Planning Commission Meeting
March 27, 2008
Verbatim Excerpt

FAIRFAX COUNTY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM MARK-UP

Decision Only During Commission Matters
(Public Hearing held on March 13, 2008)

Commissioner Lusk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This year's CIP process is looking at the County's five-year road map covering Fiscal Years 2009 through '13 and future fiscal years to 2018. The CIP serves as a planning instrument to identify needed capital projects and to coordinate the financing and timing of improvements in a way that maximizes the return to the public. This effort is undertaken with the specific purpose of creating, maintaining, and funding the County's present and future infrastructure requirements. The staff, led by Mr. Stalzer, and supported by Ms. Datta, Mr. Wales, Ms. Reed, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Jillson, and Mr. Needham, have done an exceptional job of formatting the CIP to identify individual projects based on supervisory district, function, and priority status ranking. Additionally, the staff is to be commended for the refinements that have been made to this year's CIP document, including two that I will note here: first, the addition of a new Public-Private Partnership section that will begin to address potential Public-Private Educational Facilities and Infrastructure proposals, or PPEAs, or other partnerships and their impact on current CIP projects; and secondly, the inclusion of a listing of projects proposed for funding in connection with the new Northern Virginia Transportation, or NVTA, transportation funds. This listing will be useful in tracking and prioritizing the Fairfax County based projects. However, due to a recent ruling by the Virginia State Supreme Court, the NVTA is now dependent on the General Assembly reconvening to establish a new funding mechanism to support the financing of these projects. As we've all heard, this year's review of the CIP is tempered by the ongoing financial issues facing both the local and national economies. In Fairfax County, we are experiencing the first year of what will be a series of years of declining revenue generation due to the shrinking values of both residential and commercial properties, impacted also by interest income reductions connected to federal fund rate changes and decreases in state aid. The ensuing shortfalls in the budget will place significant constraints on the County's ability to fund current and future CIP-related projects. With this in mind, the Planning Commission kicked off this year's review of the CIP by hosting a workshop on Thursday, March 6th. This workshop afforded the Commission the opportunity to hear first-hand from agency directors about their specific CIP-related needs and issues. We heard from eleven agencies about projects that are either under construction or planned to be built in the future. The presenting agencies included Schools, Parks, Housing, Fire and Rescue, Police, Community Services Board, Libraries, Transportation, Department of Vehicle Services, Department of Waste Water, and Stormwater Management. I'll share highlights from three agencies that presented at this workshop. First, the Fire and Rescue Department discussed its need for a replacement for the Herndon Fire and Rescue Station Number 4. And their second need was for additional logistics distribution and warehouse space. We also heard from the Police Department who identified a need for warehouse or storage for seized vehicles, evidence, logistical and housing of departmental vehicles. Third, we heard a ongoing request from the Community Services Board regarding a 1.5 million dollar allocation to support construction for a prototype barrier-free physically accessible group home. This facility

would support housing for six to eight residents with mental disabilities and who have decreased mobility due to aging and physical disabilities. As we move into the second step our review of the CIP, which was conducted on March 13th, 2008, the Planning Commission held its Capital Improvement Program public hearing to solicit feedback from residents of the County on this current proposed CIP. We had only one speaker who testified. His testimony focused on the funding needs of the Park Authority. The speaker noted that he was delighted the Park Authority was included in the current CIP and is specifically scheduled for a $500 million (*sic*) bond referendum item on the 2008 –

Commissioner de la Fe: Fifty million.

Commissioner Lusk: Fifty million. Pardon. I think I got excited about that. I think they'd be really excited as well. Pardon. Fifty million dollar bond referendum item on the 2008 fall ballot. While he is aware of the economic constraints facing the County, he reiterated the Park Authority's need to raise more funds in excess of the $50 million to address park related requirements as defined in the Park Authority Needs Assessment. On March 19th, 2008, the Planning Commission undertook the third step in our process by hosting a Committee meeting on the CIP to permit Planning Commissioners around this dais to ask questions and clarify the status of projects within this year's review of the CIP. There were a number of items that were discussed including: 1) reaffirm the redirection of $2 million dollars from BRAC Planning to planning for the South County Middle School; 2) support an expanded timeline for completion of the CIP's list of transportation projects pending review by the General Assembly regarding additional funding sources; 3) recommend updating the language in the CIP that addresses the NVTA, Laurel Hill, and the Woodburn Mental Health Center; 4) recommend restoration of $7.6 million in salary and operating costs associated with Stormwater Management agency to implement stormwater projects; and 5) restate the Planning Commission's support for the Community Services Board's request to build a prototype barrier-free group home. With this as background, Mr. Chairman, I would now like to now make a series of motions on the CIP. I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPROVAL OF THE ADVERTISED FAIRFAX COUNTY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR FISCAL YEARS 2009 THROUGH '13, WITH FUTURE YEARS TO 2018.

Commissioners Alcorn, de la Fe, and Lawrence: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. de la Fe, Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Alcorn. Is there a discussion of the motion? All those in favor of the motion to approve the CIP for years – Fiscal Years 2009 through 2013, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

Commissioner Lusk: Mr. Chairman, I further MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION REAFFIRM THE SCHOOL BOARD'S AMENDED CIP WHICH INCLUDES, AND I'LL HAVE FIVE POINTS HERE:

1) THE REDIRECTION OF $2 MILLION from black, excuse me, FROM BRAC PLANNING TO IMMEDIATELY BEGIN PLANNING FOR THE SOUTH COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL;

2) DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT AND COUNTY STAFF TO DEVELOP AND REPORT BACK ON CREATIVE OPTIONS, FEASIBILITY, AND COST ESTIMATES FOR THE SOUTH COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL;

3) DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO LEVERAGE FUNDS TO INITIATE AN EXPEDITIOUS CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE FOR THE SOUTH COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL WITHOUT DISPLACING ANY OTHER CURRENTLY FUNDED CIP PROGRAMS;

4) DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO INITIATE AN OBJECTIVE STUDY OF SCHOOL PROJECTS NOT CURRENTLY BONDED IN THE SCHOOLS CIP AND INCORPORATE THOSE FINDINGS IN THE FY 2010 CIP; and finally, Mr. Chairman, number

5) DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO RESEARCH AND ASSESS THE CONCEPT OF A ROLLING RENOVATION SCHEDULE AND THE COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS APPROACH.

Commissioners Alcorn, Lawrence, and Litzenberger: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. Litzenberger and Mr. Alcorn and Mr. Lawrence. Is there a discussion? Mr. Sargeant?

Commissioner Sargeant: Mr. Chairman, I would like to offer a friendly amendment at this point, if I might. On page 49 of the Advertised CIP, the description of "Projects Descriptions" for the School System, Item 11 includes a reference to the South County Middle School. I would like to ADD A FOLLOWING SENTENCE THAT WOULD STATE: "THE SCHOOL BOARD HAS DIRECTED $2 MILLION IN THE CIP TO BEGIN PLANNING FOR THE SOUTH COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL." This would make that language within the CIP consistent with the – with the motions.

Chairman Murphy: Accept that?

Commissioner Lusk: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I accept that.

Chairman Murphy: All seconds accept it? All right, thank you. Is there further discussion of the motion? All those in favor of that motion, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

Commissioner Lusk: Mr. Chairman, I further MOVE THE PLANNING COMMISSION SUPPORT THE EXPANDED TIME FRAME FOR COMPLETION OF THE CIP LIST OF TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS FROM THREE YEARS TO SIX YEARS, COVERING FY 2009 TO FY 2014, PENDING REVIEW AND DECISION BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGARDING ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR THOSE TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS.

Commissioners Alcorn, de la Fe, and Lawrence.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. de la Fe, Mr. Lawrence, and Mr. Alcorn. Is there a discussion of that motion? All those in favor of the motion, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

Commissioner Lusk: Mr. Chairman, I further MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND THAT LANGUAGE IN THE CIP REGARDING PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY AND PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LAUREL HILL AREA AND THE WOODBURN MENTAL HEALTH CENTER BE UPDATED TO INCLUDE THE MOST RECENT INFORMATION.

Commissioners Alcorn and Lawrence: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Alcorn. Is there a discussion of that motion? All those in favor of the motion, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

Commissioner Lusk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The County Executive's proposed FY 2009 budget proposes to divert a portion of the "Penny for Housing" and the "Penny for Stormwater" from direct capital projects to operational expenses. While the Planning Commission realizes that the County faces an extremely difficult financial decision – situation because of the general economic downturn, it believes that diverting these funds that are dedicated for capital funds to

operational expenses sets an undesirable precedent. The diversion relative to the "penny for housing" is relatively small; roughly $600,000. But the diversion relative to the "penny for stormwater" is much more significant; roughly $7.6 million – nearly one-third of the available funds. It is important that these capital project sources remain whole, especially during difficult financial times. The Planning Commission recognizes that keeping the "Penny for Housing and Stormwater" fundings – keeping the “Penny for Housing and Stormwater” funding to direct capital projects might not be possible without negatively affecting other worthwhile County priorities if the current 89-cent tax rate is maintained.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, I would further MOVE THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND THAT $.005, OR HALF A PENNY, BE ADDED TO THE PROPOSED 89-CENT TAX RATE IN ORDER TO FUND THE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES THAT THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE PROPOSES TO DIVERT FROM THE DEDICATED "PENNY FOR HOUSING" AND THE "PENNY FOR STORMWATER" CAPITAL PROJECTS.

Commissioners Alcorn and de la Fe: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. Alcorn and Mr. de la Fe. Is there a discussion of that motion? All those in favor of the motion, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? The Chair votes no.

Commissioner Lusk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I further MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION REAFFIRM THE PLANNING COMMISSION’S SUPPORT FOR THE COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD’S REQUEST TO BUILD A PROTOTYPE BARRIER-FREE GROUP HOME AND ENCOURAGE STAFF TO EXPLORE OPTIONS FOR FINANCING THIS PROJECT.

Commissioners Alcorn, de la Fe, and Lawrence: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. de la Fe, Mr. Lawrence, and Mr. Alcorn. Discussion? All those in favor of the motion, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

Commissioner Lusk: I further MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION SUPPORT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT’S REQUEST TO FIND AN ALTERNATIVE FIRE STATION

LOCATION FOR THE HERNDON FIRE STATION NUMBER 4 AND ENCOURAGE THE STAFF TO EXPLORE OPTIONS FOR FINANCING THIS PROJECT.

Commissioners Alcorn and Lawrence: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. Alcorn and Mr. Lawrence. Is there a discussion of that motion? All those in favor of the motion, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

Commissioner Lusk: Final motion, Mr. Chairman, I MOVE THE PLANNING COMMISSION SUPPORT THE JOINT REQUEST BY THE POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS TO LOCATE WAREHOUSE SPACE TO ACCOMMODATE VEHICLES, EVIDENCE, AND OTHER MATERIALS; ENCOURAGE THE STAFF TO EXPLORE OPTIONS FOR FINANCING THIS NEED; AND CONSIDER LOCATING THIS FACILITY IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE BRAC STUDY THAT IS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY.

Commissioners Alcorn, Lawrence, and Sargeant: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Sargeant, and Mr. Alcorn. Is there a discussion of that motion? All those in favor of the motion, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

Commissioner Lusk: Mr. Chairman, if I might just take a moment and thank the staff. This – this year, obviously we all know that it's a very trying and difficult year from an economic standpoint. And we recognize the difficulties with putting together the CIP under those constraints. I'm very grateful for the staff and their participation in the workshop as well as their participation in our committee and helping us pull together all the materials and answer the questions that we forwarded and brought forward to them. So, with that, I'm looking forward to next year. I know that the writing on the wall is that next year's going to be tougher. So, I hope that that's not the case. But we'll certainly be ready if that is. So, with that, I'll say thank you to the staff for their involvement and their engagement.

Chairman Murphy: I want to add my thanks to the staff for a great job and for preparing a very understandable and well put together CIP booklet. I mean, it's tremendous. It gets better every year. But I particularly want to thank Rodney Lusk for doing an outstanding job. I mean, you can

tell a lot of work was put into this motion. And we really appreciate the job he does chairing our CIP committee. Tremendous job. Thank you.

Commissioner Lusk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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(All motions, except for the fifth, carried unanimously with Commissioner Hall absent from the meeting.)

(The fifth motion carried by a vote of 10-1 with Commissioner Murphy opposed; Commissioner Hall absent from the meeting.)

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