



DATE: May 23rd, 2020
TO: Council Members, City of Falls Church
FROM: Environmental Sustainability Council (ESC), Andrew N Young, Chair
SUBJECT: Funding for Annual Recycling Extravaganza and Household Hazardous Waste Event

The ESC learned during its 21 May 2020 meeting that none of the FY21 budget options under discussion include resources to cover the cost of the planned October 2020 Recycling Extravaganza & Household Hazardous Waste event. While understanding the extraordinary fiscal tradeoffs facing the City Staff and City Council to address the current economic crisis, the **ESC strongly advocates that the October 2020 event, in some form or fashion, still be held.**

The original motivation for the Recycling Extravaganza & Household Hazardous Waste event was to reduce the likelihood within the City of Falls Church to have hazardous waste be discarded into storm or sewer drains, into the soil, or with regular refuse and recycling. The annual event is now anticipated by residents to be their solution to this environmental challenge, with over **900 cars participating in 2019.**

Last year's large public turnout (along with changes in terms with certain hazardous waste vendors) drove significantly higher costs than anticipated, which would have precluded the event from taking place even in the more optimistic FY21 budget initially proposed. To help defray the cost of staff overtime seen in previous years, **the ESC is committed to recruiting volunteers to help staff the event**, thus reducing the overall cost to the City.

The ESC was informed that in past years collection of hazardous waste was supported by the Stormwater fund, which seems appropriate since the event helps meet Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) requirements. The ESC would encourage City staff to revisit this alternative as a solution to funding the event.

The ESC will remain engaged with City Staff to look at innovative ways to reduce and/or offset operating costs for the Recycling Extravaganza & Household Hazardous Waste event going forward. Having a scaled back event would be better than cancelling it completely. As always, **the ESC appreciates the City Council's support and interest in strong environmental programs for the City of Falls Church.**