

Alternatives for Improving Roadway Services in Fairfax

S. Still – Comments on FCDOT Report, January 17, 2011

After reading through the executive summary and some other sections, I would offer these comments:

- Phased approach: An incremental approach to assume some responsibilities in phases is a lower risk and prudent approach. The broad issues are very complex and will be difficult to sort out in advance. Taking on more limited responsibility will be a good test to uncover and address issues on funding, management, start-up, and ongoing operations.
- Funding concerns: Charts ES-1 and ES-2 show that the County certainly is not receiving an excess of expenditures relative to the Urban Systems formula, particularly for secondary roads. Should the County decide to start taking on certain functions, and self-fund these with County revenues, the disparity relative to Urban Systems formula becomes even wider. Therefore, one would hope that if the County takes on incremental services, it would receive a pro-rata amount of state funds to cover these incremental services. It would not be fair or prudent for the County to incrementally perform its own services, and then fund these services 100% from County funds.
- Identifying highest priority items: The report doesn't indicate what services are best candidates for incremental migration, or give the criteria for identifying the best candidates. Such criteria should be identified, for instance:
 - Greatest gaps in service between current VDOT levels and what the County expects, or could deliver on its own.
 - Greatest return per unit expense: what areas could the County provide greatest return relative to expense
 - High-payback, low-expense, low-risk: what areas are relatively easy to implement and have high value?

Overall, the FCDOT staff did an outstanding job on the report, and they are to be commended for their professionalism. In addition, they should be thanked for saving taxpayer funds to date by foregoing consulting fees through this initial phase.