
EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department Name: Fairfax County Department of Transportation

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Date: November 27, 2024

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN REPORT

DEPARTMENTAL GOALS

Goal 1: Develop and implement an inclusive community engagement framework for public participation ensuring all members of the community have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process and express their views. The engagement process promotes equity, inclusion and diversity leading to more informed, representative, and effective outcomes.

Goal 1 Progress:

The goal of FCDOT's inclusive community engagement framework is fostering greater community participation and building trust between residents and the department. FCDOT has been laying the groundwork to build staff capacity relating to inclusive community engagement. Staff trainings have been offered with overwhelming support; trainings covered topics such as principles to community engagement, discussions around experiences engaging community and learning opportunities of what worked and what can be done differently in the future.

FCDOT is committed to community engagement and partners with other county agencies to engage with community organizations. Challenges encountered during community engagement efforts are low participation and language barriers. FCDOT staff strives to offer multiple community engagement opportunities; sessions are offered in person as well as virtually at different times of day to reduce barriers to participation. Public meetings are advertised in several languages other than English using data from the Fairfax County Public Schools Home Language Survey data published by the Economic, Demographic and Statistical Research Unit. This data helps staff identify languages that are spoken more frequently in each community, which reduces language barriers and provides for more targeted marketing. FCDOT offered over 25 public information meetings and 18 outreach events that covered a wide range of projects and studies across Fairfax County. These meetings/events served as a way to share information and collect feedback from county residents. FCDOT also partners with the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) to staff resource fairs throughout the county; these resource fairs help inform community members about services and programs available through FCDOT. Community

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

events included “Trunk or Treat,” where Fairfax Connector buses were decorated and used to distribute information about Fairfax Connector, the Student Bus Pass Program, mTRIP, and other programs available to the public.

FCDOT identified two community organizations for an inclusive community engagement pilot. The Mason District Council and the Lorton Community Action Center (LCAC) have agreed to partner with FCDOT as we embark on building our community engagement. Partnerships with community organizations foster greater community involvement in the decision-making process by leveraging resources and expertise. Partnership with community organizations to tap into existing trust and local knowledge, helping to reach residents who may otherwise be overlooked in traditional outreach efforts. These partnerships are mutually beneficial – while FCDOT gains deeper insights into community needs, organizations are empowered to elevate resident voices and influence transportation decisions that directly impact their neighborhoods. For future planning, FCDOT will focus on increasing engagement efforts through targeted outreach to specific demographic groups identified as underrepresented.

FCDOT staff continues to develop a community meeting checklist to support staff in planning and implementing inclusive community events and public meetings. The checklist serves as a practical tool to ensure all aspects of planning, organizing, and conducting a community meeting are covered effectively. Furthermore, the checklist identifies the stakeholders and outlines the purpose and objectives of the meeting, clearly states how the community can participate and what information the project manager is seeking from the community.

FCDOT offered three formal trainings in partnership with One Fairfax Central Team. Trainings included “Race: The Power of an Illusion,” “Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government,” and “Implicit Bias and Structural Racism.” Several divisions within the department made equity a topic during their monthly division meetings and invited the Equity Manager to provide updates and engage with staff around various equity topics. In addition to formal trainings, FCDOT offered three microlearning opportunities during staff meetings; these meetings were attended by over 40 staff during each session. Microlearning sessions are short, focused sessions delivering content in small, digestible chunks that can be absorbed in a ten-minute session. Each microlearning session covers a single topic or concept to allow for immediate application. In some cases, a larger concept in FCDOT is broken into smaller concepts, allowing for a ten-minute session. The FCDOT Equity Manager delivered microlearning sessions on inclusive community engagement and targeted universalism. Sessions are also intended to be interactive, with a few minutes meant for staff to engage in sharing experiences around the topic.

Goal 2: Increase diversity among FCDOT staff through recruitment, retention, and promotion.

Goal 2 Progress:

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

FCDOT has identified George Mason University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office as a possible partner for recruitment to bolster a diverse applicant pool; however, this is an ongoing process due to scheduling challenges. Previously, in FCDOT's 2023 Equity Impact Plan, the timeline identified for this goal was one year. After considering the magnitude of this effort and the need to pilot this partnership before expansion to additional partners, it has become clear that extra time is needed to foster this relationship. The timeline for this goal will be extended to allow for more development. In the future, FCDOT is planning on hosting a Realistic Job Preview (RJP) with a college partner. RJP's allow potential candidates to learn about specific jobs, as well as ask experts questions about the skills and talents needed to succeed in that job. This partnership will allow college students to learn about career paths in FCDOT as they transition to employment after graduation.

Members of the FCDOT Equity Team developed equity questions that will be available for hiring managers to use during interviewing potential candidates for positions with FCDOT. Team members reviewed Transportation Planner and Engineer job descriptions and drafted equity interview questions directly related to job responsibilities. Additionally, team members drafted suggested answers as a guide for hiring managers to use during the interview process. In 2024, equity interview questions were piloted in at least two instances with feedback. In the future, team members will draft additional questions for other job descriptions besides Transportation Planners and Engineers. Equity questions have been provided to staff in the Site Analysis and Transportation Planning Division that they will be using for their Transportation Planner positions. Additionally, an equity question was provided that is being used in the Marketing & Communications Section Chief interview process. Equity interview questions will be posted on the FCDOT internal resource page and included in the Hiring Manager Guide provided by FCDOT Human Resources Manager to potential hiring managers.

The FCDOT Equity Team identified key resources needed for staff to incorporate equity in their daily work. An internal resource page has been developed and shared with FCDOT staff to provide technical support. Resources on the internal page include One Fairfax policies and general information, information to complete Equity Impact Assessments for Board Items, upcoming trainings, general equity resources, etc. The FCDOT Equity Team will continue to collect feedback from colleagues about any resources that would be helpful to add to this page for the future.

Goal 3: Apply equity analysis into FCDOT plans, projects, and services.

Goal 3 Progress:

FCDOT staff has been provided with trainings on how to complete an Equity Impact Assessment for Board Items. The FCDOT Equity Manager provided four training sessions to different groups; training sessions included an opportunity to discuss when an Equity Impact Assessment is needed and how to complete the assessment. Staff prepared 22 Equity Impact statements to the Board of

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

Supervisors to inform the Board of potential effects, particularly to those historically marginalized or disadvantaged.

As part of our efforts to incorporate equity in all aspects of work done throughout FCDOT, staff completed an equity impact for the department's FY2026 budget, including budget reductions. A request submitted for a Program Manager for the Safe Streets for All program was included, with the impact being that the position would have a positive equity impact by addressing the safety disparities in Fairfax County's transportation infrastructure, particularly for vulnerable populations such as low-income residents, single-parent households, immigrant communities, seniors, children, and individuals with disabilities.

The FCDOT Equity Team is developing a project equity assessment tool to be used in prioritizing project recommendations. The assessment consists of several categories to help incorporate equity into all elements of the project including, but not limited to, access to opportunities, safety, and mobility. Project managers are also asked to identify any possible burdens, benefits, and any unintended consequences inflicted by the project. After identifying possible burdens, project managers are asked to identify any strategies that would help mitigate these burdens. The FCDOT Equity Team has coordinated with two divisions to pilot the equity assessment with each division piloting one project. After the pilot, the FCDOT Equity Team, in collaboration with each division, will evaluate the assessment and make any modifications as needed for recommendation for department-wide implementation. In 2024, the FCDOT Transportation Policy team applied an equity lens to the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan review by evaluating how proposed policies and strategies align with needs of historically underserved and marginalized communities. This included a review of the document's language to ensure it reflects inclusive, people-first, and community-centered language that supports equitable, accessible, and sustainable transportation outcomes for all residents. Additionally, equity is being considered as part of the planning and implementation of the Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, with particular attention to the Gum Springs community—one of the county's oldest historically Black communities. Efforts include engaging residents through culturally responsive outreach, understanding the potential impacts of infrastructure changes, and identifying opportunities to preserve community character while improving access to safe, reliable, and inclusive transportation options.

Public transportation providers that receive federal funds are required to submit an updated Title VI Program to the Federal Transportation Administration every three years. As part of on-going efforts to meet the Title VI requirements, FCDOT documents there is no discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, or national origin, and describe the proactive steps being taken to ensure no discrimination in the future. During 2024, there were four public meetings and outreach activities pertaining to Title VI. Distribution of transit amenities between minority and non-minority bus/stops/stations is an on-going effort and will be reported on at a later date.

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

COUNTYWIDE GOALS

Report progress on Countywide goals related to the Regional Fair Housing Plan, if relevant to your department. As above, copy in each Countywide goal from your CY 2024 Equity Impact Plan, and describe progress made in CY 2024. If none, write "Not applicable."

Goal: Expand access and affordability of public transportation for members of protected classes.

Progress:

This is an on-going endeavor; the Transit Services Division, through Fairfax Connector, continues to offer programs and services available to county residents with a focus on serving vulnerable population in Fairfax County.

OTHER EQUITY-RELATED WORK

Not applicable