

**Summary of Priority Actions from the
ACCF Collaborative on Preserving Arlington's Tree Canopy
Phase 3 – May 7, 2022**

The priority actions have been grouped to reflect the ideas considered most important and to minimize overlaps and repetition. The items noted as “immediate” indicate ones considered options for quick action, however this is only notation not limitation.

Zoning and Ordinances Actions

- Immediate: Lot coverage changes to reduce the allowed impermeable surface by 10% and related items. According to a member of the Zoning team, “Earlier this year, the County Board directed Planning Division staff to include in their annual work plan a study of possible Zoning Ordinance reforms that could address this issue.” The team would engage with County staff to determine their current plans and make suggestions on improvements. These suggestions would be transmitted to the appropriate Commissions, cognizant County departments and Board. Base stormwater fees on impermeable surfaces.
- Building on 1: Conduct a similar exercise with the Planning Division and other cognizant County staff, Commissions and Board regarding modifications and harmonizing the tree, stormwater, and Chesapeake Bay ordinances. Discuss increasing penalties, enforcement options (e.g., stop work orders, “snitch” enforcement, etc.), modifying land disturbance requirements, etc. Discuss expanded citizen participation in the future.
- Ongoing: Meet with Board and Commission members emphasizing the need to actively pursue individually, and with other jurisdictions, more flexibility to regulate trees on private property (e.g., replanting requirements, Notable trees, etc.). Assist in developing strategies to address the urgency in Richmond by working with County’s lobbying consultant. Issues to include replacement planting standards.

County Management Actions

- Building on 5: Develop the case for establishing a dedicated leader to coordinate and ensure implementation of tree canopy related activities including design, preservation, and resources. Leader to have authority across departments and County Manager’s annual evaluation to include their success in ensuring effective management. Meet with County management, Board members, and other parties to review current practices and explore best options.
- Immediate: Increase intensity of enforcement of established ordinances before and during construction on both private and public lands. Dedication of resources to increase enforcement capabilities and education of staff in all cognizant departments. Provide concrete examples of frequent current failures in operations and discuss ways to improve. Recommendations to County staff and Board.

Equity Actions

- Immediate: Using existing resources and new data, develop a county-wide central database with open access to identify and analyze equity issues including tree canopy, natural resources, and health effects in the context of key socio-economic indicators (e.g., income, housing, transportation, etc.). Identify required data sources, metrics, analytical tools, models, and data gaps. Relate data to needs identified by the affected communities. Communicate data to and from cognizant Commissions.
- Immediate: Citizens need wide-ranging, intensive education programs to understand and take action to protect and enhance their urban tree canopy. There would be a focus on underserved communities including lower-income and multi-family housing. Inventory existing resources, both public and private, to take advantage of the programs in place. Identify additions needed including resources, outreach tailored to the communities. Identify potential sources to achieve additions.

Incentives Actions

- Immediate: Develop a list of incentives for private developers. Incentives could include permit or other process expediting where trees are preserved; tax credits for preserving larger trees; flexibility to preserve trees. Work with Arlington developers individually or through associations to explore options. Take options to County staff, Board and Commissions.
- Explore adoption of a “proffers” system as used in nearby jurisdictions to obtain significant improvements in the preservation or planting of trees as part of the plan approval process. Already used to fund hard infrastructure needs, this could be expanded to include tree canopy and related natural resources.

