

Planning Commission Committee and Workshop Questions

February 27, 2023

1. Who owns Electric Charging Stations. Who determines the sites for EV stations? Who installs the infrastructure? Who maintains it? Who monitors/tracks usages?

The Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC), DPWES building Design Branch, and Department of Vehicle Services (DVS) coordinate to determine the location of projects using both DVS forecast data of vehicle projections (how many EVs will be purchased and where will they be located) and DPWES projects underway or planned. DPWES is responsible for the installation of the infrastructure to support the EV station. DVS is responsible for installing, programming, and monitoring the charging station. The County has a contract with ChargePoint to provide maintenance, but DVS contacts ChargePoint when necessary. DVS monitors the account and provides usage data to OEEC.

2. Air quality in County facilities.

The County's Facilities Management Department (FMD) and their contractors provide and replace HVAC filters per manufacturer recommendations. Filter replacement is built into the FMD preventive maintenance program. HEPA filters are only used in systems designed to receive and operate with such filters (negative pressure rooms). All other filters are typically MERV-13 filters. Please note: High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters are the true high end of filtration and as such they drastically restrict airflow and should only be matched to a compatible system.

In addition, the County building's HVAC systems exchange outdoor air for indoor air in a manner that is sufficient to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Our facilities utilize outdoor air-supplied rooftop units and commercial exhaust fans that, in combination, "refresh" building air over regular intervals. All building ventilation systems are maintained per standard protocols for optimal indoor quality, and HVAC filters are replaced every three months.

3. BACs – when reviewed, decisions on salary increases, procedures.

The last PC increase was in 2016, and before that in 2000. Salary increases are generally initiated and approved by the PC it has been included in the budget as an administrative adjustment. Jill Cooper is looking into this issue and will circle back to Commission Ulfelder.

4. What is the County currently doing to pursue the Build Back Better funding?

The County is very interested in pursuing any Build Back Better funding that is available to support infrastructure needs. Staff has been working with Rachel Flynn, Deputy County Executive for Planning and Development to identify funding for the County and/or competitive grant opportunities through the infrastructure bill. Department of Management and Budget staff is also working with our Financial Advisor, PFM, to determine what might be available and develop a process for pursuing and tracking Build Back Better funds.

5. What is the differential between the Bond Buyer Index and the County interest rate on bonds last year in comparison to this year’s bond sale?

On January 19, 2022, the County conducted a General Obligation bond sale and received an interest rate of 1.75 percent. The Bond Buyer Index is a daily index of municipal bond prices and is based on the prices of 40 recently issued and actively traded long-term municipal bonds. The Bond Buyer Index stood at 2.19 percent on the day of the sale, a differential of 0.44 basis points. Exactly one year later, on January 19, 2023, the County conducted a General Obligation bond sale and received an interest rate of 2.98 percent. The Bond Buyer Index stood at 3.33 percent on the day of the sale, a differential of 0.35 basis points. The differential for this sale is smaller compared to prior County bond deals, and representative of the tight credit spreads in the current bond market. This is not unique to the County, and true of all municipal issuers at this time. Over the past thirty years, the differential between the rate on the County’s bonds and the Bond Buyer’s 20 bond index has averaged 0.81 percent.

6. Can you provide more information on COVID testing being done by the State at the wastewater plant? With what frequency is the state providing reports to us and what are the results?

With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) coordinates wastewater surveillance for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) at 25 sites around the state. Several are in Northern Virginia, including at least one location that serves the western portion of Fairfax County. Weekly data report the amount of virus found in the samples from the “sewershed” and are useful primarily for tracking trends – whether virus levels are increasing or decreasing. Trends from wastewater generally predict (i.e. – precede) changes in COVID-19 rates from diagnostic testing by about a week.

7. How much of the Transportation CIP is dedicated to sidewalks/trails?

The Board approved Transportation Priority Plan (TPP)FY20-25 projects total \$215 million exclusively for active transportation projects. Additionally, all major roadway capital, spot/intersection projects have active transportation components in the scope (examples include adding missing sidewalk/shared-use-path links, crosswalks at intersections, curb ramps etc.). Also, the Board recently approved \$100 million for active transportation projects. More information can be found on Pages 234 and 245 of the CIP.

Project Categories	Total (in millions)
Major Roadway Capital (e.g., widenings, extensions, interchanges)	\$1,626.9
Spot/Intersection Improvements	\$185.1
Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects	\$215.3
Transit Capital and Operating	\$837.2
Debt Service	\$78.5
Project Support Needs	\$68.3
Other Transportation Needs (e.g., studies and planning, traffic calming, etc.)	\$9.8
Reserve/Contingency	\$14.9
Total	\$3,036.0

8. What are the realistic costs for sidewalks? Is it really \$10 million per mile?

While the Department of Transportation does not have a hard average, the range for the cost of sidewalks per mile are between \$5M-\$10M+. There are numerous factors that play into the cost: Major Factors that influence a 'cost/mile' include:

- Utility impacts and costs to relocate those utilities, if required.
- Cost of Land Rights (right-of-way, temporary and permanent easements) that may be needed for the project.
- Complexity of the design (do we need retaining walls, pedestrian bridges across streams, modifications to existing structures, etc.)
- Are new traffic signals installed or just modifications to existing traffic signals (e.g. add pedestrian crossing signals)?
- Storm Drainage and Storm Water Management to meet State/County code(s) and requirements.
- Permitting Requirements (for water quality/quantity; environmental impacts and mitigation).

9. Is the Build Back Better program a good source of funding for pedestrian improvements – pedestrians are having trouble getting to the Silver line station in Reston.

FCDOT is constantly pursuing federal discretionary grants to fund various transportation projects in the county, ranging from sidewalk/trail projects to major roadway projects. Most recently, FCDOT applied for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program for 2023. Two projects were submitted, one that is a cycle track project along the Sunrise Valley Drive corridor. The new state-of-the-art bicycle facility will significantly improve bicycle access to three new Metrorail stations in the DC metropolitan area, improve walkability and active transportation safety in a rapidly urbanizing transit corridor, and connect neighborhoods with employment, commercial and cultural centers, schools, nature and leisure opportunities, as well as long distance and local bicycle trails. Fairfax County is seeking \$13.8 million in RAISE grant funding to help complete the project.

10. When did the South County Police Station get approved in the CIP process?

The South County Police Station/Animal Shelter was approved by the voters as part of the 2015 Public Safety Bond. The new Police Station with animal services was proposed in the southern part of the County to serve a growing population. Police service in the County was being served by the Franconia and West Springfield Stations, with Franconia being one of the busiest stations in the County. This additional South County Police stations will enable the Department to organize smaller patrol areas and decrease response times throughout the County. The station will also house a new animal shelter and animal control officers. Prior to this facility, there was one animal shelter supporting an estimated 5,500 companion animals and 2,000 wildlife animals per year. Animals from south county were being transported long distances to the existing shelter.

11. FCPS - where did the students go when there was a drop in enrollment during COVID? What was the geographic distribution of students lost?

The Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Facilities and Membership Dashboards include a migration dashboard to view information on student migration and summer withdrawals. For School Year (SY) 2022-23, the top reasons for summer withdrawals are to transfer to a non-Virginia public school in the US, transfer to a non-FCPS public school in Virginia, and to transfer to a school outside the US. To view information by a geographic breakdown (FCPS Region, Pyramid, or by School) on the FCPS Facilities and Membership Dashboards, please visit <https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/facilities-planning-future/facilities-and-membership-dashboards> and click on the Migration Dashboard". It is important to know that FCPS continues to add, on average, over 300 students per month. This growth is higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic.

12. How many students living in Tysons go to schools somewhere else. Please provide a breakdown of Elementary, Middle and High Schools.

The Schools section of the Fairfax County Tysons Tracker displays the number of students residing in Tysons from SY 2017-18 to SY 2021-22. Due to the publication date of the Tysons Tracker, there is a one-year lag regarding school-related information. For SY 2022-23, the number of students residing in Tysons is 2,058 students (1,113 ES students, 302 MS students, and 643 HS students). To view information on the Fairfax County Tysons Tracker, please visit <https://tysons-tracker-fairfaxcountygis.hub.arcgis.com/>.

13. What are the expected number of students planned for the Tysons Elementary school.

At this time, the boundaries of the Tysons Elementary School are yet to be determined and would be determined closer to the construction of the facility. The adopted Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, for Tysons identifies a need for a new elementary school by 2030, a second elementary school by 2050, and capacity enhancements at one or more middle schools by 2050 and at one or more high schools by 2040.

To view information on the adopted Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan for Tysons, please visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/sites/planning-development/files/assets/compplan/area2/tysons.pdf>.

To view information on the Fairfax County Tysons Tracker, please visit <https://tysons-tracker-fairfaxcountygis.hub.arcgis.com/>.