and the daily challenges faced by Fairfax County police officers. The Fairfax County Police Department hosts four programs under the CPA concept. Academies for adults are held twice a year and are ten weeks in duration. Classes meet one night a week for 3.5 hours and are a combination of lecture and hands-on activities. The FCPD also hosts three programs for young adults each summer. Police Leaders of Tomorrow is a week-long program for young adults (18-24 years of age) of ethnic and racial diversity who are interested in law enforcement careers. The Teen Police Academy is a week-long program for high school students enrolled in criminal justice classes and provides scenario-based training. Future Women Leaders in Law Enforcement is a week-long program for high school girls who are interested in exploring careers in law enforcement. The Fairfax County Citizens Police Academy was selected "best in the nation" in 2009 by the National Citizens Police Academy Association (NCPAA). In FY 2022, 89 residents completed a CPA course. All classes were held in person, however, due to COVID-19 the classes were reduced in size.

The **Fairfax County Youth Leadership Program** is designed to educate and motivate high school students to become engaged citizens and leaders in the community. This is a very selective program with students from each of the County's 25 high schools represented. The students are chosen based on a range of criteria including student activities and awards, written essays, and recommendations. During a one-year period, the program includes a series of monthly sessions about County government, work assignments related to each session, a summer internship in a County agency and a presentation to 8<sup>th</sup> grade civics students. The goal of this initiative is to inspire young people to become citizens who will share their ideas and bring their energy to local government. Due to the global pandemic, this program was offered in a virtual setting in the beginning of 2022. As public health conditions improved, the program's meetings were offered in person and summer internships were provided to the students in 2022.



## Mobility and Transportation



As a rapidly urbanizing community, the need to reduce traffic congestion and improve mobility is one of the greatest challenges facing Fairfax County. Residents and workers want a variety of ways to move around the community that are easily accessible, affordable, safe, and promote both healthy living and environmental stewardship. In addition, there is a greater focus on active transportation options that prioritize safe pedestrian access and bike-friendly facilities that are connected to mass transit.

The proposed strategies in this section seek to improve the condition and capacity of the current transportation systems, while also reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and moving away from car-centric approaches to building communities and transportation infrastructure. There are also strategies to continue to improve land-use planning that incentivize transit-oriented developments that support fewer car trips, healthier living and more connected and vibrant communities.

Key County Measures	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual
Miles of trails and sidewalks maintained by the County	675	675	676
Percent change in transit passengers (Metrobus and Metrorail)	(5.3%)	(76.4%)	77.8%

The availability of trails and sidewalks supports pedestrian friendly access, and accessibility for non-motorized traffic. This indicator is measured by the **miles of trails and sidewalks** that are maintained by the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES). A GIS-based walkway inventory now provides a more accurate estimate of miles. In FY 2022, DPWES maintained 676 miles of trails and sidewalks. In addition to miles maintained by the County, approximately 1,712 miles are maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and approximately 336 miles are contained within County parks. In addition, approximately 1,134 miles of walkway are maintained by private homeowners' associations. The number of walkways in the County contributes to the sense of community and connection to places. The County will continue to improve pedestrian access and develop walkways through the use of funding support from a variety of sources, including bond funding and the commercial and industrial real estate tax for transportation.

Transit provides an important travel option for many residents and visitors. The County operates the Fairfax Connector bus service; provides FASTRAN services to seniors; and contributes funding to Metro and the Virginia Railway Express (VRE). The **percent change in transit passengers** measures the impact of County efforts as well as efforts of Metro and the VRE. The County experienced an increase of 77.8 percent in Fairfax County transit passengers (Metrorail, Metrobus) in FY 2022, up from 6.6 million in FY 2021 to 11.7 million in FY 2022. The increase reflects riders returning to transit as both service and economic activity returns to normal following the pandemic. Fairfax Connector has also experienced an increase in ridership coming out of the pandemic, with a 13.7 percent increase in ridership in FY 2022 compared with FY 2021. FY 2023 ridership for both systems is anticipated to be above the FY 2022 level but both Metro and Connector expect a multi-year effort to re-attract riders in order to return to pre-pandemic levels of ridership.

In FY 2024, the County will continue its support of Metro Operations and Construction, Connector bus service, and the VRE subsidy. For more information, please see Fund 30000, Metro Operations and Construction, and Fund 40000, County Transit Systems, in Volume 2.

## Safety and Security



To meet the diverse needs of all residents, Fairfax County must ensure a comprehensive, equitable and inclusive approach to public safety and justice. Building a safe community is more than reducing and preventing injury and crime, it is about investing in strong, vibrant and engaged communities where all people are protected and supported to live lives to their fullest potential.

Residents, employees, and businesses want a community where people can go about their daily lives without fear, or risk of harm. The responsibility to ensure a safe and secure place where all people can thrive is shared across multiple county departments, and must also include the full participation of the entire Fairfax County community.

The proposed strategies in this section seek to promote fair policing and prosecution practices, strengthen the relationship between public safety and the most vulnerable members of our community, reduce reliance on use of force and incarceration, expand prevention and preparedness programs, and enhance transparency and infrastructure.

Key County Measures	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual
Ratio of Crimes Against Persons Offenses to 100,000 County Population (Calendar Year)	703.2	725.4	806.8
Clearance rate of Crimes Against Persons Offenses (Calendar Year) <sup>1</sup>	46.3%	45.7%	TBD
Percent of time Advanced Life Support (ALS) transport units on scene within 9 minutes	90.8%	89.0%	85.2%
Fire suppression response rate for engine company within 5 minutes, 20 seconds	48.9%	55.2%	58.9%

<sup>1</sup>The methodology for reporting clearance rates was changed for FY 2021. The clearance rate is calculated by the year the offense was cleared regardless of the date the offense was reported. Therefore, clearances of a particular year may pertain to offenses that were reported in previous years. At the time of publication of the [FY 2024 Advertised Budget Plan](#), FY 2022 Actual data is still being prepared and will be included with the [FY 2024 Adopted Budget Plan](#).

Fairfax County is one of the nation's safest jurisdictions in which to live and work. In CY 2022, the Fairfax County **ratio of 806.8 Crimes Against Persons Offenses** per 100,000 residents reflected one of the lowest rates of any large jurisdiction in the United States. It is important to note that Crimes Against Persons Offenses includes all Forcible and Non-Forcible Sex Offenses, Human Trafficking Offenses, Kidnappings/Abductions, Homicides and Assaults that were reported to the Police Department. Additional information can be found in the Fairfax County Police Department's annual report on Group A Offenses: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/chief/crimestatistics>.

In CY 2021, the case **clearance rate of Crimes Against Persons Offenses** was 45.7 percent. This rate remained high when compared to similar jurisdictions across the nation.

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department Advanced Life Support (ALS) and fire unit measures are standards set by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The **five minute and 20 seconds fire suppression response standard** of the NFPA was met 58.9 percent of the time in FY 2022. **Advanced Life Support transport units arrived on the scene within 9 minutes** 85.2 percent of the time in FY 2022.

## Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Strategic Plan

The School Board's Strategic Plan was prepared to ignite the hearts and minds of the community to ensure that every student receives the best possible education, preparing them for their best possible futures. Each year, the School Board is updated on the four goals, which include:

### Goals

- Student Success
- Caring Culture
- Premier Workforce
- Resource Stewardship

### Mission

Fairfax County Public Schools, a world-class school system, inspires and empowers students to meet high academic standards, lead healthy ethical lives, and be responsible and innovative global citizens.

### Vision

- Looking to the Future
- Commitment to Opportunity
- Community Support
- Achievement
- Accountability

### Portrait of a Graduate

1. Communicator
2. Collaborator
3. Ethical and Global Citizen
4. Creative and Critical Thinker
5. Goal-Directed and Resilient Individual

School system performance is monitored regularly throughout the year by the School Board to assure that reasonable progress is being made toward achieving the student achievement goals and that the system is complying with the Board's operational expectations.



### FCPS Overview

- In FY 2023, FCPS' total approved membership is 177,570; nation's 11<sup>th</sup> largest school district.
- 199 schools and centers.
- Full-day kindergarten at all elementary schools.
- Needs-based staffing at all schools.
- 84.6% of FCPS graduates plan to continue to post-secondary education.
- In 2022, Thomas Jefferson High School of Science and Technology was ranked by *U.S. News and World Report* as the Best High School and also #6 for the best STEM school in the nation.

### FCPS is Efficient

FCPS ranks 4<sup>th</sup> when compared to other local districts in average cost per pupil (FY 2023 WABE Guide).

FCPS students scored an average of 1185 on the SAT, exceeding both the state and national average for 2021-2022 school year:

FCPS	1185
VA	1124
Nation	1050