

# Forestry and Natural Resources Plan

*Engagement #3 Summary – September 2023*



**ARLINGTON  
VIRGINIA**

Parks & Recreation



# Who Participated?

## 154 Participants

109



### ONLINE FEEDBACK FORM

**109 Online  
Feedback Form Responses**

*Through these responses, we  
received 249 comments*

45

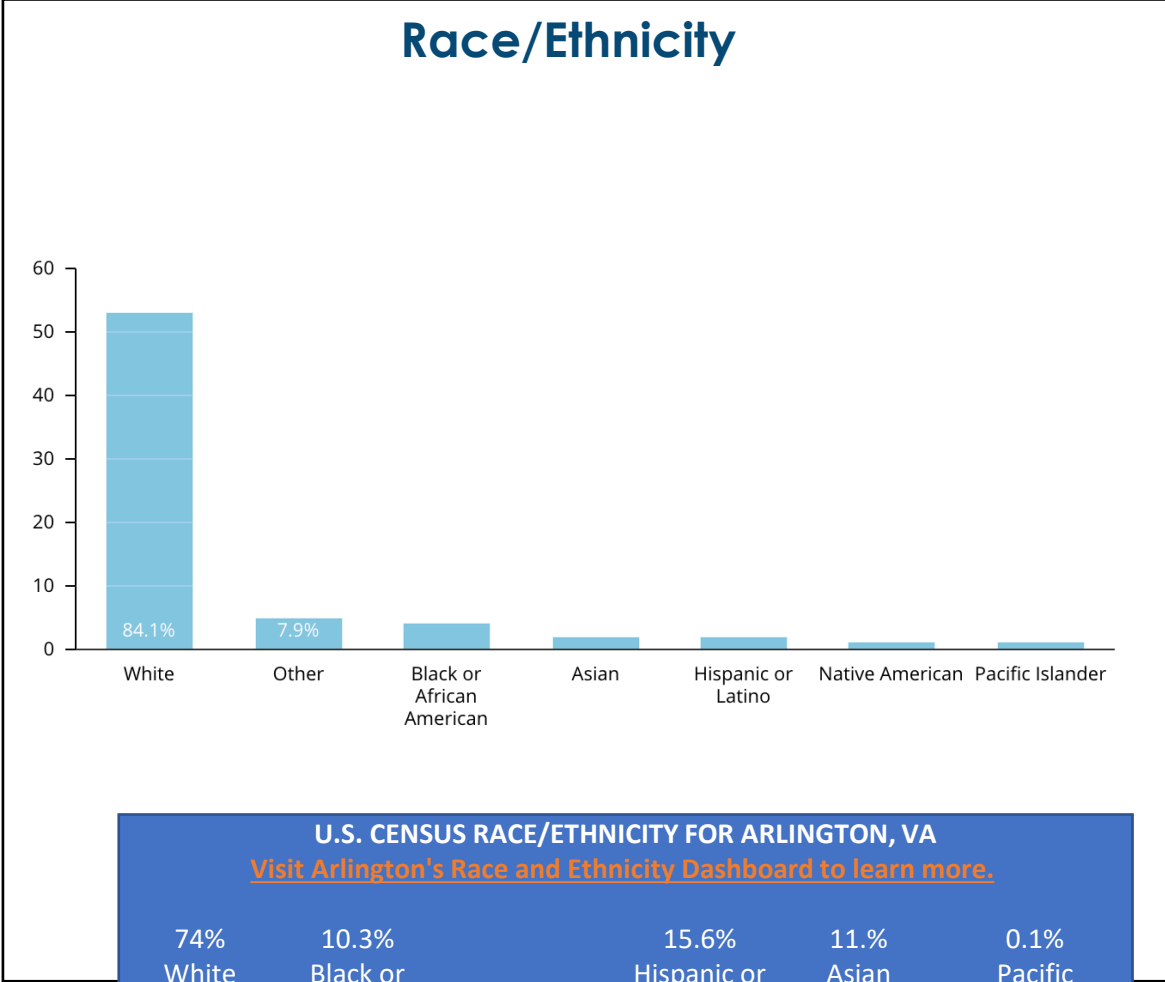
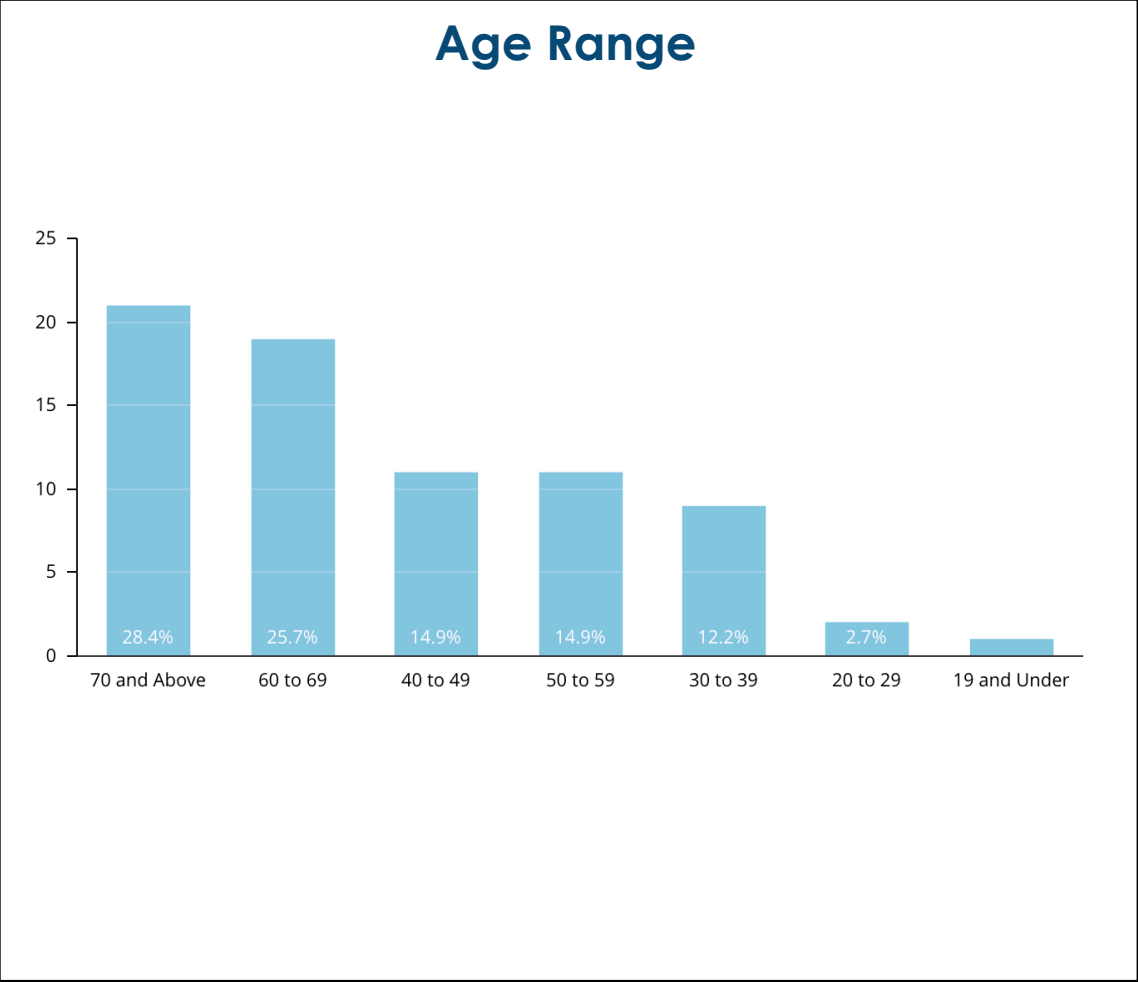


### OPEN HOUSE

**45 Open house  
attendees**

*165 comments received  
at 7 different stations*

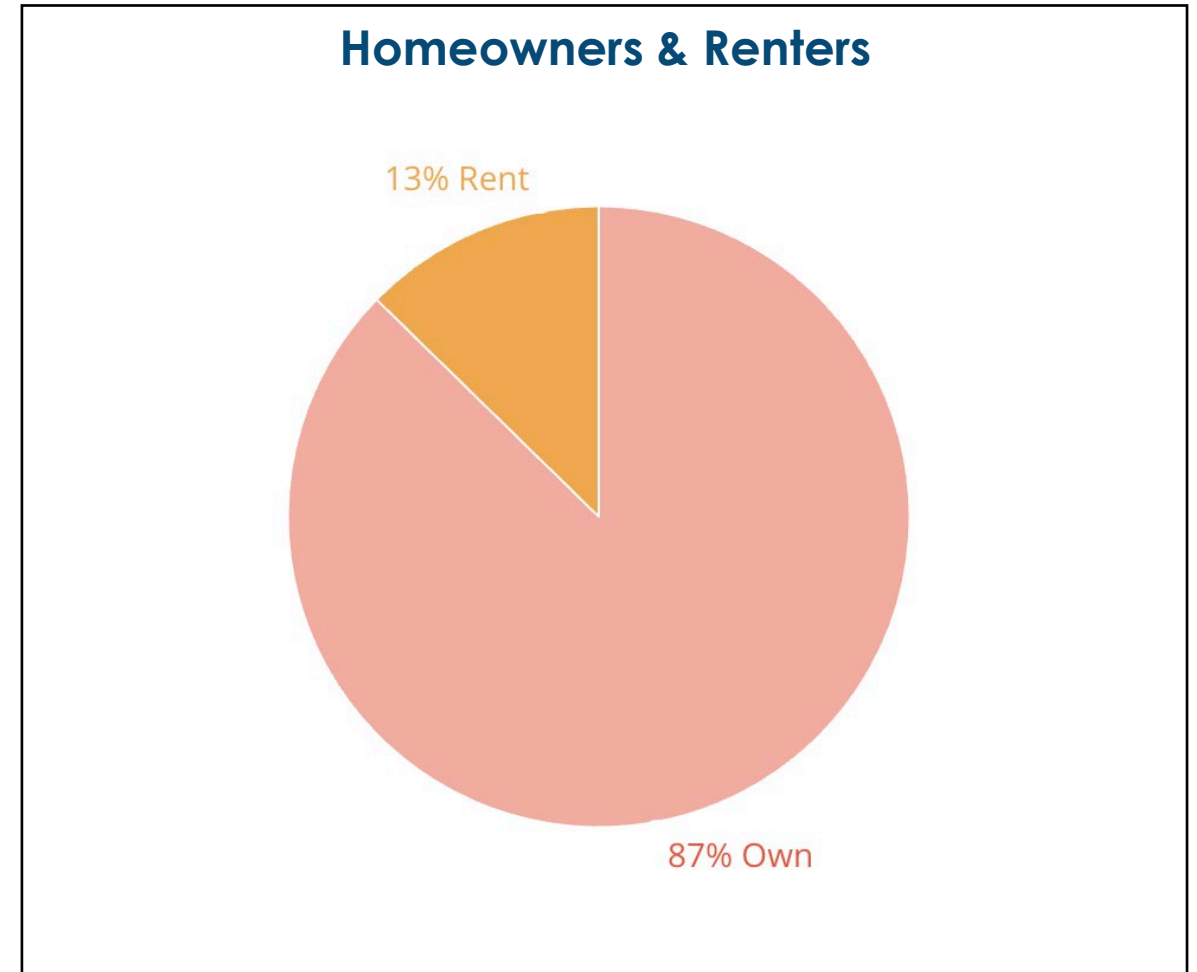
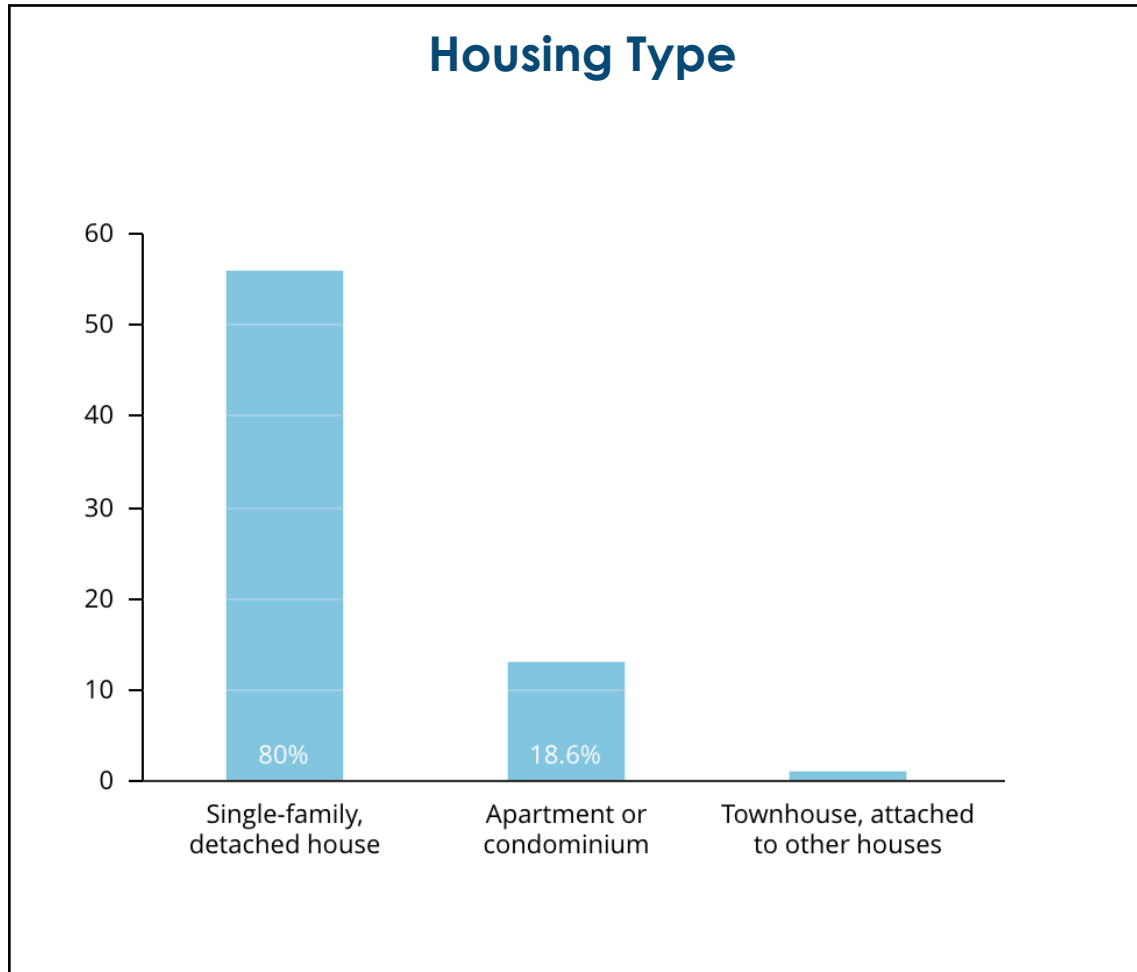
# Who Participated: Online



**U.S. CENSUS RACE/ETHNICITY FOR ARLINGTON, VA**  
[Visit Arlington's Race and Ethnicity Dashboard to learn more.](#)

74%	10.3%	15.6%	11.1%	0.1%
White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian	Pacific Islander

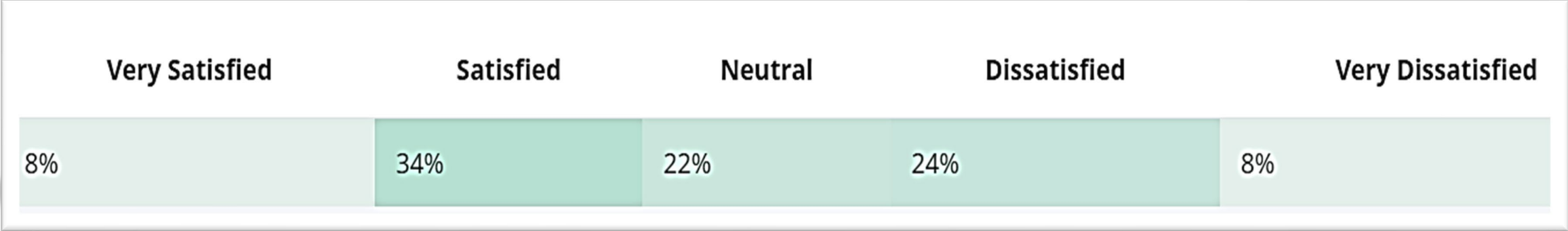
# Who Participated: Online



# Feedback on the Draft Plan



# How satisfied are you with the current draft Forestry and Natural Resources Plan?



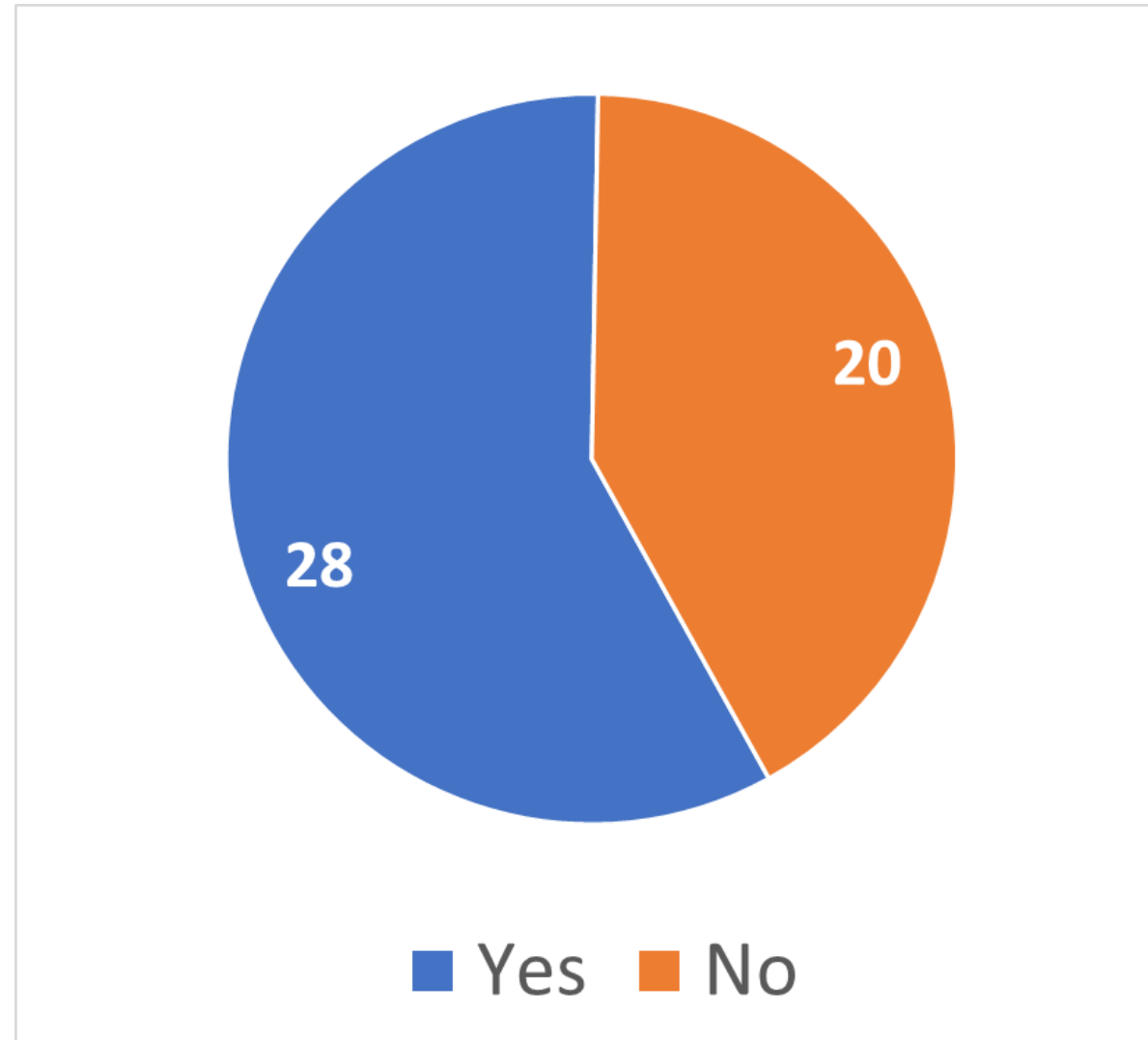
# Please explain your reason for the answer you provided above about how satisfied are you with the current draft:

*Open-ended comments were quantified by tagging each comment with the topics mentioned*

Theme	Concrete goals and metrics needed	Supportive / Like the Plan	Policy recommendations	Public and private urgency	Greater tree canopy
Mentions	24	23	15	11	10
Summary	<p>Many suggest the plan lacks concrete goals, metrics, and specific actions, making it difficult to measure progress and hold the county accountable.</p> <p>Others appreciate the comprehensive nature of the plan but feel it should focus on a smaller number of key priorities for clarity and effectiveness. Concerns include the plan's length and its perceived emphasis on promotion rather than practical policy.</p>	<p>The comments express a generally positive sentiment towards the draft FNRP. The plan is considered by many to be comprehensive, addressing important issues and providing a good roadmap for Arlington County.</p> <p>However, there are suggestions for improvement, such as the need for more specific details on addressing several issues, clearer targets for success, and stronger goals. The importance of maintaining tree canopy coverage and addressing challenges like invasive species and deer management are emphasized.</p>	<p>Policy suggestions include prioritizing forest growth, establishing mechanisms for builders to contribute to a forest fund, reducing density, enforcing tree conservation during redevelopment, avoiding the creation of unusable green spaces, providing incentives for residents to plant trees, setting higher goals for tree canopy coverage, increasing land acquisition efforts, implementing penalties for developers, addressing deer management, greening building codes, utilizing permeable materials, and promoting rooftop gardens and pollinator meadows.</p>	<p>The draft plan reflects citizen concerns and emphasizes the need for urgent action in the public and private sector.</p> <p>It calls for prioritizing forest growth, addressing increasing densification, and incorporating recent data. Urgency was noted as critical to reverse canopy decline and tackle impervious surfaces.</p> <p>Specific incentives and community investment are crucial for tree planting and native landscaping. It was noted by several respondents that the plan should prioritize Arlington's environment and natural resources in decision-making, broadly.</p>	<p>Respondents noted a lack of urgency in the draft plan to address canopy decline, loss of mature trees, and impervious surfaces.</p> <p>They called for higher canopy targets, prioritized land acquisition, and emphasized addressing threats from invasives.</p> <p>Incentives for shade tree planting and clearer information were requested. Preserving mature canopy and preventing tree destruction were highlighted. Increasing tree canopy was noted as crucial for mitigating heat islands and enhancing the environment.</p>

[A full list of all comments are provided here](#)

# In your opinion, do the changes made capture the feedback and improve the plan?





# How can this plan be further improved? Is there anything specific that you feel is currently missing and should be included?:

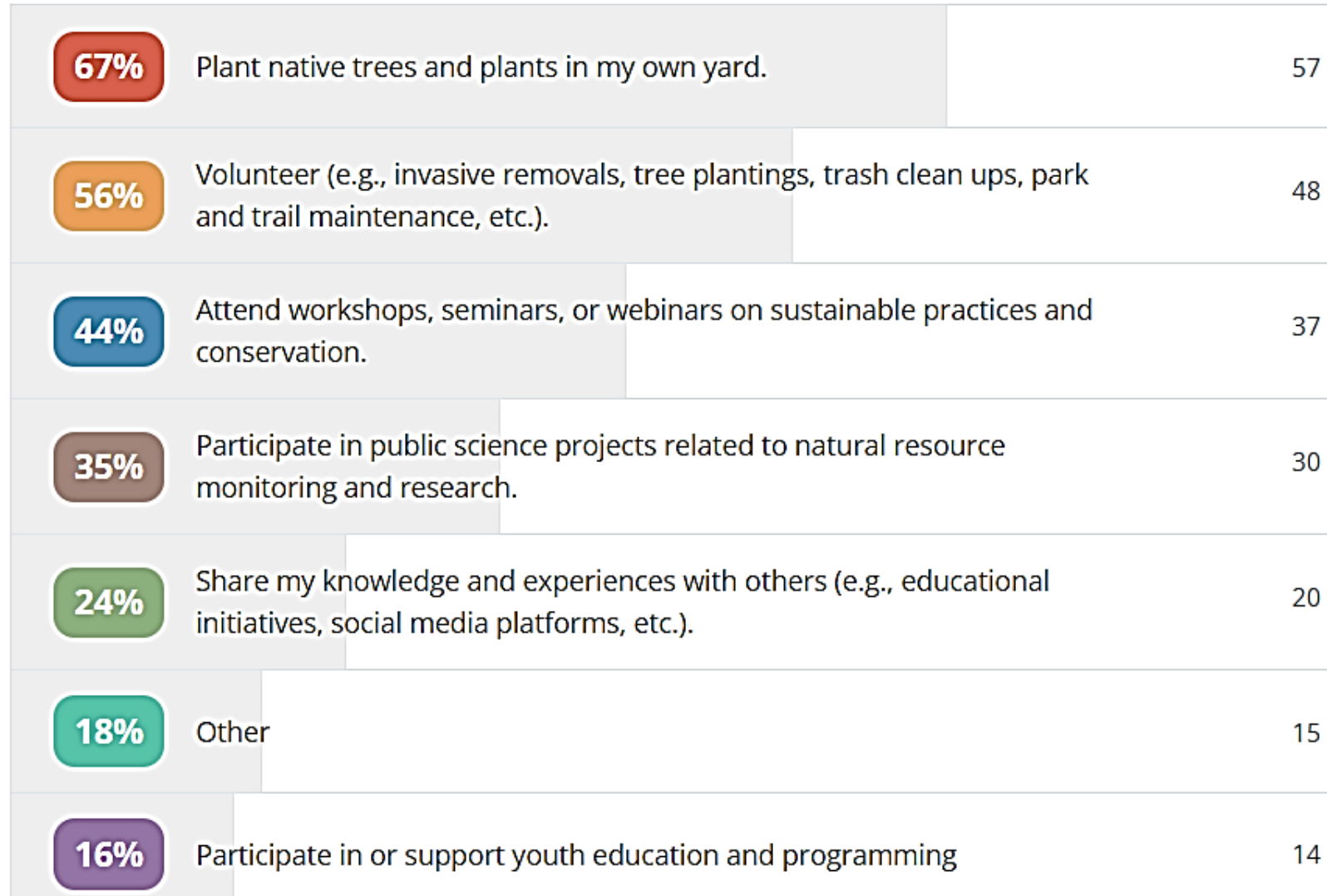
*Open-ended comments were quantified by tagging each comment with the topics mentioned*

Theme	Policy recommendations	Public and private action	Financial considerations	Volunteer focused	Invasive removal
Mentions	17	16	13	8	7
Summary	<p>Policy recommendations in the comments highlight the need to protect and expand tree canopy and green spaces in Arlington through measures like implementing tree protection permits for private land, zoning restrictions on large houses and emphasis on sidewalks, ensuring compliance with the plan for public schools and site plan projects, reducing light and noise pollution, setting specific goals and timeframes, prioritizing trees in development plans, calculating ecosystem valuation services, and enforcing stricter regulations and penalties for developers.</p>	<p>Suggestions include implementing a permitting procedure to protect mature trees on private land, addressing zoning regulations to limit excessive development and grading, establishing a tree conservation ordinance and commission, providing incentives for property owners to plant native trees and improve their landscaping, managing invasive species and deer population, enforcing stronger regulations on redevelopment projects, fostering partnerships with utility companies and civic associations, incorporating community plans and input, increasing property buyouts for stormwater management, expanding land acquisitions for green spaces, improving lighting ordinances to reduce light pollution, and promoting biodiversity.</p>	<p>Respondents ask to prioritize funding for invasive species and deer control efforts, establish measurable financial goals and for tracking progress, develop a toolkit of incentives for property owners and developers, provide accurate cost estimates, increase investments in public education, tree planting programs, and land acquisition.</p>	<p>Several respondents commented that the draft plan should prioritize and actively engage volunteers, acknowledging the valuable contributions of organizations such as EcoAction Arlington, Arlington Tree Stewards, Arlington Regional Master Naturalists, TreeStewards, Master Gardeners, Stream Water Monitors, the Forestry and Natural Resources Commission, and others who have been instrumental in supporting FNRP-related efforts.</p> <p>This includes their involvement in managing the Tree Canopy Fund and establishing the Tree Canopy Equity Program.</p> <p>Furthermore, several comments note that the plan should address the necessity for dedicated staff to effectively manage volunteer programs and recognize the significant role that Nature Centers play in supporting the goals of the FNRP.</p>	<p>Respondents feel that the draft plan showcases considerable effort and contains valuable strategies for the preservation and restoration of natural areas.</p> <p>However, they emphasize the need for a stronger sense of urgency in addressing the proliferation of non-native invasive plants, which poses a significant threat to native flora and wildlife. They note that it is essential to prioritize resource allocation and take immediate action to combat invasives to ensure a successful outcome.</p>



[A full list of all comments are provided here](#)

# Community involvement is a critical element of realizing the conservation and natural resources goals described in the FNRP. With that in mind, which of these would you be most interested in doing? (select all that apply)



# Feedback on the Implementation Framework

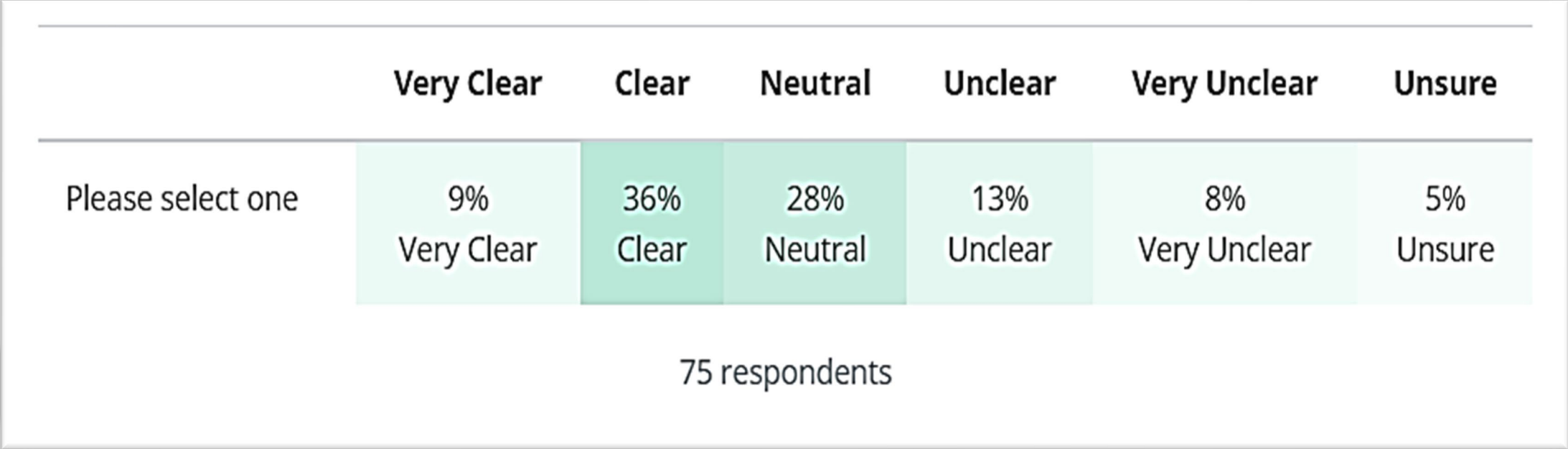


**IMPLEMENTATION  
FRAMEWORK**

Item	Description	Time Frame Ongoing, Short, Medium, Long	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Cost Range Estimate \$-\$\$\$	Potential Funding Sources
<b>1. Conservation</b>						
<b>1.1. Sustain Arlington's tree canopy and natural areas</b>						
1.1.1	Maintain 40 percent tree canopy County-wide through conservation and tree-planting programs tailored to local conditions and ecological contexts.	Ongoing	DPR, CPHD, DES	NVCT, NVRC, EcoAction Arlington, nonprofits, VDOT, NPS, NOVA Parks, DOD, DOS, private property owners, County commissions, BIDs, development community	\$\$\$	Operating budget, capital budget, federal funding, state funding, private funding
	Ensure 70 percent of Arlington's trees are regionally native by 2035.	Long	DPR, CPHD, DES	NVCT, NVRC, EcoAction Arlington, nonprofits, VDOT, NPS, NOVA Parks, DOD, DOS, private property owners, BIDs, development community	\$\$	Operating budget, capital budget, federal funding, state funding, private funding
	Reach aspirational tree coverage goals at public sites.	Short	DPR, APS, CPHD	Private property owners, NOVA Parks, NPS, DOD	\$	Operating budget, private funding
	Prevent loss of County-owned natural lands.	Ongoing	DPR, DES	Nonprofits, County commissions	\$	Operating budget
	Expand urban forestry resource base through County acquisitions.	Ongoing	DPR, DES	NVCT, private property owners, nonprofits, County commissions	\$\$\$	Capital budget, federal funding, state funding, private funding
	Adopted plan and area	Ongoing	CPHD, DPR, DES	Nonprofits, County commissions	\$	Operating budget
	Implement the APS school	Medium	DPS, APS	PTAs, nonprofits	\$\$	Operating budget, capital budget
		Ongoing	DPR, DES, CPHD	NVCT, NVRC, EcoAction Arlington, nonprofits, VDOT, NPS, NOVA Parks, DOD, DOS, private property owners, BIDs	\$	Operating budget, private funding
		Ongoing	DPR, DES	Private property owners, nonprofits, religious institutions, private schools	\$	Operating budget, private funding
		Ongoing	DPR, CPHD	County commissions, private property owners	\$	Operating budget
		Ongoing	DPR, CPHD	Nonprofits, County residents	\$	Operating budget
		Ongoing	ES,	Biophilic Cities Network, NPS, NOVA Parks, DOD	\$\$\$	Operating budget, capital budget
		Ongoing	ID, DPR,	Development community, Biophilic Cities Network, County commissions, development community, BIDs, private property owners	\$	Operating budget
		Ongoing	DPR, DES, CPHD	Utility companies	\$	Operating budget, private funding
		Ongoing	DPR, CPHD, DES, APS	VDOT, NPS, NOVA Parks, DOD, DOS, private property owners, BIDs	\$\$	Operating budget, capital budget

Years: Long-term: 10-20 years; Ongoing: Long-term collaborations, operational \$250,000; \$\$: \$250-1,500,000; \$\$\$: \$1,500,000+

# How clear is the Implementation Framework in outlining the steps, effort, and timeline required to achieve the goals of the FNRP?



# Open House: June 2023

## Lubber Run Community Center

# Project Feedback



# Open House : Top Five Comments Among All Stations

Theme	Tree canopy	Metrics/Implementation	Education/Individual Action	Volunteer Focus	Biophilia & Built Environment
Mentions	33	32	29	26	26
Summary	<p>The comments stress the importance of preserving and replenishing tree canopy in Arlington County through measures such as replacing trees during development, incentivizing developers to retain trees, updating codes, and addressing climate change and stormwater management.</p> <p>Recommendations include burying utility lines, educating residents on resilient tree species, and taking proactive measures to remove invasive plants.</p>	<p>Respondents stress the need for clear metrics and implementation measures in the plan,</p> <p>This includes summarizing costs, evaluating budget compatibility, specificity and quantification, regular monitoring, addressing invasive species, involving property owners, defining success, establishing evaluation measures and milestones, fostering partnerships, supporting staff and nature centers, implementing social accountability measures, enforcing goals, and holding developers accountable.</p>	<p>Respondents stress the need for education and individual action, including technical assistance, staff and nature center support, training developers, recognizing champion trees, providing climate-resilient planting recommendations, engaging subcontractors, expanding youth programs, educating underserved communities, focusing on multifamily areas, addressing heat islands, promoting dark sky awareness, supporting private landowners, improving water management, offering multilingual landscaper programs, training maintenance personnel, involving students and APS broadly, and providing planning toolkits.</p>	<p>Respondents stress the key role of volunteer engagement.</p> <p>This includes youth and adult programs, collaboration with existing volunteer groups, recognition of private property owners, social accountability measures, detailed implementation plans for volunteers, celebrating success with stakeholders, partnering with organizations, maintaining free trees, neighborhood tree initiatives, iterative training programs, macro-level assessment, building relationships with volunteers, and coordinating volunteer engagement criteria.</p>	<p>Respondents emphasized the need for biodiversity toolkits to educate residents on biophilic elements.</p> <p>They urged proactive education for developers, wider planting areas for canopy trees, stronger building codes, reduced impermeable paving, and attention to both natural and paved trails in the planning process.</p> <p>Additionally, they highlighted the importance of promoting stormwater management and considering the social impact of tree canopy.</p>
<p><a href="#">A full list of all open house comments are provided here</a></p>					

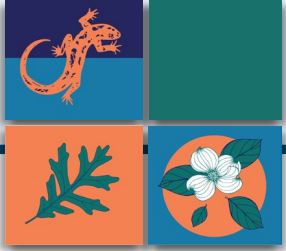
# Open House Comments by Station

<i>Station</i>	<b>Strategic Direction 1</b>	<b>Strategic Direction 2</b>	<b>Strategic Direction 3</b>
<i>Summary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure progress and evaluate effectiveness</li> <li>• Update codes to prevent tree removal</li> <li>• Engage and educate local communities</li> <li>• Identify parks for additional tree planting</li> <li>• Support APS with resources and collaboration</li> <li>• Preserve natural areas on private lands</li> <li>• Incentivize developers to prioritize tree preservation</li> <li>• Collect and analyze data for informed decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize tree canopy for stormwater and climate resilience</li> <li>• Enforce and update stormwater codes</li> <li>• Maintain free trees on private property</li> <li>• Identify quick wins for immediate action</li> <li>• Increase community commitment and allocate resources for stream health</li> <li>• Enhance green spaces in riparian zones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish measurable evaluation criteria</li> <li>• Promote stormwater management and green roofs</li> <li>• Active deer management for biodiversity</li> <li>• Prioritize public transit over parking</li> <li>• Collaborate with volunteer groups for conservation efforts</li> <li>• Educate private property owners on dark sky lighting and invasives</li> </ul>

# Open House Comments by Station (Continued)

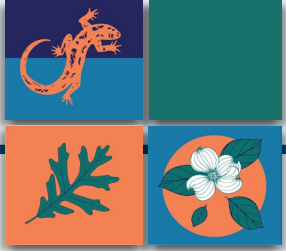
<i>Station</i>	<b>Strategic Direction 4</b>	<b>Implementation Framework</b>	<b>Additional Feedback</b>
<i>Summary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge successful volunteer groups and their contributions</li> <li>• Implement tree planting tax incentives for residents</li> <li>• Secure funding for forestry and natural resource management activities</li> <li>• Define evaluation measures with stakeholder involvement</li> <li>• Emphasize social impact and health benefits of tree canopy</li> <li>• Ensure equitable distribution of tree canopy and foster partnerships.</li> <li>• Address deer overpopulation through culling</li> <li>• Focus on invasive plant removal at scale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure enforcement for goal achievement in the plan</li> <li>• Create a community toolkit for forestry planning and implementation</li> <li>• Address utility line obstacles to planting street trees</li> <li>• Resolve encroachment issues in County parks, promptly</li> <li>• Incorporate climate change considerations into the plan effectively</li> <li>• Establish accountability measures for developers, such as a "scorecard" system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocate funding for nature center upkeep and maintenance</li> <li>• Develop comprehensive plans for nature centers and regional parks</li> <li>• Recognize and guide private property owners promoting native species plantings</li> <li>• Support nature centers as recreational and educational hubs</li> <li>• Celebrate success with key stakeholders in achieving goals</li> <li>• Implement measures to address stormwater issues and enforce compliance</li> </ul>





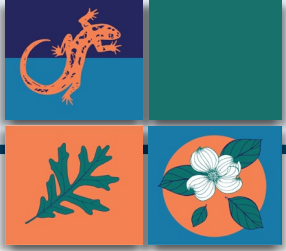
## 2023 Public Engagement – Themes

- Strong support for the vision and recommendations in the draft, and a majority feel the comments were adequately reflected in the new draft.
- Continued support for more specific goals, metrics, and implementation measures, and a more urgent tone for the narrative.
- Strong feedback that existing efforts and volunteer groups be included in more detail and be more integrated into the recommendations.
- Strong interest in how respondents could support the goals in the plan.



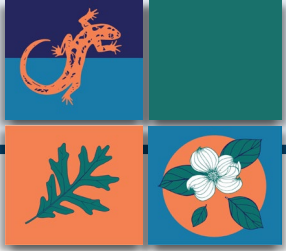
## Draft Edits - Introduction

- Highlight racial equity and environmental justice in the Executive Summary.
- Increase the sense of urgency, particularly in regards to climate, in the Introduction.
- Cross reference Natural History of Arlington section with the Historic and Cultural Resources Plan.
- Expand discussion of by-right development in the Planning Context.
- Add a new section on environmental organizations and volunteer groups to Existing Conditions.



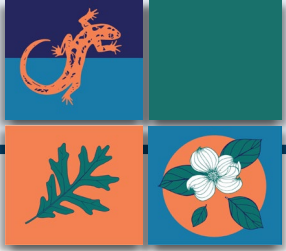
## Draft Edits - Introduction

- Clarify discussion of tree canopy decline and added references to the Tree Canopy Fund and Tree Canopy Equity Program to the Existing Conditions.
- Add detail and a discussion of trends to the discussion of Flora and Fauna in Existing Conditions.
- Reorganization of the Priority Actions, Executive Summary, and Introduction to the Strategic Directions to better introduce the plan to readers.



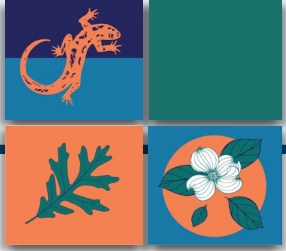
## Draft Edits – Strategic Directions

- 1.1.1 – Reframe as “Reestablish and maintain *at least* 40% tree canopy.”
- 1.1.6 – Add a recommendation to include tree canopy targets in sector plans, area plans, and similar County planning efforts.
- 1.2.4 – Add reference to utility undergrounding to avoid tree impacts.
- 1.4 – Expand references to existing partnerships, volunteer organizations, and programs.



## Draft Edits – Strategic Directions

- 2.1.1 – Clarify that communities with low tree equity scores have already been identified, and the recommendation is to work closely with those communities to make positive change.
- 4.1.4 – Refine reporting recommendation to “Report annually on implementation progress”.
- 4.1.8 – Update the placeholder for DPR’s deer impacts study with results from the assessment.
- 4.3.1 – Emphasize existing volunteer partners as the foundation to build on when strengthening volunteer efforts.



## Next Steps

- Finalize RTA Draft – September/October 2023
- RTA – October 2023
- Bring to the County Board – Winter 2023