Attachment D: Summary of Planning Commission and Board Input

The following is a summary of previous Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors input on Environmental Stewardship topics:

Biodiversity

- October 10, 2023 PC work session: The Commission stated the need for improved data, tracking, and metrics related to biodiversity, including updated Biodiversity Action Plan Maps. An inventory of resources is needed to track protection progress. The Commission also supported more education for landowners on land conservation programs they can use and best practices for environmental stewardship for community members.
- January 17, 2024 Board work session: The Board supported using the Biodiversity Action Plan to evaluate development applications and their potential impacts. The Board emphasized the multiple benefits of protecting the natural environment, including biodiversity, water quality, and scenic beauty.

Water quality

- October 10, 2023 PC work session: The Commission recommended incentives for green infrastructure and low impact development for stormwater management. The Commission also supported programs that connect failing septic systems that are in the Development Areas to public water and sewer and financial assistance for failing systems in the Rural Area. The Commission recommended stronger protections for riparian stream buffers and greater coordination with the City and the University of Virginia on water quality and water resource protection.
- January 17, 2024 Board work session: The Board supported increased protections for groundwater, including a groundwater study for the county. The Board agreed with the Commission that failing septic systems should continue to be addressed, both from an equity/environmental justice perspective and to protect water quality (especially in water supply watersheds).

Community resilience and disaster preparedness (*noting the majority of these topics will be addressed in the forthcoming Resilient Community chapter*)

- October 10, 2023 PC work session: The Commission highlighted the need to address risks from wildfires and consider a fire hazard overlay. The Commission asked staff to consider business continuity related to disaster preparedness/response and how to leverage federal funding opportunities from FEMA. The Commission supported adaptive reuse of existing buildings and considering how to address waste from construction projects.
- January 17, 2024 Board work session: The Board asked staff to consider how the floodplain boundaries may change over time, especially due to climate change, and how that could impact future development. The Board also recommended including Comp Plan actions related to local food systems.

Tree coverage

- Multiple PC and Board work sessions: The Commission and Board have both discussed the importance of improving requirements for tree coverage and tree replacement, balancing the need to use Development Areas land efficiently with the need for trees that reduce the heat island effect, provide shade for pedestrians, and remove CO2 emissions. Recommendations related to tree coverage and tree standards in the Development Areas are included in the Development Areas Land Use chapter.

Dark skies

- Multiple PC and Board work sessions: The Commission and Board have noted the importance of improving dark skies protection and implementing more effective lighting requirements. In the Development Areas, lighting requirements should prioritize safety and walkability, especially in Activity Centers and other more urban areas. Coordination is needed between the City, the University of Virginia, and the County.