

**Fairfax County Trails, Sidewalks and Bikeways Committee  
Meeting Notes**

**Regular Meeting – 7 PM, June 9, 2021**

Location: Video Conference Online via Webex

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

Note-Taker: Beth Iannetta

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

Ken Comer (At-Large / Chair), Robert Cosgriff (Braddock / Vice Chair), Wade H. B. Smith (Dranesville), Dyami Pipkin (Lee), James Albright (Mason), Jim Klein (Mount Vernon), Stiven Foster (Providence), Karl Liebert (Springfield), Katie McDaniel (Clifton Horse Society), Deborah Cohen, (Fairfax Area Disability Services Board), Shawn Newman (Fairfax County Alliance for Better Bicycling), Beth Iannetta (Fairfax County Park Authority), Howard Albers (Washington Area Bicyclists Association)

**Committee Members Absent:**

Alexander Rough (Hunter Mill), Karen Ampeh (Sully), Mark Tipton (Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations), Soledad Portilla (Northern Virginia Builders' Industry Association), *Vacant* (Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority)

**Others in Attendance:** David Loss (FCDOT), Nicole Wynands (FCDOT), Chris Wells (FCDOT), Sheila Dunheimer, (County resident)

**Call to Order & VFOIA recitals:** This remote meeting, the thirteenth since Governor Northam's State of Emergency declaration of 12 March 2020 prohibited all in-person gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was called to order by Ken Comer (Chair) at 7:00 p.m. This is the eighth remote meeting using Cisco Webex video conferencing. Mr. Comer then read the recitals required under Virginia Code § 15.2-1413, the uncodified Fairfax County Board of Supervisors emergency ordinance adopted on April 14, 2020, and the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Virginia Code §§ 2.2-3700 to -3714) pertaining to meetings that must be conducted remotely during a declared State of Emergency as being essential to the continuity of government. As required by the legal guidance, Mr. Comer introduced a motion, which was seconded, that this meeting is required for conducting an essential governmental function and must be conducted remotely. He requested that the motion be approved by acclamation and hearing no objections, declared the motion approved. Mr. Comer next conducted a roll call to determine which members, staff, and other participants were in attendance and that every member, staff, and other participants could hear every other attendee clearly. Following this roll call and determining that a quorum was reached, Mr. Comer moved that the committee confirm that every participant could hear every other participant clearly. The motion was seconded; Mr. Comer called for approval by acclamation and hearing no objections, declared the motion approved.

**Discussion Topics**

**BAC Remote Policy Plan** – David Loss, FCDOT, reviewed the proposed remote participation policy that needs to be adopted by the committee. The procedures only apply during state of

emergencies when declared and when lifted meetings must return to in person. The current state of emergency for COVID-19 is expected to expire at the end of this month. The July TSB may be in person if this comes to fruition. Several questions came up and discussion ensued about the procedural details. The policy was a boilerplate written by the County Attorney's Office and each Board committee needs to review, amend, and adopt it.

Motion to Approve- Mr. Klein made a motion to approve the BAC Remote Policy as proposed. The motion, seconded by Mr. Newman. Mr. Comer asked if anyone opposed the motion, and no one objected. The motion was approved.

**ActiveFairfax Plan Safe Streets Program** – Nicole Wynands, gave background information on the proposed Safe Streets Program explaining it was a standalone document the Board of Supervisors directed to be advanced in the overall schedule. It was originally planned to be completed during Phase 2. It has now been advanced as part of Phase 1. The document used to be referred to as the Systematic Safety Plan, but the name was changed. The document shown on the virtual screen is the most up to date version versus the one distributed to TSB committee members the day before. It's a very fluid document being revised and updated daily based on feedback from various committees. The goal is to have a final version submitted to the BOS at the June 29<sup>th</sup> BOS Transportation Subcommittee meeting. After that meeting it would be posted for public review and comment. FCDOT plans to have it formally adopted by the BOS at their September 2021 meeting. She reviewed the details and the framework of the document.

Mr. Comer inquired about the current lack of documentation for pedestrian/bicycle accidents unless there is significant damage or serious injury. He asked if there would be a mechanism for data collection in which decision and resources can be allocated to address identified safety issues. She explained there was an item related to crowdsourcing for dangerous locations, near-miss data, and potential use of data collected by other agencies or groups. Mr. Comer followed up with an inquiry to Ms. Iannetta, of the Park Authority, about accident tracking on trails or in parks. She explained that currently the Planning & Development staff for trails do not track this data. The FCPA mainly relies on requests via email from users about problems areas mainly related to maintenance. There is a larger number of ways to raise concerns about problem areas either online, through social media, talking to park staff directly, etc. The large system makes it difficult to keep track of every accident. The ones which result in serious injury would likely involve a police report or request for ambulance. Mr. Newman commented that many accidents are not likely even reported like one with his daughter where she got up, dusted herself off and continued on the trail.

Mr. Albright commented that the document felt very aspirational but very unrealistic in terms of being able to achieve the vast numbers of items listed. Ms. Wynands acknowledged that there is not enough staff to fulfil the existing needs of ActiveFairfax responsibilities. Mr. Albright stated that to accomplish a portion of the proposed program you would need to reorganize the entire agency. Mr. Newman appreciated that Mr. Albright noted there is no dedicated funding to address anything in the proposed safety plan. He asked if there will be a commitment by the BOS to fund any of these initiatives. Mr. Wells acknowledged that there is not enough funding to do most of what is proposed in the document, but they are trying to convey what is needed to make the pedestrian and bicycle system safer.

Mr. Comer inquired about the basis for determining short-, medium- or long-term goals as noted in the document. Ms. Wynands explained it is determined by how difficult it would be implemented. The short-term items would be the most realistic to implement. The medium- and

long-term goals can be politically difficult, expensive, or may involve the need to change an outside agency's policies, like VDOT. Ultimately it was based on staff's judgement. Mr. Comer noted that staff didn't render a judgement on what items would provide the most benefit in terms of safety. Ms. Wynands stated staff had started with that approach and quickly everything was being prioritized as high impact and it lost its value. Also, staff didn't want to assign a high priority to costly item in terms of funding or political will and put undo pressure on the political stakeholders for not doing something that would take a lot of funding or didn't have political backing. Mr. Foster recommended dropping the word "term" as that starts to introduce prioritization. Mr. Albright inquired what item, what one thing, would provide the most benefit. He felt there must be something that staff would support versus not stating it to provide political cover for BOS members. Ms. Wynands explained there is no silver bullet that would help solve the systemic safety problems, it will take many things. He recommends using big, medium, and little impact versus timeframe or complexity. Mr. Comer felt it would be a definite advantage to utilize the subject matter expertise of the committee members to help determine the biggest impact items among the various sections within the document. It would be valuable input to crowdsource the committee and not just utilize staff's opinion.

Mr. Cosgriff asked how this document relates to the ActiveFairfax plan. Ms. Wynands explained it is somewhat of a standalone document as it can be used before the ActiveFairfax plan is completed and it can be incorporated into the ActiveFairfax plan at the end. He also asked if the TAC committees would see this. She explained they would not see it before it went to the Board Transportation Committee in June, but they would review it before it gets formally adopted.

Ms. Iannetta recommended that the Implementing Agency column, with FCDOT identified as the lead in almost every item, be dropped for now and just a list of stakeholder agencies be listed. As presented, it sets up an unrealistic expectation that FCDOT would be the lead agency on all these initiatives. She noted the struggle in trying to review a safe streets initiative and how it would relate to trails since they are included in the document. There are differences for safety between recreational trails and roadway adjacent pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and this document lumps recreational trails in with roadway facilities. Mr. Klein agreed with Ms. Iannetta's concerns between trails and sidewalks. He noted the document has left the whole trail component out of it and overlooks an entire population that uses them.

Ms. Wynands requested comments from TSB members by June 17<sup>th</sup> so they can be compiled before the June 29<sup>th</sup> presentation to the BOS Transportation Committee meeting.

**Citizen Comment/Question & Answer:** None

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, Mr. Foster made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Iannetta and approved at 9:07 p.m.