

Fairfax County Trails, Sidewalks and Bikeways Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 9, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Location: Remote Meeting via Cisco Webex Video Conferencing
Website: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/trails>

Committee Members in Attendance: Ken Comer (At-Large) (Chair), Bob Cosgriff (Braddock/Vice-Chair), James Albright (Mason), Stiven Foster (Providence), Jim Klein (Mount Vernon), Karl Liebert (Springfield), Dyami Pipkin (Lee), Beth Iannetta (Fairfax County Park Authority), Shawn Newman (Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling), Howard Albers (Washington Area Bicyclists Association), Debby Cohen (Fairfax Area Disability Services Board), Andrea Reese (Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority), Mark Tipton (Fairfax Council of Community Associations)

Committee Members Absent: Karen Ampeh (Sully District), Alex Rough (Hunter Mill), Soledad Portillo (Northern Virginia Builders Association), Kathryn McDaniel (Clifton Horse Society)

Staff in Attendance: Chris Wells, Nicole Wynands, David Loss, Tom Biesiadny (FCDOT); Rachel Flynn (Dep. County Executive)

Others in attendance: None

Call to Order: This remote meeting, the seventh since Governor Northam's State of Emergency declaration of 12 March, 2020 prohibited all in-person gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was called to order by Ken Comer (Chair) at 7:00 p.m. This is the second remote meeting using Cisco Webex video conferencing. Mr. Comer then read the recitals required under Virginia Code § 15.2-1413, the uncodified Fairfax County Board of Supervisors emergency ordinance adopted on 14 April, 2020, and the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Virginia Code §§ 2.2-3700 to -3714) pertaining to meetings that must be conducted remotely during a declared State of Emergency as being essential to the continuity of government. As required by the legal guidance, Mr. Comer introduced a motion, which was seconded, that this meeting is required for conducting an essential governmental function and must be conducted remotely. He requested that the motion be approved by acclamation and hearing no objections, declared the motion approved. Mr. Comer next conducted a roll call to determine which members, staff, and other participants were in attendance and that every member, staff, and other participants could hear every other attendee clearly. Following this roll call and determining that a quorum was reached, Mr. Comer moved that the committee confirm that every participant could hear every other participant clearly. The motion was seconded; Mr. Comer called for approval by acclamation and hearing no objections, declared the motion approved.

Approval of the Minutes: There were no meetings in April or May, 2020, as a result of the governor's State of Emergency declaration. February, June, July August, September, October and November, 2020 meeting minutes will need to be approved at a later date.

Presentation: Deputy County Executive Rachel Flynn provided an overview of the relationship between and among three factors: transportation, land use, and the economy. Transportation (specifically street design) affects land use, which affects the economic vitality of the community. She gave historic examples in Fairfax County going back to the early colonial period in the port city of Alexandria and the interior portions of Fairfax County and continuing through the agricultural/rural period to the advent of suburbs and the construction of the Metro system. Road planning was dominated by the automobile, with discrete areas for residential, shopping, and office space. She cited Reston, which was a planned community designed to be somewhat less automobile-centric. At present, we are in the era of "new modernism" which is marked by a return to mixed-use development, with residential clustered around transit stations, and use of an urban-grid street design (as opposed to the suburban design). She gave as examples the Mosaic District in Merrifield and the Tysons master plan, as well as the plans for the Amazon HQ2 in neighboring Arlington County. She stated that we need "smarter streets" to make areas more walkable. She mentioned equity issues in pedestrian facilities and alluded to the "Complete Street" concept. She brought up the "level of service" method currently used by VDOT (measuring 'through-put') and said that perhaps other metrics should be used instead of speed limits (e.g., shorter blocks, traffic-calming, lower speed limits, bike lands and sidewalks separated from traffic and from each other.

Following her comments there was a Q & A session. Committee members asked various questions or made comments on Ms. Flynn's presentation.

Chris Wells mentioned that the committee can still contribute ideas to the Capital Trails Coalition. He also briefed the committee on the Alexandria Families for Safe Streets group which is trying to start a Fairfax County branch. Chris will try to get Mike Doyle (founder) to address the committee in 2021.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.