

News Release



For Immediate Release

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City of Fredericksburg Advances on City Council's 2035 100% Renewable Energy Goals with new Virginia Clean Cities Grant:

Partners with Fredericksburg City Public Schools and the University of Mary Washington for Comprehensive Fleet Assessment

(Fredericksburg, VA) May 4, 2022 - The City of Fredericksburg is proud to announce its participation in the Drive Clean Rural USA project. Drive Clean Rural USA is a pilot project funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, supporting 24 localities across the nation. (For more information about Drive Clean Rural USA, please visit drivecleanrural.org.) This work will be managed by Virginia Clean Cities, as this grant's sub-recipient for the Commonwealth of Virginia. The City invited Fredericksburg City Public Schools and the University of Mary Washington to participate in order to build additional momentum in community action to meet shared sustainability goals.

"Transportation is our highest energy cost, our highest air quality challenge, and is a great place to focus this attention today with high cost to communities for gasoline and diesel which are not produced in Virginia," said Alleyn Harned, Director of Virginia Clean Cities. He continued, "We are glad to work with these partners in the region through this analysis and this work, as all Virginia moves forward with these transportation energy and emissions programs."

This joint venture will receive assistance from Virginia Clean Cities throughout the 3-phased project expected to run through June 2024. (In 2021, Virginia Clean Cities successfully assisted the Fredericksburg Police Department in completing a fleet assessment that led to purchasing hybrid police vehicles.) By participating in this comprehensive assessment, the City will be equipped to strategically plan and identify opportunities to ultimately transition to a clean fuel-powered fleet city wide. This is a critical step for the City as it diligently works to achieve City Council's goal of 100% renewable energy for municipal operations by 2035.

"This joint initiative will educate students in an authentic way about the importance of clean fuel solutions, healthy air, and personal and public economic opportunities and fiscal responsibility. We have already begun energy audits and opportunity reviews for solar, electric buses, reduced energy usage; etc. however, we want and need to go farther by doing more in concert with the City and UMW to maximize potential," stated Dr. Marci Catlett, Superintendent of Fredericksburg City Public Schools.

The Drive Clean Rural USA project aims to engage with local government leaders and fleet managers to remove barriers and accelerate access to clean fuel solutions (including electric vehicle technologies) that

deliver financial savings, clean air, and economic opportunity to small communities. This \$2.3 million multi-state project is supported by the U.S. Department of Energy and through industry partners' contributions of technical expertise and demonstration vehicles. Virginia Clean Cities will provide technical assistance to the City, Fredericksburg City Public Schools and the University of Mary Washington at no cost.

"We welcome the City of Fredericksburg as a Drive Clean Rural USA pilot community and applaud their commitment to clean transportation," said Transportation Energy Partners Executive Director, Ken Brown. "Through their work with Virginia Clean Cities and by sharing their successes and challenges, Fredericksburg will help small and rural communities across the country find new and better ways to transition to cleaner fuels and vehicles."

This project's scope is very intensive and requires a review performed by industry specialists. This project will provide vehicle demos, a fleet assessment, and expert consultation to help the City, Fredericksburg City Public Schools and the University of Mary Washington develop practical plans that reflect its fleet and environmental priorities. The assessment and plan development will look at fuel type costs & benefits, infrastructure & financing options, and available federal and state financial incentives.

"The opportunity to collaborate with the City of Fredericksburg and Fredericksburg Public Schools on the Drive Clean Rural USA project comes at an opportune time for the University," said Troy D. Paino, President of the University of Mary Washington. "UMW is in the process of developing a Climate Action Plan with clear and timely clean energy targets. Partnering with the city and schools will propel this plan forward to the benefit of everyone in our community."

"As we collectively begin to transition to cleaner fuels, there may be cost savings and efficiencies in pulling limited resources to serve public sector needs collaboratively. This multi-party endeavor will explore possibilities to invest in potential shared infrastructure over time," stated MacKenzie Belliman, the City of Fredericksburg's newly hired Environmental Sustainability Coordinator.

The City of Fredericksburg, after a joint procurement with Fredericksburg City Public Schools, is also working now with ABM to analyze City government buildings (City Hall, Dorothy Hart Community Center, Police Department Headquarters, Downtown Library, City Shop, Bass Ellison, Dixon Park, and Parking Garage). The ABM energy savings project is now in the Investment Grade Audit phase of the work. The next steps include working with the vendor to evaluate potential projects and select which ones to proceed with first. City Council should be able to consider energy saving projects this summer, and work on the selected projects should be able to get underway during Fiscal Year 2023.

If you would like more information about these topics, please contact MacKenzie Belliman, City of Fredericksburg Environmental Sustainability Coordinator at (540) 372-1023, or email Imbellimam@fredericksburgva.gov.

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