

**Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Economic Initiatives Committee (EIC)
Fairfax County Government Center
Board Auditorium
May 17, 2022**

Meeting Summary

Board Members present: EIC Chairman Supervisor John W. Foust, EIC Vice-Chairman Supervisor Daniel G. Storck, Board of Supervisors (BOS) Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay, BOS Vice Chairman Penelope A. Gross, Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw, Supervisor Walter L. Alcorn, Supervisor Rodney L. Lusk, Supervisor Dalia A. Palchik, Supervisor Pat Herrity, Supervisor Kathy L. Smith

Chairman’s Opening Remarks

The Economic Initiatives Committee met on May 17th to discuss placemaking in Fairfax County. EIC Chairman Foust provided a brief review of the meeting agenda. Minutes from the February meeting were approved by the board.

Item 1. Community Revitalization Section- Initiatives Updates

Elizabeth Hagg, Director, Department of Planning and Development, opened the meeting with an update on community revitalization efforts that are underway. In her presentation, she shared the progress made towards the Economic Incentive Program. Hagg also brought new placemaking and urban design initiatives to the meeting for Board feedback and direction. The Economic Incentive Program, established in September of 2020, has had three applications approved to date: 1. Bailey’s Crossroads Skyline Buildings 1,2&3; 2. Alexandria Crossing; and 3. Mount Vernon Gateway.

Hagg shared that the Office of Community Revitalization (OCR) has developed new, and revised existing, district urban design guidelines for built environments. Public Space Development and Activation, Branding and Wayfinding, Maker Network Support and Marketing, and Pop-Up Support are the areas of focus which OCR will use to actualize their plans. OCR has had success with garnering licensing and trademark rights for makers, implementing a gateway signage program in Springfield, and supporting the creation of the Creative Places Toolkit. The areas of focus have already led to collaborations between the Office of Community Revitalization and organizations. The Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation, Arts Fairfax, Visit Fairfax, Department of Planning and Development, and Land Development Services were among the collaborations referenced in the presentation. Hagg also brought plans to pilot other ideas such as revitalizing streetscapes and pedestrian walkways, expanding public art installations in underpasses, and use of the “Build a Better Block” toolkit to design community spaces.

EAC Chairman Foust opened Item 1’s discussion with praise for the Office of Community Revitalization’s progress thus far. Foust also expressed interest in all three of the proposed pilot projects. BOS Chairman McKay, Supervisor Palchik, and Supervisor Herrity see revitalization efforts as an opportunity to streamline existing Fairfax County permitting processes and ordinances. Both officials expressed concerns that existing procedures could stall current efforts. BOS Vice-chairman Gross, Supervisor Alcorn, and Supervisor Storck are excited about the plans to use art and lighting as “inspirational revitalization”. Supervisor Lusk conveyed his excitement about the opportunity to use tax

abatements to bring economic vitality to other parts of the county. Supervisor Stork praised the team for their current partnerships and implored OCR to consider other means for funding projects and leveraging community support in various corridors.

Item 2. Place-Led Economic Development Presentation

Supervisor Palchik addressed the committee to introduce the panel on private sector and community contributions to place-led economic development strategies in the county. The panel featured six individuals who presented the “Tysons Vision” workgroup’s approach and recommendation of proposed activities to the board. The “Tysons Vision” group came together in response to a joint board matter brought forth by Chairman McKay, Supervisor Palchik, Supervisor Alcorn, and Supervisor Foust in December of 2020. Under Supervisor Palchik’s direction, the multidisciplinary team of community stakeholders and county representatives were assembled as a work group to develop an anchor economic development organization in Tysons.

The panel presented the recommendation from the work group that the anchor organization focus its efforts on carrying out activities in four business areas. The organization will operate with the vision “to be a catalyst for the continuing transformation of Tysons, Virginia into an inclusive, vibrant, globally attractive urban center where all thrive”. The first proposed business area for the new anchor organization is promoting Tysons through branding, marketing, and outreach. Second, the organization would focus on placemaking and place management, engaging various business and community stakeholders to activate the public realm. Third, the organization would use those partnerships to champion livability through walkability and connectivity. The final business area is to use data to measure the return on investment and evaluate the organization’s success.

Evan Braff, Countywide Coordinator, Office of the County Executive explained why the Tysons Vision group was congregated and justification of its diverse membership. Braff explained that the engagement of residents, local government, the Economic Development Authority, Tysons businesses and property owners will serve as a template for future groups. Rebecca Moudry, Director, Fairfax County Department of Economic Initiatives, gave the Board an overview of the paradigm used to drive the group’s recommendations. The model centers place-led economic development as an integral element of talent attraction and community reinvestment strategies. Richard (Rich) Bradley, Executive Director, The Tysons Partnership (Acting), and Clayton Medford, Vice President, Government Relations, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce spoke to the analyses done to understand best practices implemented in other locales and governance models that have leveraged the nonprofit sector’s involvement in place-led economic development. Medford presented the proposed organization business areas.

The Board expressed their support for the initial presentation of the working group’s ideas. Chairman McKay and Supervisor Storck would like to explore applications of the model in parts of the county. In response to comments made by Lisa Samuels, President, Board of Directors, Gates of McLean Unit Owners Association and Hillary Katherine Zahm, Vice President, Development, Macerich, Supervisor Lusk remarked that he appreciates the “residential elements” of the anchor organization activities. Supervisor Gross agreed with Lusk and added that efforts should also be relevant to community or resident laypersons. Supervisor Alcorn asked that the group broaden efforts beyond “county level” measurements of return on investment. The panel will return with detailed activities, a proposal for funding, and a proposed governance structure after they have had individual discussions with each board member.

Item 3. Lee District Workforce Innovation Skills Hub

The meeting concluded with a presentation on the Workforce Innovation Skills Hub (WISH) center that is scheduled to open in the Lee district this summer. The presentation opened with Supervisor Lusk providing the board with an overview of the Lee district's current economic landscape and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on its residents. At the conclusion of the presentation, Supervisor Storck gave support for the center and conveyed excitement about the positive impact it will have on residents of the Richmond Corridor.

The WISH center will operate in the Lee District Community Center, an area of opportunity in the district. WISH will feature facilities for events, laboratories, workshops, and classrooms. Human services, case management, job placement and diversion programs will be integral to the WISH center's workforce development model. The center will also offer training and development for those interested in the building trade, technology, public and the private sectors. To ensure success, it will operate under four strategic goals. The first goal is to reduce income disparities by connecting residents with entry level roles that pay at least twenty-one dollars an hour. The second goal is that participating employers will provide training, certification, and credentialing to residents. Third, the WISH center hopes to introduce young people to new and emerging technologies. Fourth, the center will create an incubation ecosystem in Southeast Fairfax County. The center is expected to be managed and supported by Melwood and Building Momentum.