

Clyde Wilber to EQAC Invitees on VDOT ROW 9/11/2024

With your help, I hope EQAC can develop recommendations to the Fairfax County BOS on:

- Heat Island climate change impacts from roads. According to NASA, Fairfax is projected to see an increase in frequency and intensity of hot days. Very hot days are projected to more than double by 2050. Areas of particular heat Island impact include Tysons, Annandale, Chantilly, Centreville, Springfield, and Herndon, among others. Change is needed to lower this personal health risk to Fairfax residents.
- Dump sites in the VDOT ROW. Fairfax County Health Department studies show Illegal dumping is a major problem with significant social, health, environmental and economic impacts for Fairfax County residents. VDOT ROW Dump Sites are particularly problematic in poorer neighborhoods where people tend to not register complaints with the County. Means of preventing ugly and unhealthy VDOT dump sites is needed.

Like many of the VDOT organization, I am a Civil Engineer dedicated to building public works for the benefit of the public. I did not attend Tech, rather I studied at the University of Illinois, a school my public works friends grudgingly acknowledge as at least adequate. At U of I, I believed environmental engineering would provide the most civil works public benefit. In 40 years of practice, I came to believe that transportation public works, has a direct and more personal benefit to the public. Transportation public works not only serve a good economy, but good transportation also provides people freedom to live where they want, work where they want and send their children to schools where they want.

VDOT is the third largest DOT in the country with a budget of almost 8 billion/yr. Your website states your purpose to build and maintain roads for the community. The biggest civil public works organization in the county is undeniably the ACOE. Prior to the 1980's their public works projects focused on flinging dirt, placing concrete, and erecting steel. The ACOE has evolved. For over 25 years, a principal mission of the ACOE principal mission has been to restore and protect the environment. The ACOE is restoring the everglades and streams, and removing dams. Congress funds much of this environmental mission through WRDA, however protecting the environment goes well beyond WRDA for the Corps.

VDOT has a budget approaching \$8 B. Of that, about ¼ of 1% is for environmental monitoring and Stormwater TMDLs. The ACOE WRDA budget is similar to VDOT's total budget. Proportional to population, WRDA is over 10 times the VDOT environmental budget. Clearly, VDOT is not funded to address the environment in the way the ACOE is. VDOT's budget addresses its current mission. However, the VDOT budget does not reflect serious environmental investment.

I am not coming tonight expecting VDOT to meet Fairfax County's environmental goals without the Commonwealth funding those goals. Rather, I seek your advice and counsel on how best to frame recommendations to the BOS on modifying your mission with budget aligned with what the BOS has told EQAC it wants. Where the Fairfax BOS goals can better be accomplished through County action, I hope VDOT can assist by allowing the County to act on VDOT ROW without impediment. Either way, I believe addressing these problems will be good for the people of Fairfax County and VDOT.

EQAC may provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors this year on how the Board could act within its own resources and if legislation changes are needed to address the Board's Environmental Mission and One Fairfax Policy on these matters. We seek comments on these potential recommendations and any suggestions to improve them.

- Require VDOT policies be updated to be accountable for trash clean up in their ROW, or for the Fairfax DPWES to take on this responsibility.
- Requiring the Department of Code Compliance to track trash and dumping complaints, assign responsibility to the appropriate State or Fairfax Department, and report to the BOS on complaints that are not addressed in an expeditious manner.
- Calling for trash cleanup to be included in future VDOT DEQ stormwater permits.
- Require VDOT to conform to Virginia's Stormwater Guidance issued this year.
- Requiring the Fairfax Police to implement dumping enforcement measures.