

...

Paul Beran

FRANCONIA CANDIDATE | Republican | BeranGoodNews.com

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 cannot accept any provision that places high rise development in areas where:

- 1. Traffic capacity cannot support the increased volume that this will cause.**
- 2. Displacement of single-family homes loved by and cared for by generations of local tax-paying Fairfax citizens.**

I do not consider "inclusive" when, because of high rise development, we cause displacement or discomfort for the very taxpayers we pledge to serve. That is "exclusive" rather than "inclusive."

2) Housing Goals

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC), 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?

New housing development only in depressed or neglected areas. A balance of single family and multi-family units are needed. The American Dream WILL NOT DIE under my watch!

Single family homes are preferred by the wealthier class. We must not drive this higher tax bracket base out of our county. Without them, we will diminish our tax base rather than increase it.

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?

It is true. We need to make housing affordable in our county. But, the way to do that is to LOWER PROPERTY TAXES. In order to accomplish this, we need to reduce the budget across the board, and put common sense back into our spending.

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?

Tax credits for lower income households on an ascending scale based on the years of ownership. Our citizens should feel welcome in their homes for as long as they wish to live here, and never feel that government is pushing them out.

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?

The board should welcome and consider all developer proposals. But, never at the expense or displacement if valued.

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?

First time home buyers tax credit, veteran benefits extended, possibly others.

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?

Funding for reliable transportation is unavoidable. But, a close watch on services provided versus consumer demand needs to be maintained so taxpayers are not funding empty buses.

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 have no problem supporting programs that are needed by the community, and widely used. This includes our obligation to maintain our roadways.

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?

First, biking isn't for everyone. Nor is our climate conducive to year-round use. Our first priority is to maintain our roadways for public safety and general use. Bicycle lanes are nice, but not to the exclusion of automobile and truck traffic.

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?

Speed traps are essential. They also tend to be self-funding. Digital speed indicators are also needed in habitually ignored areas.

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?

Our education system is already well funded. This should be a requirement upon them in order to maintain their funding level.

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 am personally not convinced that we can effectively mitigate carbon emissions in this manner. I will need to see more evidence that any amount of spending will make any difference.

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?

Only guidelines can be provided, with new requirements for new construction. Minimal funding is required for these steps to be implemented.

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?

Explained earlier.

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?

Incentives work great here, also. "Plant a tree" weekends can be scheduled annually or semi-annually with participating merchants offering specials for this event.

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?

A coalition of county and private sector task group can be formed to create incentives, assistance and possibly grants to start community farming. This works well in other counties. Why not Fairfax?

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?

Through the coalition mentioned in my previous answer. Backyard gardens, Rooftop and deck gardens, and common area gardens can be incentivized for the short term. Long term plans can include a govt/private sector partnership to provide for the masses, locally.

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?

Coalition of church, social and govt agencies need to provide assistance in this area. It is wrong for local taxpayers to be forced to fund this extent of general assistance long term as it denies funding for other needed programs. Short term needs after a local emergency is the exception.

OTHER COMMENTS

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

I tend to lean conservative in most matters. I will not hesitate to make changes quickly when absolutely necessary. But for long term decisions, I will require additional information and proof before making any decision, particularly as it may impact my constituency.