

# Board of Supervisors Revitalization Committee

October 8, 2019

Government Center Conference Room 11

Supervisor Storck called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm

Board Members present: Co-chairs Jeff McKay and Daniel Storck; Chairman Sharon Bulova, Supervisors John Foust, Cathy Hudgins, Kathy Smith, and Linda Smyth

## **1. Update on CRD Maintenance Program (PJ Tierno, DPWES):**

Patrick (PJ) Tierno, Program Manager for CRD Maintenance, DPWES, said that since the previous Revitalization Committee meeting, staff has expanded current services to include more maintenance of infrastructure and landscaping beyond the County's original inventory. He said that the two approved positions to implement and expand the CRD Maintenance Program were filled in FY 2019, including the hiring of PJ as the Program Manager.

PJ summarized the longer-term implementation plan for achieving the ultimate CRD Maintenance Program. He outlined the new organization and current staffing for the program, as well as the current budget and available Sinking Fund monies.

PJ recapped the street and sidewalk sweeping efforts over the past year, presented results from the monthly street light inspections conducted in each area, detailed the sidewalk trip hazards corrected in all the areas, and highlighted the planned paver repairs, tree box repairs, sidewalk replacements/repairs, and bus shelter and bench replacements to be made in the next year. PJ mentioned that plans are being developed to redesign the Route 50 pedestrian bridge to increase safety but that in the meantime they are addressing current litter/refuse issues on a regular basis.

PJ concluded with a summation of challenges moving forward with the program. He reported that the program's expansion is contingent on expanded funding in the future. He noted that one of his maintenance contracts was expiring in the next year and that he anticipates contract rates will increase significantly. He also noted that a new contractor would have a learning curve as they got familiar with each area. He said that, in general, they continue to struggle with contractor reliability, which will require greater oversight to overcome. Finally, he hopes to move the program in the direction of an asset management approach in the coming years.

Chairman Sharon Bulova said we should be making the case for VDOT to address their infrastructure problems. She asked if we are rushing in to take care of a safety problem that they should be addressing. At the very least, she felt we should be capturing the cost of doing this work. Supervisor Dan Storck concurred and said we want a running total of costs to share with state delegates.

Supervisor Jeff McKay asked if staff could use the inventory they have to flag certain issues with VDOT. He asked if there was an end-game to all of this. He stated that in the long-run the idea is to have more and more of these areas under the county system. He suggested that there be a conversation with VDOT to bring up the standards and then have the county take over the maintenance. He also raised the question (for Tom Biesiadny) regarding the bus shelter advertising contract and wondered how that was going.

Supervisor Linda Smyth asked about the tree box design shown for Bland Street in Springfield and asked how the trees will grow. PJ responded that there is a wider space around the tree trunks that will allow the trees to grow.

Supervisor John Foust said he thought this is an awesome program and that staff was making good progress. He noted that VDOT will repair sidewalks if they are truly dangerous but that they do not actually repair anything to our standards. He stated that they have all concurred that VDOT was not going to be doing maintenance and therefore the county should continue to do it.

Supervisor Dan Storck said that while no one has any illusions about VDOT doing the maintenance work, the county should still capture the financial consequences of assuming this work. Dan added that it would be helpful to share our accomplishments.

## **2. Urban Design Best Practices and Innovations, Including Ecological Spines, JoAnne Fiebe, Community Revitalization Section, DPD:**

JoAnne Fiebe, Senior Revitalization Program Manager, Community Revitalization Section, DPD, stated she would be sharing some of the work they are doing as they develop urban design guidelines for revitalization areas of the county. She stressed that the work staff has done has improved the knowledge and state-of-the-art practice of urban design and has resulted in the development of in-depth guidance for the creation of innovative linear park spaces.

She noted that she was not asking for them to take any action at this time. Rather, the purpose of her presentation was to share the evolving state of urban design practice and knowledge, and to make Board members aware that these ideas can be applied in any activity center in Fairfax County regardless of whether or not they have urban design guidelines.

JoAnne gave an overview of the process that got them here. She said she began by creating a series of technical teams with internal staff and external experts. They conducted research on national best practices. As a result of this work, she stated that staff feels they have advanced the knowledge and practice of streetscape and urban design in a way that will facilitate implementation. JoAnne then proceeded to share three specific examples of this with the Board, pertaining to street trees, stormwater infrastructure, and small-scale development.

JoAnne reported that from their research they learned that tree planting in urban areas requires different types of trees to survive the harsher urban conditions and also identified alternative ways to plant street trees when space is limited and minimum soil volumes cannot be met. Similarly, the technical teams identified way to provide more sustainable, environmentally-friendly stormwater facilities and ways to layer multiple uses and functions within one space. In regards to small-scale development, particularly development that may not realize the full build-out and desired land uses in the Comprehensive Plan, at least initially, JoAnne said the teams explored ways that even these types of developments could contribute towards the ultimate vision in some way. She said they have incorporated design suggestions for developers and business owners that can be workable on smaller sites and in ways that do not add significant costs to a project.

Next, JoAnne presented two innovative linear park concepts – the Livability Spine and the Ecological Spine – and described how their work will help these concepts be realized. She shared some of the cases studies that they evaluated and how they achieve the goal of providing accessible, useable and connected open space, often to underserved areas. JoAnne emphasized that these specialized linear parks can connect across multiple developments so that we can end up with larger, more useable open spaces rather than each development providing isolated public parks.

JoAnne went on to explain that Ecological Spines are linear parks and enhanced riparian corridors where there are surface or buried streams that are either day lighted or enhanced in order to provide a range of environmental, recreational, and educational functions. She said the teams developed four distinct configurations of Ecological Spines for the Richmond Highway area based on the variety of conditions, planned roads, and future buildings. She noted that the teams also identified suitable programming for these types of linear parks. JoAnne acknowledged that despite their extensive research and problem-solving, substantial implementation challenges remain that may require further research and/or partnerships between developers and the county.

JoAnne then described Livability Spines in greater detail. She said Livability Spines are roadways that include linear green spaces and plazas along their sides and span across multiple developments and/or blocks. She added that they can enhance multimodal mobility by integrating bicycle and pedestrian facilities and can provide spaces for outdoor activities and active uses. Joanne then presented how a Livability Spine could be implemented over several blocks with a range of active to passive programming, depending on adjacent uses, density and proximity to public uses and transit. She concluded with a summation of emerging issues and on-going documentation and research work still needed.

JoAnne opened it up for Board member discussion and questions. Supervisor Linda Smyth stated that she was a bit concerned about the idea of counting street trees in streetscapes towards the park requirement. She said we should not turn parks into streetscape.

Supervisor Jeffrey McKay brought up the concern of parks that are in floodable areas. He noted that the county already has parks that flood but are not designed to. He said that we should work with the Park Authority to make any flooding of park space intentional, not accidental.

Chairman Sharon Bulova thought that this was a fascinating presentation.

Supervisor Dan Storck said that this allows us to rethink and relook at what we have done as a suburban county. He said he was very excited about these concepts.

### **3. Tysons annual Report, Chris Caperton, Urban Centers Section, DPD:**

Chris Caperton, Director, Urban Centers Section, DPD, provided a brief overview of the Tysons 2018-2019 Progress report, which was previously distributed to Board members. He reported that 990,000 SF of development has been delivered since 2018, with another 3 million SF under construction, and 633,000 SF approved but not yet built. He noted that residential square footage was 28 percent of existing development in 2019, compared with only 23 percent in 2011; an overall improvement in the jobs to household balance.

In terms of public facilities, Chris stated that they received one major public facility commitment this year for a 5 acre signature park at the Mile development. He added that to-date, three athletic fields have been built with another 6.7 proffered. Other major projects completed and opened in 2019 were the Vesper Trail and the Jones Branch Connector.

Finally, Chris reported that Metrorail ridership was up 8 percent across all four Tysons stations from April 2018 to April 2019 and Capital Bike Share saw a 41 percent increase in total trip segments over this same period. All newly constructed developments required to report TDM in 2018 exceeded the required reductions.

Supervisor John Foust said it was a good report. He suggested adding background information on the evolution of the assessed value of Tysons. He said this helps to make visible the contribution Tysons is making towards the economic success of Fairfax County. County Executive Bryan Hill indicated that he gave a presentation to the Tyson Partnership a few weeks back that shows assessed values for Tysons, which can be made available to interested Board members.

Supervisor Catherine Hudgins pointed out that the new Vesper Trail provides a really seamless connection between Tysons and the Town of Vienna. Also, the trail from Pimmit Hills and Dolley Madison is underway to provide an alternative to driving to Tysons.

Supervisor Linda Smyth said that the office building connecting to the Jones Branch connector was staff's idea. She added that the signature park is wonderful and goes back to the genius of the Plan itself.

Chairman Sharon Bulova said the greatest element of the success story is the community engagement. She said the community created a vision that was translated into a plan. She added that she likes the idea of a ten year anniversary presentation.

Supervisor Storck adjourned the meeting at 2:55 pm.