

**Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Economic Initiatives Committee (EIC)
J. Hamilton Lambert Conference Center (Room 11)
December 12th, 2023**

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 Pat Herrity, Supervisor Dalia A. Palchik, Supervisor Kathy L. Smith

Chairman's Opening Remarks and Approval of Meeting Summary

EIC Chairman Supervisor Foust opened the meeting with approval of the previous meeting's minutes and review of the agenda. In his remarks, Foust asked the Board of Supervisors to listen to each item with intent to provide input and recommendations.

Place-Led Economic Development – Phase I and Phase II Updates

The first agenda item brought to the Economic Initiatives Committee (EIC) was a presentation of the multi-phased commercial profiles pilot. The profiles are a data template assembled as a tool to enhance county staff's ability to make data driven decisions about future interventions, strategy, or program recommendations, as well as to support local commercial district organization efforts. Data synthesized in the profiles provide relevant demographic, performance, and economic health insights for Fairfax County's commercial districts. The pilot was presented by Department of Economic Initiatives staff members Laura Baker, Catalytic Development Manager and Scott Sizer, Catalytic Development Division Manager and Mike Van Atta, President, Bailey's Crossroads 7 Corners Revitalization Corporation (BC7RC).

The commercial district profiles feature six data sections: 1. user/visitors; 2. retail spend; 3. recent investments; 4. Key insights; 5. business highlights; and 6. an appendix of district level demographics. Baker spoke to the commercial profile's value in providing communities and organizations relevant information so that they may advocate for themselves. As part of the pilot's first phase, StreetSense, a placemaking consultant firm, conducted economic analyses for two different commercial districts. Those districts were Bailey's Crossroads and University Center. After the profiles were developed, the information was shared with the BC7RC and other anchor organizations for review and input. Van Atta expounded elements of the tool from the perspective of an entity that would be an end user. For the second phase of the project, staff will utilize several criteria to select additional commercial districts to study. This includes current planning areas, shopping centers that are outside of the county's special planning areas, areas with existing partnership or organizations, economic impact, and use One Fairfax's vulnerability index.

In discussion of the item, the Board of Supervisors expressed support for the effort, explored potential uses of the commercial profiles, and asked questions related to the profiles' data collection and maintenance. Several members of the Board recommended that staff include community-related perspectives and metrics in the profiles. Supervisor Foust encouraged staff to consider the possibilities to develop profiles for the county's 26 planning areas, identify additional users, incorporate metrics related to affordable housing, and bring the analysis to the Board for review and comment. There were questions and discussion about data maintenance and development in the long term. Staff explained that additional capacity and partnerships would be required for future efforts. Chairman McKay asked whether the county should be reliant on subscription-based data services and for clarification of the profiles' value over the use of current data subscriptions. Staff reiterated the value of using disparate data sources to provide synthesized insights included in the commercial profiles. Staff also articulated efficiencies that had already been created during the pilot's first phase.

Supervisor Gross advised staff to both include community and residential metrics and consult and educate the residential community on the potential use of the profiles. Supervisors Alcorn, Lusk, and Storck expressed similar interest in the inclusion of public involvement in the development of the profiles. Supervisor Alcorn supported the existing criteria and encouraged the use of the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan as guidance for bolstering community involvement. Supervisor Storck spoke to the importance of engaging community organizations to produce positive outcomes.

Supervisor Lusk expressed appreciation for the data visualizations, interest in leveraging area anchor organizations, and was supportive of the criteria used. Lusk also encouraged staff to study lease terms and incorporate analysis of retail, office, and residential demand in each area. Supervisor Walkinshaw recommended that staff take a broader look at replicable metrics that relate to broader regional planning and revitalization efforts. Walkinshaw stated that the tool could help staff understand revitalization "life cycles" in the County. Supervisor Smith was interested in learning more about how the tool and its processes will be used to proactively prevent decline in the County's commercial areas. Supervisor Palchik urged staff partnership with the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to address transportation considerations and promote the development of safe, multimodal spaces in the County. Staff will use Board of Supervisors feedback and recommendations to finalize the commercial profiles template, confirm criteria for the project's second phase, circulate a request for proposals, and launch the second phase in 2024.

Fairfax CORE – Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Findings

The second item presented to the Board was Fairfax CORE, Connecting Opportunities & Resources for Entrepreneurs, an online resource for entrepreneurs and business owners seeking to establish, expand, or evolve their Fairfax County business. The item was brought to the Board, so that they may provide feedback and recommendations for promotion. Meaghan Kiefer, Small and Local Business Division Manager, Department of Economic Initiatives, presented the platform, reintroduced its elements, and described the service partners that entrepreneurs and business owners will access through the platform. Kiefer also recognized community partners

such as the Mason Small Business Development Center, Women's Business Center, and Financial Empowerment Center, who were part of the platform's core development team. Fairfax CORE has three components: 1. entrepreneurial support guides, 2. a calendar for county and resource partner events, and 3. a resource navigator feature. The resource navigator will feature over 100 providers that provide direct, free or low-cost business support services. Existing providers, or resource partners, provide business services in 22 distinct industries. Many resource partners focus on serving diverse and innovative businesses. Fairfax CORE's "contact us" process will feature an assessment to ensure proper referral to its resource partners. The platform is expected to collect data related to web analytics, network engagement, partner network referral reports, and network collaborations. Staff will share the list of resource partners with the Board of Supervisors' offices, launch, and promote the platform in spring of 2024.

Chairman McKay spoke to the potential for Fairfax CORE to be used as a recruitment tool for entrepreneurs and business owners interested in relocating to Fairfax County from other jurisdictions. Supervisor Palchik asked staff to collect feedback from business owners and ensure that there is no overlap with current Fairfax County Economic Development Authority efforts. Supervisor Lusk asked for more information about resource partners that will specialize in funding. Staff clarified that some of the resource partners with that specialization may provide counseling specific to funding questions rather than provide funding. Supervisor Storck shared his experience in promoting resources to entrepreneurs and challenges his staff has encountered while engaging small business networking groups.

Review of Recovery and Resiliency Initiatives

The third and final item was a presentation of the Department of Economic Initiatives (DEI) recovery and resiliency programs. Rebecca Moudry, Director, Department of Economic Initiatives, thanked the Board for their support for the department's past initiatives and spoke briefly about future departmental efforts. Moudry gave an overview of the impact that DEI's 2020 and 2021 recovery programs had on Fairfax County businesses and reviewed the resiliency programs currently underway. Special attention was given to the Tourism Recovery Program, a 4.1-million-dollar program implemented by Visit Fairfax, Fairfax County's destination marketing organization. Chairman McKay complimented the Department of Economic Initiatives for the work that had been done to date, and the positive impact the department's efforts have had on Fairfax County's economy.

The meeting concluded with presentation of gifts and formal recognition of the leadership Supervisors Foust and Gross had given the department.