

# 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 future 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
- Align and integrate existing and emerging countywide work
- Provide a tool to focus and prioritize shorter-term countywide initiatives
- Communicate progress on achieving measurable outcomes on behalf of the community

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, Health, 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 plan, along with background documents and informational videos translated into multiple languages, is 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

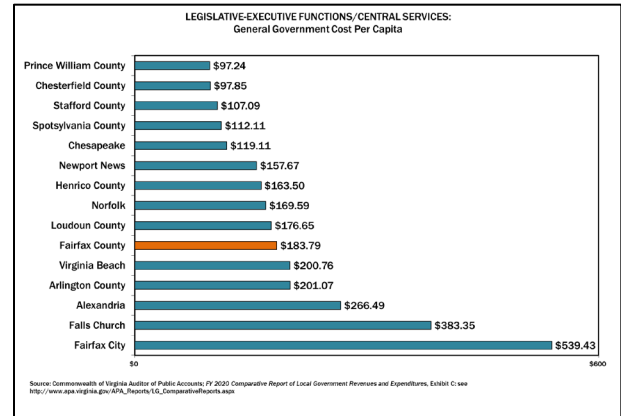
Since 1997, Fairfax County has used performance measurement to gain insight into, and make judgments about, the effectiveness and efficiency of its programs, processes, and employees. While performance measures do not in and of themselves produce higher levels of effectiveness, efficiency, and quality, 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, 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 2023 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. In prior years, the County has participated in the International City/County Management Association's (ICMA) benchmarking effort to find comparable data annually



for several service areas. Due to the decline in participation amongst comparable jurisdictions, and format changes within the data set, this data is not included for FY 2023. In service areas that are not covered by ICMA's effort, agencies rely on various sources of comparative data prepared by the state, professional associations, and/or nonprofit/research organizations. It is anticipated each year that benchmarking presentations will be enhanced based on the availability of information.

## 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 12.6 percent of current employees will be eligible for retirement by the end of FY 2022 and over 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 Fund, 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 2023 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 Indicators:** The Key County Indicator presentation provides several performance measurement indicators for each Vision Element. The presentation gives the reader a high-level perspective on how the County is doing as a whole to reach its service vision. The presentation of Key County Indicators will continue to be refined to ensure that the measures best represent the needs of the community. A detailed presentation and discussion of the Key County Indicators is included following this discussion on the next page.

- ▶ **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 37<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.

### Vision Elements

The current strategic framework sets a direction for the organization through seven "Vision Elements" for the County which describe what success will look like as a result of the County's efforts to protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods, and diverse communities of Fairfax County. Now that the new 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. These changes will be incorporated in future budget volumes.



**Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities:** The needs of a diverse and growing community are met through innovative public and private services, community partnerships and volunteer opportunities. As a result, residents feel safe and secure, capable of accessing the range of services and opportunities they need and are willing and able to give back to their community.



**Building Livable Spaces:** Together, we encourage distinctive "built environments" that create a sense of place, reflect the character, history, and natural environment of the community, and take a variety of forms – from identifiable neighborhoods, to main streets, to town centers. As a result, people throughout the community feel they have unique and desirable places to live, work, shop, play, and connect with others.



**Connecting People and Places:** Transportation, technology, and information effectively and efficiently connect people and ideas. As a result, people feel a part of their community and have the ability to access places and resources in a timely, safe, and convenient manner.



**Maintaining Healthy Economies:** Investments in the workforce, jobs, and community infrastructure and institutions support a diverse and thriving economy. As a result, individuals are able to meet their needs and have the opportunity to grow and develop their talent and income according to their potential.



**Practicing Environmental Stewardship:** Local government, industry and residents seek ways to use all resources wisely and to protect and enhance the County's natural environment and open space. As a result, residents feel good about their quality of life and embrace environmental stewardship as a personal and shared responsibility.



**Creating a Culture of Engagement:** Individuals enhance community life by participating in and supporting civic groups, discussion groups, public-private partnerships, and other activities that seek to understand and address community needs and opportunities. As a result, residents feel that they can make a difference and work in partnership with others to understand and address pressing public issues.



**Exercising Corporate Stewardship:** Fairfax County government is accessible, responsible, and accountable. As a result, actions are responsive, providing superior customer service and reflecting sound management of County resources and assets.

## Key County Indicators

The Key County Indicator presentation communicates the County's progress on each of the Vision Elements through key measures. The Indicators were compiled by a diverse team of Fairfax County senior management and agency staff through a series of meetings and workshops. Indicators were chosen if they are reliable and accurate, represent a wide array of County services, and provide a strong measure of how the County is performing in support of each Vision Element. The County also compiles Benchmarking data, providing a high-level picture of how Fairfax County is performing compared to other jurisdictions of its size. Benchmarking data is presented within the program area summaries in budget Volumes 1 and 2.

The following presentation lists the Key County Indicators for each of the Vision Elements, provides actual data from FY 2019, FY 2020, and FY 2021, and includes a discussion of how the Indicators relate to their respective Vision Elements. In addition, the Corporate Stewardship Vision Element includes FY 2022 and FY 2023 estimates in order to present data related to the current budget. For some indicators, FY 2020 is the most recent year in which data are available, and FY 2021 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.

### Key County Indicators

#### How is Fairfax County performing on its seven Vision Elements?

- ✓ Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities
- ✓ Practicing Environmental Stewardship
- ✓ Building Livable Spaces
- ✓ Maintaining Healthy Economies
- ✓ Connecting People and Places
- ✓ Creating a Culture of Engagement
- ✓ Exercising Corporate Stewardship



## Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities

The needs of a diverse and growing community are met through innovative public and private services, community partnerships and volunteer opportunities. As a result, residents feel safe and secure, capable of accessing the range of services and opportunities they need and are willing and able to give back to their community.



Key County Indicators	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual
Ratio of Crimes Against Persons Offenses to 100,000 County Population (Calendar Year)	714.5	703.2	725.4
Clearance rate of Crimes Against Persons Offenses (Calendar Year) <sup>1</sup>	50.9%	46.3%	45.7%
Percent of time Advanced Life Support (ALS) transport units on scene within 9 minutes	87.5%	90.8%	89.0%
Fire suppression response rate for engine company within 5 minutes, 20 seconds	50.9%	48.9%	55.2%
Percent of low birth weight babies (under 5 lbs 8 oz) <sup>2</sup>	NA	6.7%	NA
Immunizations: completion rates for 2 year olds	67%	67%	64%
Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) On-Time Graduation Rate	91.3%	93.0%	94.6%
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>3</sup>	95%	NA	NA
Percent of food service establishments found to be in compliance, at the completion of the inspection cycle, with control measures that reduce the occurrence of foodborne illness <sup>4</sup>	97%	NA	NA

<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.

<sup>2</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.

<sup>3</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.

<sup>4</sup> The calculation of this measure is based on the performance of in-person inspections of food service establishments. Only virtual inspections with a survey about compliance with Executive Orders were conducted in late FY 2020 and FY 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The FY 2020 Actuals for the measures cannot be accurately reported.

Fairfax County is one of the nation's safest jurisdictions in which to live and work. In CY 2021, the Fairfax County **ratio of 725.4 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, 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 55.2 percent of the time in FY 2021. **Advanced Life Support transport units arrived on the scene within 9 minutes** 89.0 percent of the time in FY 2021.

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 2021 immunization completion rate of 64 percent for two-year-olds was slightly lower than FY 2020 possibly due to the impact of reduced clinic services and/or fear of COVID-19 exposure in the health care setting. 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.

Fairfax County also 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 2021 **Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) On-Time Graduation rate** of 94.6 percent.

The County continues to be successful in **caring for older adults and persons with disabilities by helping them stay in their homes**. Customer satisfaction surveys for the Home Delivered Meals and Congregate Meals programs were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic and accurate data for FY 2020 and FY 2021 is not available. However, it should be noted that the Home Delivered Meals program provided 25.0 percent more meals in FY 2021 as more older adults self-quarantined and the Congregate meals program shifted to a home delivery model offering seven meals per week, up from the normal five when centers were open. Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) satisfaction was 100 percent in FY 2020 based on data collected until centers were closed on March 13, 2020, due to the pandemic. All ADHC centers reopened in September 2021.

In FY 2016, the Fairfax County Health Department (FCHD) implemented a new process to categorize food establishments and conduct inspections on a risk and performance-based frequency. Depending on its assigned risk category, food establishments were inspected one, two, or three times. In FY 2019, the Environmental Health Service implemented a more defined process for screening environmental complaints to determine the best means to respond, which can require interagency coordination and referral. Based on the compliance history of each food establishment, FCHD provided tailored services (e.g., inspection, onsite training, and risk control plan) to help the establishment achieve long-term compliance with the regulations. Due to the health and safety risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, only virtual training inspections with a survey about compliance with Executive Orders and phased reopening guidelines for businesses were conducted until late FY 2021 and, as a result, the measure cannot be reported accurately. In late FY 2021, virtual training inspections transitioned to in-person inspections to better address risk factors that could lead to disease in regulated establishments and to educate employees on public health interventions that contribute to a healthy and safe community.



## Building Livable Spaces

Together, we encourage distinctive “built environments” that create a sense of place, reflect the character, history, and natural environment of the community, and take a variety of forms – from identifiable neighborhoods, to main streets, to town centers. As a result, people throughout the community feel they have unique and desirable places to live, work, shop, play, and connect with others.

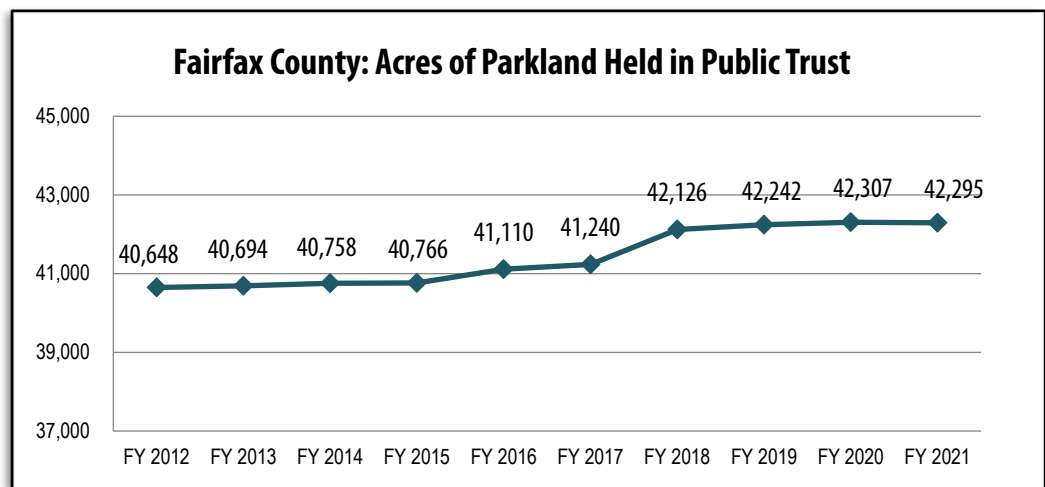


Key County Indicators	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual
Acres of parkland held in public trust	42,242	42,307	42,295
Miles of trails and sidewalks maintained by the County	672	673	675
Annual number of visitations to libraries, park facilities and recreation and community centers	10,412,274	7,807,849	7,205,278
Value of construction authorized on existing residential units <sup>1</sup>	\$147,982,001	\$132,263,769	\$259,405,737
Annual percent of new dwelling units within business or transit centers as measured by zoning approvals	99%	98%	98%
Percent of people in the labor force who both live and work in Fairfax County	55.9%	55.8%	55.8%
Number of affordable rental senior housing units <sup>2</sup>	2,672	2,701	2,707

<sup>1</sup> The increase reported in the FY 2021 value of construction authorized on existing residential units is partially due to changes in the reporting methodology that allow for greater accuracy in reporting.

<sup>2</sup> The FY 2019, FY 2020, and FY 2021 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).

Many of the indicators above capture some aspect of quality of life for Fairfax County residents and focus on the sustainability of neighborhoods and the community. 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. This indicator measures 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 2021, there was a decrease in acres due to revised calculations related to the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust. This adjustment brought the FY 2021 total acreage to 42,295.



In addition, 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 2021, DPWES maintained 675 miles of trails and sidewalks. In addition to miles maintained by the County, approximately 1,711 miles are maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and approximately 334 miles are contained within County parks. In addition, approximately 1,133 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.

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 include 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 Lee 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 2021, the number of visits to all libraries, parks and recreation facilities decreased slightly to 7,205,278.

Resident investment in their own residences reflects the perception of their neighborhood as a "livable community." The **value of construction authorized on existing residential units** in FY 2021 increased 96 percent over FY 2020. This is partially due to changes in the reporting methodology that allow for greater accuracy of the data. In addition, growth continues to trend upwards despite the pandemic as the demand for residential construction permits continues to rise. The value of construction in FY 2022 is expected to increase compared to FY 2021.

The measure for the **percent of dwelling units within business or transit centers as measured by zoning approvals** provides a sense of the quality of built environments in the County and the County's annual success in promoting mixed use development. The Comprehensive Plan encourages built environments suitable for work, shopping, and leisure activities. The County encourages Business Centers to include additional residential development to facilitate an appropriate mix of uses. In FY 2021, 98 percent or 1,929 dwelling units were approved within business or transit centers throughout the County.

The **percentage of employed people who both live and work in Fairfax County** is currently above 55 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).

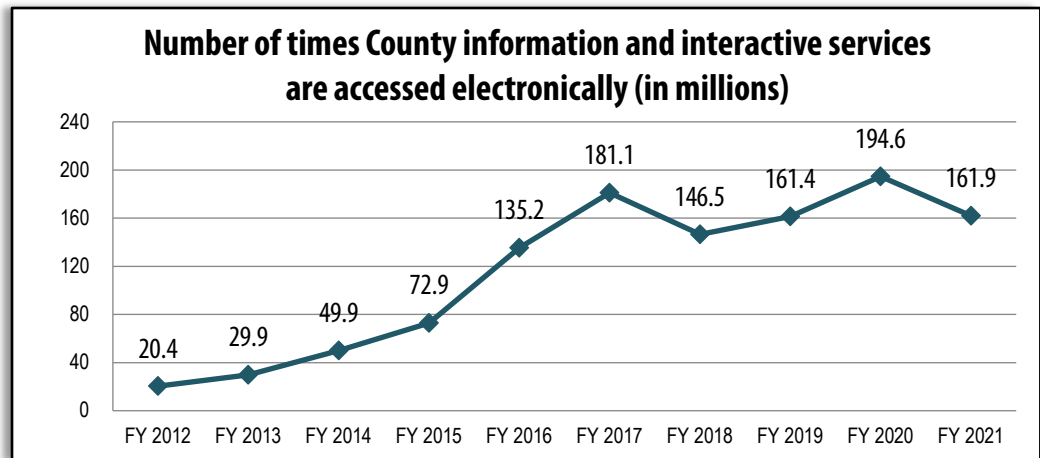
## Connecting People and Places



Transportation, technology, and information effectively and efficiently connect people and ideas. As a result, people feel a part of their community and have the ability to access places and resources in a timely, safe and convenient manner.

Key County Indicators	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual
Number of times County information and interactive services are accessed electronically (millions)	161.4	194.6	161.9
Library materials circulation per capita	9.3	7.5	8.4
Percent of library circulation represented by materials in languages other than English	1.3%	0.8%	0.8%
Percent change in transit passengers (Metrobus and Metrorail)	(4.6%)	(5.3%)	(76.4%)

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 is especially important during 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 the numbers reflect, these social platforms were crucial to connect the community with COVID-19 information for the last two years. These 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 82 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 2021 measure of 161.9 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).



Fairfax County Public Library worked through a second challenging year due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. In response to changing state and CDC guidelines, the library Just 26 days of 'new normal' service was available in FY 2021 which adversely impacted the library's performance metrics. Most of the year, library service was provided at a limited 'Express' level with in-person visits limited to just 30 minutes. The remainder of the year the library provided only curbside and virtual services.

Even with the disruptions to service, electronic use of resources saw significant increases compared to FY 2020: database usage increased 16 percent; eBook circulation increased 12 percent; eAudiobook circulation increased 21 percent; eMagazine circulation increased 61 percent. Total eCirculation increased 1 percent and now accounts for 27 percent of circulation of all materials.

During the limited service levels necessitated by increased infection rates, library staff met challenges posed by the pandemic. Staff members created online programming to take the place of in-person events. Digital programming continued to offer library users services through a variety of platforms for preschoolers, school age children, and adults. Early literacy programming attendance increased 138 percent.

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 needed internet access for work or educational purposes, all Fairfax County Public Library branches expanded hours of WiFi availability in library parking lots where patrons quickly found them and used the service regularly. FCPL cardholders were also able to checkout Chromebooks for use at home from five regional branches participating in a pilot program. Library users were also able to seek guidance in conducting research, support using library databases, and information services via text. Library staff answer texts 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 was 8.4 in FY 2021. 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 totaled 1,847,512 in FY 2021. 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 2020, 39.3 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 million items by Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL) in FY 2021, the 0.8 percent reported for the circulation of non-English materials represents a significant number of materials being used by a multi-language population.

Another important aspect of connecting people and places is actually moving them from one place to another. 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 a decrease of 76.4 percent in Fairfax County transit passengers (Metrorail, Metrobus) in FY 2021, down from 27.9 million in FY 2020 to 6.6 million in FY 2021. The decline is attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic, as health and safety guidelines recommended avoiding congregating in indoor spaces as well as reduced frequency and operating hours for both rail and bus service. Fairfax Connector was also similarly affected by the pandemic, with a 32.7 percent decline in ridership in FY 2021 compared with FY 2020. Both Connector and Metro have resumed normal service, in August 2020 and January 2021 respectively, once health and safety restrictions had been lifted but ridership remains significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels. FY 2022 ridership is anticipated to be above the FY 2021 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 2022, 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.

While transportation funding and improvements has historically been primarily a state function, the County also has supported a large portion of local transportation projects in an effort to reduce congestion and increase safety. The County continues to broaden its effort to improve roadways, enhance pedestrian mobility, and support mass transit through funding available from the 2014 Transportation Bond Referendum and from the commercial and industrial real estate tax for transportation. This tax was first adopted by the Board of Supervisors in FY 2009, pursuant to the General Assembly's passage of the Transportation Funding and Reform Act of 2007 (HB 3202). Commercial and Industrial (C&I) real estate tax revenue is posted to Fund 40010, County and Regional Transportation Projects, and then a portion is transferred to the County Transit Systems budget. In FY 2023, this amount totals \$38.5 million. Since FY 2014, the County has received regional revenues dedicated to transportation as a result of the State Transportation funding plan approved during the 2013 Session by the General Assembly (HB 2313). During the 2018 Virginia General Assembly session, a bill was passed (HB 1539/SB 856) to support Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) capital funding requirements. As a result of the Metro funding bill, Grantors and Transient Occupancy Tax revenues in HB 2313 have been redirected to fund Metro Capital needs. In FY 2023, Fairfax County can reasonably expect to benefit from approximately \$151.5 million in regional funds for transportation improvements. Fund 40010, County and Regional

Transportation Projects, provides funding and support for the implementation of projects and services funded with the State Transportation funding plan (HB 2313) and the C&I tax.

## Maintaining Healthy Economies



Investments in the work force, jobs, and community infrastructure and institutions support a diverse and thriving economy. As a result, individuals are able to meet their needs and have the opportunity to grow and develop their talent and income according to their potential.

Key County Indicators	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual
Total employment (Total All Industries, All Establishment Sizes, equaling the total number of jobs in Fairfax County)	630,592	575,788	611,166
Growth rate	1.6%	(8.7%)	6.1%
Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)	2.2%	5.8%	3.5%
Commercial/Industrial percent of total Real Estate Assessment Base	19.43%	19.66%	19.72%
Percent change in Gross County Product (adjusted for inflation)	3.0%	(2.6%)	3.0%
Percent of persons living below the federal poverty level (Calendar Year) <sup>1</sup>	5.9%	6.0%	NA
Percent of homeowners that pay 30.0 percent or more of household income on housing (Calendar Year) <sup>1</sup>	26.1%	24.9%	NA
Percent of renters that pay 30.0 percent or more of household income on rent (Calendar Year) <sup>1</sup>	46.1%	45.3%	NA
Direct (excludes sublet space) office space vacancy rate (Calendar Year)	13.9%	14.6%	16.0%

<sup>1</sup> The source of the data for this measure is the U.S. Census Bureau's 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.

Maintaining a healthy economy is critical to the sustainability of any community. In addition, many jurisdictions have learned that current fiscal health does not guarantee future success. Performance in this area affects how well the County can respond to the other six Vision Elements. The above nine indicators shown for the Healthy Economies Vision Element were selected because they are perceived as providing the greatest proxy power for gauging the overall health of Fairfax County's economy.

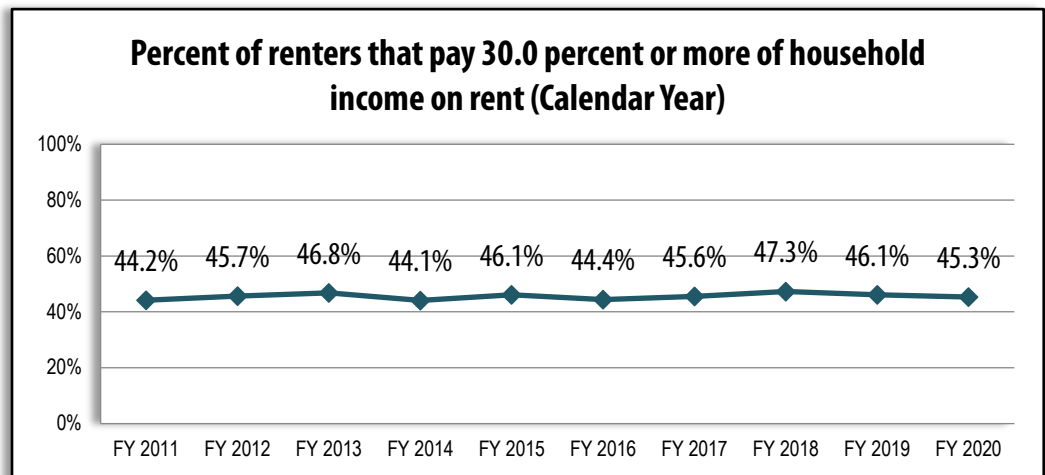
**Total employment** illustrates the magnitude of Fairfax County's jobs base. In FY 2021, the number of jobs increased as the County's economy reopened after the pandemic-related closures. In June 2021, employment was 6.1 percent above the June 2020 level, though still well below the pre-pandemic level. While related to the number of jobs, the **unemployment rate** is also included because it shows the proportion of the County's population out of work. The County's unemployment rate fell to 3.5 percent in 2021, down from 5.8 percent in 2020.



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 and FY 2023. The Commercial/Industrial percentage of the County's FY 2022 Real Estate Tax base fell to 18.17 percent, and further fell to 17.00 percent in FY 2023, 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.

**Gross County Product (GCP)** is an overall measure of the County's economic performance. The percentage change in the GCP indicates whether the economy is expanding or contracting. Based on estimates from IHS Markit, Gross County Product (GCP), adjusted for inflation, increased 3.0 percent in 2021 after decreasing 2.6 percent in 2020.

While it was recognized that **percent of persons living below the federal poverty line** is an imperfect measure due to the unrealistic level set by the federal government, i.e., \$25,750 for a family of four, it is a statistic that is regularly collected and presented in such a way that it can be compared to other jurisdictions, as well as tracked over time to determine improvement. In relative terms, Fairfax County's 6.0 percent poverty rate in FY 2020 is better than most, yet it still translates to over 68,000 persons living below the federal poverty level. *Note: Census data are reported based upon the calendar year (CY) 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.*



The next two measures, **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 2020, 24.9 percent of homeowners paid 30 percent or more of their household income on housing, while a substantially greater number of renters, 45.3 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.)*

Finally, 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 14.6 percent in 2020 to 16.0 percent as of year-end 2021. Including sublet space, the overall office vacancy rate as of year-end 2021 was 17.0 percent, an increase from the 15.5 percent recorded as of year-end 2020. The amount of empty office space stood at approximately 20.3 million square feet. Many industry experts view 2022 as the beginning of the office market recovery.

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.

## Practicing Environmental Stewardship



Local government, industry and residents seek ways to use all resources wisely and to protect and enhance the County's natural environment and open space. As a result, residents feel good about their quality of life and embrace environmental stewardship as a personal and shared responsibility.

Key County Indicators	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual
Unhealthy Air Days as reported by Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (Calendar Year)	10	2	8
Overall Level of Stream Quality as a weighted index of overall watershed/ stream conditions on a scale of 5 (Excellent) to 1 (Very Poor)	2.4	2.6	2.5
Percent of Tree Coverage in County	54%	54%	54%
Number of homes that could be powered as a result of County alternative power initiatives	65,000	64,000	64,416
Municipal Solid Waste Recycled as a percentage of the waste generated within the County (Calendar Year)	47.0%	49.6%	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, in FY 2021, the County engaged in two major climate planning initiatives, the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) and Resilient Fairfax, to address greenhouse gas emissions and the impacts of climate change on the County. 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 FY 2021, the County engaged in efforts to update its Operational Energy Strategy, a policy originally adopted in 2018 to reduce overall energy demand, costs and consumption and promote an energy conscious culture in the County workplace. 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, including the 14 electric vehicles purchased in FY 2021, 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 2021 was 8, up from 2 in calendar year 2020, as reported by Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC). The low number of unhealthy air days in 2020 was attributed in part to COVID-19 related travel restrictions; these travel restrictions have since been lifted. The County continues to work with MWCOC and the Clean Air Partners, a volunteer, non-profit organization chartered by the MWCOC, 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 18.1 miles of streams have been restored countywide since July 1, 2009.

Since 2004, a stratified random selection procedure has been used to identify monitoring sites used 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 seventeen 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 2021, the SQI declined slightly from the previous year (2.6) to 2.5.

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 2020, the equivalent number of homes powered by alternatively generated electrical energy was 64,000 homes, according to Covanta Fairfax. When comparing with prior years, it should be noted that the EfW was shutdown with no electric generation from February 2017 through December 2017 due to a catastrophic fire that occurred in February 2017. EfW operation resumed in January 2018, so FY 2017 reported electric generation represents seven months of operation and FY 2018 reported electric generation represents six months of operation. 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 2019, that use was the equivalent of 450,000 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 May 2015. 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. 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 2021 will be included in the FY 2023 Adopted Budget document. In 2020, 49.6 percent of municipal solid waste was recycled, a slightly higher percentage than in 2019 years. 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 130,000 pounds of food waste.

## Creating a Culture of Engagement



Individuals enhance community life by participating in and supporting civic groups, discussion groups, public-private partnerships, and other activities that seek to understand and address community needs and opportunities. As a result, residents feel that they can make a difference and work in partnership with others to understand and address pressing public issues.

Key County Indicators	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual
Volunteerism for Public Health and Community Improvement (Medical Reserve Corps and Volunteer Fairfax)	15,472	15,191	13,655
Volunteer hours leveraged by the Consolidated Community Funding Pool	440,902	377,750	276,011
Total Volunteer Hours Reported in the Volunteer Management System (VMS)	1,839,685	930,125	987,699
Residents completing educational programs about local government (includes Citizens Police Academy and Fairfax County Youth Leadership Program)	156	30	95
Percent of registered voters who voted in general and special elections	65.8%	44.3%	79.4%
Percent of Park Authority, Fairfax County Public Schools, and Community and Recreation Services athletic fields adopted by community groups	13.8%	14.4%	14.5%

Volunteerism provides a measure of community engagement and is strongly evident across a wide range of volunteer activities, including Public Health and Community Improvement in the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Volunteer Fairfax, volunteer programs in the Police Department, Fire and Rescue and Sheriff’s Office, the Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) with the Office of Emergency Management, Meals on Wheels, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, support for victims of domestic and sexual violence, mentoring, tutoring and parent education classes, advocacy for residents of assisted living and nursing facilities, teaching at community centers, parks, and libraries, and efforts to protect and enhance natural resources. Fairfax County benefits greatly from citizens who are knowledgeable about and actively involved in community programs and initiatives.



Nationally, **the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)** consists of over 200,000 volunteers organized into 800 individual units, whose purpose is to build strong, healthy, and prepared communities. At the local level, 2,144 active medical and non-medical volunteers serve in the Fairfax MRC. Volunteers participate in trainings, exercises, and emergency response operations to augment local resources that serve Fairfax residents prior to, during, and after a public health emergency. Active MRC volunteers also support the daily operations of the Health Department. To be classified as an “active” MRC volunteer, individuals must complete three mandatory trainings (total time commitment is about 10 hours) – MRC orientation, Introduction to the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS) in their first year with the program. In addition, they must complete a background check and participate in at least one activity in subsequent years to maintain “active” status.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 public health crisis, more than 3,000 volunteers have signed up to join the program. MRC volunteers have been critical in supporting COVID-19 activities in the county. Volunteers have worked vaccination clinics, community testing events, community outreach efforts, logistical support, and supported isolation and quarantine efforts. Volunteers have also provided medical surge support in long term care facilities and worked Safety Net clinics. They even assisted voters at the polls by acting as infection prevention ambassadors.

As 2020 ended, Fairfax MRC launched its latest mission to lead the way in COVID-19 vaccinations with over 400 approved vaccinators that have consistently volunteered to vaccinate our community. Non-medical volunteers work at vaccination sites throughout the Fairfax Health District, including the Fairfax County Government Center, Health Department clinics, and Equity Clinics as language interpreters, flow controllers, greeters, site assistants, post vaccination staff, and logistics assistants.

During FY 2021, there were 10 training and exercise opportunities provided to Fairfax MRC volunteers for a total of 12,608 training hours. Training opportunities included Youth Mental Health Training, CPR and BLS for Healthcare Providers Training, Mass Vaccination Training, N-95 Train the Trainer, Revive, COVID-19 Vaccination Training, and online MRC Orientations.

In addition, Fairfax MRC volunteers contributed 53,515 deployment hours in support of COVID-19 response operations for a total value of \$1,559,427. Immediate efforts for FY 2022 include continuing to integrate MRC volunteers in COVID-19 response operations, as well as continuing to support the other ongoing public health needs in our communities. Future efforts will focus on enhancing volunteer skills and capabilities by increasing the number of volunteers that have completed the required training, providing more emergency preparedness and response exercises and real-world opportunities as well as routine public health and outreach activities to engage and retain volunteers, and diversifying the program to better represent the Fairfax community. The Fairfax MRC will continue to prepare volunteers to support the Fairfax County Health Department in responding to public health emergencies and other natural and man-made emergencies.

**Volunteer Fairfax** is a private, nonprofit corporation created in 1974 to promote volunteerism and mobilize people and other resources to meet regional community needs. Through a network of over 650 nonprofit agencies, Volunteer Fairfax connects individuals, youth, seniors, families, and corporations to volunteer opportunities, honors volunteers for their hard work and accomplishments, and educates the nonprofit sector on best practices in volunteer and nonprofit management. Volunteer Fairfax tracks the types and degrees of need in Fairfax County communities in order to best serve the population; current work focuses heavily COVID-19 relief and recovery, as well as supporting the Afghan resettlement initiative. Other areas of focus include food security, affordable housing counseling, aging in place for seniors, mental health, support for persons with disabilities, educational equity, and One Fairfax.

To make volunteering easy and accessible for all who wish to serve, Volunteer Fairfax uses an easy-to-use online database that provides immediate information and referral to individuals, civic groups, and corporations. People of all ages can access between 150 and 300 active volunteer opportunities by searching by mission type and geographic location as well as requested skills.

Volunteer Fairfax is also active in disaster preparedness and response. Activated March 16, 2020, for COVID-19 response efforts through the entirety of FY 2021, Volunteer Fairfax has worked diligently with the Fairfax County Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS) and other partners in the community to support needs via the Volunteer and Donations Management Annexes under the County Emergency Operations Plan. Volunteer Fairfax's leadership role in maintaining the Annexes further positioned it as the lead agency for nongovernment volunteer and donation resources within Fairfax County before, during, and after emergency situations. Activities ranged from querying the nonprofit sector for needs during this time to promoting opportunities to the public and private sectors. Volunteer Fairfax sourced donated warehouse space to manage and coordinate donations to DEMS, Neighborhood & Community Services (NCS), and the nonprofit sector. Support ranged from collecting and warehousing food and cleaning supplies, as well as PPE for County employees and vulnerable populations identified by the Health Department and nonprofit and faith sectors.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the number of volunteers Volunteer Fairfax has been able to send out into the community, but it has not hampered their impact on the residents of Fairfax County. In FY 2021, Volunteer Fairfax engaged 9,971 individuals who contributed 30,606 hours of volunteer time. Volunteer Fairfax also helps to build capacity within the sector by offering monthly virtual workshops and roundtables to bring volunteer coordinators together to discuss and share best practices as the landscape of engaging volunteers and meeting needs has changed. Volunteer Fairfax's key pandemic initiatives included organizing and collecting 53,146 homemade masks for adults and children. During the Martin Luther King Jr. Weekend of Service, individual and family volunteers made 10,000 valentines for Inova frontline healthcare providers. Prior to the end of their fiscal year on June 30, 2021, 427 volunteers logged 7,047 hours at the Stonebridge vaccination clinic and other mobile vaccine units deployed in underserved neighborhoods. Volunteer Fairfax is one of 250 local volunteer centers affiliated with the national Points of Light.

Volunteerism not only reflects a broad-based level of engagement with diverse organizations and residents throughout Fairfax County, but also greatly benefits County residents through the receipt of expertise and assistance at minimal cost to the County. As indicated by the number of volunteer hours garnered by the Consolidated Community Funding Pool (CCFP), there is a strong nucleus and core of invested volunteers who participate in vital community programs, and they make a difference in the community. The current COVID-19 public health crisis resulted in a 27 percent decrease in the number of volunteer hours over the previous fiscal year due to social distancing guidelines mandated by the Centers for Disease Control. As community-based organizations pivoted services to online platforms, the need for volunteer participants contributing hours at physical locations diminished in keeping with the health and safety measures for both clients and volunteers.

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 answers 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 90% of volunteers feel more connected to their community and 98% feel they made a difference and would recommend volunteers to others.

In FY 2021 **volunteers recorded 987,699 hours of service** which is a value of \$28,781,549 to the county based on data captured in VMS. During the majority of FY 2021, county volunteer programs ceased operations or were limiting volunteer service opportunities in order to comply with CDC restrictions on gathering in groups and social distancing restrictions, which resulted in a significant decline in volunteer service. Once vaccinations were available, volunteers were recruited to assist with vaccination centers around the county. VMS was utilized to recruit multi-lingual volunteers to help with translation of information and outreach to various communities in the county. Many of the volunteer programs developed virtual services to replace in-person assistance – mentoring, tutoring, social visiting, and program presentations over video chat. Outdoor volunteer activities have returned to pre-COVID levels while following social distancing protocols. Where possible, volunteer activities are returning to in-person with health and safety protocols in place.

In addition to its many volunteer opportunities, Fairfax County has 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 2021, 65 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 and summer internships were not provided to the students in 2021. The Program has continued virtually; however, internships in the future will be dependent on public health conditions.

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 2020 General Election** for federal offices (FY 2021) was 79.4 percent; the increase in voter turnout is typical for the presidential election cycle compared to the preceding state and local election cycle. The County's 44.3 percent turnout represents 279,252 citizens who voted at the polls on Election Day or cast absentee ballots.

Another aspect of an engaged community is the extent to which residents take advantage of opportunities to improve their physical surroundings and to maintain the facilities they use. Community groups have adopted 14.5 percent of athletic fields. In FY 2017 and in FY 2018, **the share of athletic fields adopted by community groups** included fields adopted by the Fairfax County Public Schools Friends of Fields and Gyms. This program was discontinued for FY 2019 and fields previously supported through this program are no longer included for FY 2019. 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.

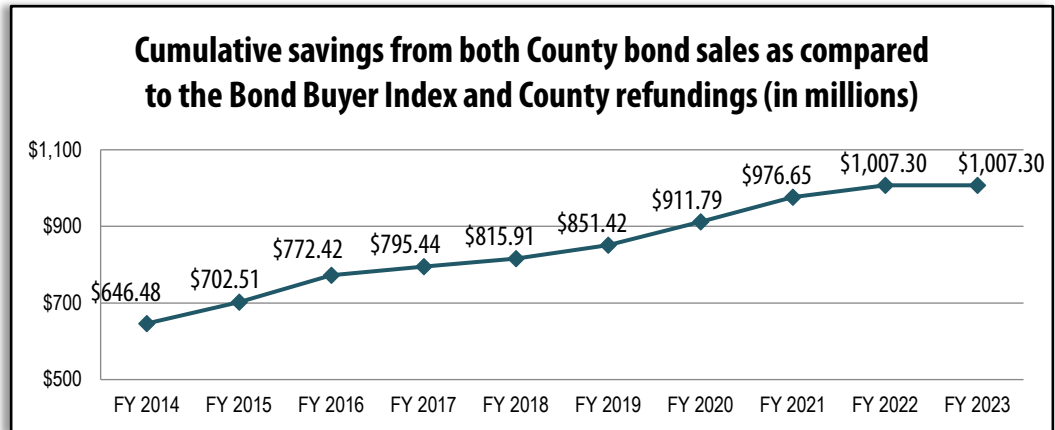
## Exercising Corporate Stewardship

Fairfax County government is accessible, responsible, and accountable. As a result, actions are responsive, providing superior customer service and reflecting sound management of County resources and assets. Estimates for FY 2022 and for FY 2023 are provided for this element to allow comparison with prior years and show trends.



Key County Indicators	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate
Average tax collection rate for Real Estate Taxes, Personal Property Taxes and Business, Professional, and Occupational License Taxes	99.68%	99.57%	99.44%	99.29%	99.39%
County direct expenditures per capita	\$1,338	\$1,381	\$1,408	\$1,574	\$1,465
Percent of household income spent on residential Real Estate Tax	4.92%	5.04%	5.08%	5.05%	5.35%
County (merit regular) positions per 1,000 citizens	10.98	11.27	11.34	11.49	11.40
Number of consecutive years receipt of highest possible bond rating from major rating agencies (Aaa/AAA/AAA)	41	42	43	44	45
Cumulative savings from both County bond sales as compared to the Bond Buyer Index and County refundings (in millions)	\$851.42	\$911.79	\$976.65	\$1,007.30	\$1,007.30
Number of consecutive years receipt of unqualified audit	38	39	40	41	42

The Corporate Stewardship Vision Element is intended to demonstrate the level of effort and success that the County has in responsibly and effectively managing the public resources allocated to it. 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**”). Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Finance was able to complete the Annual Comprehensive Annual Report in a timely manner while working remotely and coordinating electronic submission of work with other agencies with the external auditors. The FY 2021 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report received an unmodified opinion from the County’s audit firm.



The Board of Supervisors adopted the *Ten Principles of Sound Financial Management* on October 22, 1975, to ensure prudent and responsible allocation of County resources. These principles, which are reviewed, revised and updated as needed to keep County policy and practice current, have resulted in the County receiving and maintaining a Aaa bond rating from Moody's Investors Service since 1975, AAA from Standard and Poor's Corporation since 1978 and AAA from Fitch Investors Services since 1997. Maintenance of the highest rating from the major rating agencies has resulted in significant flexibility for the County in managing financial resources generating **cumulative savings from County bond sales and refundings** of \$1,007.30 million since 1978. This savings was achieved as a result of the strength of County credit compared to other highly rated jurisdictions on both new money bond sales and refundings of existing debt at lower interest rates. This means that the interest costs that need to be funded by County revenues are significantly lower than they would have been if the County was not so highly regarded in financial circles as having a thoughtful and well implemented set of fiscal policies.

Recent recognitions of sound County management include continuing annual recognition by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for excellence in financial reporting and budgeting, and receipt of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) 2021 Certificate of Excellence for the County's use of performance data from 15 different government service areas (such as police, fire and rescue, libraries, etc.) to achieve improved planning and decision-making, training, and accountability. Only 31 jurisdictions participating in ICMA's Center for Performance Measurement earned this prestigious award in 2021.

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 11.40 in FY 2023. 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 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 \$1,465 in FY 2023 represent a decrease from FY 2022. 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 2023 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 2022, 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 2023, real property taxes represent **68.0** percent of total General Fund revenues.

## Ignite: 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 Ignite goals, which include:

### Ignite 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 2022, FCPS' total approved membership is 188,799; 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.
- Over 83% of FCPS graduates plan to continue to post-secondary education.
- In 2021, Thomas Jefferson High School of Science and Technology was ranked by *U.S. News and World Report* as the Best High School and also #5 for the best STEM school in the nation.

### FCPS is Efficient

FCPS ranks 6<sup>th</sup> when compared to other local districts in average cost per pupil (FY 2022 WABE Guide).

FCPS students scored an average of 1201 on the SAT, exceeding both the state and national average for 2020-2021 school year:

FCPS	1201
VA	1116
Nation	1051