



Media Contact

Serrita Farnsworth

media@fairfaxcityeda.org

(571) 455-8321

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Innovation finds a new home in Fairfax

The City of Fairfax, George Mason University, and the Fairfax City Economic Development Authority commit to a new Mason Enterprise Center-Fairfax, announce relocation to Class A office space in Northfax

Fairfax City, VA. - October 11, 2021 - The Fairfax City Economic Development Authority (EDA) announced today that it has executed a new memorandum of agreement to continue operations of the Mason Enterprise Center - Fairfax "MEC-Fairfax", along with its institutional partners George Mason University and the City of Fairfax and has signed a lease for the relocation and modernization of the MEC - Fairfax within the city. These EDA actions ensure that Fairfax City remains at the forefront of business incubation and innovation in Northern Virginia, provide a new state-of-the-art, central location for the MEC network of business incubators, and further commit the City and George Mason University to a deeper and expanded partnership.

The new memorandum of agreement streamlines the operations of the MEC - Fairfax and establishes standards and procedures for business attraction, growth, and retention benefitting the city and the larger MEC network. The reinforced and expanded partnership is the result of an 11-month visioning process that brought together stakeholders from George Mason University, the City of Fairfax, and the EDA.

The new lease will facilitate the relocation of the MEC - Fairfax from its current facility to 15,383 square feet of Class A office space in the city's Northfax district at 10300 Eaton Place. The relocation of the MEC-Fairfax also includes relocating the sponsored programs to a 6,680-square-foot space at 10306 Eaton Place. The programs include the SBDC (Small Business

Development Center, a federal SBA sponsored program) Virginia State Office, the Mason SBDC counseling center, the State Office of the Procurement Technical Assistance Program (a DLA program), the International Business Development Program (under the SBDC), and the Innovation Commercialization Assistance Program (ICAP), also under the SBDC State Office.

The MEC and the City's economic development teams will leverage the new location and state-of-the-art facilities in identifying and incubating new businesses with high growth and mentorship potential. The new MEC - Fairfax buildout will be completed by November 2022 when they move into the space.

"George Mason is proud to be continuing this 25-year-old partnership with the City of Fairfax and the Economic Development Authority to grow small businesses in the region. The Mason Enterprise Center has worked in partnership to serve the community by providing services and access to university resources and talent in the support of the local economy – and we look forward to continuing the work through our next chapter of this shared mission" said **Dr. Gregory Washington, President of George Mason University.**

"We value the contribution of the MEC partnership in Fairfax. The economic activity that it has generated in its previous iterations led to the unanimous support of the City Council when considering the modified agreement for the next decade of operations" said **David L. Meyer, Mayor of the City of Fairfax.** "The MEC partnership is representative of our city's desire to help businesses with the resources necessary to start, grow, and succeed. I applaud the EDA and GMU for taking these important steps."

"This is a monumental step in the evolution of business incubation in Northern Virginia. The new MEC - Fairfax, powered by George Mason University, will solidify Fairfax City's place in the innovation economy currently exploding in Northern Virginia" said **Christopher Bruno, Fairfax City Director of Economic Development.** "This partnership will allow Fairfax to continue working to attract new business startups and businesses looking to grow within the center of our metropolitan region."

"Today's announcement is significant for the Economic Development Authority. Our ongoing support of the MEC, including leading relocation efforts to a modern, flexible facility, represent our prioritization of the GMU-City partnership and our commitment to growing small businesses in Fairfax" said **Kathleen Paley, Chair of the Economic Development Authority.** "On a macro-scale, the relocation of the MEC is symbolic of our belief that the Northfax district, for which the city recently adopted a new small area plan, is poised to become the next great commercial activity center in Northern Virginia."

"On behalf of the ownership of Willowood Plaza I & II, we are very excited to welcome the Fairfax MEC to the project. We are pleased that the full renovation of the buildings along with the brand-new retail center (Point 50) across Eaton Place has resulted in such a dynamic and prestigious organization joining our roster of tenants" said **John Gordon, President, Polinger Development Co..**

The EDA was advised by Ken Biberaj and David Cornbrooks of Savills. The EDA was represented by James Landon, Esq. in the lease negotiation process and Crystal Kramer, Esq. in the memorandum of agreement negotiations, both of Offit Kurman.

About The Organizations

The Fairfax City Economic Development Authority is an independent agency administered by a commission appointed by the City Council to promote economic development activity within Fairfax. The EDA helps attract businesses to the city, encourages and develops programs that foster connections between businesses, residents, and visitors of Fairfax, and spearheads innovative programs and strategies devoted to positioning Fairfax City as an ideal location to start, grow, and scale a business. It is a founding member of the Northern Virginia Economic Development Alliance.

The Mason Enterprise Center-Fairfax is a partnership between the City of Fairfax, George Mason University, and the Fairfax City Economic Development Authority. The MEC-Fairfax is the flagship location for the Mason Enterprise Center network which offers a unique combination of programs, services, and resources for entrepreneurs of varying experience levels. The MEC is primarily focused on small business services, incubation and acceleration, entrepreneurship, technology ventures, and international businesses. The George Mason University tech mentorship program, ICAP, based at the MEC-Fairfax, is set to expand support to early-stage tech companies across the Commonwealth, with help from a GO Virginia grant.

George Mason University is Virginia's largest public research university. Its innovative and inclusive academic community is committed to creating a more just, free, and prosperous world. Located near Washington, D.C., Mason enrolls 39,000 students from 130 countries and all 50 states. Mason has grown rapidly over the past half century and is recognized for its innovation and entrepreneurship, remarkable diversity, and commitment to accessibility. It is ranked as the most innovative university in the state according to the latest US News and World Report Ranking.

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