

**RESOLUTION: A RESOLUTION ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION****REVISION 2: 29 OCT 2024**

Resolution by the Public Services Committee of the Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF), John Ford, Chair; Jackie Snelling POC, [bod.orgdev@civfed.org](mailto:bod.orgdev@civfed.org). Introduced at the 8 October 2024 Membership Meeting and updated 29 October 2024. **APPROVED BY THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP ON 12 November 2024; 39 (95%) YEA, 2 (5%) NAY, 5 ABSTENTIONS.**

1. **WHEREAS** climate change impacts our community wellbeing, livability and equity both currently and increasingly through anticipated extreme weather events that increase risks from flooding, drought, and extreme heat;
2. **WHEREAS** climate change can adversely impact economic activity, labor patterns and productivity, increase government costs of infrastructure maintenance and operations, and increase utility costs while diminishing reliability and utility services<sup>i</sup>;
3. **WHEREAS** addressing climate change requires climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience<sup>ii</sup>;
4. **WHEREAS** multiple Elements of the Arlington Comprehensive Plan (CP) impact climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts that require coordination and prioritization across elements of the Plan<sup>iii</sup>;
5. **WHEREAS** there currently is no formally coordinated plan for climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience with explicit goals across Arlington County departments, projects, and services with meaningful evaluation tools for prioritization of efforts including metrics to measure progress and no plan that includes private sector choices, behavior, and action in climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience;
6. **WHEREAS** there is Arlington level data and analysis of risk from increased rainfall intensity but not comparable Arlington data and risk analysis for extreme heat and increasing patterns of frequency, intensity and duration of prolonged heat and drought events<sup>iv</sup>;
7. **WHEREAS** extensive science and strategy is available to identify and reduce climate change impacts through mitigation, adaptation and resiliency<sup>v</sup>;
8. **WHEREAS** the Arlington County Board has allocated resources and appointed an Assistant County Manager for Climate Policy “to successfully lead ‘whole of government’ teams”<sup>vi</sup> to build on the previous accomplishments and investments in both operating and Capital Improvement resources including Energy, Green Buildings, Tree Canopy, Natural Resources and Flood Resilience.

**Therefore, be it resolved that the Arlington County Civic Federation takes the following positions and recommends and requests actions by Arlington County (AC).**

1. That AC develops an overarching action plan for climate change, including an initial focus on adaptation, to establish coordination across the Comprehensive Plan Elements to include priorities, metrics, and performance measures for the critical climate actions for each Element with metrics to be reviewed annually and as part of the 5-year CP review. The intent is to integrate existing climate mitigation goals and plans for carbon neutrality with complementary adaptation plans;

**RESOLUTION: A RESOLUTION ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION****REVISION 2: 29 OCT 2024**

2. That AC systematically include representatives of the ACCF and other community organizations in current and ongoing planning for mitigation and adaptation methods including prioritizing adaptation and resilience measures that best use county resources to deliver timely benefits to our residents as this climate change work continues;
3. That AC adds more Open Public Spaces, particularly in areas where there is less current open space acreage and less access to Open Public Spaces<sup>vii</sup> and track the additions with metrics;
4. That AC parks plans and site plans should be required to preserve existing mature canopy as well as increasing ecosystem-enhancing canopy trees and ground level vegetation, planted in soil and maintained for long-term survival of the plantings;
5. That ACCF supports the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan and a specific implementation plan and metrics to track its priorities;
6. That AC establishes an annual tree planting and preservation goal that will track and report the number of trees planted annually by Arlington on public and private space<sup>viii</sup>. The tracking system should also monitor the viability of new trees and trigger replacements as needed;
7. That Arlington County proceeds to develop a comprehensive, climate-facing green infrastructure strategy that includes natural sites as well as necessary use of green infrastructure integration with built infrastructure;
8. That Arlington County promotes adaptive building design for new construction and for existing buildings
9. That Arlington County develops a Heat Risk Assessment and Management Plan (RAMP) comparable to the recently completed Stormwater RAMP<sup>ix</sup>
10. That AC revises the site plan process to conduct a proactive examination of conceptual and preliminary site plan locations to identify potential opportunities for stormwater management and urban heat island mitigation including easements and specific improvements, both those that could be funded as community benefits, and those that AC could fund in coordination with the private development;
11. That the site plan process and internal priority review be updated to balance CP priorities and site opportunities in the specific site context and not in competition, to make certain that incentives and cost benefits reflect priorities by location to achieve CP overarching goals;
12. That AC and APS coordinate public open space and built environment to meet joint priorities for climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience through both built environment and natural space; and,
13. That the County identifies and seeks legislative authority through VA legislation for actions that are required to meet the life safety and health requirements of climate adaptation, including for extreme heat and stormwater management for urban flooding<sup>x</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Heat waves are getting longer and more brutal. Here's why your AC can't save you anymore (7-4-2024)  
<https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/04/climate/heat-waves-air-conditioning-climate/index.html>

<sup>ii</sup> Definitions of Climate Mitigation, Adaptation, Resilience include Congressional Research <https://crsreports.congress.gov> | IF11827 · VERSION 2 · NEW White House <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/National-Climate-Resilience-Framework-FINAL.pdf> ; Center for Climate and Energy Solutions <https://www.c2es.org/document/what-is-climate-resilience-and-why-does-it-matter/> , USDA <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/climate-change-adaptation-mitigation-resilience>

<sup>iii</sup> Arlington Comprehensive Plan Accessed 9/20/24

<sup>iv</sup> Arlington Risk Assessment and Management Plan <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Environment/Risk-Assessment-and-Management-Plan> accessed 9-20-24

<sup>v</sup> Research areas examples include tree canopy and ground level natural space for water and temperature management, managing

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**REVISION 2: 29 OCT 2024**

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the built environment for air flow, green roofs, and other green infrastructure with heat reducing and stormwater absorption features, decrease impervious space and increase the natural space for cooling and water absorption, use of bioretention swales and street trees, planned pathways for overland relief to distribute stormwater for broader absorption and strategic water retention for slowing the inundation rate of high intensity storms.

<sup>vi</sup> Arlington County Website <https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/Newsroom/Articles/2024/Jennifer-Fioretti-Named-New-Assistant-County-Manager-for-Climate-Policy-Climate-Policy-Office-Expanded> AND Arlington County Adopted 2025 budget <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Budget-Finance/FY-2025-Budget-Information>, fy-2025-adopted-all-in-one-budget.pdf, page 4, accessed 9-20-24

<sup>vii</sup> ACCF 2021 Resolution and White Paper on Open Space Equity <https://www.civfed.org/about-us/committees/parks/>

<sup>viii</sup> ACCF Taking Action for Trees May 2022, and June 23 Urban Tree Canopy Assessment <https://www.civfed.org/about-us/committees/environmental-affairs/>

<sup>ix</sup> Arlington Risk Assessment and Management Plan <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Environment/Risk-Assessment-and-Management-Plan> accessed 9-20-24

<sup>x</sup> ACCF 2024 Legislative Priorities Resolution <https://www.civfed.org/about-us/committees/legislation/>