

## 2026 Candidate Recommendation Process

Member Briefing — June 4, 2026

**NOTE: THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT BE THE MOST UP TO DATE, PLEASE REVIEW APPROVED DOCUMENTS**

### OUR VALUES — WHAT WE LOOK FOR IN EACH CATEGORY

*These are the ten areas we evaluate every candidate on. All ten apply equally. Incumbents are scored on their actual record, not their platform alone.*

#### 1. Housing

*The committee supports proactive city action to expand housing and end homelessness for all — especially low-income residents, seniors, disabled individuals, young families, and students. Candidates should recognize Fairfax City's housing shortage and demonstrate support for a range of housing types. We look for candidates who engage with real policy tools: zoning reform, ADUs, nonprofit partnerships, and dedicated funding for affordable housing development.*

#### 2. Diversity & Inclusion

*The committee believes strongly in diversity and inclusion. City boards and commissions should reflect the full makeup of Fairfax City, and City events should celebrate its cultural richness. Candidates should speak directly to protecting our most vulnerable communities — including immigrant and LGBTQ+ neighbors — from federal-level threats. An ideal candidate names these values clearly and commits to defending them using the city's available authority. Candidates should also publicly support the three constitutional amendments on the ballot.*

#### 3. Environment & Stormwater

*The City has a direct responsibility to address local environmental challenges, including stormwater management and green infrastructure, as well as broader climate commitments. We want candidates who understand Fairfax City's specific infrastructure vulnerabilities and connect them to a larger sustainability vision — including tree canopy expansion, fleet electrification, EV infrastructure, and a city-level climate action plan.*

#### 4. City Employees

*City employees deserve fair treatment, competitive pay and benefits, and the right to organize. Three commitments are evaluated: (1) emergency pay continuity during state-declared emergencies; (2) support for a collective bargaining ordinance; and (3) demonstrated respect for city staff in public statements and day-to-day conduct. How a candidate treats city employees reflects their values as a leader.*

#### 5. Regional Partnerships

*The committee values the City's partnerships with Fairfax County, FCPS, George Mason University, NOVA Parks, VDOT, and the Northern Virginia Planning District. The city's small size, Virginia's Dillon Rule framework, and reliance on state and federal grants make strong intergovernmental relationships a practical necessity. We want candidates who will actively steward and grow these relationships — not take actions that put them at risk.*

#### 6. Growth, Zoning & Development

*Smart, forward-looking growth is essential to the City's long-term vitality. We support Small Area Plans, new housing and businesses, and key infrastructure investment. Candidates should demonstrate willingness to push back against reflexive opposition to change and prioritize the city's future needs over nostalgia for the status quo. The question is not whether the city will grow — it is whether that growth is planned, equitable, and aligned with community values.*

#### 7. Transportation

*The committee supports building a city that is safe and accessible for people who walk, bike, take transit, or cannot drive. We want candidates with concrete ideas for improving the CUE bus system, making it genuinely possible to live and move around Fairfax City without a car, and expanding EV infrastructure throughout the city.*

#### 8. Charter Reform

*The committee believes the City's charter and governing structure should be treated as living documents — subject to periodic, thoughtful re-examination. We look for candidates who approach structural governance with genuine openness rather than reflexive resistance to change. Areas worth examining include term length, staggered terms for continuity, the Mayor's role in votes, and other structural innovations that could strengthen long-term institutional stability.*

#### 9. Responsible Governance & Ethics

*Good governance is a prerequisite for everything else on this rubric. We want candidates who demonstrate genuine commitment to competent, ethical, and accountable decision-making — not just in their platforms but in how they have behaved in prior roles. The committee also supports codifying Council rules and procedures (including when the Mayor votes and public speaking limits) into the City Code so they cannot be unilaterally reset by each new Council.*

#### 10. City Budget Priorities

*We look for intellectual honesty: candidates who name real trade-offs, acknowledge fiscal constraints, and understand the difference between campaign promises and governing decisions. Vague pledges to 'prioritize everything' or 'eliminate waste and fraud' are not acceptable. Candidates who want to grow services must say what they'd tax; those who want to cut taxes must say what they'd cut.*

THE EVALUATION RUBRIC — HOW SCORING WORKS

Each of the 10 categories is scored on the following scale:

|   |                                                                         |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 0 | No answer, non-answer, or actively opposes the committee's position.    |
| 1 | Acknowledges the issue but offers only generalities or platitudes.      |
| 2 | Solid position with some specificity. May not address all dimensions.   |
| 3 | Specific, well-reasoned, and fully aligned with committee expectations. |

Score thresholds determine how a recommendation is issued:

|             |                                                                                         |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 25 +        | Automatic recommendation unless 2 of 5 Select Committee members object.                 |
| 15 – 24     | Recommendation upon unanimous Select Committee vote; otherwise goes to full membership. |
| 14 or below | Unanimous committee vote AND a majority vote of the full membership required.           |

**Bonus points:** +3 for self-applying · +3 for current active CFDC membership · +1 for past CFDC membership. Maximum possible score: 37.

THE RECOMMENDATION PROCESS — STEP BY STEP

What is a CFDC Recommendation?

A CFDC Recommendation is a formal expression of the Committee's support for a candidate's fitness for office, based on a structured evaluation of their publicly stated positions, record in office where applicable, and alignment with Democratic values. A recommendation does not commit any individual member to provide financial support or volunteer time, and the absence of a recommendation is not necessarily an expression of opposition. More than one candidate for the same office may receive a recommendation.

STEP 1 — How Candidates Enter the Process

There are two ways a candidate can be evaluated:

**Pathway 1: Self-Application.** Any candidate may voluntarily apply by submitting a Candidate Application Form, which includes short-answer questions tied to each rubric category. By applying, the candidate consents to the process and agrees to respond in good faith to follow-up questions. Application deadline for Round 1 is June 17, 2026 (24 hours after the candidate filing period closes). Round 2 applications are accepted through July 31.

**Pathway 2: Member Nomination.** Any candidate can also be nominated by two or more active CFDC members in good standing using the official Member Nomination Form. The nominated candidate is then notified in writing within 48 hours and given 5 business days to voluntarily submit responses before scoring begins. Declining to participate does not stop the evaluation, the Select Committee will score based on publicly available information.

*Candidates restricted from participating due to the federal Hatch Act or comparable state or local employment law will instead be connected by*

STEP 2 — The Select Committee

All scoring is conducted by the CFDC 2026 Select Committee on Recommendation, a five-member body consisting of:

- The CFDC Chair (ex officio)
- The CFDC Vice Chair (ex officio)
- Three At-Large Members elected by the full membership at the June 2026 membership meeting

Each Select Committee member scores each candidate independently using the rubric. Individual scores are averaged per category and rounded to the nearest half-point. Members must recuse themselves from evaluating any candidate to whom they have a family, financial, or personal relationship that could affect their impartiality. If a recusal drops the committee below quorum, the Chair appoints a substitute.

*Select Committee deliberations are confidential. Finalized score sheets are shared with all active members but are not released publicly without a majority vote.*

*members of the select committee on their own behalf to judge policy positions.*

### **STEP 3 — Scoring, Clarification & Timeline**

Round 1 covers all candidates who apply or are nominated by June 20. The Select Committee completes scoring by June 25, score sheets are distributed to all active members on June 26, and the member objection window closes at midnight June 27. The committee then deliberates and votes on recommendations between June 28 and July 1.

Round 2 covers candidates entering the process between June 21 and July 31. These are evaluated on a rolling basis with a 10-business-day scoring deadline after the application or nomination is received. Members have 24 hours after score sheet distribution to file objections, and the Select Committee votes within 5 business days.

If the Select Committee cannot clearly score a candidate's position on a category, it will submit written clarification questions. Candidates have a minimum of 3 business days to respond. A non-response is not penalized beyond the inability to improve the score — the committee scores from what is available and notes the outreach in the score sheet.

### **STEP 4 — Objections, Votes & Announcements**

Any active CFDC member in good standing may file a written objection to a scoring determination within the applicable window. A valid objection must identify the specific category being challenged and explain the basis. The Select Committee must acknowledge the objection within 24 hours, review it against the scoring documentation, and issue a written response explaining any adjustment or the reason no change was made.

Recommendations are issued based on the score thresholds described in the rubric section. Where a Special Membership Meeting is required — for borderline scores or contested recommendations — it must be held no later than August 15, 2026. Only active members in good standing may vote at those meetings, and a virtual attendance option must be available.

Once finalized, recommendations are publicly announced within 48 hours. The announcement includes the candidate's name, office, and the fact of the recommendation. Individual scores are not publicly disclosed without a majority membership vote. All process records are retained by the Committee Chair.

---

**SEE THE FULL LENGTH RUBRIC & PROCESS DOCUMENT:**

**[cityfairfaxdems.com/members](https://cityfairfaxdems.com/members)**

**Password: BlueFFX26**