

**Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Economic Initiatives Committee (EIC)
J. Hamilton Lambert Conference Center (Room 11)
June 13th, 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

Supervisor Foust opened with an overview of the Department of Economic Initiatives’ projects and programs to date. Among the projects he described were the Fairfax Founders Fund, THRIVE, Fairfax CORE, and Place Led Economic Development (PLED) efforts.

Item 1. Tysons Community Alliance

The first item brought to the Board of Supervisors was an update on the newly established Tysons Community Alliance (TCA). Josh White, Board Chair, Tysons Community Alliance spoke to Tyson’s demographics, progress made since the board’s decision to establish the organization, and future actions the organization will take. Since it’s establishment, the organization has focused on incorporation, forming its governance and management structures, securing a budget and hiring Chief Executive Officer, Katie Cristol. As of the date of the meeting, TCA had undertaken activities and conducted analyses related to communications and branding; placemaking; transportation and mobility; and research and business support. Supervisors Palchik, Alcorn, Foust, and Chairman McKay were recognized for their leadership, contributions to, and support of the organization.

The TCA is a non-profit community development organization focused on enhancing Tyson, Virginia’s economic vibrancy and diversity. Between July 2022 and June 2023, the alliance had successfully been incorporated, developed by-laws, established its organizational and governance structure, adopted a work plan and an were approved for a start-up budget of 2.5 million dollars. Through online marketing and social media, the organization is positioning Tysons’s brand as a “premiere urban center” characterized by its livability and authenticity. To encourage community input in the Tyson’s brand identity, TCA has engaged with private industry, local government, and community stakeholders and has created a database for future engagement efforts. The organization’s placemaking and place management strategy has been focused on hosting pop up TCA events to promote various destinations in Tysons. To align itself with the Tyson’s comprehensive plan for urban safety and walkability, gap analyses have been conducted to study pedestrian traffic patterns. As part of a data driven approach for business support, TCA has conducted a comprehensive conditions assessment and market study for

benchmarking. The organization's next steps will be to assemble work groups for the purpose of drafting a strategic and comprehensive development plan.

Supervisor Foust opened the discussion by complementing both the presentation and the comparative analyses that preceded the establishment of the Tysons Community Alliance. Chairman McKay also complimented the presentation and stated that the alliance had met the expectations of the Board. McKay also said that the TCA could serve as a model for other redevelopment efforts in the county. In reference to the strategic plan, McKay asked how the TCA may partner with the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority and the Fairfax County Housing Authority to address affordable housing and repurpose vacant office space in the County. Supervisor Palchik thanked the team that created the Tyson's comprehensive plan and spoke to the importance of a collaborative strategic approach that includes the diverse perspectives of all stakeholders.

Palchik recommended that TCA consider microlevel analyses to create office vacancies solutions. Supervisor Alcorn touted the TCA as a "community level system" for Tyson's identity development. Supervisor Lusk asked about analyses of the industrial industries in the TCA's comprehensive conditions assessment and market study. Lusk expressed his appreciation for the TCA's strategic plan's attention to the County's assets, affordable housing, inclusion, and income distribution. Supervisor Gross questioned the organization about its financial plan for garnering additional funding and resources beyond what the Board could provide.

Item 2. Talent Up – Work-Based Learning Opportunity Fund Proposal

The second agenda item was an update on the Talent Up Fund, first presented to the Board as the Work-Based Learning Opportunity Fund at the September 2022 Economic Initiatives Committee meeting. The presentation was made with the intention to garner board approval and feedback. Talent Up will be a two-year, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funded, program developed by the Department of Economic Initiatives (DEI) and Department of Family Services (DFS) based on recommendations from the Economic Advisory Commission (EAC). The program will address current workforce challenges, enhance employer-led work-based learning programs, and create talent pipelines through employment matching and subsidizing the cost of paid internships in Fairfax County.

Since the September, 2022 meeting, the program's planning team had refined its eligibility criteria, targeted industries, key partnerships, and program metrics. Bill Browning, Manager, Workforce Innovations, Department of Family Services shared that the Skill Source Group, Opportunity at Work, and FCEDA are program partners. Browning reiterated the program's purpose to connect moderately skilled workers with economically mobile careers. Theresa Benincasa, Manager, Economic Mobility, Department of Economic Initiatives presented updates to the eligibility requirements for employers and job seekers. Office administration, health, information technology, sales and finance roles were recognized as "high-demand, hard to recruit occupations" in the County. Benincasa, introduced the program's updated program metrics that will measure employer engagement, worker opportunity, and impact. Benincasa also spoke to the proposed budget and plans for communication, recruitment, and engagement.

In the discussion, Supervisor Foust inquired about the program's sustainability after the initial ARPA funds are exhausted. Michael Becketts, Director, Department of Family Services, responded that the Career Works Northern Region Workforce Development Board and Skill Source Group would be prepared to use WIOA funds to continue the program's efforts. While fund allocations may change, Beckett estimates that \$200,000-\$400,000 could be contributed to the program in fiscal years 2025 and 2026. Beckett also shared his belief that if the program produced positive outcomes, additional state, grant, and philanthropic funds could be garnered.

Chairman McKay recommended that the team partner with the Northern Virginia Technology Council. McKay spoke to the opportunity for Talent Up to engage the companies that participated in the council's AIM High program. McKay also suggested that the program remain flexible, so that it may be responsive to the needs of the job seekers and employment market. Supervisor Palchik asked about potential partnerships with Fairfax County Public Schools' academies and how the program could support or engage residents who speak English as a second language. Supervisor Walkinshaw recommended that program include return on investment measures to incentivize partnership between local government and employers. Walkinshaw requested industry sector, wage, and skill-level data of the open 67,000 available employment opportunities.

Supervisor Smith asked the Talent Up team to clarify the level of employer commitment and risk of participating in the program. Smith also recommended that the program track the number of internships that are converted to full employment opportunities to avoid the program becoming an "intern churn". Supervisor Lusk sought to learn more about the geographic focus of the pilot employment opportunities and asked whether the program will provide wrap around services to job seekers. In response, Becketts shared intentions to refer job seekers to other social services community partners. Supervisor Herrity asked what percentage of the budget would be allocated for the contract with Skill Source.