



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 – May 18, 2021, 7:30 p.m.

Held electronically due to the COVID-19 pandemic

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

Note-Taker: Eric Thiel

TAC Members in Attendance: Chair Mike Champness (Dranesville), Secretary Roger Hoskin (Mason), Linda Sperling (At-Large), Kevin Morse (Braddock), Kelley Westenhoff (Hunter Mill), Alexis Glenn (Lee), Pete Sitnik (Mount Vernon), Jeremy Hancock (Providence) and Eric Thiel (Springfield).

TAC Members Absent: Vice Chair MaryPauline Jones (Fairfax Area Disability Services Board) and M. David Skiles (Sully).

Others in Attendance: FCDOT staff: Chris Wells, Nicole Wynands, Lauren Delmare, Brent Riddle, Calvin Lam and Tom Biesiadny

Special Guests/Observers: N/A

Opening Remarks of Chair, Roll Call, and Electronic Meeting and FOIA Procedures

The meeting was called to order by Chair Champness at 7:36 p.m. To fulfill procedural obligations of virtual meetings, Chair Champness and Vice Chair Jones performed the opening procedures for a virtual meeting via WebEx. Meeting recording and materials will be posted online at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/tac/meetings

The location of each member was announced by voice because they are participating remotely from their private residence.

- Chair Michael Champness – McLean
- Secretary Roger Hoskin (Mason) – Falls Church
- Linda Sperling (At-Large) - Clifton
- Kevin Morse (Braddock) – Burke
- Kelley Westenhoff (Hunter Mill) – Reston
- Alexis Glenn (Lee) – Alexandria
- Roger Hoskin (Mason) – Falls Church
- Pete Sitnik (Mount Vernon) – Mount Vernon
- Jeremy Hancock (Providence) – Falls Church

Chair Champness 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 Sitnik, and unanimously approved by the Commission.

Chair Champness 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 Webex online platform or by calling: 1-415-655-0001 or 1-844-621-3956 Toll Free and entering the Access Code: 173 854 0103. The phone number for ADA is 711. Access information is also available at the TAC website at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/tac/meetings*”. It was seconded by Commissioner Morse, and unanimously approved by the Commission.

Chair Champness 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 Morse, and unanimously approved by the Commission.

The Minutes from February, March and April were approved by the Commission.

Active Fairfax

Active Fairfax Transportation Plan: Discussion and Follow up from the May 4 Working Session – Chris Wells, Nicole Wynands and Lauren Delmare (FCDOT).

Editorial note: Active Fairfax is intended to become an integrated plan combining pedestrian and bike trails with improved connectivity to designated “activity centers” across the county.

Briefers noted that we are at a roadmap stage of the project, and it is not yet a plan or a schedule, etc. At this it is a concept or set of concepts containing goals and intentions. Following approval by the BOS County staff will move forward into the development of a plan.

TAC commissioners asked questions about options and opportunities for making progress on elements of the overall goal set while the overall plan is taking shape. Staff indicated that this is occurring since multiple independent activities currently underway will become part of the plan as it is developed.

Commissioners expressed a concern about the process for ensuring eventual compliance by developers, etc., with the overall plan—especially the idea of putting concrete requirements into the plan. Staff noted that this is a goal, but also noted that VA State Law limits many options due to being a “Dillon Rule” state, etc. They also noted that there would be limited impacts to landowners from any rules unless, and until a landowner wants to make large enough changes to a property that a zoning change is required. At that point, the County has more options. Some things, like bike parking, are typically “doable” since the impacts are often small. Landowners

often listen and attempt to meet this class of request by the County. Staff also noted that the County cannot spend tax dollars on private property, and this can limit County options.

TAC Commissioners raised the issue, in multiple locations, of construction blocking trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, etc. and noted that blockages were often total with no attempt at mitigations such as would be common in other jurisdictions. (Example: Covered city sidewalk next to construction.) Staff noted that the professional guidance in various documents requires that alternate routes should be prepared, but the language is not always directive. Often, alternate paths are not built unless the County intervenes. This appears to remain an “open issue”.

Concerns about this topic led to discussion of the need for a “single contact point” across the appropriate agencies (VDOT, FCDOT, etc.) to encourage and stimulate reporting and resolution of such issues.

Following up on prior discussion of traffic pedestrian fatalities, FCDOT Staff noted that crash data is now centralized in the DMV. FCDOT is trying to get improved data to enable improvements to pedestrian safety. Most pedestrian fatalities appear to involve high volume pedestrian crossing sites in the middle of relatively high-speed roads. Most automobile crashes are at intersections and do not involve many fatalities. Equity index area show more issues disproportionately to population. FCDOT Staff noted that there are many challenges in trying to get to zero deaths as an eventual goal. The original focus of road and related transportation developments was mobility, not overall safety. Further, Fairfax County does not own or control most of the roadways in the county. Recent ordinance changes are expected to have some positive effects in this area such as changes to cell phone use laws and changes to requirements to stop for pedestrians.

Following a discussion of the wording of a resolution from the TAC supporting the Active Fairfax initiative to the County BOS, the TAC voted unanimously to support the initiative and so inform the BOS.

Public Comment Period

There were no members of the public attending the meeting.

Other Business and Announcements

The meeting concluded with discussion on the topics for the May 4th Work Session and the May 18 meeting. The subject May 4th Work Session will be Active Fairfax Transportation Plan. Commissioners added final comments and the meeting concluded.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:13 p.m.