



# Environmental Sustainability

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# Environmental Sustainability



- Prince William County's Environmental Management System Program
- Sustainability from a Countywide Perspective
- Plastic Bag Tax Legislation
- Questions



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# Prince William County's Environmental Management System Program



# History of Environmental Management in PWC



# Virginia Environmental Excellence Program

- Certified Environmental Management System Plans
- Groups identify high impact activities
- Create plans to minimize or eliminate impact
- Annual reporting on progress to DEQ



**Solid Waste**



**Public Works**

**Facilities & Fleet  
Management (FFM)**

**Fire & Rescue**

**Parks, Rec & Tourism**



**Police**

**Libraries**



## PWC Environmental Council

- Six departments on the Council, Risk & Wellness facilitates
- Focus efforts on shared impacts
- Develop policies, action plans

# Three Stages of Sustainability

## Compliance

- Not strategic or centralized
- Volunteer driven
- “green teams”
- Meeting minimum requirements is focus

## Efficiency

- Strategy driven
- Look to cut waste, protect reputation
- Recycling, energy savings is focus

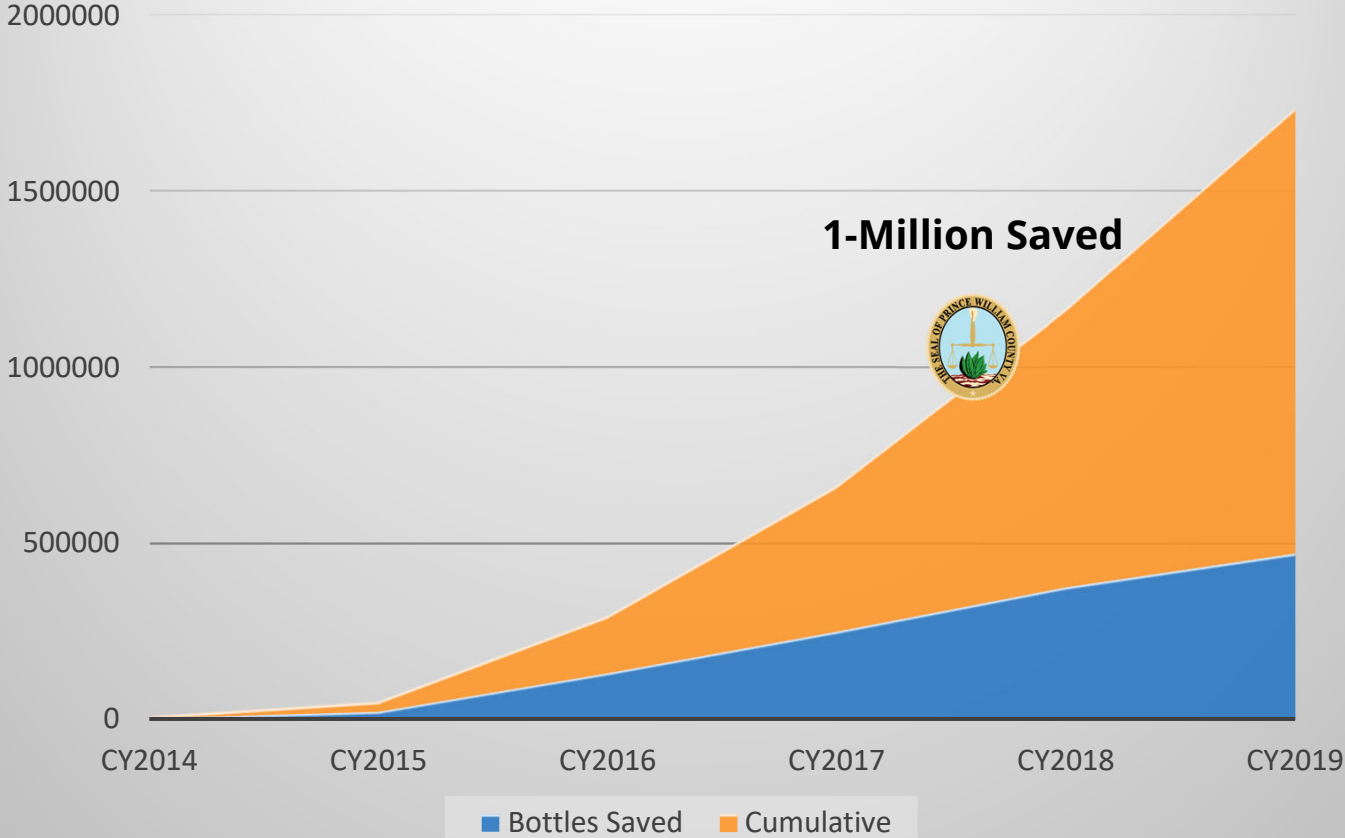
## Innovation

- Sustainability integrated into core business
- Systems, controls, centralized programs are the focus



# Sustainability Strategies: Waste Reduction

## Single-Use Plastic Bottles "Saved" with Bottle Station Program



- Over 30 units installed by FFM, Parks
- Now saving over 500,000 bottles a year



# Example Results of Projects: 2016-2019



## Energy

- **154 Million kWh** generated from Landfill
- **2.1 Million kWh** reduced consumption in buildings



## Hazardous Waste

- **19,200-lbs** recycled
- **5,900-lbs** reduction



## Pollution Prevention

- **64,461-lbs**



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# Environmental Sustainability

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## What is Sustainability?

Avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance.

Which can be addressed in many areas, such as:

- Energy
- Environment
- Food
- Green Building
- Land Use Planning
- Transportation
- Waste



## What PWC Policy Documents Currently address components of sustainability?

- Comprehensive Plan
  - Environment Chapter
  - Open Space Chapter
  - Technology Chapter
  - Land Use Chapter
- Zoning Ordinance
- Design Construction Standards Manual

## What are some examples of existing PWC policies and regulations supporting sustainability?

- Policies related to climate and air quality, watershed planning, energy and surface and groundwater
- Policies related to preservation of agricultural land uses
- Minimum open space requirements
- Link land uses with multi-modal transit options (including sidewalks and trails) which reduces reliance on vehicles
- Encourages using technology to more efficiently deliver services. Encourage use of electric charging stations at all facilities
- Encouraging compact walkable integrated mixed-use development

# Current Directives/Resolutions



**Since 2020, the Board has issued several directives related to sustainability:**

- **Dir. No. 20-40 [June 2, 2020]**
  - Create a C-PACE program to provide for financing mechanism for renewable energy projects (Response September 3, 2020 attached)
- **Dir. No. 20-79 [October 6, 2020]**
  - Create a Sustainability Plan (Response November 2, 2020 attached)
- **Dir. No. 20-81 [October 6, 2020]**
  - Require a certain percentage of native plants to be used on all County projects

# Current Directives/Resolutions



- **Dir. No. 20-42 [October 20, 2020]**
  - Research options for creation of a Sustainability Commission, summarize area jurisdictions commissions (November 30, 2020 Response Attached)
- **Dir. No. 20-84 [October 20, 2020]**
  - Update Community Energy Master Plan (referenced in the Environment Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan)
- **Dir. No. 20-85 [October 20, 2020]**
  - Begin a Community-Wide Climate Planning Process that addresses MWCOG greenhouse/carbon reduction goals

# Current Directives/Resolutions



- **Res. No. 20-773 [November 17, 2020]**
  - Endorse MWCOG climate mitigation goal (50% greenhouse gas emissions reductions below 2005)
  - Endorse MWCOG climate resiliency goals (become a climate ready region to make progress to be a climate resilient region by 2030)
  - Incorporate goal of 100% of PWC electricity to be from renewable sources by 2030 and for PWC Government to be 100% carbon neutral by 2050 into the Comprehensive Plan.
  - Make recommendations for the creation of a public advisory body charged with advising on potential enhancements to the Community Energy Master Plan (CEMP)
  - Incorporate equity principles and environmental justice into the Community Energy Master Plan (CEMP) and the Comprehensive Plan
- **Dir. No. 21-08 [February 2, 2021]**
  - Report out timeline for the creation of a climate action plan

# What Are Our Neighboring Jurisdiction's Initiatives?



- **City of Alexandria**

- Eco-City Alexandria
- Environmental Policy Commission
- Sustainability Coordinator
- Eco-City Charter (2008)
- Environmental Action Plan 2040 (2009, 2019)

- **Arlington County**

- Community Energy Plan (2019) (in their Comp Plan)
- Community Energy Plan Implementation Framework (ongoing 2021)
- Environment and Energy Conservation Commission
- E2C2 Energy Committee



# What Are Our Neighboring Jurisdiction's Initiatives?



- **Fairfax County**
  - Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination
  - Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (2019)
  - Environmental Quality Council
  - Joint Environmental Task Force (Board and School Board)
- **Fauquier County**
  - Department of Environmental Services
- **Stafford County**
  - Environmental Services Division, Public Works
- **Loudoun County**
  - C-PACE
  - Energy and Conservation Program
  - Energy Strategy (2009)
  - Environmental Commission (Recently created 2020/2021)

# How Do We Continue to Progress the Issue of Sustainability in PWC?



- **Establish an Office of Sustainability**
  - Include Budget and appropriation for administration. We expect this to cost \$200,000 to start up the office
- **Budget and Appropriate for a Community Energy Master Plan/Sustainability Plan**
  - We expect this to cost no more than \$450,000
- **Create a Sustainability Commission**
  - Community appointees to include citizen representation as well as sustainability groups located in Prince William County, and other stakeholders that will liaise with the existing Prince William County Environmental Council\* and other necessary departments

\*Includes Risk & Wellness Services, Public Works, Police, Fire, Parks, Library

# What About All of the Issued Board Directives?



## Board Directive

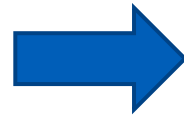
## Board Action Needed

C-PACE



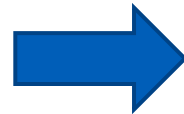
County plans to bring draft ordinance to BOCS in early summer for Board adoption

Sustainability Plan (CEMP)



Budget and Appropriate \$450,000

Native Plants



Staff has already amended internal policies to require native plants in County projects. No Board action needed

Sustainability Commission



Direct the Creation and Budget and Appropriate \$200,000 for the Office of Sustainability, which will administer the Sustainability Commission

# What About All of the Issued Board Directives?

## Board Directive

## Board Action Needed

Incorporate energy and carbon goals into Comprehensive Plan



Staff amended scope of Comprehensive Plan update to include additional energy and carbon goals.  
No Board action needed

Incorporate environmental justice and equity into Comprehensive Plan



Staff amended scope of Comprehensive Plan update to include definitions and goals related to environmental justice and equity.  
No Board action needed

Endorse MWCOG climate mitigation goals



No further action needed as this was an endorsement

Endorse MWCOG climate resiliency goals



No further action needed as this was an endorsement



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# Plastic Bag Tax

Michelle Attreed, Director of Finance/CFO



# Local Plastic Bag Tax

- **Enabling legislation passed during the 2020 General Assembly**
  - Authorizes a \$0.05 local tax on each disposable plastic bag provide at a grocery, convenience and drug stores
- **Revenue Uses**
  - Environmental clean-up, waste reduction education, mitigating pollution and litter
  - Providing reusable bags to federal nutritional assistance programs (SNAP and WIC)
- **Any local tax must be enacted at the start of a calendar quarter and the County must notify the Tax Commissioner's Office at least 3-months prior to the effective date of the tax**



# Local Plastic Bag Tax

- **Exemptions from Tax**

- Durable reusable plastic tote bags (> 4 mils),
- plastic bags used solely to wrap, contain, or package ice cream, meat, fish, poultry, produce, unwrapped bulk food items, or perishable food items

- **Cost Recovery to Retailers**

- Retailers may retain \$0.02 between January 1, 2021 and January 1, 2023 and \$0.01 after January 1, 2023

- **Other Localities Considering Bag Tax**

- Concerned about uniformity and are awaiting guidelines which the Tax Commissioner's Office is required to make publicly available (3 months prior to 1<sup>st</sup> law)



# Potential New Revenue: Plastic Bag Tax



- Any county or city may, by duly adopted ordinance, impose a tax in the amount of five cents (\$0.05) for each disposable plastic bag provided, whether or not provided free of charge, to a consumer of tangible personal property by retailers in grocery stores, convenience stores, or drugstores (§ 58.1-1745)
    - Any tax imposed under this section shall be collected by the retailer, along with the purchase price and all other fees and taxes, at the time the consumer pays for such personal property
  - **Estimated to generate approximately \$50-\$54 thousand in new tax revenue in early years; increasing over time to \$90 thousand**
- **Pros:** Diversifies the tax base; reduces the use of disposable bags that end up in the County's landfill
  - **Cons:** Would require new resources to administer (i.e., public information & outreach outreach campaigns, distribution of reusable bags for equity, tax administration, collection and reporting efforts)





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**Questions?**

