

FAIRFAX COUNTY CANOPY PROGRAM

OVERVIEW



The Fairfax County Canopy Program is intended to advance the county’s tree canopy goals by funding tree plantings in commonly owned open space, including properties owned by homeowners’ and condominium associations (hereinafter HOAs). The Canopy Program will support tree plantings throughout the community, including in communal areas owned by HOAs and non-profit organizations, at schools and on other publicly and privately owned lands. The Fairfax County Canopy Program is a joint effort between the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) and the Urban Forest Management Division (UFMD) of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES).

The Fairfax County Canopy Program will directly support the CECAP Natural Resources sector-based goal:

- Expand the tree canopy to 60 percent with a minimum 40 percent tree canopy coverage in every census block by 2030 and 50 percent by 2050, prioritizing areas of highest socioeconomic need first.

HOW THIS INITIATIVE SUPPORTS CECAP IMPLEMENTATION

The program supports the following strategy:

Strategy Number and Name
12: Support Preservation, Restoration, and Expansion of Natural Systems, Green Spaces, and Soil Quality

The implementation actions under Strategy 12 are expected to lead to reductions of 251,000 MT of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions by 2050. While this is just 2.4 percent of the emissions reductions needed to meet the CECAP carbon neutrality goal by 2050, the recommended actions in Strategy 12 have numerous co-benefits for the environment, public health, and local economy. For instance, expanding the county’s tree canopy and green space can increase carbon sequestration, support wildlife and ecosystem diversity, reduce runoff, improve air and water quality, reduce the Urban Heat Island effect, increase property values, and positively impact public health.

As currently envisioned, the new Fairfax County Canopy Program will be promoted and funded by the county and administered by a local non-profit organization. This organization will conduct outreach to county residents, Fairfax County Public Schools, HOAs and non-profit organizations to solicit participation in the program; it will then work directly with the participants to identify planting locations, plant trees, and ensure proper maintenance of the trees through the provision of educational resources. The county will work closely with the non-profit to identify and target those communities or associations most in need. Using the One Fairfax Vulnerability Index and other mapping tools, the county can identify areas of opportunity in which the non-profit should focus its outreach efforts.

The Fairfax County Canopy Program will complement the county’s Tree Planting and Preservation Fund (TPPF), which dates back to 2005. The TPPF was established as a funding mechanism to support programs and policies relating to the preservation and management of existing forest tracts and the planting of new trees by governmental and non-profit entities on public properties. The Canopy Program is being established to focus tree planting efforts on commonly owned open space, such as HOAs. Together, these programs will support the expansion of the county’s tree canopy and support the goals of CECAP.