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James Walkinshaw

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HOUSING FOR ALL

1) Transit-Oriented Communities

Providing homes in walkable, mixed-use, mixed income communities close to transit can provide more equitable access to opportunities, reduce reliance on driving, and improve environmental and social outcomes for residents. In fact, County plans call for inclusive, transit-oriented development near its transit stations and along its transit-rich corridors.

1a) Do you agree with the Comprehensive Plan's inclusive, transit-oriented communities goals?

Yes No Partially

1b) How would you improve on or change the County's approach to inclusive, transit-oriented communities?

I have advocated that our planning and zoning processes incorporate a recognition of the overall demand and need for housing units, both affordable and market-rate.

2) Housing Goals

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG), which includes Fairfax County, has committed to providing 320,000 more homes in our region by 2030 with 75% near high-capacity transit and 75% qualifying as affordable. Yet Fairfax County has not committed to meeting a specific share of this need and is falling behind on its own previously set targets. This contrasts with an earlier time when then-Chairman Connolly committed the County to planning for 48,000 additional households to ensure people could live closer to their jobs and reduce the traffic commuting into and through the County.

2a) Do you believe Fairfax County should be doing more to provide additional housing in the County?

Yes No Partially

2b) What housing and zoning policy steps would you take to fill the housing gap and construct more housing at all levels of affordability, including both committed affordable and market-rate homes? Would you support these changes County-wide or just in specific locations?

As noted above, our planning and zoning processes need to recognize the overall demand and need for housing. We will need to construct more housing at all levels of affordability across the county, with a focus on higher density in areas close to transit.

3) Affordable Housing Funding

Fairfax County has adopted a minimum affordable housing production goal of 10,000 units by 2034, but the annual funding is still below the amount needed to meet that goal.

3a) If elected, would you support dedicated, sustainable funding to achieve the County's housing goals, particularly for those individuals and families at lower incomes?

Yes No

3b) What policies and programs would you consider to strengthen or add to address housing affordability in the County? How much money would you ask for in the County budget to build new affordable housing? To preserve/renovate existing affordable housing?

I support the goal of dedicating \$.02 of the real estate tax rate to affordable housing preservation and construction. Doing so will likely require further diversifying our tax base, including implementation of new taxing authorities granted to counties in 2020.

4) Displacement Concerns

The County has pledged no net-loss of affordable housing but as needed investments are made in revitalization areas and transit corridors, older market rate affordable housing is being lost to newer and more expensive homes. This can lead to current residents being displaced from their communities because affordable homes may no longer be available in their neighborhood. They may even need to leave Fairfax County altogether to find more affordable housing, with profound negative impacts on intergenerational communities.

4a) Do you feel the County should do more to address displacement concerns and ensure more inclusive communities available to different income levels?

Yes No

4b) What tools would you use to help provide more housing options for a mix of incomes in areas facing redevelopment as well as support residents facing possible displacement?

Respectfully, this question misses the main driver of displacement in Fairfax County. Rather than older market rate affordable housing being torn down and lost to newer and more expensive homes, the main driver is rising rents in existing buildings. I don't discount the pressures to redevelop existing market rate units and the importance of that challenge moving forward. But today, displacement is occurring because rents are rising. The most effective way to address that is to ensure we are producing enough housings units to keep pace with the demand for housing and continuing to build new affordable units.

5) Zoning for More Housing

Eighty two percent (82%) of Fairfax County land is zoned exclusively for single-family detached homes according to a [2019 Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance report](#). Expanding housing options in single family neighborhoods can make way for more housing, increase access to home ownership, reduce racial and economic segregation, and increase access to opportunity.

5a) Would you support a planning process to consider changes to the zoning ordinance to expand housing types in the County?

Yes

No

5b) What are your thoughts on this issue in light of Arlington County's recent community study and vote to expand "Missing Middle Housing" options?

I was a passionate supporter of ZMod because I believe that reducing regulations in our Accessory Living Unit policy would increase availability of a more affordable housing option, especially in the parts of Fairfax County that are zoned exclusively for single-family detached homes. I also represent the Burke Centre PRC [Planned Residential Community], which was planned with a mix of housing types, including duplexes, quadplexes, and small apartment buildings. Moving forward, I believe we can find ways to build on that model in other parts of Fairfax County, with a focus on areas close to current and future transit.

6) Homeownership Opportunities

Multiple studies have shown growing wealth and racial/ethnic homeownership gaps in the County. For Black families, this is due in part to the legacy of segregation through deed restrictions that prevented them from buying homes and building wealth.

6a) Do you support County policies to provide more opportunities for home ownership?

Yes No Partially

6b) What types of policies or programs would you propose?

I support expanding home ownership opportunities through our Affordable Dwelling Unit and Workforce Dwelling Unit ownership, down payment assistance, interest rate reduction, and purchase counseling programs.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

1) Improving Public Transit

Public transit is the backbone of a sustainable, equitable transportation system and a thriving economy, and Fairfax County has admirable plans to expand its bus rapid transit (BRT) network to ensure fast, frequent, and reliable service for residents. While public transit ridership on some systems has been hit by the pandemic with reduced commute trips due to increased teleworking, transit remains key for essential workers, and for supporting compact, walkable communities.

1a) Do you support increased funding for public transit to address budget shortfalls and make improvements to better serve riders?

Yes No

1b) What is your experience riding public transit? What ideas do you have to improve public transit in Fairfax County?

I currently Chair the Virginia Railway Express [VRE] Operations Board and have been a VRE rider for more than a decade. Through Transforming Rail in Virginia, we are working to expand VRE ridership by adding evening and weekend service and attracting new riders to the system. We also need to continue to expand South-North Connector bus routes to serve residents commuting from Southern and Central Fairfax to Tysons and Reston.

2) Active Transportation Funding

The ActiveFairfax Transportation Plan - the County's most significant overhaul of its bicycle, pedestrian, and trails plans - is expected to be finalized this year. The plan's recommendations address critical safety needs for residents who already walk and bike and also make improvements to allow more residents to walk and bike conveniently and safely for daily needs. Realizing the Plan's vision will require substantial, dedicated, and consistent funding.

2a) Would you support Fairfax committing dedicated annual funding to support the ActiveFairfax Transportation Plan, even if that meant potentially delaying road expansion and interchange projects?

Yes No

2b) What is your personal experience dealing with or advocating for pedestrian or bicyclist safety issues?

I spend much of my time working with community members to address pedestrian and bicycle safety issues in the Braddock District and supported the Board's commitment of \$100 million to make much-needed improvements across Fairfax County. Recently, I worked with the community, FCDOT [Fairfax County Department of Transportation], and VDOT [Virginia Department of Transportation] to improve a crosswalk used by families walking to Irving Middle School. I am also working to install RRFBs [Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons] at key locations in the Braddock District.

3) Low-Stress Bike Network

Fairfax County has committed to reducing the amount people have to drive and associated transportation-related carbon emissions. The County's climate plan calls for meeting a goal of 30% non-auto commuting trips by 2030. To make this shift, the County will need robust, accessible alternatives and bicycling is an ideal, low-cost, carbon-free alternative. But that mode shift requires dedicated infrastructure including an expanded network of trails and comfortable, protected, low-stress bicycle facilities - not just painted bike lanes or sharrows - to make bicycling meaningfully safer, more appealing, and more accessible and often requires roadway redesign that reduces parking and/or vehicle lanes.

3a) Compared to the current prioritization, do you think greater priority should be given to the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians in the County's roadway designs?

Yes No

3b) How would you ensure that people of all ages and abilities have robust active transportation access to and along the County's major and most important thoroughfares and connecting streets?

Despite some opposition in the community, I have advocated for the inclusion of shared use paths as part of the Braddock Road Multimodal Improvement Project. We can no longer design roads without giving careful consideration to the needs of bicyclists of all ages and skill levels.

4) Safe Streets for All

On May 10, 2022, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously endorsed the Safe Streets for All Program, a comprehensive initiative to address systemic transportation safety issues for people walking, biking, taking transit, and driving. Included in the recommendations is a call for roadway infrastructure changes to slow traffic on our community's streets. Unfortunately, the County has not yet dedicated staff or funding to begin executing the program. At the same time, Fairfax County experienced a troubling uptick in traffic-related pedestrian fatalities in 2022.

4a) Do you support the full implementation of the Safe Streets for All Program in Fairfax County, including changes to roadway design guidelines and an expanded automated speed enforcement program?

Yes No

4b) What proven traffic safety improvement policies, programs, and/or technologies would you like to see implemented in your district and throughout the County?

Given the lack of clarity around who has the legal and budgetary authority to make roadway safety improvements stemming from state ownership of County roads, what steps would you propose to ensure that these roadway safety improvements are implemented?

As Chairman of our Legislative Committee, I have actively worked in Richmond to secure greater local authority around road design and speed limits. I would like to see local authority to reduce speed limits in certain areas and the expansion of automated enforcement options.

5) Safe Routes to School

Trips to and from schools are among the best opportunities to reduce car trips in Fairfax County. A robust Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program can play a critical role in encouraging more families to walk and bicycle to school, which has been shown to increase confidence and sense of independence among children while also reducing pickup/dropoff vehicle congestion and associated carbon emissions. Unfortunately, the County's SRTS program includes just one dedicated staff position for a public school system that serves 185,000 students.

5a) Would you support expanding the Safe Routes to School program, including additional staff capacity, to get more kids to walk and bike to school?

Yes No

5b) What other policies or budget items will you pursue to upgrade transportation infrastructure so kids can safely walk and bike to school?

I would support dedicated state and local funding to make it safer and easier for children to walk or bike to schools in Fairfax County.

CLIMATE MITIGATION, RESILIENCE, AND GREEN SPACES

1) Reaching Carbon Neutrality by 2050

The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report made clear that tackling the climate crisis is **the** challenge of this century, and will interact with all others, from ecological to economic to social. Leaders who boldly act to reduce and prepare for climate impacts have the opportunity to truly preserve and create a better world for ourselves and our children. This starts with reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. The Community-wide Climate & Energy Action Plan (CECAP) established a goal of carbon neutrality for Fairfax County by 2050, with interim goals of 50% greenhouse gas emissions reductions by 2030 and 75% by 2040. To reach these goals, the County requires actionable implementation plans, effective management, robust accountability mechanisms, a clear communication strategy, consistent metrics and monitoring, and sufficient funding to address the current challenges. We have just seven years to reach the first 2030 goal.

1a) Are you committed to ensuring that Fairfax County complies with and achieves its greenhouse gas emission reduction goals by 2050?

Yes

No

1b) What specific policy actions and/or programs would you undertake as supervisor to accelerate and/or achieve the aggressive carbon reduction goals?

I have worked to improve our county building policy by making all new county buildings net-zero and ensuring that buildings designed in recent years either use all electric infrastructure or are wired and ready to be converted to electric infrastructure. I have also advocated that our CECAP [Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan] strategies be prioritized by gHg [greenhouse gas] emission potential so we can focus our immediate efforts on those strategies that will have the most impact.

As Chairman of our Legislative Committee, I advocated for the passage of the Green Bank enabling legislation and have been an active supporter of the work to establish the Fairfax Green Bank.

2) Climate Resilience

In 2022, Fairfax County adopted Resilient Fairfax, a roadmap to help residents and infrastructure adapt to an increasingly warmer and wetter climate. Ensuring our County is implementing the necessary measures (such as providing emergency relief hubs, planting

trees, and improving stormwater management) in the face of a changing climate is important, particularly for disadvantaged communities who are identified as the most vulnerable.

2a) Will you support the plan recommendations of Resilient Fairfax?

Yes No Partially

2b) How would you further fund and support equitable resilience investments to implement the Resilient Fairfax plan in communities most affected by climate impacts?

Moving forward, we will have to dedicate additional funds from our stormwater fee to address climate impacts. That will likely require an increase in the fee paid by property owners.

3) Climate Impacts of Land Use and Development

Every land use decision is an environmental decision. To meet both our climate and resilience goals, the County can take actions through the development process such as prioritizing compact development and land use patterns, which have a positive impact on reducing carbon emissions and on protecting current natural resources. To do this, we must ensure the implementation of energy efficient buildings (such as green buildings and the use of solar and other renewable energies), eliminate any building or development in Resource Protection Areas, reduce the amount of impermeable surfaces, and increase native tree canopy and natural landscaping.

3a) Are you committed to utilizing the development process to reduce carbon emissions and minimize environmental impacts on our natural resources?

Yes No

3b) How would you utilize the development process to achieve CECAP and Resilient Fairfax goals?

I have advocated for the adoption of modern building codes in Virginia and strengthening and adhering to our Comprehensive Plan Green Building policy by, for example, requiring that new buildings include solar panels and that they include EV [electric vehicle] chargers and wiring for additional EV chargers that will be needed in the near future.

4) Tree Canopy and Forest Management

Trees help mitigate climate impacts by sequestering carbon, mitigating heat island effects, and improving stream valley integrity, thus improving drinking water quality and minimizing flooding. The result is a healthier, more friendly, and more resilient urban habitat. CECAP calls for a minimum of 50% tree canopy coverage in every census block by 2050, prioritizing areas

of highest socioeconomic need first. Data from 2015 to 2018 shows that the County lost 2.6% of our tree canopy, which will make reaching these goals even more challenging. Relatedly, the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) owns nearly 10% of land in Fairfax County, including stream valleys and forested areas, yet faces significant budget challenges that impact its ability to manage and protect its natural resources.

4a) Are you committed to protecting and increasing Fairfax County's tree canopy?

Yes No

4b) Which actions would you take to protect and grow the County's tree canopy, particularly in areas with the lowest tree canopy coverage?

There is often a tension between tree preservation and the other goals -- housing, bicycle facilities, etc. -- highlighted by Fairfax Healthy Communities. But we can preserve tree canopy by moving away from road widening projects and focusing density of development in areas served by transit. We also need to aggressively address the threats to existing trees by funding programs to remove invasives.

FOOD SECURITY

1) Inclusive and Accessible Community Gardens

The Fairfax County Park Authority has 10 community gardens, but only one is near communities where the residents struggle to get enough to eat. Additionally, almost all of the gardens require a car to get to and have multi-year waiting lists.

1a) What County actions would you advocate for in order to increase residents' ability to grow their own food, particularly food-insecure residents?

We should work with FCPA [Fairfax County Park Authority] to expand community garden opportunities in equity emphasis areas.

2) Urban Agriculture

The pandemic showed how fragile local food supply systems are. However, County zoning rules can severely limit entrepreneurs who want to start commercial agricultural operations that would help build a more robust food production system locally. Fairfax County also lags behind its neighbors in providing incentives for would-be commercial food growers, who may be unable to finance the upfront technology and equipment needs or support an agricultural operation for the length of time it takes to become sustainable.

2a) What regulation changes or incentives would you endorse to facilitate innovative urban agriculture in Fairfax County?

I'm not aware of any regulatory barriers to urban agriculture in Fairfax County, but we should make a greater effort to market Fairfax as a place that welcomes urban agriculture.

3) Food Insecurity

The demand at local food distribution sites has not yet fallen back to pre-pandemic levels, likely due to inflation and employment insecurity in low-income neighborhoods. Yet federal programs for extra food as well as rent relief have ended, leaving many residents worse off than they were before the pandemic.

3a) Do you support additional County funding for food assistance to meet the current needs?

Yes

No

3b) What policies or programs would you support to make sure the lowest income families have access to food?

I have supported and will continue to support direct county funding for organizations like the Capital Area Food Bank that work to address food insecurity. I will also continue to support full funding of FCPS [Fairfax County Public Schools] requests to meet the needs of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch.

OTHER COMMENTS

Are there any other comments you would like to provide? (optional)

No response provided