



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

**April 7, 2026, at 11:00 a.m.
Conference Room 11, Government Center**

Board of Supervisors Members Present:

Jeffrey C. McKay, At-Large (Chairman)
Kathy L. Smith, Sully District (Vice-Chairman)
James N. Bierman, Jr., Dranesville District (Committee Chairman)
Walter L. Alcorn, Hunter Mill District (Committee Vice Chairman)
Rachna Sizemore Heizer, Braddock District
Rodney L. Lusk, Franconia District
Andres F. Jimenez, Mason District
Daniel G. Storck, Mount Vernon District
Dalia A. Palchik, Providence District
Patrick S. Herrity, Springfield District

Board Members Absent: N/A

County Leadership:

Bryan J. Hill, County Executive
Jennifer Miller, Deputy County Executive
Beth Teare, County Attorney

Link to agenda and presentation materials:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/board-supervisors-transportation-committee-meeting-april-7-2026>

1. Opening Remarks

Committee Chair Bierman called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Committee Chair Bierman asked if there were any objections to approving the February 24, 2026, meeting minutes. No objections were raised, and the minutes were approved unanimously. He noted that today's meeting was especially important, as the Board would examine delays in transportation project timelines, understand their causes, and identify strategies to improve delivery time. He emphasized that many delays involve factors both within and outside Fairfax County's control, including the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) processes and utility companies. He framed this session as the first of two aligned discussions, explaining that

the Board Auditor is concurrently reviewing these project timeline issues and will provide additional recommendations in the future.

3. Transportation Project Timelines

Gregg Steverson, Director, Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT), and Martha Coello, Deputy Director, FCDOT, briefed the Committee on the timelines of various Active Transportation projects. The presentation is available at:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/sites/transportation/files/Assets/Documents/PDF/bt/c/April%207%202026/Transportation%20Project%20Timelines%20-%20BTC.pdf>.

Fairfax County transportation projects typically take 3 to 6 years to complete after funding is allocated, moving through phases such as planning, design, land acquisition, utility relocation, and construction. Small projects, like pedestrian improvements, take about 3 years; larger sidewalk or intersection projects can take up to 5.5 years. Agency reviews, utility coordination, and property negotiations cause common delays. The Committee discussed strategies to speed up delivery, including earlier coordination, process improvements, stronger oversight of consultants, and better engagement with VDOT, Supervisors' offices, and utility companies.

Next steps include updating project timelines, improving survey scheduling, raising contract authorization limits, enhancing agency coordination, and holding regular utility meetings. Staff will also act on upcoming Board Auditor recommendations. The Board was asked to advise on early public engagement and ways to prevent late project changes. Additionally, staff sought Board guidance on public involvement, especially earlier engagement and limiting late-stage scope changes, and invited further suggestions to improve delivery timelines.

Chairman McKay supported the proposed improvements and stressed that current project timelines are too long, especially for small projects. He recommended setting clear performance goals from the start and tracking delays throughout each project. He asked staff to identify sources of delays and provide the Supervisors with regular updates. He emphasized that all parties are accountable and noted that delays in one project can affect others.

Chairman McKay also called for earlier public engagement and clearer communication of realistic timelines and goals. He recommended firm deadlines in the design process to avoid repeated redesigns. He stressed that delays and repeated redesigns can affect other communities as they wait in line for the opportunity to have an infrastructure improvement in their own. Staff should clearly explain funding, permits, and scheduling challenges to the public and specify when public input will be accepted.

Supervisor Smith sought clarification on challenges in the presentation. She confirmed that "contributing entities" include both internal and external agencies (e.g., the Park Authority). She discussed problems caused by the retirement of long-term staff and loss of institutional knowledge, urging better knowledge-transfer practices. She cited an ongoing project where delayed community feedback led to costly redesigns and increased stormwater requirements. While agreeing that early community engagement is essential, she emphasized that public engagement must be structured to avoid late-phase scope changes. For utilities, she urged the County not to delay escalating issues to Supervisors when utility companies are slow in

delivering plats or relocation schedules. She expressed frustration that projects can remain active and incomplete for years while costs continue to rise.

County Executive Hill noted the need for a clearly defined “trigger point” for when Supervisors should be asked to intervene with lagging utility companies. He agreed that escalation timelines need to be better defined. He stated this will be incorporated into timeline standards. Director Steverson stated that getting the public involved early was essential to have community feedback on the design phase.

Supervisor Palchik suggested sending survey notices and outreach materials earlier because many residents do not engage until they receive notices that a project may directly affect their property. She also recommended standardizing project timelines and communication platforms and improving the usability of project information. She noted that staff must review how well engagement efforts worked after projects conclude, and post-project process reviews to evaluate what worked and what did not. She encouraged an approach that improves transparency at each milestone for both the community and the Supervisors’ offices.

Supervisor Lusk emphasized early identification of environmental constraints, noting his district has experienced project delays when environmental issues surfaced mid-process. He endorsed process re-engineering and learning from private-sector efficiency models. He emphasized that residents should feel included throughout the process and encouraged staff to make projects feel more collaborative and transparent for affected communities.

Supervisor Herrity emphasized early and frequent community engagement, especially now that virtual platforms make meetings more accessible. He stressed the importance of “right-sizing” projects during scoping, referencing a project that initially proposed trail widths would have required unnecessary property acquisition and tree removal. By reducing trail widths and modifying the design, the County avoided overbuilt designs that would have increased costs and right-of-way impacts. He also recommended greater task parallelization, dashboards, improved notifications to Supervisors, sending surveys to the community early and regularly, and checking with the Supervisors’ offices for known issues. Director Steverson explained that project scoping involves reviewing design sizes, environmental impacts, alternative layouts, and utility impacts, and setting project limits. He warned that decisions must be made early, as redesigning projects later becomes costly and difficult.

County Executive Hill emphasized that the County needs to improve the process for sending electronic notifications or create a dashboard for the Supervisors’ office.

Deputy County Executive Miller noted two major ongoing Countywide improvements: a new standardized community engagement framework across agencies and a “shot-clock” approach to project timelines, paired with benchmarking against other jurisdictions. She confirmed these align with FCDOT’s direction and will strengthen predictability. She stated that Fairfax County currently lacks consistency in how community engagement is conducted across departments. She explained that County staff are reviewing engagement practices countywide to develop more standardized approaches.

Supervisor Alcorn encouraged greater visibility into project information, citing the FCDOT Transportation Design Division's (TDD) monthly status report as a useful resource. He supported the development of a GIS-based public portal to display real-time status and historical timeline changes. He emphasized the need for a centralized place for residents to track all prioritized and early-stage projects. Director Steverson explained that the TDD report provides details such as project descriptions, funding, costs, schedules, and progress from design through construction. However, he noted that the report does not clearly show changes over time, such as schedule delays or revised completion dates, unless someone manually compares previous reports. He emphasized the importance of making project history and status updates more transparent and accessible. He said the County's long-term goal is to develop a capital project management system with a GIS-based online platform that allows users to click on individual projects to view their full history, schedules, and current status, or to view all projects within a specific area. He noted that existing reports are currently posted online and remain useful for quick reference.

Supervisor Alcorn suggested that VDOT projects should also be included in a centralized system. Director Steverson responded that VDOT projects are included in a separate status report issued twice a year. However, it is more of a static snapshot and harder to update because the County does not directly manage those projects. Supervisor Alcorn also raised the need for better tracking of projects at the early conceptual stage, particularly pedestrian and active transportation requests that have not yet advanced to formal studies or implementation. He noted that the Hunter Mill District alone has approximately 277 requested pedestrian and active transportation projects. While acknowledging that not all projects will advance, he stressed that once official action begins, there should be a centralized and publicly accessible way for residents to track project status, next steps, and projected schedules.

Supervisor Storck focused on the importance of setting clear public expectations early, ensuring timelines align with best practices in both the public and private sectors, and identifying risk factors that could delay projects. He emphasized the importance of establishing realistic expectations for project timelines so Supervisors can accurately communicate schedules and risks to residents. He noted that understanding project phases, funding needs, and realistic schedules helps manage public expectations. He also asked how Fairfax County's practices compare with those of other jurisdictions and the private sector. Director Steverson said the County is actively coordinating with VDOT and neighboring jurisdictions, including Arlington, Prince William, and Loudoun, to share best practices and lessons learned. The County is working to improve project predictability by collecting better data on how long project phases typically take. This information will help staff provide more accurate timelines, identify causes of delays, and communicate potential risks more clearly. He added that improving the system will be an ongoing, iterative process. Supervisor Storck concluded by asking staff to continue identifying ways Supervisors may help expedite projects and better understand potential delays.

Supervisor Sizemore Heizer discussed the importance of improving coordination, communication, and internal project management for transportation projects. She asked about VDOT's adherence to its 30-day review requirement (noting the Braddock Road delays) and its internal knowledge management processes during staff turnover. Director Steverson responded that VDOT has recently struggled to meet those timelines. However, he emphasized that continued coordination, clearer communication, and the submission of complete and accurate

materials can help streamline the review process. She recommended that staff develop a one-page public guidance document explaining the project phases, deadlines for community input, and ways to track progress. She emphasized consistent expectations and the need for a clear “decision moment” at which community input transitions from collaborative to final. She raised concerns about the loss of institutional knowledge when staff leave during long projects. She asked staff to develop stronger knowledge-management systems to preserve project history and background information even when personnel change. County Executive Bryan Hill stated that the County may need different staffing skill sets moving forward as project delivery methods evolve and modernization efforts continue.

Chairman McKay expressed concern about the County’s reliance on consultants and the effectiveness of current oversight practices. He focused on a section of the presentation referencing “consultant quality control materials.” He questioned whether enough emphasis is placed on setting strong upfront expectations in procurement documents and specifications, and on ensuring consultants reduce workload rather than increase staff oversight burdens. He cautioned against situations where staff must spend significant time coaching or correcting consultants, which could reduce the value of hiring them, and whether reliance on consultants is justified if it requires extensive internal management and oversight. He recommended strengthening front-end specifications and expectations in RFPs, ensuring consultants are held accountable to clear standards from the outset, and reducing the need for corrective oversight after contracts are awarded. Director Steverson clarified that the intent of the referenced slide was not to imply that consultants are inherently problematic, but rather to ensure that submitted work meets required standards, that poor-performing consultants are identified and not used if expectations are not met. The County maintains appropriate follow-up and quality checks. He agreed with the Chairman’s point and supported the idea of embedding stronger controls earlier in the process, specifically through a robust QA/QC (Quality Assurance/Quality Control) section in RFPs and contracts.

Committee Chair Bierman summarized the discussion raised by multiple Supervisors, including:

- The pros and cons of using consultants and the importance of evaluating effectiveness over time
- The need to track changes and measure results as new processes are implemented
- Emphasis on transparency in documentation and communication with the public
- Balancing parallel vs. sequential project delivery approaches to improve efficiency
- Managing expectations between the Board, staff, and the community

He also referenced a real-world example involving a utility company delay in providing plats, which caused a project delay of approximately nine months, underscoring the importance of maintaining strong working relationships with external partners such as utilities and VDOT – the need for contingency planning when external partners do not meet timelines or obligations. Committee Chair Bierman concluded by noting the importance of ongoing relationship-building with external stakeholders.

4. \$100 Million for Active Transportation Project

Gregg Steverson, Director, Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT), and Martha Coello, Deputy Director, FCDOT, continued briefing the Committee on the specific projects associated with the \$100 million for active transportation. The presentation can be found here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/sites/transportation/files/Assets/Documents/PDF/btc/April%207%202026/%24100M%20for%20Active%20Transportation%20-%20BTC.pdf>

Fairfax County is implementing a six-year, \$100 million program to improve access to and safety of active transportation. As of 2026, approximately \$56.7 million has been allocated, with an additional \$25.4 million approved in Round 4, for a total of \$82 million. The presentation outlines funding rounds, project statuses across Rounds 1-3, and the County's evolving prioritization process.

Across all rounds, projects advance through scoping, pre-design, design, land acquisition, and construction. Many projects remain in early phases, reflecting staffing shortages, workload demands, design challenges, right-of-way negotiations, and utility coordination issues. The County also faces increasing design complexity due to updated guidance (e.g., the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), VDOT Logical Termini requirements, traffic study requirements), rising engineering and construction costs, and staff vacancies from 2022 to 2024. To address delays and improve delivery, staff identify opportunities, including earlier public engagement, minimizing late-stage scope revisions, improving coordination with VDOT and Supervisors' offices, streamlining utility relocation, and building stronger project-tracking tools. For Round 4, the County is applying a structured four-step prioritization approach that incorporates need and demand analysis, Board coordination, project vetting, and public engagement. Looking ahead, staff proposes transitioning to a new three-year cycle to keep data current, manage project requests efficiently, and fund only the most recently approved priority lists. The Board is asked to provide feedback on the proposed prioritization cycle and whether Round 4 funds should be used to address cost-escalated projects before adding new ones.

Chairman McKay supported trying the cyclical model, noting the drawbacks of the current system. He emphasized that if a cyclical model improves outcomes, it should be seriously tested or piloted, rather than dismissed. He suggested that the Board remain open to experimentation if it leads to greater efficiency and better project delivery. He raised an alarm about the impact of PROWAG. He expressed concern that requiring full intersection upgrades whenever a single crosswalk improvement is made could dramatically increase project costs and unintentionally prevent smaller safety projects from moving forward. He questioned whether there is any waiver or modification process available under PROWAG. He was concerned that a relatively new and potentially rigid requirement could be blocking or significantly expanding projects, and whether compliance requirements could unintentionally prevent smaller, incremental improvements, such as adding a single crosswalk. He expressed concern that current interpretations may force a full intersection upgrade when only a minor improvement is needed, and trigger expanded right-of-way impacts that could increase costs and complexity. It can ultimately discourage or delay many otherwise viable projects. In a county the size of Fairfax, this approach could result in fewer completed projects and higher costs without clear on-the-ground benefits. He requested a deeper review of PROWAG requirements, greater Board involvement in shaping how these standards are applied, and a follow-up discussion through the cyclical review process so the

Board can weigh in directly. He also pushed for understanding about vacancy challenges, hiring barriers, and whether the County is attracting the right skill sets for the future.

Director Steverson explained that PROWAG is a federal, not a state, requirement. He acknowledged the concern and stated that staff is exploring whether any flexibility or alternative approaches may exist. However, he was uncertain whether waivers would be available under federal requirements. He noted that hiring challenges stem from evolving skill-set needs and past budget cuts; staffing today must align with new expectations for project delivery.

Chairman McKay noted a recurring theme in discussions where project challenges are often met with a request for additional staff. He questioned whether the issue is truly headcount-related, whether the current staffing challenges are due to other factors, and whether the County could accelerate hiring or adjust recruitment strategies. He expressed interest in a deeper analysis and indicated willingness to discuss staffing issues further.

County Executive Bryan Hill responded by emphasizing that the issue is not simply staffing levels, but rather a need for a shift in workforce skills and mindset. Chairman McKay agreed with the County Executive's framing. He reinforced that the issue is not solely a VDOT or staffing shortage problem, but a broader organizational challenge. The County must adapt and modernize its workforce to new delivery methods and evolving technical requirements.

Supervisor Palchik expressed appreciation for the presentation but emphasized that the challenges discussed go beyond budgeting and reflect broader systemic process and communication issues. She supported the three-year cycle, addressed cost-escalated "on-hold" projects, and advocated for a clearer understanding of true project costs and expectations. She raised a major concern that projects and funding are not being used efficiently, and that some funds have remained unspent or delayed for up to 10 years. She noted that millions of dollars sitting unused for years is unacceptable and emphasized the need for improved transparency and communication with both the Board and the public. Her core point was that the County must be able to keep multiple projects moving simultaneously, rather than stalling overall progress when individual projects encounter obstacles. She connected these issues to workforce needs, stating that staffing is not only about technical expertise but also about people who can both manage technical work and clearly communicate progress and challenges in real time.

Supervisor Herrity again stressed the importance of right-sizing projects to avoid overbuilding. He supported using Round 4 funding to rescue delayed projects, including maintenance needs in future funding considerations, and flagging "quick-hit" projects. He noted that long-term maintenance responsibilities should also remain a priority, as many complaints received by his office involve deteriorating sidewalks and infrastructure maintenance.

Supervisor Smith asked about the status of two on-hold projects in her district and emphasized that scope review should be part of any decision to use new funding. She asked how project delays are communicated to the Board, especially when using or considering carryover funds for delayed projects. She emphasized that decisions about reallocating or carrying over funding cannot be separated from project scope considerations. She expressed support for exploring a more cyclical planning approach. Director Steverson responded by clarifying that a cyclical process would improve structure and prioritization, not rigidity. There would still be flexibility

to address urgent safety issues immediately. However, the intent is to avoid making constant exceptions to the norm, which could undermine planning discipline. Safety concerns would remain the highest priority trigger for immediate action and planning discipline.

Committee Chair Bierman stated that today's discussion is part of a broader two-stage process, with the Board Auditor expected to propose additional concrete steps soon. He repeated Chairman McKay's comment about "do all of it" as the Committee supported the strategy and the process.

6. New Business

No new business was raised.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:34 p.m. The next Board Transportation Committee meeting is scheduled for June 16, 2026, at 11:00 a.m.