



Telephone (703) 971-6262
Fax (703) 971-3032
E-mail: leedist@fairfaxcounty.gov
Web site: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/lee

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF FAIRFAX



6121 Franconia Road
Alexandria, VA 22310

Rodney L. Lusk
LEE DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

Board Matter

September 13, 2021

Mr. Chairman – In January of this year I shared with the Board the results of an initiative piloted in the Lee District designed to assist those who are differently-abled in better coping with the stress and anxiety associated with routine traffic stops. As my colleagues may remember from that discussion, many of those facing physical or behavioral health challenges in our county are able to obtain a driver's license, yet choose not to drive due to the anxiety that they experience during such stops.

The pilot was coordinated through a partnership between the Fairfax County Police Department (FCDP), the Arc of Northern Virginia, members of the Fairfax County School Board, and my office—and involved simulated traffic stops where FCPD officers and differently-abled FCPS students had the opportunity to learn from one another about how to best handle these interactions.

At that time, the Board requested that I work with FCPD to inform the Board on the details of the training. In response to that request, I've attached a copy of a memo submitted on behalf of FCPD.

In that memo, Major Gregory Fried makes the following concluding remarks:

“This mock traffic stop experience was beneficial to the parents, students, and the officers. Some officers involved in this initiative never experienced the level or types of disabilities that some of the participants presented. Officers involved worked proactively to develop a card that those that may have a disability could present to an officer at the beginning of a traffic stop. Participants came all over Fairfax County to participate, well outside of the Franconia Police District. We also received follow-up requests for additional dates. This initiative appeared to be incredibly well-received by all involved...I firmly believe that developing relationships through these experiences make our police officers woven into our community's fabric and offers a different experience for expanding everyone's lens.”

As a result of Major Fried's memo, and the success of the pilot, I'm pleased to announce to the Board and to the public that Chief Davis has directed similar trainings to be held in all 8 patrol districts before the end of this calendar year, and on a singular day in order to increase visibility.

Additionally, I'm pleased to share that Fairfax County School Board Member Rachna Sizemore-Heizer is simultaneously working with FCPS staff, as well as her colleagues on the School Board, to examine the feasibility of incorporating such trainings into all FCPS drivers education curriculum.

Mr. Chairman, in light of the attached memo's conclusions, and the initiative currently being undertaken by both FCPD and FCPS, Supervisor Alcorn and I move that:

- The County Executive direct the Office of Public Affairs to coordinate with FCPD on their pending training day for the 8 patrol districts across the County in order to maximize the

training's visibility and accessibility to all of our residents who could potentially benefit from it.

Thank you.



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 6, 2021

TO: Supervisor Rodney Lusk
Lee District Supervisor

FROM: Gregory Fried, Captain
Commander, Franconia District Police Station

SUBJECT: Franconia District Police Station Differently Abled Community
Member Traffic Stop Initiative

On February 8, 2021, a request was made for the Franconia District Station to provide a memorandum detailing our participation in a traffic stop community initiative. This memorandum will serve as a report in reference to the Differently Abled Community Member Traffic Stop Initiative.

Background

The Franconia District Station Community Outreach Officer (COO) and Crime Prevention Officer (CPO) have engaged in several initiatives over the past year to engage various communities, including communities of color and newly arriving community members, to educate and engage in dialogue about traffic stops. Due to the pandemic, many of these forums have been conducted remotely.

There was also a desire to have a similar program for drivers with disabilities. However, given the unique nature and breadth of different disabilities, there were requests for a more hands-on approach. Franconia District personnel, led by MPO Eric Nelson, organized a pilot initiative in cooperation with community partners such as your office, School Board-at-large Member Rachna Sizemore-Heizer, The Arc of Northern Virginia, Fairfax County Public Schools, and the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management.

Guidelines would allow for an individualized approach for participants and enabled them to utilize their vehicles.

Project

Given that schools were still closed to full-time students, it was determined that an area high school would serve as a suitable venue for the program. By liaising with the School Resource Officer at Edison HS and Edison staff, we secured the east side parking lot. This provided a relatively contained and easily accessible location.

The initiative was conducted on Tuesday, January 12, 2021, and Thursday, January 14, 2021. The Arc of Northern Virginia was responsible for scheduling participants. Participants were scheduled on 20-minute increments to provide time to engage in the exercise while also maximizing safety and social distancing. A police officer was detailed to sit with the participant and their caregiver in their vehicle to explain the process as it was happening as well as advising on how to safely navigate the interaction with the police officer, such as not suddenly reaching and following the contact officer's guidance. Two officers were detailed to conduct the traffic stop and engage with the participant in a manner consistent with an actual traffic stop. The officer in the vehicle continued to explain the process, provide constructive feedback, and answer any questions the participant or caregiver may have. The officers making the stop then complete the stop, and there was more time for all involved to talk about the encounter.

Officers from the COO/CPO office served as the officers in the vehicles, and officers from the Franconia Neighborhood Patrol Unit conducted the traffic stops. There were two stations for each time slot. There was no impact to patrol squads on shift. However, officers on patrol in the area were encouraged to attend so that participants could see and engage with officers in different capacities and uniforms.

While it was colder given January, the weather was a minimal factor. Participants ranged from new or learning drivers to seasoned drivers. There appeared to be a wide array of differently-abled, from developmental disabilities to physical impairments such as hearing impairments.

This initiative demonstrated an incredible amount of coordination from numerous community stakeholders. The goal of all the traffic stop education efforts has been to educate community members about the traffic stop and its inherent dangers and explain how the process works to ensure everyone can be safer.

Conclusion

This experience was beneficial to the participants and the police officers and provided an excellent opportunity for everyone to gain a greater understanding to lead to positive and safe outcomes. The Differently Abled Traffic Stop Initiative worked in this same spirit, and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

This mock traffic stop experience was beneficial to the parents, students, and the officers. Some officers involved in this initiative never experienced the level or types of disabilities that some of the participants presented. Officers involved worked proactively to develop a card that those that may have a disability could present to an officer at the beginning of a traffic stop. Participants came all over Fairfax County to participate, well outside of the Franconia Police District. We also received follow-up requests for additional dates. This initiative appeared to be incredibly well-received by all involved.

As we continue to seek ways to enhance a greater understanding with law enforcement and our community, contributing to safe outcomes for everyone, this traffic stop initiative provides an advancement toward that desired goal. I firmly believe that developing relationships through these experiences make our police officers woven into our community's fabric and offers a different experience for expanding everyone's lens.

Additionally, the FCPD Public Affairs Video produced a video of the event, which can be viewed at this link: <https://fb.watch/4AhyxYxVWx/>

We look forward to continuing the program and deepening the relationships with our community partners.