



County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

Board of Supervisors Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes

May 25, 2021

Government Center, Board Auditorium

Board of Supervisors Members Present:

Jeffrey C. McKay, Chairman

Penelope A. Gross, Mason District (Vice Chairman)

Walter L. Alcorn, Hunter Mill District (Committee Chairman)

Kathy L. Smith, Sully District (Committee Vice Chairman)

James R. Walkinshaw, Braddock District

John W. Foust, Dranesville District

Rodney L. Lusk, Lee District

Daniel G. Storck, Mount Vernon District

Dalia A. Palchik, Providence District

Pat Herrity, Springfield District

Board Members Absent: None

County Leadership:

Bryan Hill, County Executive

Rachel Flynn, Deputy County Executive

Beth Teare, County Attorney

Link to agenda and presentation materials:

[Board of Supervisors Transportation Committee Meeting: May 25, 2021 | Board Of Supervisors \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

Committee Chairman Alcorn called the meeting to order at 11:14 am.

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 12, 2021, meeting were accepted with no changes.

2. Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Study

Sean Schweitzer, Transportation Planner II, FCDOT, updated the Committee on the Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) study's recommendations. The Route 7 Transit study was conducted by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC). The study identified BRT as a preferred alternative from the Mark Center in Alexandria to Tysons. It recommended dedicated bus lanes within Tysons and provided a multimodal solution. Three alternative alignments within Tysons were selected for evaluation. Alternative 1 via International Drive is the preferred option based on a public survey conducted in March 2021. The final report is scheduled for July 2021. The Board consideration of the final recommendation and authorization for Comprehensive Plan Amendment is anticipated on July 13, 2021. The preferred alternative will be incorporated into Phase IV of NVTC's effort, which is expected to begin in Fall 2021.

Chairman McKay stated that based on public feedback, Alternative 1 should include stops at Marshall High School and West Park Transit Station. Mr. Schweitzer replied that most students will be bused to the school. The ridership is anticipated to be low considering that people coming from Alexandria may not use the stop at the school. For the West Park Transit Station, he said that using the Tysons circulator route will be a better service choice for people making connections to Tysons. Adding a stop there would add more delays to the BRT system. Chairman McKay stated that it is important to have stops at these two locations. He asked for more information regarding the route, frequency, and how it can be connected to the BRT system. Supervisor Palchik stated that she appreciated the public outreach and asked staff to share additional public comments. She stated that the distance between the Patterson Road Station and Fashion Boulevard Station is long, a stop should be considered to service the areas in between the two stations. She asked if Alternative 1 would also provide access for future bus routes to Maryland and the 495 NEXT project. Tom Biesiadny, FCDOT Director, replied that the routes that are being planned for the 495 NEXT project (Montgomery County to Tysons) would connect to this system. She asked if there will be any connection or service between the Tysons Galleria on the BRT system and Greensboro Metrorail Station. She stated that it is helpful to see that Alternative 1 has dedicated bus lanes.

Supervisor Herrity stated that he supported Alternative 1. He asked if the BRT system will have by-pass lanes. Mr. Biesiadny replied that there are none, because the project would have a larger footprint if it included by-pass lanes. Supervisor Herrity stated that the project should consider express buses and not stop at every station. Supervisor Foust asked how a BRT express bus and a regular BRT bus would operate in the same dedicated lanes. Supervisor Herrity stated that if a regular BRT bus is stopped at a bus stop, the express bus would have to wait, because there is no alternative to go around the stopped bus. It is the same situation with the Route 1 express bus. The system should have by-pass lanes to allow buses to go around each other. Mr. Biesiadny stated that there is no physical barrier between the two lanes. There are fewer stations on the BRT system, so buses would travel to their destinations quicker. There is also an activity center at each stop, and because of that, staff has not planned for the express BRT bus. Running an

express bus will require a larger footprint which is a concern for adjacent properties. Supervisor Lusk supported the project, because it serves the employers and employees in the Tysons area.

3. Fairfax County Parkway/Franconia-Springfield Parkway Recommendations

Thomas Burke, Transportation Planner IV, and Michael Garcia, Chief, Transportation Planning Section, FCDOT, updated the Committee on the Fairfax County Parkway/Franconia-Springfield Parkway recommendations. The study reassessed the Comprehensive Plan recommendations for the Parkways. The study examined nearly 35 miles of corridor and was separated into five segments.

The study examined multiple alternative scenarios to minimize impacts, maximize capacity, and evaluated high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) options. A multimodal assessment of bicycle, pedestrian and transit facilities was also conducted. The study analyzed high-level capacity and operational analyses by using travel forecasting and micro-simulation tools. Based on public outreach and capacity and operational analyses, the study found that there are needs to enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transit routing, and performance. There was a low demand for HOV lanes, a need for six general-purpose lanes, grade-separated interchanges and interchange modifications, and innovative intersection strategies at key locations. Final recommendations for five segments were discussed in detail. The study is anticipated to receive Board consideration of final recommendations and authorization for the Comprehensive Plan Amendment on July 13, 2021.

Committee Chairman Alcorn stated that it is important to resolve the conflicts between pedestrians/bicyclists and vehicles by creating physical separation. Supervisor Smith stated that she was happy to see the recommendations for Franklin Farm Road. She asked for clarification for the recommendations at Rugby Road. Mr. Burke noted that innovative intersection improvements at Rugby Road may be considered, but would not be included in the Comprehensive Plan, since intersection-level improvements are typically not included in the Plan.

Supervisor Herrity wanted to clarify that a trail facility will not be installed on both sides of the Fairfax County Parkway for the entire length, especially on segments between Burke Centre Parkway and Popes Head Road to Route 29 where a residential area is not present. Mr. Burke replied that staff has made a general recommendation for having trail facilities on both sides of the Parkways. However, it will be a judgment call whether to implement them on both sides. Mr. Biesiadny confirmed that the current project between Route 29 and just north of Burke Centre Parkway only has a trail on the west side of the Parkway.

Supervisor Foust asked if the “modify interchanges at Spring Street and DTR (Dulles Toll Road)” and “consider innovative intersection improvements at Wiehle Avenue” will be on the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Burke replied that anything related to grade separated interchanges

and extensive improvements like Spring Street and DTR will be included in the Comprehensive Plan. There is no grade separation at Wiehle Avenue, so it will not be in the Comprehensive Plan. Supervisor Foust asked for the concepts at Spring Street and DTR. Supervisor Foust wanted to confirm that the County is continuing to move forward to find funding for the Spring Street improvements. Mr. Biesiadny confirmed it.

Supervisor Walkinshaw asked if the County is still planning for a time-restricted left turn from southbound Fairfax County Parkway onto eastbound Burke Centre Parkway. Mr. Biesiadny confirmed it is part of the current VDOT widening project. Supervisor Walkinshaw asked if the Comprehensive Plan would show restricted movements for an interchange, and Mr. Biesiadny replied that it will not show that level of detail. The Comprehensive Plan will show a half-circle denoting a partial interchange. At this location, a flyover interchange is being planned.

Supervisor Storck asked about adding a third turn lane on the Parkway at Terminal Road as part of the Transportation Priority Plan (TPP). Mr. Biesiadny replied that there are currently two projects in the area. Supervisor Storck asked for the details on the network connectivity between I-95 and Backlick Road. Mr. Burke explained the two options being considered for improved access at the Terminal Road location. Chairman McKay stated that the two options are contingent upon the other. Mr. Biesiadny confirmed that they would perform best if the two options were implemented together.

4. Active Fairfax Transportation Plan Update

Chris Wells, Active Transportation Program Manager; and Nicole Wynands, Transportation Planner III, Active Transportation, FCDOT, updated the Committee on the Active Fairfax Transportation Plan. Community engagement was completed in May 2021. The summary from the community engagement efforts showed that the main reasons for active travel are exercise, relaxation, outdoor activities, and traveling to a destination. Primary destinations are parks, trails, business, work, and schools. The summary showed the desire for improvements of sidewalks, bikeways, trails, safer street crossings, lighting, slower vehicle speeds, and more destinations within walking and biking distance. The proposed draft Active Transportation Plan includes a vision statement and goals. The Board considerations for the proposed drafts of the Active Transportation Plan and Safe Streets Program Plan are anticipated in September 2021. Phase II of the project includes development of a facility selection toolkit, recommendations on the network, program, policy, implementation guidance, and Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Committee Chairman Alcorn stated that the Safety Plan is coming to the Committee meeting on June 29, 2021. Supervisor Gross stated that retrofitting older communities is a challenge. She asked staff to study ways to reduce the cost and timeline for such projects. For example, it can take a long time just to build a simple sidewalk. Supervisor Lusk thanked Ms. Wynands for her work on the survey. He reiterated the importance of “minimizing traffic injuries and fatalities” and the use of technology to achieve that goal. He commended Chairman McKay for his focus

on the One Fairfax policy. Supervisor Herrity concurred with Supervisor Gross' comments about finding ways to reduce the costs of the projects. He stressed the importance of also addressing the current maintenance needs. He said that the County needs to look at the complete picture of projects and maintenance needs countywide.

Chairman McKay stated that he appreciated Supervisor Lusk's comments on the One Fairfax Policy. There is a direct connection between safety issues that occur in communities of color and equity issues. He was pleased to see the focus on older communities to address the sidewalk issues. He stressed the importance of prioritizing connections to schools to build a lifetime of good habits in children. There is a desire to have kids walk and bike to schools. It will not happen until we can make it safe for children to walk and bike to schools. Supervisor Palchik commended Sally Smallwood, Fairfax County Public School (FCPS), for her effort to encourage kids to walk and bike to school. She stated that the County should be able to address both the missing links and the needs of the communities. She also thanked Ms. Wynands for her effort on this project. She asked how the updates of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) would impact this Active Transportation Plan. Mr. Biesiadny stated that the MUTCD is a Federal Highway Administration document that governs how departments of transportation implement the devices such as rapid flashing beacons and High-Intensity Activated CrossWalk (HAWK) signals. Supervisor Storck shared the concern about the timeline to build a trail and on-going maintenance. He supported developing lifelong habits for young children to walk to schools. He asked how to incorporate the environmentally sensitive areas into the design. Mr. Biesiadny replied that for every project, staff will consider the environmental aspects based on the circumstances unique to each project. Mr. Biesiadny also stated that every day FCDOT is seeking funding for many different transportation projects. The TPP will be brought back to the Board when there is the ability to add projects and funding. Committee Chairman Alcorn stated that the key strategies to achieve the proposed vision, goals, and objects should also consider the maintenance issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m. The next Board Transportation Committee is scheduled for June 29, 2021, at 3:00 p.m.