Board of Supervisors Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes

February 25, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.
Conference Room 11, Government Center

Board of Supervisors Members Present:
James N. Bierman, Jr., Dranesville District (Committee Chairman)
Walter L. Alcorn, Hunter Mill District (Committee Vice Chairman)
Jeffrey C. McKay, At-Large (Chairman)
Kathy L. Smith, Sully District (Vice-Chairman)
James R. Walkinshaw, 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: None

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-feb-25-2025

Committee Chairman Bierman called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.

1. Opening Remarks Committee Chair Bierman welcomed Ms. Miller, the new Deputy County Executive, to her first meeting of the Board Transportation Committee.

2. Approval of Minutes
The Committee had no changes to the minutes from the October 29, 2024, meeting.

3. Transportation Demand Management (TDM)
Sam Chanesman, Transportation Planner III, and Jeff Hermann, Chief of the Site Analysis and Transportation Planning Division, FCDOT, presented updates on the proposed Proffered Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program in Fairfax County. The Board adopted the TDM Program guidelines in 2013 to establish trip reduction goal expectations for office and residential uses through the entitlement process. The TDM Program is designed to be flexible with the TDM plan and work plan, the TDM account in FOCUS, the remedy fund, the penalty

fund (only for the Tysons area), traffic counts and surveys, and annual reporting. The TDM Program guidelines for office and residential development establish a trip reduction goal based on distance from a Metrorail station and provide a range of reduction percentages for transit-oriented developments (TOD) that are not in the Tysons area, as well as reduction percentages for non-TOD locations. The TMD Program guidelines for TOD in Tysons have trip reduction goals based on the gross square footage of development and distance from a Metrorail station. The distance ranges from 0 to 0.5 miles. Based on industry feedback, staff proposed updates to the guidelines. TDM Program guideline improvements include a streamlined process for TDM plan submission, updated language surrounding Transportation Management Associations, cleaner sample proffers, and greater fairness and flexibility for developers to meet the TDM Program guidelines.

Since the TDM Program guidelines were established in 2013, the average trip reduction for sites with a TDM Program is 61 percent. On average, individual developments exceed their goals by 29 percent. As of 2023, compliance meetings identified only one developer missing their goal. However, they exceeded it for the following three years. On average, the observed TDM reductions have exceeded the reduction goals for development inside and outside the Tysons area. Based on this, staff seeks feedback from the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on the proposal to increase the reduction rates for developments in non-Tysons TOD and non-TOD locations by 5 percent. The proposed rates for Tysons TOD trip reduction goals would increase by 10 percent.

Committee Chair Bierman asked Mr. Chanesman for examples of TDM policies to reduce trips. Mr. Chanesman noted one example: when the developer provided employee transit subsidies and teleworking opportunities, especially during the pandemic.

Chairman McKay stated that the most important thing was to streamline and standardize the process. The standard process is helpful for the developers and staff to apply, monitor, collect data, and enforce the TDM policies. He wanted to ensure that the proposed guidelines, especially for Tysons, would not trigger penalties for developments that meet existing standards. Mr. Chanesman responded that the remedy fund was designed to assist developers with issues with the reduction goals before penalties are incurred. Chairman McKay asked staff to comment on whether the COVID pandemic skewed the telework data. Mr. Chanesman said the numbers could be higher because of teleworking. However, the trends before and after the pandemic are consistent in the percentage of trips reduced across the program. Chairman McKay requested that the updated requirement be overlaid on the data for recent years to show whether these changes would trigger penalties or noncompliance in both the Tysons and non-Tysons areas. He suggested contacting communities and transportation-related committees for feedback on the updated guidelines.

Supervisor Alcorn said that raising the reduction goals for Tysons is consistent with the Wilson Boulevard corridor's performance in Arlington County. Supervisor Alcorn suggested consulting with the land-use committees for feedback. He concurred with the Chairman's request for information on how the guidelines would specifically impact the Tysons corridor. He suggested

encouraging more pedestrian-related improvements and focusing on pedestrian and bicycle programs, especially for the Tysons and Reston areas. Mr. Chanesman agreed that the pieces of active transportation are critical to the success of the TDM program.

Supervisor Palchik suggested that the last quarter-mile transportation options are important for people in Tysons. She suggested contacting the Tysons Community Alliance, the Tysons Transportation Service District Advisory Board, and the newer senior buildings. She inquired about encouraging properties or smaller communities to join a shuttle circulation program. Mr. Chanesman agreed that last-mile programs are important, and any shuttle program consideration should involve collaborating with adjacent properties.

Supervisor Herrity asked for an explanation of the calculation of the "average trip reduction for sites with a TDM program is 61%" since the guidelines were created in 2013. Gregg Steverson, FCDOT Director, responded that if a development was expected to generate 100 peak-hour trips by default, they may only generate 39. Supervisor Herrity asked who was responsible for paying the subsidy. Mr. Chanesman stated that a TDM transit subsidy account is set up and budgeted annually for each development site. For example, a Condo or Homeowners Association (HOA) would manage the subsidy fund at a residential site. Supervisor Herrity suggested including the cost per unit for the residential development in the future, contacting condominium associations, the Apartment & Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington (AOBA), and the Chamber of Commerce. He also reiterated the need for flexibility in the TDM policies to accommodate changes or unforeseen circumstances. He also expressed concern for changing the goal when the federal government is returning to work at this time. Mr. Chanesman confirmed that the TDM program provided a framework and allowed individual developments to choose the best strategies.

Supervisor Storck inquired about the best practices in the country, the calculation of the trip reductions, and how the program, which focuses on Metro Stations, works in other areas of the County, like the Route 1 corridor. Mr. Chanesman said he would provide examples of best practices, calculations, traffic assessments for incoming applications, and policies for other areas of the County.

Supervisor Smith asked for an explanation of the remedy fund and how the contribution works but stated staff could respond to this request later.

Supervisor Lusk asked how the County monitors the proffer commitments for those TDM programs established before the guidelines were established in 2013. Mr. Chanesman replied that there was not a proper plan to track the proffers in those cases, making them difficult to measure. Mr. Hermann said he could provide examples of the older proffers and how they compare them with the newer TDM program. Supervisor Lusk asked for additional information regarding the guideline changes outlined on slide 5.

Supervisor Alcorn said he wanted the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) to broadcast the TDM program successes to County residents.

Supervisor Bierman mentioned that we should consider the benefits of transit subsidies in condominium and apartment developments.

4. ActiveFairfax Transportation Plan

Nicole Wynands, Senior Transportation Planner, and Laura Ghosh, Chief of the Active Transportation Section, FCDOT, updated the Committee on developing the draft Active Transportation and Trails Network Plan. The updates were needed because the current Comprehensive Plan guidance provides conflicting recommendations. There are gaps in the planned network and potential impacts on natural or cultural resources that need to be minimized. The facility types and design recommendations also need to be updated to reflect current best practices, including national and state standards.

Staff presented a four-step update for the Active Transportation and Trail Network:

Step 1: Internal Coordination to combine planned network, add public input from Phase I engagement, and fix data errors

Step 2: Internal Coordination to fill network gaps; review for environmental conflicts and find alternative routes if possible

Step 3: Public and Stakeholder Engagement to identify regional routes, coordinate with external landowners and surrounding jurisdictions

Step 4: Network revised as needed

Key comments from the open house/virtual meeting included focusing on pedestrian and bicycle safety, filling gaps in existing trail, sidewalk, and bikeway networks, dedicated bicycle facilities, and better signage. The comments on the interactive map consisted of requests to improve existing conditions on roads, network gaps, intersections, and other barriers limiting active mobility; requests for direct connections to schools, parks, and transit stations; support for road diets and speed limit reductions; and reports of unsafe condition locations. The online survey results showed that people prefer separate bicycle facilities that minimize interaction with traffic and are concerned about speeding, distracted driving, traffic enforcement, and maintenance of existing facilities. Staff has incorporated public and stakeholder comments and concerns into the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment Authorization for the Board's future consideration.

Chairman McKay inquired about the location of 425 online respondents to the community survey. Ms. Wynands replied that staff did not track the respondents' locations because it was supposed to be anonymous. Chairman McKay suggested including a Zip Code in future surveys so the Supervisors could see if the responses came from their district. He praised staff for the Active Transportation newsletter.

Supervisor Palchik expressed her appreciation for the newsletter in facilitating community outreach. It was invaluable and much needed for people to see the Active Transportation activities.

Supervisor Storck urged staff to expand the trail network maps to be comprehensive, including all trails from County parks, regional parks, and state and federal entities.

Supervisor Alcorn raised concerns about small fixes, such as crosswalk improvements over the County that may not be visible on the map. He suggested putting those things on a map and working with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Mr. Steverson stated that having a comprehensive map or list of those improvements will not be easy. The Transportation Priorities Plan can help address that list. He mentioned the Spot Improvement Program, which may also be part of the solution. Supervisor Alcorn inquired if staff could put the cost of those improvements on the Comprehensive Plan. Bryan Hill, County Executive, said a complete comprehensive list cannot be fully estimated; however, staff will continue to update and provide the information to the Board. Committee Chair Bierman believed that getting the exact cost estimates for many spot improvements can be difficult. However, he thought the real issues were to control and lower the costs of these improvements because it can be expensive to get everything done both timely and efficiently.

Supervisor Herrity inquired if the survey was limited to one response per machine. Ms. Wynands believed that the users could take multiple surveys if preferred. Supervisor Herrity asked for a statistically valid survey. He also asked for an update on the maintenance backlog of existing facilities. Supervisor Herrity asked for a way to track actual use for a project that the County or VDOT built. He recalled a VDOT project on Rolling Road where VDOT built a 10-foot walkway/path on both sides of the road. He questioned if that was needed and whether a 6-foot path would be sufficient. Supervisor Herrity suggested staff go back and review the practice to see if it made sense to reduce it. Mr. Hill responded that the County would work with VDOT on the flexibility issue for path size and report it to Supervisor Herrity.

Supervisor Walkinshaw advocated securing state funding for stand-alone pedestrian safety and access improvement projects that are not tied to a larger project. In alignment with the DMV Moves discussion, people need access to transit for transit to be successful.

5. Student Bus Pass Program/Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP)

Saul Cieza, Communications Specialist, and Gregg Steverson, FCDOT Director, updated the Committee on the Free Student Bus Pass Program and the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP). The Free Student Bus Pass Program was created in September 2015 to allow Fairfax County high school and middle school students to ride Fairfax Connector buses for free. The students made 32,904 trips in January 2025. Since the program started, the students have taken 3,549,546 trips. In September 2022, the program expanded to allow five high schools to take free trips on Metrobus in addition to the Connector in Northern Virginia. The combined programs will reach more than 4 million trips in February 2025.

TRIP is supported by a grant from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT). The TRIP goal is to reduce financial barriers to transit use. The TRIP criteria are based on qualifying for the County's TOPS (Transportation Options, Programs & Services) program. TRIP provides a 50 percent reduction in fares for Fairfax Connector. The number of trips TRIP users take is projected to increase significantly, based on existing trends. The initial

collaborators for the TRIP program include Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) and the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness (OPEH). In an effort to expand the program, the County is doing outreach with additional collaborators. The TRIP program has been marketed on printed and social media, including participation in fairs and festivals, visits to schools and community activities, and others.

Chairman McKay recalled that he and former Supervisor Hudgins brought forward the Board Matter to start the Student Bus Pass Program many years ago. He was amazed at the popularity and success of the program, helping the students go to school and work. They will be future transit users because of their early experiences with the Connector. He asked if there are schools that are not served by the Connector buses. Mr. Cieza responded that some schools have not officially requested the program, but staff expressed interest. Chairman McKay asked staff to review the bus stop locations and amenities, focusing on their distance to the schools and how to improve them for better service and increased student usage.

Supervisor Jimenez asked if there is any partnership between the Connector Student Bus pass and TRIP program and the new 14 bikeshare locations opening in the Mason District. Mr. Steverson promised to review it.

Supervisor Lusk asked what percentage of the DRPT grant supports the TRIP program and if the TRIP program could be expanded with the Student Bus Pass Program. Mr. Steverson responded that DRPT supports the half fare, but he was unsure if the grant could be expanded or extended, as it's a three-year grant. Supervisor Lusk inquired if other grants support the program. Mr. Steverson said he needs to research and discuss whether to continue the grant or pursue a new grant with DRPT. Supervisor Lusk asked for the breakdown of the number of TRIP users and their average number of trips. Mr. Steverson said he would report back to the Supervisor.

Supervisor Palchik expressed her support for the programs and suggested exploring the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) Commuter Choice Program as a potential option to fund the TRIP program in the future. She stated that Oakton High School is not on the Metro's Better Bus Network list and asked staff to consider adding it to the Student Bus Program in the future.

Supervisor Alcorn inquired about the progress on cross-program qualification (based on income qualification) so people do not have to fill out applications for multiple programs but stated that information could be provided later.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:31 p.m. The next Board Transportation Committee is scheduled for June 3, 2025.

(Staff note: While the next Board Transportation Committee meeting was originally scheduled for June 3, 2025, an additional Committee meeting has since been added to the schedule, to be held on April 8, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.)