



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 10, 2023

TO: Consumer Protection Commission

FROM: Rebecca L. Makely, Director *RLM*
Department of Cable and Consumer Services

SUBJECT: Consumer Protection Commission Meeting for October 17, 2023

Please find attached the Consumer Protection Commission meeting packet. The next scheduled meeting is **Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at 7:30 p.m. in Conference Room 232** of the Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia.

Please RSVP with your attendance to Susan Jones by COB on Monday, October 16, 2023, at Susan.Jones@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-5877.

Enclosures

cc: Ellicia Seard-McCormick, Deputy County Executive

Susan C. Jones, Consumer Specialist III
Department of Cable and Consumer Services



**FAIRFAX COUNTY
CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMISSION
October 17, 2023 AGENDA**

Call to Order by the Chairperson (7:30 PM)

Remote Participation Motions

Minutes

- Approval of the draft September 19, 2023, meeting minutes

Report of the Director

Old Business

- Review and consideration of CPC Subcommittee proposal

New Business

-

Commissioner Matters

Report of the Chairperson

-

General Interest

- Consumer Protection Commission Calendar
- Consumer Protection Commission Membership
- CAB Statistics
- Community Outreach
- Consumer Resources

Minutes of the Fairfax County Consumer Protection Commission

September 19, 2023

7:30 PM

Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035
Chairperson Kratovil, presiding

Attendance:

Commissioners: Belkowitz, Gasimov,
Gulakowski, Kirk, Kratovil, Roark, Rosier, Svab

Remote Attendance:

Commissioner: Hargraves

Absent:

Commissioner: Freedenthal, Kharat, Springer

Staff:

Rebecca L. Makely, Director
Cable and Consumer Services
Susan C. Jones, Consumer Specialist III
Consumer Affairs Branch

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM by Chairperson Kratovil.

Chairperson Kratovil notified the Commission that Commissioner Hargraves requested to participate in the meeting remotely.

Vice Chairperson Gulakowski made the motion to approve that Chairperson Kratovil's decision to approve Commissioner Hargraves' request to participate from a remote location was in conformance with the Consumer Protection Commission's Remote Participation Policy. Commissioner Kirk seconded the motion. The motion was approved, 8-0-0.

Chairperson Kratovil made the motion that Commissioner Hargraves' voice can be heard by all persons at the primary meeting location. Commissioner Gulakowski seconded the motion. The motion was approved, 8-0-0. Commissioner Hargraves participated remotely due to attending an out-of-town event for his son.

Chairperson Kratovil introduced the newest CPC member Commissioner Josef Gasimov.

Minutes

Commissioner Belkowitz stated under old business the Dillon Rule was misspelled. Commissioner Hargraves moved to accept the minutes as amended. Commissioners Roark and Gulakowski seconded the motion. The minutes for the August 1, 2023, meeting were adopted unanimously, 9-0-0.

Commissioner Matters

Commissioner Svab had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Gulakowski had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Roark had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Belkowitz thanked the Chairperson for the presentation from Identity Theft Resource Center. He stated that he dropped FIOS to the internet only and the process was easy. He will be saving money by streaming with other options.

Commissioner Kirk had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Rosier spoke about a recent meeting and the discussion was on scams and a reminder not to provide personal information.

Commissioner Gasimov spoke on an email scam with Costco that he receives on a frequent basis.

Commissioner Hargraves had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Chairperson Kratovil inquired about an update on the proclamation for John Fee. Director Rebecca Makely stated at the September 12, 2023, meeting, Chairman McKay did move a resolution for CPC Chairperson John Fee. Without objection, Chairman McKay asked the Fairfax County Office of Public Affairs to prepare a resolution to be presented inside the board room before the end of the year. Staff will notify the Commission once a date has been selected.

Chairperson Kratovil mentioned his work group with the Federal Reserve on scams. The group was attempting to define what is a scam. The definition reached is a scam is the use of deception or manipulation intended to achieve financial gain. The group is now trying to develop a classification system.

Report of the Chairperson

Chairperson Kratovil had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Report of the Director

Susan Jones, Branch Manager, Consumer Affairs conducted a review of two consumer complaints address by staff.

Old Business

There was no old business before the Commission.

New Business

1. FY 2023 Annual Report. Directly Makely sent out the updated draft of the FY 2023 CPC Annual Report for Commission to review last week. Director Makely walked through the updates requested by the Commission.

Commissioner Kirk stated he objected to the FY 2023 Annual Report for failure to provide a group photo of the Commission.

A discussion ensued on taking the photograph at the next meeting, delaying the report, or using headshots in the report.

Chairperson Kratovil moved to approve the FY 2023 Annual Report with the condition that all Commissioners submit to staff head shots by COB on Tuesday, September 26, 2023.

Commissioners Gulakowski and Hargraves seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

2. CPC Subcommittee proposal review. Chairperson Kratovil stated he emailed Commissioners a clean copy and a red line copy of the proposals. Staff handed out copies of each. Chairperson Kratovil stated there was considerable discussion at the last meeting on the reduction of the number of subcommittees, the roles of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, frequency of meetings changed to quarterly or as needed, the requirement for Commissioners to serve on a committee, making the process less cumbersome by tightening up the language, and the reasoning behind the subcommittees. Chairperson Kratovil reiterated the Commission's role of the subcommittees was not to oversee staff's work but find new ways or opportunities to use the Commission's expertise, talents, passions, and expand the work staff and the County are doing by being better spokespersons.

Commissioner Belkowitz stated he had submitted comments that were not reflected in the updated version. Chairperson Kratovil apologized for the oversight and asked Commissioner Belkowitz to walk through his comments.

- Add a section that defines terms like Commissioner, Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, etc.
- Clarify the timing of appointments; and
- Clarify who will take the minutes of the meeting and how the minutes will be submitted.

A discussion ensued on how committees would be formed, how many members on each committee, and appointment by the Chairperson vs. volunteering based on interest.

Chairperson Kratovil stated there is nothing in the County code to dictate this process. Director Makely stated at the request of the Chairperson she consulted with County Attorney's office. In the CPC's Bylaws Article VIII - Committees it does address standing and special committees and states that the Chairperson may appoint standing and special committees and a Chairperson for each with the consent of the majority of the Commission members present and voting. In this language, appoint is interpreted as individuals and permits the Chairperson to appointment members to the committees.

Chairperson Kratovil stated a consensus was reached not to mandate that each Commissioner must serve on a committee. Chairperson Kratovil further stated a simple google survey could be used for each Commissioner to determine their interests, willingness to serve, and what position on a committee.

Commissioner Belkowitz raised the question from the previous comments that there seems to be a lack of interest in serving on subcommittees, so why go through the exercise to develop subcommittees.

Chairperson Kratovil posed the question to the Commission inquiring if there is no interest in subcommittees.

A discussion ensued on interest in subcommittees, keeping the Commission focused on certain areas, the number of Commissioners to serve on each Committee, a list of topics and ranked order of importance to map the direction of the Commission, and implement a pilot program for six months to see if it works.

Further discussion ensued on having virtual meetings and staff support. Director Makely reminded the Commission of the County Attorney's recommendation regarding virtual meetings held by a subcommittee and their recommendation not to have virtual meetings but would not stop the action as a public body of having virtual meetings. Director Makely stated based of the number of participants the meetings would have to be posted on the public meetings calendar, the mechanics of public participation through Teams, and staff support at the meetings.

Chairperson Kratovil plans to draft a new version of the plan and to incorporate feedback and comments made by the Commission and suggestions from Commission Belkowitz. The new plan will be emailed to the Commission by COB on Friday, September 22, 2023. Chairperson Kratovil asked the Commission to review the new version and provide any other suggestions.

Chairperson Kratovil made the motion to adjourn without objection. The meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM.

CPC Calendar

Consumer Protection Commission
2023 Planning Calendar
October 17, 2023

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| January 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chapter 28.1• 2023 Meeting Calendar |
| February 21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resilient Fairfax and CECAP Presentation• Election of Officers• 2023 Items of Interest |
| March 21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorization to Advertise Public Hearing |
| April 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting Cancelled |
| May 16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |
| June 20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Virginia Senior Medicare Patrol Presentation by Commissioner Freedenthal• BOS Engagement• Review draft subcommittee outline• Future briefings and activity• Open discussion and ideation |
| July 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting Cancelled |
| August 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FY 2023 Annual Report• Identity Theft Resource Center Presentation |
| August 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting Cancelled |
| September 19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FY 2023 Annual Report |
| October 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |
| November 21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nomination of Officers• 2023 Taxicab Biennial Determination Report |
| December 19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |

CPC Membership

Commissioners

Fairfax County Resident #1
Jacqueline Rosier (Secretary)
Appt. Expires 7/31/2025

Fairfax County Resident #2
Michael J. Roark
Appt. Expires 7/31/2026

Fairfax County Resident #3
Jason J. Kratovil (Chairperson)
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #4
Dennis D. Kirk
Appt. Expires 7/31/2025

Fairfax County Resident #5
Dirck A. Hargraves
Appt. Expires 7/31/2023

Fairfax County Resident #6
Vacant

Fairfax County Resident #7
Pratik J. Kharat
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #8
Harold G. Belkowitz
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #9
Chester J. Freedenthal
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #10
Josef Gasimov
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #11
Paul Svab
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #12
Denis Gulakowski (Vice-Chairperson)
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #13
Maurice B. Springer
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

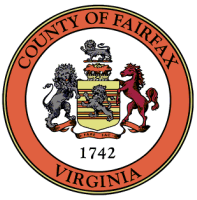
Staff

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consumer@fairfaxcounty.gov

CAB Statistics



Department of Cable and Consumer Services
Consumer Affairs Branch
Monthly Summary Statistics

9/1/2023 Through 9/30/2023

	Current Month		Fiscal YR to Date	
Cases Received	68		203	
Cases Closed	59		185	
Resolved	43	73%	124	67%
Unresolved	6	10%	18	10%
Referred	1	2%	9	5%
Legal	1	2%	1	1%
Other	8	13%	33	17%
Advice Inquiries Closed	339		1188	
Amount Reclaimed	\$49,531.14		\$186,270.12	

Top Complaint Types

Tenant-Landlord	44%
Automotive	12%
Housing Services	10%
Medical Billing	7%
Professional Services	7%
Others	20%

Community Outreach

Outreach Event Calendar October 2023

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	# of Guests	Event Time	Staff
10/2/2023	Consumer Knowledge	Lake Braddock Secondary School 9200 Burke Lake Road Burke, VA	70	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	MDP CH
10/12/2023	Consumer Knowledge	James Madison High School 2500 James Madison Drive Vienna, VA		8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	MDP CH
10/13/2023	Consumer Knowledge	James Madison High School 2500 James Madison Drive Vienna, VA		8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	MDP CH
10/15/2023	Beacon 50+ Expo Consumer Booth	Springfield Town Center 6500 Springfield Mall Road Springfield, VA		12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	SCJ SW
10/16/2023	Consumer Connection Purchasing a Used Vehicle	Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Facebook		11:00 a.m.	SCJ AB
10/17/2023	Consumer Knowledge	Fairfax High School 3501 Lion Run Fairfax, VA		8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	MDP CH
10/18/2023	Community Health and Safety Day	Lincolnia Senior Center 4710 N. Chambliss Street Alexandria, VA		10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	SCJ
10/21/2023	Providence Community Day Consumer Booth	Jim Scott Community Center 3001 Vaden Drive Fairfax, VA		11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	CH
10/27/2023	Annual Retiree Appreciation Day	Wells Field House 1810 Goethals Road Fort Belvoir, VA		8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	PNB
10/28/2023	Southgate Community Day	Cathy Hudgins Community Center 12125 Pinecrest Road Reston, VA		12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	AB

Consumer Resources

Resource Items

Fairfax County Department of Cable and Consumer Services

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer>

Fairfax County Consumer Affairs

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/csd/consumer>

Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountyconsumer/>

Consumer Connection: Charge Up Fairfax (September 21, 2023)

<https://fb.watch/njUhTIAQrj/>

Consumer Affairs Day: National Consumer Protection Week (March 9, 2023)

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/channel-16/consumer-affairs-day-2023>

Information Items

County approves money to survey panhandlers, will weigh safety next ([more](#))

Fairfax County funds survey of people who engage in ‘panhandling’ ([more](#))

Fairfax Supervisors Approve Plan to Reduce Parking Requirements ([more](#))

Consumer advisory: People have the right to cancel credit repair services ([more](#))

Campaign Stresses Benefits of EV Chargers for Workplaces ([More](#))

County approves money to survey panhandlers, will weigh safety next

• By Collin Cope / Fairfax County Times



Oleg - stock.adobe.com

Fairfax County's panhandling problem continues to affect residents, despite efforts by some county officials to curb the problem.

Last week, at the request of Chairman Jeff McKay, the Board of Supervisors approved \$75,000 in carryover funds to survey people who panhandle, asking them how long they've been panhandling, why they panhandle, and their employment experience, among other questions.

As first reported by FFXNow, the county will contract a firm with experience surveying “marginalized populations.” The effort is expected to take six months.

Some residents might be familiar with the stare of a panhandler trying to guilt drivers into their support, but one Fairfax County resident reports a much more troubling incident.

While driving home after an anniversary dinner with his wife, Herndon resident George Chervenik described a situation at the Route 7 and Dranesville Road intersection where a panhandler lunged at his vehicle.

“He lunged at her open window and scared her, so I exited the car to coax him to get out of the roadway,” said Chervenik in an email to The Fairfax County Times. “He turned aggressively on me and approached me, so I returned to the car.”

Chervenik tried to escape the situation and retreated to his vehicle when the suspect continued to bang on his wife’s side of the vehicle.

When Chervenik stepped out of the vehicle again, he was assaulted.

“He approached my wife’s window several more times and banged on the car aggressively,” said Chervenik. “This drew me back out of the car. My intent was to subdue him until the authorities could arrive. He sprayed me in the face with pepper spray and fled the scene.”

While the man was able to flee the scene, Chervenik claims that the suspect is a regular at this particular intersection and is known for taking aggressive action towards motorists.

“I was just trying to help that person. It’s a four-lane highway on Saturday night with cars whizzing by, and he was in the middle of the road. I was just trying to get him to move to the median,” said Chervenik in an interview.

Given the ongoing problem of panhandling, Fairfax County has implemented a series of public programs, as well as regulations to curb panhandling. Additionally, the county recognizes that individuals may suffer from mental health or substance abuse issues which may discourage them from seeking assistance.

Springfield District Supervisor Pat Herrity has been trying to get the county to address the panhandling issue for years. After Loudoun County adopted a similar ordinance in 2013 with successful results, Herrity began promoting a Curb-to-Curb safety ordinance preventing drivers from interacting with panhandlers in 2019. He revived it in 2022.

However, at a Board of Supervisors meeting on Oct. 11 last year, other supervisors voted against Herrity's suggestion for the ordinance instead supporting efforts to educate the public about the number of services available for those genuinely in need.

"Understanding the critical needs of people in our community is essential when dealing with this multi-faceted issue," said Herrity. "However, I believe it is also critical to address the public safety component of panhandling, not just to understand the service issues. I am continuing my review of ordinances involving prohibiting the change of objects in the roadway that have been successful in other jurisdictions."

Herrity learned after speaking with Fairfax County Police that the General Assembly made jaywalking a secondary offense, taking away a tool police can use to deter people who are in the street outside of crosswalks for their own safety and the safety of motorists. And so, he introduced a board matter last week recommending the Board consider asking the state to let police charge jaywalkers.

Braddock District Supervisor James Walkinshaw suggested instead that the board consider jaywalking as part of the larger issue of pedestrian safety given the rise in fatal accidents in the past year.

One of the other initiatives to deter panhandling included a collaboration between the Fairfax Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) and the

Office to Prevent and End Homelessness (OPEH), known as Operation Stream Shield, was implemented in 2022 to provide jobs for homeless residents.

According to the county's Health and Human Services department, panhandling often does little to solve the underlying issues influencing poverty and homelessness.

"We discourage people from giving cash to individuals who panhandle. While many of you may get a good feeling by providing money, the reality is that people who panhandle often require more resources than small amounts of money. Donations of cash will not help solve the underlying reasons why someone panhandles," said the county's website.

Despite these efforts, panhandling continues to be a problem in the county. Some residents have noticed increased taunting and guilt-tripping when engaging with panhandlers, suggesting a criminal syndicate is afoot.

"If you wave or don't roll your window down, they'll yell something back on occasion," said Chervenik. "There are similarities from intersection to intersection where it's the same signage or language used. It does seem to be organized."

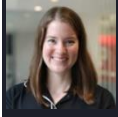
Additionally, Chervenik is curious about how one panhandler might compete with another when two different individuals are seen at the exact location.

"I've actually questioned how they manage their time on any particular median. Do they fight with one another, does survival of the fittest apply," asked Chervenik.

Chervenik emphasized that he has empathy for these individuals and understands why they panhandle but wishes that they didn't feel that they need to. He said he's wary of the Board of Supervisors' effort to survey panhandlers.

"I don't know how well that's going to work," said Chervenik.

Fairfax Supervisors Approve Plan To Reduce Parking Requirements



Margaret Barthel



"Parking Reimagined" is the first time the Board of Supervisors has done a full rewrite of the county's parking zoning regulations since 1988. [Machvee / Flickr](#)

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed [a policy](#) updating the county's rules governing parking requirements for new developments on Tuesday night, following years of community debate.

The final "Parking Reimagined" policy is aimed at reducing the number of parking spaces developers are required to include in projects. The new parking minimums depend on a variety of factors, including whether the project is residential, retail, or office, where it is located, and whether it's close to transit. The plan also adds in requirements for bike and pedestrian infrastructure to help non-drivers navigate large parking lots.

County leaders hope the change — while modest — will ultimately mean more space for housing, parks, and other public amenities, instead of large, mostly-empty suburban parking lots that become heat islands in the summer and produce stormwater runoff when it rains. They also say that lessening parking requirements will make building affordable housing and other developments less costly — and prevent costs from being passed on to residents buying or renting a home. (Building new parking can cost as much as \$60,000 per space in Fairfax, according to reporting from [The Washington Post](#).)

“Fairfax County is extraordinarily diverse in its topography and its land use and its design,” said Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay. “It’s very hard to do ordinances or parking [tabulations] in a one-size-fits-all environment with a county that’s so different at a granular street level.”

McKay called the final policy “a grand compromise,” one that he said recognizes the concerns of residents who worry about having enough parking as well as the frustrations of locals who see underused parking lots as an eyesore and a missed opportunity. The policy will take effect in January.

Tuesday was the first time the county has fully revised all of its zoning regulations about parking since 1988, and in those decades, a lot about the county and how people get around has changed. (The county adopted separate parking minimums for commercial and residential buildings in Tysons in 2010, and for areas near other Metro stations [in 2018](#).)

“When we did our last parking ordinance, there was no Metro. There was no Connector bus. There wasn’t much in the way of Metrobus. There were few bicycles and fewer trails,” said Mason District Supervisor Penny Gross, the longest-serving member of the board and its vice chair. “So we really were very car centric.”

Gross also pointed to one example of the waste of space caused by overly high parking requirements in her district: a nearly-always empty parking garage at the Plaza at Landmark Shopping Center, which she said was built in the 1980s solely because the county’s regulations required it.

“It’s a multimillion dollar investment that is not being used,” Gross said.

Loosening parking requirements could help the county avoid building too many new underused parking garages, and get rid of existing ones that are underused in future redevelopments, advocates believe. That space could be repurposed. In fact, the offending Landmark garage came up in the public comment period, in video testimony from a resident who lives nearby and recorded himself walking through the

parking garage's levels — and finding only two cars parked in the entire structure. “That’s where we should put more pickleball courts,” one supervisor joked while the video ran. (The board had previously heard testimony from residents arguing for more pickleball courts across the county.)

The new policy comes at a key moment in the sprawling suburban county’s development. County leaders are grappling with transforming areas near the Silver Line and other transit hubs into more walkable urban places — and as the advent of hybrid work complicates that mission. Fairfax, the largest jurisdiction in the D.C. region, has also struggled to build housing at the rates some experts believe the region needs to satisfy burgeoning demand for the area’s workforce.

Those big shifts have raised plenty of controversy and concern, particularly among local homeowner’s associations worried that less parking in commercial corridors may result in people taking up parking spots in residential neighborhoods. Meanwhile, the policy enjoyed enthusiastic support from many younger residents eager to look ahead to a less-car-dependent, more affordable future in Fairfax.

Reductions near transit, little change in residential neighborhoods

“Parking Reimagined” doesn’t limit the number of parking spots a developer can choose to build on a given project — but it does reduce the number they’re required to build in most cases, particularly near rail and bus lines. It also simplifies certain parking-related processes for developers and business owners and adds requirements for better pedestrian and bike infrastructure in and around large parking lots.

Most significantly, the new policy imposes a tiered structure for determining parking minimum requirements, cutting them back particularly in mixed-use areas near transit and in places designated by the county’s comprehensive plan for revitalization, such as Annandale and the Route 1 corridor. For example, multifamily buildings near transit stations could build as few as 0.4 spaces per bedroom, a roughly 20-40% reduction from the overall standard for multifamily buildings.

The policy also streamlines the process for when a “parking tabulation,” or a review of the number of parking spots required, is needed after a building changes hands. Small business owners testified that the current tabulation rules are clunky and often lead to delays or onerous new parking requirements for existing buildings — issues that can cost businesses dearly and even prevent them from opening.

The policy also takes a few notable steps to push for more pedestrian and bike infrastructure, requiring pedestrian routes through new or redeveloped surface parking

lots of more than 50 spaces and putting in place the county's first-ever requirements for bike parking.

The final vote on "Parking Reimagined" comes after years of community debate and county staff research on the subject. Earlier in the month, the county's planning commission approved the policy, but scaled back several of the county staff's original recommendations, making more modest cuts in the parking requirements for multifamily housing and houses of worship.

In the end, the supervisors mostly followed the planning commission's suggestions, approving a base rate of 1.45 spaces per unit in a multifamily building instead of the staff's recommended 1.3 spaces per unit, which is in line with national parking demand survey data.

What "Parking Reimagined" does not do is also significant: it does not change the overall amount of parking required for single-family detached houses, though it does adjust it based on the new tiered system. Similarly, for townhomes or stacked townhomes, the minimum number of spaces also remains the same, with an added requirement for visitor parking in those neighborhoods. That could result in more parking spaces being built, since it means some of the required spaces for a development of townhomes would need to be in common space, not individual garages or driveways.

A zoning debate, Northern Virginia-style

The back-and-forth debate over the relatively modest change in Fairfax echoes more heated and more expansive arguments over zoning reform in neighboring [Arlington](#) and [Alexandria](#), where younger residents — many of them [organized by the YIMBYs of NoVA](#) and their partners — eager for more density and more housing have butted heads with older, more entrenched homeowners wary of crowding and possible strains on county services.

"A true parking reimagination would abolish all parking minimums and switch to parking maximums," said Aaron Wilkowitz, a Fairfax resident and a leader with the pro-housing group YIMBYs of NoVA, during the public comment period. "But I recognize that progress is sometimes slow and incremental."

Wilkowitz and other supporters, several of them George Mason University students and public school teachers, applauded the tiered system and transit-oriented development orientation of the policy. But they said in mostly leaving single-family home parking rates the same, the county had missed an opportunity to make a bigger difference for residents struggling to afford living there.

“Low income residents take buses and are less likely to own cars, so ‘free’ parking is actually a tax on carless, low income residents to subsidize wealthier car owners,” Wilkowitz argued. “That’s the single most important thing I’m going to say tonight.”

But other public commenters, several of them leaders or members of homeowners’ associations, disagreed. They argued lowering parking requirements, especially on multifamily buildings, would result in “the likelihood of overflow parking and adverse impacts” in their neighborhoods, as Sally Horn, of the McLean Citizens’ Association, put it.

“This is particularly so since it is more likely than not that developers will provide only the minimum required off street parking for multi-family buildings that primarily house middle-to low-income residents,” she said.

Others said they wanted to see the county build out its transportation infrastructure before it made significant cuts to parking.

“Annandale has a few bus routes that will not generate an appreciable decline in the number of cars and trucks,” said Susan Jollie, an Annandale resident. “‘Parking Reimagined’ will turn our roads into parking lots.”

“Transit improvements on a massive scale have to come first,” Jollie said.

Consumer advisory: People have the right to cancel credit repair services

SEP 22, 2023

People working to improve their credit situations can feel trapped. Some companies use this stressful situation to take advantage of consumers by selling a promise of credit repair services. However, these services often charge fees without delivering on their promises.

The CFPB filed a lawsuit against companies doing business using the names Lexington Law and CreditRepair.com. These are two of the country's largest credit repair companies—companies that promise to fix or to improve people's credit. The court concluded that the companies broke the law. As part of a legal settlement in the case, the companies are banned from using telemarketing to sell their credit repair services for ten years.

Some customers of Lexington Law and CreditRepair.com can cancel their services without penalty

Thousands of customers of Lexington Law and CreditRepair.com have received e-mail notices, letting them know they can cancel their credit repair services with no penalty and outlining the steps to take. The email includes an internet link and phone number you can use to cancel your account, along with the following information:

Lexington Law and CreditRepair.com are reaching out to you to remind you that—as stated in your attached engagement agreement—you have the right to terminate your credit repair services at any time and for any reason (or no reason at all).

Check your inbox for the e-mail and take action today to protect yourself from illegal charges from Lexington Law or CreditRepair.com.

You have the right to see results before you pay

Under federal law, when a company uses telemarketing to sell credit repair services, they have to meet certain requirements before they can charge for their services. First, the company must achieve the results it promised you within the time frame they stated. Second, the company must give you a consumer report showing the results, and the report must be generated more than six months after the results were claimed to have been achieved. Only then can the company charge you fees or accept your payment.

You don't have to pay a company to fix or improve your credit

You can dispute mistakes in your credit reports yourself, for free. You don't have to pay a credit repair company to do it for you.

The first step is to visit annualcreditreport.com to get your free credit reports from the three nationwide credit reporting companies. You can see your credit reports online, for free, each week. Look over the reports to spot errors. Then, use our [sample letters](#), [video](#), and [answers to common questions](#) to help with resolving problems.

Errors can be investigated and resolved, but credit repair companies cannot legally get information removed if it is accurate and timely. If errors on your credit reports are not the problem, the CFPB has tips for [building and keeping a good credit score](#).

What you can do:

- Turn to our [online guides and tools](#) for information on how to dispute inaccurate information on your credit reports along with ways to improve your credit scores.
- Submit a complaint about financial products or services [online](#) or by phone at (855) 411-CFPB (2372)
- If you work or formerly worked for a company and believe the company has violated federal consumer financial protection laws, send what you know to whistleblower@cfpb.gov.

Campaign Stresses Benefits of EV Chargers for Workplaces

The U.S. Department of Energy has launched an educational campaign that stresses the benefits of installing [electric vehicle](#) charging ports in employee parking areas at workplaces.

September 15, 2023 • [Skip Descant](#)



Fresh educational campaigns are underway to inform and assist employers on the benefits of installing [electric vehicle](#) charging ports in employee parking areas.

[CALSTART](#), along with [Forth Mobility](#) in Oregon and Equitable Mobility Powering Opportunities for Workplace Electrification Readiness (EMPOWER), a project organized by the Clean Cities Coalition, are all part of an effort by the U.S. Department of Energy to expand workplace charging. The overarching campaign is called Charge@Work.

“One of the key things we can do inside of our education and outreach is point the way toward incentives that exist at the state level, or utility service territory level. Because there are plenty of Level 2 incentives,” said Jason Zimbler, director of light-duty EV vehicles at CALSTART, a clean transportation nonprofit, calling attention to Level 2 charging, the most common mid-level home and passive charging technology.

The effort has been picked up and endorsed by a mix of public- and private-sector employers, including Fairfax County, Va. The county has 102 Level 2 charging ports at government facilities, which include public community centers, parking garages and office buildings, said John Silcox, public information officer at the Fairfax County Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination. Of those, 71 of the charging ports are publicly accessible at eight different buildings. Another 100-plus charging spaces are being planned over the next year.

The EV charging ports in publicly accessible county parking lots and garages are available for anyone to use on a first-come basis. The cost is 30-cents per kilowatt hour, which means it would cost about \$20 to fully charge a vehicle like the popular Chevrolet Bolt.

“The county hasn’t yet installed any chargers specifically for employee use; that is something the county will pursue in parallel with additional charging for the public,” said Silcox in an email, noting that most of the EV chargers are seeing “strong use,” but it’s difficult to distinguish the visiting public and workers. “We are still gathering information to gain insight into overall use of EV charging.”