



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

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

## Fairfax County Transportation Advisory Commission Meeting Notes

### REGULAR MEETING

**February 21, 2023, at 7:30 pm**

Location: Virtual Meeting

Web Site: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/tac/meetings>

Note-Taker: Roger Hoskin

**TAC Members in Attendance:** Chair Mike Champness (Dranesville), Secretary Roger Hoskin (Mason), Kevin Morse (Braddock), Matt Bechak (Franconia), Phylicia Woods (Hunter Mill), Matt Bechak (Franconia), Jeremy Hancock (Providence), and Eric Thiel (Springfield).

**TAC Members Absent:** Linda Sperling (At-Large), M. David Skiles (Sully), and Christy Garton (Fairfax Area Disabilities Services Board – FADSB).

The Mount Vernon District's position remains vacant.

**Others in Attendance:** FCDOT staff members included Brent Riddle, Martha Coello, and Calvin Lam. Mena Nakhla from the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services also attended.

**Special Guests/Observers/Public:** Susan Shaw, Megaprojects Director; Michelle Holland, Megaprojects Communications Manager; Shannon Coyne, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

### Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order by Chair Champness at 7:37 pm. The Chair then proceeded with the protocol necessary to justify a virtual meeting.

To fulfill procedural obligations of virtual meetings, Chair Champness and Commissioner Morse performed the opening procedures for a virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams. Meeting recordings and materials will be posted online at:

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/tac/meetings](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/tac/meetings)

The location of each member was announced by voice since they are participating remotely.

- Braddock District: Kevin Morse – Burke
- Dranesville District: Mike Champness – McLean

- Mason District: Roger Hoskin (Secretary) – Falls Church
- Franconia District: Matt Bechak - Alexandria
- Hunter Mill District: Phylicia Woods – Herndon
- Providence District: Jeremy Hancock – Washington, DC
- Springfield District: Eric Thiel – Fairfax Station

The Chair made a first motion to *"determine that each member's voice can be adequately heard by each other member of this Commission."* It was seconded by Commissioner Hoskin and unanimously approved.

The Chair made a second motion that *"the State of Emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic makes it unsafe for this Commission to physically assemble and unsafe for the public to physically attend any such meeting. I further move that this Commission may conduct this meeting electronically through a dedicated audio-conferencing line, and that the public may access this meeting by Microsoft Teams online platform or by calling: 1-571-429-5982, phone conference ID: 710 688 944#. The phone number for ADA is 711. Access information is also available at the TAC website at: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/tac/meetings](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/tac/meetings)".* It was seconded by Commissioner Thiel and unanimously approved by the Commission.

The Chair made a third motion that *"all of the matters on the agenda previously furnished and posted on the TAC website are necessary for continuity in Fairfax County government, and/or are statutorily required or necessary to continue operations and the discharge of this Commission's lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities."* It was seconded by Commissioner Hoskin and unanimously approved by the Commission.

## **Minutes**

Commissioner Morse motioned to approve the Minutes from the February 2023 meeting with the Chair's edits. It was seconded by Commissioner Thiel and unanimously approved by the Commission.

## **VDOT Megaprojects Update**

This evening's program was an update on the Express Lanes Network in Northern Virginia, presented by Susan Shaw, Megaprojects Director; and Michelle Holland, Megaprojects Communications Manager, VDOT. The Northern Virginia Regional Express Lanes network comprises over 90 miles planned for Northern Virginia. Presently there are 81 miles in service. Three different toll operators are operating the network. Thirteen miles are under construction, and two other segments are under study.

Route 66 Outside the Beltway Express Lanes is now open. The outside beltway is segmented tolling; a traveler could travel through different segments, thus adding to the tolled amount. A Commissioner asked if estimating a total trip price could be determined from historical data. Ms. Shaw noted that it is possible to obtain historical prices, but data needs to be collected. Another issue raised concerned signage to estimate total tolls and allow entry to and exit from toll lanes to general purpose lanes.

Another feature under consideration is simultaneously bi-directional Express Lanes. There is congestion in the opposite direction of the Express Lane operation; this capability is under preliminary feasibility study with no planned timetable. For the Outside the Beltway project, there are plans for expanded commuter bus service and commuter parking. Some major construction projects remain: the Gallows Road bridge over I-66 and an interchange at Nutley Street. The Gallows Road bridge is expected to be completed by August 2023.

Tolls will vary by vehicle size and time of day or day of the week. The objective is to preserve space in Express Lanes for High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV). Enforcement will be by electronic means as well as by the state troopers.

An issue was raised by a Commissioner regarding the I-495 to the I-66 interchange. Another Commissioner commented that the interchange seemed "counter intuitive." This is admittedly a complex interchange, given the infrastructure and Metro's pass-through at that point.

The I-495 Northern Extension accommodated added pedestrian and cycling access. The Virginia and Maryland teams are working to ensure the connection works "seamlessly"; however, Maryland has majority jurisdiction on the bridge. The Georgetown Pike Bridge will be wider to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. The new bridge will be completed then the current span will be torn down.

The 495 Southside Express Lanes Study is still in the preliminary stage. The purpose is to provide continuity of the Express Lanes system from Springfield interchange to MD 210 interchange in Prince George's County, MD.

A Commissioner queried if additional planning for Metrorail is certain. VDOT responded that the planned space could be for other means of transit. Again, intersection signage was raised by two other Commissioners.

After the presentation ended, a Commissioner raised an issue regarding door closure on the Commissioner; the door did not open automatically. Also, the question was raised regarding Blue line-plus in that the signage could be misinterpreted, and passengers could board the wrong train.

### **Joint Meeting with Board of Supervisors (BOS)**

The joint meeting with the BOS has not been finalized. The agenda has also not been determined. It is closing in on the time for the TAC to present its annual report. This topic will be revisited as circumstances change.

### **TAC 2023 Workplan**

With the turnover in the Commission, there will likely be changes in areas of special interest. The variety of topics the TAC engages is sufficiently broad to exceed the capacity of all Commissioners to be knowledgeable of all facets considered by the TAC; thus, some specialization is desirable to accomplish goals. Commissioners can self-select areas of interest depending on their own interests and the needs of their District.

**Public Comment Period:** there was no public participation at the meeting.

### **Other Business and Announcements**

The end of the pandemic emergency rules on March 1, 2023, implies the meetings will return to in-person meetings. Most likely, the protocol will be a hybrid of in-person and remote meetings. The public may still attend in-person meetings by phone. The TAC is determined to meet in March in person. Some details remain to be worked out with respect to in-person and remote meetings.

Commissioner non-attendance was discussed with a full discussion to be taken up at the March meeting.

Possible topics for the March meeting were discussed (NVTC Route 7 BRT project).

The Commission unanimously voted to present the Lifetime Achievement Award to Tom Biesiadny, FCDOT Director, who will retire after 35 years of service for Fairfax County in May 2023.

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Morse motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Commissioner Hancock seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 9:59 pm.