

Fairfax County Trails, Sidewalks and Bikeways Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2021 at 7 p.m.

Location: Remote Meeting via Cisco Webex Video Teleconferencing

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

Note Taker: Beth Iannetta

Committee Members in Attendance:

Ken Comer (At-Large / Chair), Bob Cosgriff (Braddock/ Vice-Chair), Alex Rough (Hunter Mill), James Albright (Mason), Jim Klein (Mount Vernon), Karl Liebert (Springfield), Karen Ampeh (Sully District), Kathryn McDaniel (Clifton Horse Society), Shawn Newman (Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling), Deborah Cohen (Fairfax Area Disability Services Board), Elizabeth Iannetta (Fairfax County Park Authority), Howard Albers (Washington Area Bicyclists Association),

Committee Members Absent:

Wade H.B. Smith (Dranesville), Dyami Pipkin (Lee), Mark Tipton (Fairfax Council of Community Associations), Soledad Portillo (Northern Virginia Builders' Industry Association), Michael DePue (Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority), *Vacant* (Providence)

Others in attendance:

David Loss (FCDOT), Sheila Dunheimer, Bill Niedringhaus (Fairfax Trails & Streams), Karen Jones (Fairfax Trails & Streams), Charlie Grimes (Greater Prince William Co Trails), Ernie Rodriguez (M.O.R.E)

Call to Order: This remote meeting used Cisco Webex video conferencing. Mr. Comer read the recitals required under Virginia Code § 15.2-1413, the uncodified Fairfax County Board of Supervisors emergency ordinance adopted on 14 April 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.

Approval of the Minutes: The October 2021 draft TSB Minutes were distributed for review. One correction needs to be made, a typo "Safter" in the discussion item for the Joint Board Action. A

motion to approve the minutes as amended, was seconded by Karen Ampeh, and approved without objection.

Presentation:

- **Trail Opportunities for Fairfax County** (Bill Niedringhaus/Karen Jones, Fairfax Trails and Streams/Potomac Heritage Trail Association) – Mr. Niedringhaus provided an update on recent trail activities and reports. The NVRC staff has been working on a report for the quality of trail benefits. The data should be available in the coming months. Loudoun County and Prince William County have been ramping up trail planning efforts and both seek good trail connections among the jurisdictional boundaries. The Fairfax Trails and Streams motto has always been “show them, don’t tell them”. He noted that currently there are over 600 trail recommendations on the ActiveFairfax community input map. He envisions them to start as hiking trails constructed by volunteers that would be widened eventually. He reviewed several trail route recommendations throughout the county including Lorton, Centreville, Oakton, Fairfax, Reston, McLean, and Pohick Stream Valley. Bill Niedringhaus wanted to make the committee aware of the circuitous route being proposed on the Maryland side for the proposed trail over American Legion Bridge when widened. He showed a depiction of the route and discussion ensued. After the presentation Beth Iannetta inquired about the necessary maintenance effort needed for the various trails being proposed within the County and if they a plan to ensure that volunteers could meet the maintenance needs. She further inquired if the proposed trails would meet the equity goals of the county and how they would be for all ages and abilities. The establishment of informal trails may be a quick and easy way to get more miles of trails, however consideration for ADA compliance as well as the ability to keep them maintained are critical factors. Ernie Rodriguez sees this as an effort to satisfy community needs. Trails can start out as deer paths social paths but often become unusable and destructive. The goal would be formally recognized and eventually turn them into sustainable, natural surface multi-use trails. He agreed that maintenance needs to be part of the consideration up front. Shawn Newman noted that many natural surface trails are not as ADA compliant or accessible as intended. A person in a wheelchair, a kid on bike, or newer heavier ebikes can’t be lifted across obstacles or crossings. Jim Klein noted any trail experience, at an introductory level, can start with shorter loops on accessible routes and then branch out into connecting trails and communities. He felt it would be a mistake to think of the proposals as one trail user type and recommends that a multitude of abilities be considered as routes are pursued.

Citizen comments/Question & Answer Period: (if any)

- **Charlie Grimes, of Greater Prince William Trails Coalition** -Working on a trail planning effort. Their county has been road and building focused and not much effort was focused on trails. The community group is working on an aspirational network of routes while the county staff have been developing its own network with fewer routes. They are particularly interested in connecting to Fairfax County via bridges. Jim Klein thanked him for coming to the meeting and looks forward to working in the Occoquan/Mount Vernon area. Shawn Newman inquired if they had any success connecting to the I-66 trail. Charlie Grimes explained Prince William

County missed their opportunity when they failed to include a trail connection when they updated their transportation plan.

- **Ernie Rodriguez-** He had no further comment and he appreciated his ability to join the conversation.
- **Sheila Dunheimer** – She wanted to follow up on her discussion from last month. She noted that she was in contact with FCPA staff on the CCT easements and deed language. She requested that environmental concerns be considered with the ActiveFairfax project. One comment she had on social trails in parks based on the earlier presentation is there are cost issues for maintenance and a clearer process needs to be considered so that other trails aren't created.

Staff Report (David Loss, FCDOT):

- **ActiveFairfax Update-** The “Vision, Goals & Objectives” document was reviewed by the BOS Transportation Subcommittee on September 28, 2021, and it was endorsed by BOS yesterday, November 9th, 2021. The “Safe Streets for All” program recommendation had a public meeting on November 8th and another is scheduled for November 18th. Staff anticipates presenting it to the BOS Transportation Subcommittee on January 22nd and presenting to the BOS for endorsement in the Spring of 2022. The funding for Phase 2 of the project was approved in October 2021. Phase 2 would focus on the creation of the ActiveFairfax network. Beth Iannetta inquired if staff could update the committee on the revised scope for Phase 2.

Active/Unresolved Issues:

- **Joint BOS Action Item \$100 million for pedestrian/bicycle improvements-** Howard Albers inquired about the next steps anticipated for this potential funding. David Loss explained staff is working district by district to consider projects.
- **Cinder Bed Road Bikeway-** Jim Klein wanted to follow up on a meeting he missed in July and the concerns raised by environmental groups. He inquired if this committee ever drafted a letter of support of the project which was discussed in July. The project was also discussed in September. It was generally understood that the committee needed more information and requested FCDOT provide more project details.
- **Future Committee Presenters/Presentations** – Bob Cosgriff requested FCDOT staff follow up with the Deputy County Executive, Rachel Flynn to inquire about her availability to return to this committee and update us on any of the initiatives and programs she discussed the last time she was here. Howard Albers recommended the TSB be briefed on the “Parking Reimagined” project as there are ongoing community meetings being held. Bicycle parking requirements may be considered as part of this project.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:59 p.m.