



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

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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**

**September 28, 2021**

**Board Auditorium, Government Center**

### **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

Beth Teare, County Attorney

Link to agenda and presentation materials:

[Board of Supervisors Transportation Committee Meeting: Sept. 28, 2021 | Board Of Supervisors \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

Committee Chairman Alcorn called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

### **1. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the June 29, 2021, meeting were accepted with no changes.

## **2. I-495 and I-270 Express Lanes Briefing**

Susan Shaw, Northern Virginia District Megaprojects Director, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT); Abraham Lerner, Associate Manager Special Projects (VDOT), Rob Cary, Chief Deputy Commissioner (VDOT); Jeffrey Folden, I-495 & I-270 P3 Office Deputy Director, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT); and Caryn Brookman, I-495 & I-270 P3 Environmental Manager (MDOT), updated the Committee on the VDOT I-495 Express Lanes Northern Extension (495 NEXT) project and the new MDOT's American Legion Bridge I-270 to I-70 Traffic Relief Plan. Key updates of VDOT's 495 NEXT project were the environmental and agency approvals, stormwater management and stream restoration commitments, and design refinements. The MDOT's new American Legion Bridge I-270 to I-70 Traffic Relief Plan update included a project overview, Phase 1 predevelopment details, and identified project elements in Virginia. Key elements of the Maryland and Virginia coordination regarding a new American Legion Bridge and transit options were discussed. The VDOT 495 NEXT project is expected to have a financial close by winter 2021, enter final design by 2022, and be open to traffic in 2025. The MDOT project is anticipated to have a financial close by fall 2022.

Chairman McKay thanked and acknowledged the efforts that the project team has done regarding the stormwater management and stream restoration commitments to improve the quality and quantity of water in the project area. He emphasized the commitments to transit components from both states. He asked presenters for their plans to manage traffic through the corridor during the construction periods that are overlapping. The Virginia project is anticipated to be in operation by 2025, and the Maryland project is expected to open by 2027. Ms. Shaw acknowledged the challenges and difficulties they expected for the projects. Although they have a traffic management plan, not many options exist for commuters traveling through the corridor. She also stated that the contractor TransUrban is one of the two partners managing both projects, and noted the incentives to work together for better coordination. Chairman McKay noted that the Board has consternation about the degradation of travel time on the general-purpose lanes during construction times of both projects. Ms. Shaw noted that for 2025 and 2027, the general-purpose lanes will experience continued impacts because of ongoing construction. However, in the 2045 timeframe, the analysis has shown significant improvements compared to the No Build option.

Supervisor Foust expressed appreciation for how VDOT has helped to address the concerns and questions from the community. He said that his position is unchanged and stressed that Virginia should have waited to make sure that Maryland can go forward with its project. He noted that the Maryland project has not been through the final approval process, and there are significant objections to the project. The Virginia project was approved and will be complete with or without the Maryland project. Regarding the stormwater management issues, he asked for a map to show the existing infrastructure on that portion along the Beltway.

Supervisor Palchik asked for the timeline for bus service. Ms. Shaw replied that bus service would be available in late 2022 or 2023. Supervisor Palchik asked if electric buses would be used in the corridor. Tom Biesiadny, FCDOT Director, stated that staff is studying the bus purchase program and would consider how to best use the electric buses considering the operating range.

### **3. County Lighting Policies and Practices**

Carey Needham, Deputy Director, and Wayne Kotter, Utilities Design & Construction Division Director, Capital Facilities, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), briefed the Committee on County lighting policies and practices. Fairfax County has the most extensive municipal streetlight inventory in Virginia. Major initiatives included converting streetlights to dark-sky approved LED, increasing inventory through privately funded projects and public programs, working with Dominion to expand fixture styles, and promoting pedestrian and cyclist safety with improved lighting for sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails.

Committee Chairman Alcorn recommended that the County could be the information clearinghouse for streetlights that are out and for locations that need to be lighted. He also stated that the County could have an active role in promoting newer technologies that improve lighting, safety, and help identify areas for additional lighting regardless of who owns the property. He asked if staff has a map showing the ownership for streetlights on trails like the map for streetlights on sidewalks.

Chairman McKay asked for clarification on whether at the end of the five-year LED conversion program every municipal streetlight will be converted to LED lights. Mr. Needham stated that they have an agreement with Dominion, but there are about 2,000 lights under the NOVEC agreement that are not covered under this program. Chairman McKay stated that so many lights are not in the County's control. He asked if the County has a program to assist the conversion for other locations, for example, older HOA communities or privately owned streetlights. He suggested developing a strategy to help those communities. Mr. Needham stated that there is not a program in place, but he suggested an opportunity to develop that program.

Supervisor Palchik said that lighting is a big issue for pedestrians in older communities. She asked if the County has updated the interim plan for lighting, especially in the Tysons area. Mr. Needham stated that he would follow up with Supervisor Palchik's questions.

Supervisor Storck said that he supported Chairman McKay's recommendations. He asked who controls the "On and Off" capabilities for streetlights and for information on the Dim Bulb program. Mr. Needham stated that the Dim Bulb program is a program with limited fund where a citizen can petition for streetlights in their neighborhood. Regarding "On and Off" of the LED

streetlights controlled by sensors, Mr. Needham noted a possibility to put further constraints on the time of operation for streetlights. Mr. Kotter added that for smart city technology, Dominion has set up a new LED module that will accept smart city technology. They have not activated that system yet. The County will work with Dominion to enable technologies such as self-reporting outed streetlights.

Supervisor Smith asked how the County could do a conversion on areas controlled by NOVEC. Mr. Kotter responded that staff has been working with NOVEC. However, NOVEC has not been as aggressive as Dominion regarding the LED conversion program.

Supervisor Lusk asked for clarification on increased lighting for pedestrians and cyclists on Route 7 in Tysons and the Richmond Highway BRT project. Mr. Kotter stated that it is typical that more lighting is installed at intersections than along the roadway. Mr. Biesiadny noted that in Tysons there are double-sided poles that have a light for the vehicles on one side and a light for pedestrians on the other side. For the Richmond Highway corridor, enhanced lighting for pedestrians and bicyclists are planned. Supervisor Lusk asked if the lighting sensors could report to Dominion if a light was out. Mr. Kotter confirmed that the technologies would be able to do that once Dominion activated the modules.

#### **4. Active Fairfax Transportation Plan Vision, Goals and Objectives**

Chris Wells, Active Transportation Program Manager, and Nicole Wynands, Transportation Planner III, FCDOT, updated the Board on the status of the Active Fairfax transportation plan vision, goals, and objectives. The final draft vision statement, goals, and objectives were reviewed by the Board and the public with overall positive responses. The five goals and their components were discussed in detail. The next steps for the project include finalizing the vision, goals, and objectives with Board action on November 9, 2021; proposed Safe Streets for All program recommendation with Board action in spring 2022; and funding for Phase Two of the project in the proposed carryover budget.

Committee Chairman Alcorn noted that the community interactive feedback map showed barriers to active transportation. Ms. Wynands stated that the interactive barrier maps will be active for public comments (until further notice). Phase 2 will continue public engagement for another round of review and proposed trail alignments for feedback from the public.

Chairman McKay stated that the development of the funding prioritization methodology and the Transportation Priorities Plan (TPP) could be confusing for the public. Mr. Wells stated that the intent was to provide a data-driven approach for future funding decisions by identifying the needs of the community with data-driven input and community knowledge. The previously-approved TPP is still ongoing and a work in progress. Chairman McKay asked for confirmation that the new approach for Active Fairfax would not attempt to go back to reprogram funding for existing projects or upcoming projects. Mr. Biesiadny confirmed and added that any projects

that the Board has previously approved will continue to be implemented. He stated that the Board would be actively involved selecting which projects will be funded. Chairman McKay stated that the County needs to make sure that we are investing in communities that may not have the means to make some of the improvements and to separate those projects from projects in development or done by other entities.

Supervisor Lusk stated that he was supportive of the plan and looking forward to seeing the next steps. Supervisor Gross stated that a design for intersections needs to be clear of clutter, such as poles, signs, utilities, and other objects that may block pedestrian movements, as shown by an example at the corner of Gallows Road and Avenir Place at Dunn Loring-Merrifield Metrorail Station. Supervisor Foust stated that the data-driven approach should include input from the community. Regarding the community outreach effort, Supervisor Foust recalled the tremendous efforts that Mr. Biesiadny and staff had done for the TPP. He asked if staff still use traditional metrics such as access to transit stations, schools, and connectivity to the neighborhood to make recommendations. Mr. Wells responded that in addition to those traditional metrics, staff uses a broader approach to address the community's needs for activities surrounding them. Supervisor Herrity asked for the list of backlog for maintenance. Mr. Biesiadny stated that he would have the information available at the next briefing. Supervisor Herrity recommended that staff consider congestion relief and usage as some of the critical factors. Supervisor Storck recommended using recreation as one of the main focuses related to tourism. Supervisor Palchik emphasized the livability and health of goal number 3 as one of the key factors related to trails, sidewalks, parks, and safe access for bicyclists. Supervisor Walkinshaw recommended dialogue with VDOT and the state about improvements to public facilities. He recalled a case where the state had refused to let a private developer improve the public facilities.

## **5. Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project Update**

Martha Coello, Special Projects Division Chief, FCDOT, provided an update on the construction and testing progress of the Dulles Metrorail Silver Line Phase 2 project. Phase 1 still has some outstanding work to be completed in 2021/2022. Phase 2 is 99 percent complete. The presentation provided a list of ongoing unresolved, underway, and completed items. Staff anticipates the Silver Line Phase 2 bus service plan presentation to the Board for action in late 2021 or early 2022. The presentation requested input on any further action needed to address the outstanding construction quality issues, and if the Committee has any suggestions for additional areas of coordination prior to revenue service.

Committee Chairman Alcorn asked about the status of substantial completion of the project. Ms. Coello listed some of the ongoing issues and informed the Committee that the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority's (MWAA) targets substantial completion for the fourth quarter of 2021. Chairman McKay stated that the project has been delayed for more than four years and

expressed the Board's frustration. He stated that the delay is not a fault of the County, despite some people misunderstanding.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. The next Board Transportation Committee is scheduled for December 14, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.