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City of Fairfax City Council Work Session, Tuesday, July 1, 2025

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[00:00:15] Good evening, and before we convene the work session, I would like to make a motion to conclude our previous closed meeting. At 6.56 p.m., the City Council concluded its closed meeting to conduct interviews for boards and commissions and discuss appointments to boards and commissions. I move that each of us certify that to the best of each council member's knowledge.

[00:00:33] One, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements in the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and two, only public business matters identified Other than the motion convening, the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered. All council members in favor of the certification motion, please signify by voting aye. Aye.

[00:00:49] Those who opposed to the motion, please vote nay. The motion passes unanimously. So with that, good evening and welcome to the work session of July 1st, 2025. I will call the meeting to order. I will now recognize Ms. Clark for the first work session item for discussion.

[00:01:07] The first work session item is an update and discussion on Move Fairfax City, Safety Action Plan, Pedestrian Plan, and Old Town Circulation Study. Chloe Ritter, Multimodal Transportation Planner,

will provide the staff presentation. Thank you, and good evening, Mayor, Council, and also members of the Planning Commission.

[00:01:26] We're glad to have everybody here for a big discussion on this project. So we are here to give an update and have a discussion on the Move Fairfax City Safe Streets for All project. But before we get started, I do want to just quickly introduce the team that's here tonight. So I'm Chloe Ritter, transportation planner with the city.

[00:01:43] And then going down the row, we have Colin Hodges and Ryan Sharp from Alta and Steve Schmidt from Timmons Group for our consulting team. And then we have Wendy Sanford, the transportation director. And then behind us, we have a few more people who can help us answer questions. Kurt McCullough, the city's traffic engineer, Paul Nabte from the planning department, and David Summers from Public Works.

[00:02:05] So with that, we'll go ahead and get started. So here's our agenda for this evening. We're going to give an overview of the project. We are at the beginning of the project, so we want to give an overview of the project background, the goals, and what we're looking to achieve with this project. And what we're looking to achieve with this project is to develop three separate plans, and we'll go over each of those plans in a little bit more detail for the Safety Action Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, and the Old Town Circulation Study.

[00:02:31] And then the Old Town Circulation Study is the most detailed of the three plans, and so we want to have a more in-depth discussion about what that project is going to involve and what the trade-offs are, what our priorities are for that study. And then we'll wrap up with some next steps to talk about the Community Engagement Plan and have some questions and discussion, and we want to hear your feedback on these plans and the priorities for this project.

[00:02:57] So project overview. The first question I want to answer is, why are we doing this project? And so I'll answer that by saying we have several long-term plans in the city that are looking to improve pedestrian safety and safety overall throughout the city. And so we have the comprehensive plan, and we have the bicycle master plan, and the strategic plan all call for improvements to safety and pedestrian improvements and walkability.

[00:03:23] And the Old Town small area plan, of course, looks to have improvements to walkability and connectivity and improves traffic circulation in Old Town. What these plans don't provide is specific project priorities, and so that's what we're doing with this project is to take these long-term plans and move them to the next step of identifying our priorities for how to implement those goals and visions for improvements of safety and pedestrian improvements.

[00:03:50] So as I said, the purpose of this project is to develop these three plans. And so we have an umbrella project called Move Fairfax City, and that project is going to develop a citywide safety action plan to identify priorities for safety improvements across the city, a citywide pedestrian master plan to prioritize pedestrian improvements, and the Old Town Circulation Study to look at improvements and opportunities to improve walkability, connectivity, and safety in Old Town.

[00:04:18] And you'll notice I said safety and pedestrian improvements a lot, so that's where we see all of these three plans overlapping, and that's why we decided to do these three plans as a single project,

because even though each plan has its own focus area, They do each have a lot of overlap in terms of the types of analysis we look at.

[00:04:36] And we want to make sure that we're coordinating recommendations and making sure that the plans speak to each other instead of competing with each other. And it's also an opportunity to coordinate our community engagement to make sure that the community understands that we're looking at these things comprehensively. And another reason that we're doing these projects together is because we're able to leverage funding to do them more cost-effectively.

[00:04:59] So we were awarded a \$400,000 grant from the federal Safe Streets for All program, and that's matched with \$150,000 in local funding. Now what we're doing is we're leveraging local funding that we'd have previously identified to do each of these plans individually, to do a pedestrian master plan as a single project and the Old Town Circulation Study as a single project.

[00:05:20] And now we can take that funding and address several planning needs at once in a more cost-effective way. And it also will position us for future funding to have these plans and have done these plans in an accorded manner. So with that background, I'm now going to turn it over to Colin to talk about the, or I'm sorry, to Ryan to talk about the safety action plan.

[00:05:45] Thank you, Chloe. Good evening, Council. So the first plan that is a part of this overall umbrella project is a safety action plan. And the goal of the safety action plan is to focus on improving traffic safety for all modes of transportation, right?

[00:06:02] So not just pedestrians, not just bikes, not just drivers, all modes of transportation. And the real goal here that will come out of the plan is trying to eliminate severe injuries and traffic deaths, right? Humans make mistakes, and that's kind of the whole kind of philosophy of the safe systems approach, which is kind of the core philosophy for what the action plan, how that will be developed.

[00:06:29] And basically what that means is that there are redundancies. Imagine building a space shuttle, right? You want to have redundancies put in place to avoid having one system failing and causing a catastrophe, right? So it's applying a similar approach to traffic safety where it's using a proactive approach to try to prevent crashes that are going to be severe or result in death from happening before they happen or turning a crash that may have been severe into something that's, you know, much more minor.

[00:07:03] And there are several components to the safe system approach, focusing on infrastructure improvements, reducing speeds on streets, improving behavior for people, also post-crash care.

[00:07:19] So when you do have a crash, it's identifying exactly what the contributing factors are and what could be done to mitigate that as quickly as possible so it doesn't happen again. And then also safer vehicles, right? So looking at ways that vehicles themselves can be safer, right?

[00:07:37] If you're a municipality, that could mean purchasing vehicles that have technology built into it, like blind spot monitoring, pedestrian collision avoidance technology, things like that to help improve the safety of the vehicle itself, right? And together, those five components create that systems approach, right?

[00:07:57] And the goal of the safety action plan is ultimately to identify and prioritize a list of projects that you can then put in your capital improvement plan. Next slide. And a few of the key components of the action plan include a high injury network, right?

[00:08:15] So we're going to do a crash analysis that will look at all the crashes that have happened in Fairfax City over the last several years. And then we're going to analyze that data. We're going to map that data and create a high-injury network, right? So you'll be able to see the street segments throughout the city that have clusters of the highest number of severe crashes, right?

[00:08:38] And from there, we'll also go to the next level, and we're not just going to play this whack-a-mole approach where we're looking at historical data and then recommending action, and then there's more crashes, and then you just keep chasing the data, this takes a more proactive approach and it looks at roadway characteristics and looks at patterns and contributing factors that happened for these crashes and then tries to identify where they might happen in places where maybe the data doesn't show a history of severe collisions, right?

[00:09:10] So if you have left-turn crashes that have happened several times over a five-year period and there have been multiple severe injuries, and we look at that and we say, okay, well, what are other intersections throughout the city that have very similar characteristics?

[00:09:26] Maybe they don't have the same traffic volumes as that intersection, but it's still worth looking at and saying, okay, maybe we should proactively, when we have an opportunity, implement safety improvements there that are similar to where the intersection was that had those severe crashes.

[00:09:42] We'll also be looking at underserved communities, which are typically overrepresented in the data, disproportionately suffering from severe injuries and traffic deaths. And then we're going to use connected vehicle data to help supplement our analysis, right?

[00:09:58] So using telematics and in-vehicle sensors that basically creates big data, right? It's anonymous data that you can get, but it'll tell you things like heartbreaking behavior, speeds if people are traveling more than, say, 10 miles per hour over the speed limit.

[00:10:16] Again, it's private, it's aggregated, and it's a really useful tool, though, for the overall analysis. Next slide. And lastly, these are just a few of the other components that will be in the safety action plan.

[00:10:32] They're required through the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program, which is funding all three of these plans. So in addition to what I mentioned before with the crash analysis, there will be a steering committee, right, task force that helps create the development of the plan. There'll be public outreach and engagement, right? It's going to be a robust public outreach and engagement process. There'll be project prioritization, right? So once we have a crash analysis, we'll be able to use that data to identify street segments that will be prioritized as part of the public engagement process. And

[00:11:08] through a data-driven process, you put that all together, you end up with a list of prioritized corridors for investing in improvements and putting you into your capital improvement plan and applying for grants and so forth. And, you know, our goal is to complete the action plan in time for the next probably last round of the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program when they have a NOFO in probably 2026 sometime to apply for an implementation grant where you can AND THEN TAKE THE PLAN AND SUBMIT FOUR CONSTRUCTION FUNDS.

[00:11:43] OKAY. THANKS. AND I'M GOING TO TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN. SO PEDESTRIAN MOBILITY AND SAFETY ARE VERY INTER-RELATED.

[00:12:01] BETTER PEDESTRIAN MOBILITY WILL USUALLY RESULT IN ENHANCE SAFETY FOR ALL MODES. YOU MIGHT HAVE BETTER PEDESTRIAN SEPARATION, BETTER CROSSING FACILITIES, BETTER FACILITIES AT INTERSECTIONS GENERALLY. And this Pedestrian Master Plan is going to coordinate with all the other efforts, as Chloe mentioned.

[00:12:19] And the need for this is well documented. In the comprehensive plan, there are a variety of actions that specifically cite increased and improved pedestrian mobility. And ultimately, similar to the Safety Action Plan, the Pedestrian Master Plan will result in projects that are recommended for implementation and that should be the next steps.

[00:12:42] And those will be coordinated, again, with the safety action plan findings, and also, as you'll see, the Old Town Circulation Study as well. And a little bit about the approach. So first, the pedestrian master plan, the analysis will take cues from the findings of the safety action plan.

[00:13:02] So the analyses that Ryan mentioned, the high injury network, the crouch profiles, those will be considered in the pedestrian master plan to see where there might be pedestrian safety issues that could be accommodated through improved mobility. But there will also be a separate kind of parallel focus on pedestrian comfort and improving pedestrian routes to get to where people need to go.

[00:13:27] And a couple of those analyses are the pedestrian level of traffic stress. So that looks at identifying which roads are more stressful for pedestrians to travel. So that looks at the number of lanes, vehicle speeds, Sidewalk, the presence or absence of sidewalks.

[00:13:45] If there are sidewalks, what kind of buffer there is. Is there anything protecting pedestrians from traffic? Or is a sidewalk directly abutting vehicle traffic? And that will give us an idea of where, again, where there are corridors or areas in the city where pedestrians might feel particularly uncomfortable and they may need to be addressed.

[00:14:07] And a sidewalk gap analysis and a crossing gap analysis will also be done. Crossing gap analysis, it's important not to underestimate the need for good crossing facilities at intervals that make sense for the land use that's surrounding them. Because if someone isn't able to cross at a certain location that is maybe a desire line or there aren't enough crossings on a long block, then that could also lead to safety issues.

[00:14:33] It could lead to people trying to cross where they shouldn't be. And so that's an example of how safety and mobility for pedestrians does overlap. But this plan will build on the Safety Action Plan data analysis, use its own data analysis, and come up with a series of projects that recommend the path forward for improving mobility for pedestrians in the city.

[00:15:02] And so now we're going to talk about the Old Town Circulation Study, but first I'm going to give a little bit more background. So this is a quote from the Old Town Small Area Plan, and I'm not going to read the whole thing, but I'll just read the first sentence. The long-term plan vision is to create a pedestrian-friendly precinct in the downtown core.

[00:15:23] And then the plan goes on to talk about some different strategies to do that. And so I put this up here because we want to talk about what the goal is of the Old Town Circulation Study. And this is kind of our guiding vision for how we're going to start looking at improvements to the Old Town Small Area Plan and think about what kind of improvements we want to consider.

[00:15:45] And the Small Area Plan has set out this vision for us and now the study is going to take a deeper dive and look at how we do that and it's going to have more discussion tonight about the trade-offs that are going to be required to achieve that vision. And so that's what we want to be thinking about tonight and as we go through this plan of how do we implement this in a way that supports all of the community's priorities.

[00:16:10] And so just for a little bit more background, we wanted to give some examples of some of the major efforts that have been taken in Old Town in the past roughly 20 years. So in about 2006, the last really significant effort to improve transportation in Old Town was the conversion of Main Street and North Street from a one-way couplet to two-way traffic on both of those streets.

[00:16:33] And at about the same time, the city of Fairfax Library was built and the Old Town Village was built. And since that time, most of the projects that have been done have been kind of nibbling around the edges to try to improve pedestrian safety and pedestrian comfort, but not really any significant changes.

[00:16:50] So, for example, we've done spot widening of sidewalks. We've done some crosswalk improvements. We've tried to improve some of the lighting in Old Town. We've done some improvements north and south of Old Town with the bike lanes, and we're working on the South Street extension. So all of those projects, again, are sort of going around the edges, but it's not really requiring any significant or major tradeoffs with things in the center of Old Town to achieve really big change.

[00:17:16] So in order to achieve really big change, we may have to really look at some really big tradeoffs. And that's really what this study is meant to do, is to think about what trade-offs we're willing to look at, what are our priorities, and what is our willingness to explore some of these big changes going forward.

[00:17:33] Because this is trying to implement a long-term vision and is going to take some long-term effort to decide if this is something we want to do. So the purpose of this study and what we want to hear from the community is how do we want to go forward to implement the vision of pedestrian improvements in Old Town.

[00:17:51] So with that, we're going to talk a little bit more about how this study is going to go. Right. So good evening. Thank you for having us. The Old Town Circulation Study is going to begin, like most traffic studies do, with a lot of data collection. We've actually already gone out and done traffic counts at 13 intersections.

[00:18:09] We've done field observations. All of this was done in the April timeframe when both university and public schools were still in session. You know, so from North Street at the top, Main, Sager, South Street, and then East and West as well, right? So looking at those 13 intersections to really understand what vehicles are using it, what pedestrians, bicycles, trucks, buses, fire rescue vehicles, all of that.

[00:18:33] We need to assemble this data, build a model of what is out there today to then understand how we can move forward. The goal of the study is to advance the recommendations in the Old Town Fairfax Small Area Plan. From here, we're going to start evaluating different alternatives to change those patterns, change that traffic flow more for pedestrians, more for vehicles, some of those trade-offs that Chloe was talking about, right?

[00:18:56] So we're in the process now of looking for and starting to look at different alternatives of things that we can look at. There's going to be a ton of trade-offs, but the key outcome of this is we want to come up with a preferred alternative to develop for implementation. This is going to be a more detailed, more

analytical and detailed-driven plan than the other two because we're going to look at that existing data and future traffic needs and pedestrian needs.

[00:19:24] Go ahead. Right, so I already talked about this a little bit, but then we're going to start by developing feasible design alternatives, right? We know that Old Town is, you know, there's some narrow roads, some narrow crosswalks, some narrow sidewalks, and a narrow right-of-way, right?

[00:19:40] We can't just, there's a lot of alternatives that we would like to come up with that may not be feasible. So we want to identify and analyze feasible alternatives for the Old Town area. And with that, the performance of those alternatives and the trade-offs, again, as we talked about a little bit before, but the purpose being to develop actionable improvements that the city then can move forward with.

[00:20:04] Brad, please. So we have some constraints. Again, I mentioned a little bit, the right-of-way, limited ability to widen or add future streets. You know, the South Street extension is coming in, but beyond that, there's a limited area where we could look to potentially add a street or anything like that.

[00:20:22] Emergency access, utility conflicts. We've got the county and city properties. We've got a lot of different constraints in this area. And so we need to look at all of those, the data, the future, and, you know, look at what are the tradeoffs going to be. Some examples, this is not a comprehensive list, but, you know, a tradeoff might be less travel time for drivers going through Old Town versus a more walkable environment.

[00:20:45] Wider sidewalks or more on-street parking. You know, those two things are going to be a tradeoff in this process. Who's going to wait more at intersections, drivers or pedestrians? You know, are there more frequent crossing opportunities for pedestrians or fewer stops for vehicles? These are just some of the examples of some of the tradeoffs that we're going to have to look at as we develop these alternatives.

[00:21:08] And so just to give one example to illustrate some of the tradeoffs, this is just one example of where we've had to make a tradeoff in the past and where we could reevaluate the priorities and decide which tradeoff, how we want to balance this tradeoff. So as you know, a few months ago we had a public hearing about the university drive bike lanes, and one of the questions that came up in the public hearing is why don't the bike lanes go all the way through the center of Old Town?

[00:21:30] And the reason is that that is one of these big changes and really big trade-offs that we evaluated a few years ago. And at that time, there wasn't a willingness to make a big trade-off to remove a travel lane through the middle of Old Town, which the analysis at that time showed would result in more gridlock and more congestion through the center of Old Town in order to provide the bike lanes all the way through the center of Old Town.

[00:21:54] And so as a result, the decision at that time was not to do the bike lanes through the center of Old Town and to leave it with the four lanes, with the two lanes in each direction. And so that's one example of a really big change that could result in a really big benefit, but it would require a really big trade-off in terms of how does it impact traffic.

[00:22:12] And we want to look at it holistically through the Old Town Circulation Study to understand are there different ways that we can move people through Old Town to balance those trade-offs more holistically. And, you know, I'll just say and mention also that this is one of the other key ideas from the

Old Town Small Area Plan is to have a multimodal spine through Old Town on University Drive from George Mason University to North Vax on University Drive.

[00:22:38] And again, so as we look at the Old Town Small Area Plan and the Old Town Circulation Study, how do we balance our priorities and how do we balance the different trade-offs that are required to achieve the vision that's laid out in the Small Area Plan? And so two of the other preliminary alternatives that we're thinking about for this study are to re-evaluate the one-way couplet.

[00:22:58] So as I mentioned, the streets used to be one-way in 2006, and then we changed to two-way traffic. Going back to a one-way pair might provide opportunities to reallocate some of the roadway space for other uses, whether it's on street parking or bike lanes, and help traffic circulate through Old Town in a different way that allows both for east-west and north-west and north-south circulation in a little bit better way.

[00:23:22] And the other alternative that we're looking at or considering looking at is the loop road and pedestrian precinct concept, which is outlined here from the small area plan, showing traffic circulating around Old Town with the inner streets more prioritized for pedestrians.

[00:23:38] So these are two of the alternatives we could be looking at. There may be other alternatives that come up in the community discussion. We don't have an endless amount of resources to evaluate every possible potential opportunity, but we do want to be able to hone in on some priorities that really make sense for the community and the community goals.

[00:23:57] So I'll just bring us back to what the vision is, as outlined in the small area plan, to create a pedestrian-friendly precinct, just so we can be thinking as we have the discussion tonight and as we have a discussion with the community, what is our willingness to look at big changes and big trade-offs to achieve and implement this vision? So this is just something to be thinking about in the long term. How do we implement the vision of the small area plan and implement the priorities for improving pedestrian connectivity in Old Town? And just to bring it

[00:24:34] back even further a bit, we talked a lot about the details of each plan, how we are approaching each the questions we're asking ourselves also wanted to just go back to how they're overlapping and the ways they reinforce each other so one of the big benefits of this is we've talked a lot about recommendations and identifying alternatives and projects and these overlapping plans give an opportunity to see where there are overlapping benefits so where say we have a crash hotspot or a corridor that has a lot of crashes a lot of serious and fatal crashes that is also would

[00:25:11] also improve pedestrian mobility or you know make it easier for people to get to and from in and within or between activity centers and then you know maybe that also is something that syncs with old town circulation study and if those things layer that gives really good indication of where some of the best kind of bang for your buck projects could be and then also those feed into potential rationalizations or arguments for grant grant funding federal and state funding opportunities, whether they be the implementation grant funding that Ryan mentioned through the SS4A program or SmartScale or another type of program.

[00:25:49] So it's just a lot of benefits and efficiencies to doing these all at once. And we also want to talk a bit about just what's coming up next. So as far as public engagement goes, to segue from kind of the

benefits of these plans being done at once that, as has been mentioned, directly relates to public engagement.

[00:26:11] So rather than doing three separate plans that we're engaging the public with on separately on different occasions, we're doing this all under one project umbrella where we can look at the benefits and constraints and questions that we have for each plan individually, but combine them into a single engagement effort that makes better use of people's time, resources, and energy.

[00:26:33] So the way we're planning to go about this, we have two phases. Phase one, which we anticipate beginning in the fall, we would be going to the community to get general feedback, reactions to the data analyses we've started, look at priorities, maybe bring up findings from other plans and the plan review process we've gone through so that we're building on previous efforts.

[00:26:58] And this would be conducted in a few ways, online, in person, and also at some in-person pop-up events and on-site things. But the online engagement would be through the city's website, an interactive story map, and an online survey to try to get the word out about the project provide people a way to understand interact with the project's findings and to provide their direct feedback and going into phase two we would the results of phase one would partially inform of what the recommendations we develop so we would provide draft version of the recommendations that were we consider considering going forward with and the alternatives in the case of the old

[00:27:36] town circulation study and we would have an opportunity for the community to to give direct feedback on the work we've done so far. And also make it clear where the feedback we've received from both community and stakeholders have influenced some of what we're presenting.

[00:27:52] And this would be, again, a mix of online and in-person engagement. And lastly, we recognize the importance of reaching out to people in a variety of different ways and not just relying on any one method to get as many people as possible. So we'd be doing a lot of different things from targeted mailers, email, in-person events, and other website communications.

[00:28:17] And finally, so we've, I think, heard a lot about the steering committee lately, and we just wanted to emphasize that the steering committee is going to be an important part of this process, similar to the public engagement process. You know, it's very important in this kind of project to have stakeholders that are familiar with the issues that are not at the city and are not part of the consultant team, so they can provide really good feedback from that perspective and from their respective specialties.

[00:28:43] And also, this committee is going to serve as the required Vision Zero Task Force, which is part of the SS4A program. And if we're developing a safety action plan, we do need to have that steering committee and get their feedback. Also, it's just generally a huge benefit to have that insight regularly.

[00:29:06] Lastly, that's it for the presentation. We just wanted to open it up to you all, get some feedback. And we have a series of questions here just for you to consider, but very interested in hearing your reactions. questions and concerns anything else Chloe no thank you that does conclude our presentation and we're very interested to hear what questions you have and hear your input on these plans wonderful thank you for that councilmember Amos so this presentation really spoke to me I've been hinting at July 1st for a little while now when when looking at the Old Town small area

[00:29:42] plan I love the idea of focusing and emphasizing the pedestrian precinct part of it I walk in Old Town all the time with my fiancé and we're just kind of wandering around waiting at the lights and we're

wondering this place would be perfect for a plaza type idea why has that never happened turns out they did look at it back in 2017 but it just didn't move anywhere so I feel like tonight would be a good opportunity and I've kind of brought this up with my colleagues individually to look at bringing back that plaza idea for some type of pilot program to form a pedestrian plaza many other communities have taken a look at this

[00:30:18] I think this would be a good opportunity to look at the traffic ramifications of that, congestion opportunities, things there as a part of this study. So if my colleagues are amenable, I would like to look at launching a pedestrian plaza pilot program, say that four times.

[00:30:37] And with that transportation component, looking at it there, concurrently also asking the EDA to take a look at it from an economic development perspective in terms of implementation, feasibility. working with Old Town Fairfax Business Association, hi Tina, and the Central Fairfax Chamber, hi Jennifer.

[00:30:56] So if my colleagues are cool with that, I wanted to just bring that up. Council Member McGuillan? I am very much in support of looking into that and learning more about it, absolutely. I would also be interested if the opportunity presents to allow our restaurants to spread into the streets and possibly have an open alcohol situation going on to bring people out from the restaurants into the stores as well and just kind of moving around a little bit more pedestrian traffic in our city.

[00:31:32] So, yes, I love that idea. Thank you for bringing that up. Councilmember Peterson. Well, I think it sounds like an intriguing option also. I guess my bigger, and I'm supportive of it, but as I understand it, your bigger process here is to identify options and you've got some already you're going to be reaching out, as I understand it, to the community to develop more, then you're going to sort through them because, as you indicated, you can't do everything, right? And this could be one of those options, but at the same time, am I correct in

[00:32:07] understanding you will be proactively generating a broader set of options that will come back for consideration? I'm seeing heads nodding yes. And I guess the follow-on question to that is as you're screening through things. We've got a safety plan, a pedestrian plan, and an old town circulation plan. When you try to get your priorities set, you're going to have to screen them down through some set of criteria or things that people care about the most. And I don't know whether you've thought that far forward, but I just want to say that I'm sure you'll be doing that and you'll be bringing some multiple set of objectives that will be balanced and reflective

[00:32:45] of the community to deal with the trade-offs that you've mentioned before. So I'm seeing heads nodding around that. I think that's exactly what you need to do and appreciate that. And again, I support including this, but I really would look forward to the creative energy of your group and the creative energy of the community to paint out what this broader set of options might look like.

[00:33:07] Council Member Hardy-Chandler? So first of all, thank you for doing a coordinated plan, because I think a lot of these massive efforts when you are setting up things that don't speak to each other there is duplicative effort and so I think it is really smart to look for the common ground and to have this be a coordinated effort under one umbrella so definitely appreciate the approach that you're taking and I think it's a smart approach for our city and I think it's also an efficient approach looking at

[00:33:43] these things I appreciate the fact that in addition to whatever we might suggest you're wanting to get the community engagement and I've heard very clearly and it is absolutely true we do not have unlimited resources to explore everything so my question is really I wonder if technology allows us to present to our residents modeling kinds of things that help them provide input IN A MORE INFORMED WAY. I KNOW THAT FOR ME AS A MORE SEASONED INDIVIDUAL, I KIND OF THINK OLD SCHOOL AND SURVEYS AND

[00:34:22] THAT KIND OF THING. BUT I WONDER IF TECHNOLOGY ALLOWS US TO PROJECT POSSIBLE MODELS THAT THE COMMUNITY CAN PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON SUCH AS PLAZAS AND CERTAIN THINGS WHERE THEY CAN REALLY KIND OF GET A PREVIEW OR VISUALIZE BASED ON WHAT resources we can devote to providing the information for those just wondering about that and also part of that question comes from conversations with some of our colleagues at mason who do modeling kinds of things for a wide variety of issues and just wondering if that could be a partnership that helps you get the most informed the most information you need in order to make the

[00:35:01] recommendations moving forward curious about so i'll just say that one of the things we want to do with the public engagement is to provide some opportunities for more hands-on activity and more an interactive activity to understand some of the challenges and some of the priorities we probably won't be able to develop everything to the level of detail of knowing if we do this we're gonna have this much traffic that is part of this study but that is one of the limitations is that we're we're really only to do that that detailed traffic modeling for a few scenarios that doesn't mean that we can't try to illustrate different ideas before we get to that step and that is kind of what we want to do with our public engagement

[00:35:38] Can I ask a question just for clarification and just to make sure I understand what you're saying? Is your concern that if we were to ask a question on paper, are you in favor of having a more walkable downtown or something like that? Without people understanding what that would look and feel like to them maybe when they're in a car, is that what you're getting at?

[00:36:00] Just are we maximizing how we can get informed feedback? Whatever that way is, it may be just a question, but also with some of these, like we get the advantage of the pictures and the diagrams and the history and all of that stuff, which might not be easily transferable into, you know, certain, you know, old school ways of getting that information.

[00:36:23] Just wondering how we can maximize so that for this planning phase in preparation for implementation, which is what I heard, right, that that input is as informed as it possibly can be under our resources and the technology that's available.

[00:36:41] Just as I think I had a follow up to that, too, but I'll wait on that point. If I may add one other note, too, Dr. Matt Rice is the Planning Commissioner delegate to the steering committee. So in terms of the George Mason data integration, I think he will be more than happy to leverage all those resources in support of the project.

[00:37:02] Council Member Hall. Thank you for that. I was actually going to ask, since you guys were here, if there was a nominee that you had already put forth. So thank you. I have a couple questions I think maybe I'll start with. First of all, has there been any consideration to reducing speed limits on some of the roads, or is that something that will be considered as we do some of these conversations?

[00:37:23] So I'm going to ask the city's traffic engineer to answer that question. I'm not sure if... Here, you sit here.

[00:37:38] Let me see. Yeah, much better. Yes, there is some consideration to that, but we must realize that there is both state and city requirements that any speed reductions be backed by an engineering study.

[00:38:02] And at the current time, most of the engineering study methodologies start with the 85th percentile speed. So whereas you hear a lot of jurisdictions looking at reducing speed limits, you know, to really do that, you need to look at an engineering study.

[00:38:26] And one thing that federal highways and many traffic engineers have found in the past, just because you sign the speed limit does not necessarily mean that you're going to get people to follow it. And that is part of the reason that the recommended methodologies start with the speeds people are traveling now. Okay. So it sounds like then with your response that in order to analyze if we should consider reducing the speed limits, it would be a completely separate engineering study that will not be included in any of the conversations we're going to be having.

[00:39:05] Am I inferring that correctly? It's okay to say no or yes, whatever the answer is. I'll chime in. There's a little bit of nuance there. So I mentioned earlier that those five components of the safe system approach, right, one of them is safe speeds. So we will definitely be looking at recommendations for kind of a holistic approach to speed management to improve safety.

[00:39:29] And it's possible that recommendations that come out of that could be focused on re-evaluating speed limits within the whole city or certain parts of the city, you know to Kurt's point, you know in order to actually implement the speed limit changes you would need to have you know a traffic study that's going to be probably outside the scope of this work.

[00:39:55] But it doesn't mean we can't take a lot of really important steps through this plan that can get you part of the way there and again holistically looking at a pedestrian master plan and the impact on speed for pedestrian safety and comfort, and looking at Old Town as well, right? How speeds impact comfort, safety, economic development, all these factors right here in Old Town. All of that is going to be really important and things that we're definitely going to consider as part of the study. Thank you. And I understand for the small area plan there is consideration for specific roads already, but are the other

[00:40:31] two plans, the safety action plan, the pedestrian plan, is the plan there to kind of look at the entire city and then pull the data to see what the exact best hotspots are to look at, or is there specific areas of focus, let's say along Fairfax Boulevard or Germantown Road or whatever that is kind of top of mind, or is it an overall approach at high level to begin with?

[00:40:55] So it is starting with the high-level citywide approach to look at all the streets in the and look at where those hotspots are. And I know, Colin, you were already discussing some of those methodology, and Ryan was discussing some of the methodology looking at the high-injury network and where there's higher rates of or less comfortable areas for pedestrians.

[00:41:17] Looking at it with data and looking at it objectively to sort of then start to prioritize, and that's where the priorities come in to say this is a corridor that's really requiring a lot of needs for all of the plans, and so let's focus more on that particular road. Okay, that's what I was hoping your answer was going to be, that we hadn't kind of already pre-targeted areas.

[00:41:35] My last final question, and then I'll answer or respond to other comments, was that when we met with the City of Falls Church to kind of walk through their city, they were talking about doing a no right turn on red. And so I'm not advocating for those that are watching at home, I'm just asking the question. Will any sort of consideration be thought of when it comes to these type of plans and see if that would be something that would be recommended in certain areas?

[00:41:59] I know we've gotten very good at the no turn on red when pedestrians are present signs as opposed to in some areas there really is a no turn on red option. But I think those are few and far between now as far as the actual inability to turn right on red. I would say that I think that's something that we can look at kind of similar to reducing speed limits.

[00:42:20] It might be something that we have to take a more nuanced look at. I don't know if you have. Yeah, I'll just add to that too. You know, as part of the crash analysis, we're going to see a huge data set. What are all the contributing factors, right? And so once we know what those contributing factors are, there are countermeasures that are then going to be recommended that are going to be most applicable to correcting those crashes from happening in the future, right?

[00:42:47] So if a pedestrian is hit, for example, when they're crossing in a crosswalk by a vehicle making a right turn, right, that may have been something that could be prevented by having a no turn on red, depending on the scenario, right? So in a situation like that, if there have been several crashes like that at a particular location, then a countermeasure that may be recommended in the plan might be no turn on red.

[00:43:13] There won't be analysis that is, you know, traffic study level for that. But it's looking at, you know, again, big data, lots of crash data, and then matching up the best countermeasures that are proven that are going to have the biggest safety impact for correcting the contributing factors, right?

[00:43:35] And how far back are you going as far as data goes to when you start to collect this? I mean, is it five years? Is it ten years? Is it seven years? Do you remember? It's five years, yeah. Okay, so five years would put us back at 2020, which is the beginning of the pandemic. I feel like that could potentially sway the data in one way or the other, just because we had a lot more people potentially walking, not driving, people weren't commuting for a year or two or more.

[00:44:04] Obviously, we've had less or more people working from home, I think. So we've had just different things, I think, in the past. I think there's more of a move towards go back to the office for many. So I'm certainly not trying to tell you what, I don't know personally what data would be most useful, but I just want to keep that in mind if, you know, going back an additional two years would be helpful pre-pandemic to see that type of data as well.

[00:44:31] Yeah, that's a great point. Travel behavior, you know, on a macro level across the entire country definitely was impacted post-COVID. Yeah. So we'll take a look at the data we have and if it's of, you know, certain high quality that going back that far, it may be something we can expand.

[00:44:50] We'll see. Thank you. I appreciate that. I will say that when looking at accidents all across the city at various intersections, I typically look at the state database. The state database goes back to 2015. Okay. That's wonderful.

[00:45:06] To your point about the plaza, we'll leave it at that. I think that's a really interesting conversation. I know we've talked about it offline, But, you know, one of the things that I love about the

city, especially our downtown area, is that it does feel really walkable, but it does feel like you're often stopping and starting and stopping and starting, both in a vehicle and as a pedestrian.

[00:45:28] And I love when we, you know, shut down some of the roads for our festivals and things like that, because I think it really makes it feel more walkable. It makes it feel more of a destination and not just, oh, I'm going to go to this restaurant, but I don't want to stop and, you know, maybe pop into here or there.

[00:45:45] I would actually support the open container opportunity to walk around the city in a, you know, sustained environment. If that's a Dillon rule, I have no idea. But I do think that there's some interesting opportunities to consider. You know, I think the downside to part of our Old Town area compared to something newer like a Reston Town Center is that, you know, we already have our existing roads.

[00:46:07] We have our existing infrastructure. Our sidewalks can only be so big compared to what they have. And again, not suggesting we change traffic, that's for you guys to suggest and to do, but I think that there is definitely an opportunity to try to, you know, marry the two of those ideas.

[00:46:26] And even if it's not every day, if it's just on the weekends or one weekend a month or something, just to try to make sure that we're really inviting in pedestrians and trying to make things safe while recognizing that people still do need to drive through or around our city in a slightly different way and I would be very interested to hear what our business residents, OTFBA, all those other organizations, Chamber of Commerce, you know, they speak with these people a lot too and I think probably every business owner has some suggested ideas upon what they think could be beneficial. To Councilmember Hardy Chandler's point, I think if I take my own

[00:47:02] spin on it, I think the visual that you were referencing that I'm seeing in my head is that when you're looking at a map and as you guys are going through this, I'm like, okay, that's North Street. That's out. Okay. I'm like turning my paper to see where Cambridge is, you know, for my association. So I think if, if you can somehow do a video, if you were proposing a one-way, let's say of, you know, what would that look like for you as a pedestrian? What would that look like for you as a vehicle? So you can see kind of how that flow currently is and then what it might look like. I think that to me is what I took away from your question for people that might be a little directionally challenged like me when it comes to talking about road names um and i just think it

[00:47:41] gives people a different idea and opportunity than just again a flat picture when you're in a presentation so i think that you know using our online tools and survey options like that could be really really beneficial but it sounds like you all have a really good handle on this so far so thank you for what you've done to date um and i'm i look forward to the next opportunity here thank you councilmember hardy chandler yeah i just wanted to follow up on councilmember hall's point about the existing structure and we know with an older town and the existing businesses we don't have the freedom to kind of create something

[00:48:18] optimal from the ground up but I would be interested in making sure that or I didn't see it in the presentation attention to the existing businesses I would imagine that they would be concerned about the traffic flows in terms of the sort of spontaneous identification of businesses and stopping in because you pass by sort of that not just I know I'm going to this place but hey that looks interesting let me stop there so I would certainly encourage really concentrated attention to the existing businesses and ways in

[00:48:55] which not only people we know that that can be a destination but we also know that that's a corridor for going through and how can some of those incidental business kind of marketing things be maximized as well but thank you appreciate the plan looking forward to what comes next councilmember Amos just a comment and question to follow up on on what we all brought up I think this is a unique opportunity for us to really start thinking outside of the box in all facets and I think it really is going to start from this type of study

[00:49:30] to see what can we implement, what can we do that supports our businesses, supports our pedestrians, lets us become more of that nightlife that we talked about back in January, and that's going to come from everywhere from economic development to planning to transportation to council, so it's going to be an all-hands-on-deck situation.

[00:49:49] Just a question that I had, so what is coordination with the county going to be like for certain things like the South Street extension, but also, you know, there's development happening on right on the outskirts of the city that could have transportation effects such as like for example Pender Drive they are about to have a lot of development in that area and it's right right on that border so what are we looking like with that so I'll just start with we do have Fairfax County Department of Transportation represented on the steering committee so we want to make sure that they're aware of the project that's going on and they can share that

[00:50:23] with their colleagues as well so that is certainly one area where where we can coordinate with the county on that and then we also do coordinate with the county on some of these projects we've we've been involved or they have invited the city to be involved in things like the Pennier Drive project both the planning staff and the transportation staff have been involved in that just in discussion so we're at least aware of what's going on on either side of the border but certainly I think one of the biggest areas of coordination will be with the South Street and that is a separate project of course but and I know that our team is already working on that with the county and I would just add to that that when we look at traffic volumes and pedestrian volumes today,

[00:51:03] we also are going to project that out into the future and take into mind the county complex master plan and some of these other developments. These plans need to work into the future as well, not just for what the volumes of all sorts are today. Councilmember Hall?

[00:51:19] Just one quick thing. I keep meaning to ask about this, and I forget, too, in all these other meetings, but one thing I feel like our city really needs is a big, like, welcome to Fairfax City sign that hangs over the road as you come into our Old Town area, like along Chambridge Road and, again, along Main Street, kind of like when you go into Vienna.

[00:51:38] They've got that sign that hangs there on 123. I've discussed this with the EDA. I understand it might be some sort of traffic or hurt situation that needs to be addressed as far as signage or things like that, but I think that that would be really, really nice to see in our city.

[00:52:00] Yes, gateway features have been looked at on several projects, And not necessarily the arch over top of the roadway, but other features. If you are aware, the Blenheim Boulevard is looking at gateway features on that project.

[00:52:17] So, you know, in the future, we can look at that. But in many cases, with that type of signage, you run into issues with right-of-way and other stuff and making sure it's tall enough. But, you know, that

can certainly be looked at in the future.

[00:52:35] Councilmember Peterson and then Councilmember McQuillan. Just a quick follow-up on the safety questions Councilmember Hall has asked. Just to clarify, you said you're going to be looking at existing crash data within the city for some period of time.

[00:52:54] Are you also looking at areas that may not have experienced crashes, but based on other information appear to be at risk? I'm seeing heads nodding. Yes, definitely.

[00:53:10] We'll be looking at that a few different ways. One of the main ways we're doing that for this project, as Ryan mentioned a little bit or discussed a little bit, is looking at connected vehicle data, which collects large amounts of information on driver behavior and activity so that you can see where people are breaking hard, accelerating quickly, where there could be high risk of crashes happening.

[00:53:31] Another way we're getting at that outside the big data avenue is just looking at parsing the existing crash data that we have in a different way by, as I think Ryan mentioned a little bit, if we're looking at a no turn on, runway turn on red situation, there's crashes where there is a vehicle turning right on, turning right and pedestrians in a crosswalk.

[00:53:57] That's a type of crash we can identify and there are factors like that we can parse to see exactly what types of factors are leading to the majority of crashes in the city. So that's another way where we could not only see where we're having severe crashes happening in terms of location, but what common factors are we seeing?

[00:54:16] Where are those common factors clustering? And then through that clustering, we can say, well, there is a high likelihood that there could be serious incidents in the future. So those are the two ways we're going to get at that. And just a very quick follow-up. Are you also looking at crashes that don't involve vehicles, but involve, well, not automobiles, trucks, et cetera, scooters, bicycles?

[00:54:42] Yes, all modes are captured in the data. Council Member McQuillan. Thank you, Mary. What's the timeline for this? How long will this take and when can we expect to get when one monthly engagement, things like that occur?

[00:55:01] So we don't have exact dates for the engagement yet, but we are roughly planning for fall as the first engagement period after the summer recess and then developing the recommendations over the winter and coming back in the spring with the intent of having a plan kind of in the late spring or summer of next year for consideration.

[00:55:20] Thank you. Council Member Bates. Thanks. First off, definitely, you know, what the, and, you know, likewise not advocating for anything in particular, but what right turns on red look like should definitely be looked at.

[00:55:44] I've been shocked by the people out there who seem to think that a pedestrian who has a walk signal needs to dodge them when they're turning and it's you know pretty jarring and shocking the you know and I guess to some extent people like that who are not safety conscious might not really care what the rule is anyway so I don't know it's certainly worth some additional consideration though with regard to you know the the old pedestrian precinct

[00:56:23] idea um would you all only be looking at permanent changes or also things like what and this is something that was suggested to me but what leesburg is doing for example where they close down uh you

know certain segments of roadway on Friday evenings during the summer or something like that that's more temporary and not um you know the usual i mean i think we could look at either or both i think they're going to have different trade-offs so you know every time we have an event in the city and close a street, there's a pretty large staff involvement in terms

[00:57:02] of closing the streets safely. If we're going to do it more regularly, we might want to look at other ways of doing that and what the trade-offs are with building something that can be used temporarily or permanently. How does it impact utilities? How does it impact staffing? How does it impact what is the cost of the overall thing? So there's probably a number of other trade-offs we'd have to look at, but certainly either one could be an option that we look at.

[00:57:28] Right. Yeah, definitely. I think, you know, both are certainly worth exploring and definitely hope that police department will be engaged on that. I think that they'll have a lot of expertise to share on that. And, you know, I know that we have the public safety representatives on the steering committee, so look forward to that.

[00:57:47] Thank you. Other questions? My observation would be this is a significant investment to do this kind of planning, to do this kind of survey and study. It's not just the money. It's an investment of staff time and a lot of people on the steering committee coming forward to figure out what some of the alternatives might be that the community wants.

[00:58:13] But I would also point out, too, given this timeline, one of the challenges in this city is coming up with plans that are supported by successive city councils. And so looking at this being ready to roll out in spring or possibly summer of 2026, you are possibly looking at a new council in 2027.

[00:58:38] And to the point about in 2017, there was not support, and so it was not pursued. I think one of the challenges for the staff in long-term planning is always considering what we think is a good idea or the things that we are putting forward.

[00:58:55] We cannot look into the future to see if future councils will embrace the ideas. But I think it's so significant for us to do this work and to do these studies and to consider all of the possibilities, however that comes out with the public and however that comes out with future dioceses.

[00:59:16] This is what we have to think about as we look at what the future of the city is going to be. This is so important. I think it's very significant. I really appreciate all the work that's been done up to this point. This has been a wonderful presentation, and I look forward to seeing the public engagement and what the public is going to come back and say, you know, if they want the plaza or beer in the square or whatever it is, to collect that feedback and do some really significant planning around that.

[00:59:44] But I do acknowledge that I think it's difficult on your side to figure out going forward what's going to be on this side, too. So I very much appreciate everybody's work. And with that, I think that we have concluded this portion.

[01:00:04] Mr. Cunningham? I was here because I thought this was a giant work session with the council and the planning commission. But if it's just a council work session, that's fine.

[01:00:26] No, the intent is this is a joint work session to hear your feedback as well. Okay. So please, that was my mistake. Mr. Cunningham. I don't think it can be understated how important the data collection

aspect of these studies are and the fact that it's going to be done comprehensively so that we really get a full picture.

[01:00:48] To your point, Mayor Reed, yes, we cannot anticipate the whims of the city or, you know, future councils, but data-driven decisions and also data-based responses to applicants for development are so important because right now maybe the best we can say is, well, you're building facing a really tricky intersection, but now we can articulate exactly how tricky that is and what the throughput is and what we would expect to see from a design perspective or a safety mitigation perspective.

[01:01:11] So, you know, on behalf of Council Member Rice as well, I will say that the data piece of this is so critical in so many ways. And I think we'll really, along with Council Member Peterson's comment about the metrics, the data and the metrics together, I think we'll really produce some ironclad recommendations that carry a lot of weight when you go to the public and say, you know, we've thought about this and we've heard you, but, you know, here's the real safety risk and the real risk mitigation that we can achieve by the target selection.

[01:01:39] So I think this is vital. I think, again, to many of you brought the point of the integrated nature of these studies is exactly what we like to see. I mean, I'm sure if you've heard any of our feedback on development proposals or even the comprehensive plan, we love to see things coming together and being integrated.

[01:01:56] The city has phenomenal staff, award-winning, or if they haven't won an award yet, they should. And this is exactly right up their alley in terms of being innovative and integrated. So we feel really strongly this is absolutely the right way to go and that it's going to produce some really sterling recommendations for the city. Thank you. With that, I've got three thoughts I think I would share with you.

[01:02:18] One, and they've been partially alluded to, one is we're looking at a study that's going to run a year, year and a half, as you alluded to. My question is, then, with this, how long to implement and what costs to implement following that?

[01:02:34] Because I think that's one of the key things when we're looking at budgeting and other things that goes on. When you get a really good study and it tells you to do this great stuff, say, okay, we'll be back with that in five years when we can fit it in the budget. And in five years, a lot can change, which means that if the study is going to be effective and cost effective, it needs to be implementable.

[01:02:54] The second is what needs to change business-wise in the study area and the Old Town area. For a long time, I've heard the comment, why would you go to Old Town? Well, they've got some really great restaurants there, but when I'm done eating, what do you do?

[01:03:11] I keep my kids off the street because they're not safe, and then we go someplace else. So what if we're going to activate this downtown area needs to change business-wise or that to activate the kind of place that makes this study worth it and makes it a destination that we're going to go down and not only eat but hang and do stuff.

[01:03:32] And I guess my third one is it has to fit in a context, and right now we've got an area ripe for redevelopment that's just adjacent to this and just to the south, from Armstrong up to Sager and between 123 and University.

[01:03:49] And the thoughts we have for implementing the Old Town Plan, and this feeds right into Old Town, needs to feed and work together. So in addition to just looking at the box downtown, looking at the opportunity that you have that's on the doorstep right now to see that it's going to complement as we're moving forward.

[01:04:10] And those are things I would tie in with studies like this to see that we're getting all of the old town into a future that we're all going to be happy with instead of being able to point to, well, we can redo that and we can update these elements and individual pieces.

[01:04:29] And those are the thoughts I have. It's a good study. It will bring us good data. What can we do with it that makes it worthwhile? Well, and that is a great perspective.

[01:04:45] I think when you were talking about the block ripe for redevelopment, looking at that greenway that's on the map as a concept and the fact that some of the projects that we have seen brought before us, even in a preliminary format, have acknowledged that developers understand that the city has said this is another way we want to have pedestrian access from downtown all the way over to the university, to city hall here.

[01:05:16] And it's good to see the developers acknowledging that the city has a plan. I think small area plans have really been beneficial in that regard for giving people a concept that it's a – and it is a concept, not a blueprint. We keep hearing that. But you have to start somewhere, and I do think that's significant that our small area plans are giving people direction and that is something else.

[01:05:37] The comprehensive plan, the small area plans and the studies and the data that support that these are good decisions. It's all very important. I mean, I'm very proud of the fact that the city approaches things this way. Did you have something to add, Council Member Peterson? Just a follow-up to Mr. Cunningham.

[01:05:56] Procedurally, do you have thoughts on how we would integrate the work going on here with redevelopment and the planning around that? so that it has some procedural approach that makes it integrated and makes it real and not coincidental?

[01:06:14] My thoughts are that, as has just been said, that the small area plans are concept plans, and the one for downtown is a concept which we're trying to implement, and it's a vision that has to be shared from one council to the next over time if it's going to be implemented.

[01:06:35] It's not a plan that was laid out to be accomplished in two years or three years because there are too many moving parts with that updating a small area plan at some point as we get a clearer vision so that we can tie it into individual budget items things that you can plan for put on a piece of paper and bring through and do it in such a way that as councils change as you said one council says yay the next council says nay now we move on and keeping I think in a

[01:07:09] practical realm. When we talk about detail and data and all of that, the U.S. had a plan. They made a 55 mile an hour speed limit. Was it ever enforced on I-95? So when you look at the practical application of making rules and analyzing data and saying what would be really good, you're also leading the people who are going to make it happen to say this is what they want, this is what they will respond to and this is what they will thrive on and and in an environment that will do that

[01:07:45] so that's that's one of the core things i think with any plan that we make is is making it functional and some of that is getting feedback but some of that is henry ford uh saying nobody knew they wanted a car until i built one so there has to be a leadership element in there to lead people to the things that they didn't know they wanted.

[01:08:10] I think resourcing comes into the prioritization of both initiatives and actual plans, too, as you all spoke to in your presentation. I mean, there could be highly impactful changes that actually have a minimal cost. You know, maybe it doesn't cost much to reroute traffic. I say that partially tongue-in-cheek, but, you know, versus building an entirely new road, right, or entirely new on and off ramps, for example.

[01:08:32] So I think that's, you know, not that you shouldn't think about it ahead of time, as Commissioner Cunningham has alluded to, but I do think that's after you get all of the ideas out, then resource constraints or budgeting timelines can fall into the prioritization phase.

[01:08:51] I think the other thing, too, is technology, and we can't predict what leaps they'll be in technology. You know, autonomous vehicles are hanging around out there. you know all kinds of things related to pedestrian safety and what vehicles will be able to do without driver input it's hard to know but i mean those things are kind of already there they're just not necessarily widely in use you know sort of a leading uh pedestrian so that when somebody pushes the button the pedestrian light comes on and gives them a few seconds before the light changes things like that i mean there are things that we can't predict what's going to happen but

[01:09:30] there's already technology out there that's in development that could tremendously impact things like vehicular safety pedestrian safety and how people move through our city so you know tbd on that but again these studies help us to to figure out what some of those things are to your point that could be done sooner and maybe not with a huge expense to up the net safety and getting and getting cars to slow down and getting pedestrians to feel safe.

[01:10:00] We are a car-centric city. I mean, to Council Member Bates' point, because he is a pedestrian, he walks a lot, we're a car-centric city, and getting people to understand we've changed our mind. Council Member Amos would like a plaza. We've changed our mind.

[01:10:16] And so you can't just get drivers to change their behavior because we changed our priorities. It's a process. I mean, it's a process to get people to understand we are going to do things that are going to change the behavior of people in cars. So it's a team effort.

[01:10:35] Any other comments for the good of the body? Council Member Peterson? Just a quick follow-up on metrics. When you look at the steering committee, it's a diverse collection of interests and areas of expertise that of themselves would represent different metrics, different ways that you might look at this.

[01:10:52] And so I'm guessing and hoping that your presence, and is it Dr. Rice who represents? will help ensure that we're covering the bases in terms of metrics that will be important for planning. But I think it's a whole effort here that needs to take place so that it's reflective of the deliberate design of this to be diverse and cover a variety of different areas.

[01:11:17] So I'm seeing nods, and I'm heartened to know Dr. Rice will be playing that role, and I think it's a really critical one. Thank you. Anything else for the good of the body? Okay, this time. Thank you all so much. Thank you. Ms. Clark? The next item is an update on future stream restoration projects. Satoshi Ito, Public Works Program Manager, will provide the staff

[01:11:47] presentation. Okay. If you would like to, I think we've got people coming back in just a minute, but

[01:12:59] if you would like to get started with your introduction, I think that might be the best use of our time. Sure. Good evening, Mayor and Council. The purpose of this presentation is to review the stream condition assessment project that led to seven future stream restoration project options. We'd like to summarize the community input we received when we shared those project options at a community meeting. We also presented these options to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Environmental Sustainability Committee, and we have their feedback to share with you this evening as well. And lastly, we'd like to present staff's recommendations on next steps for these restoration projects, and would like Council's concurrence

[01:13:38] on those recommendations before we move forward. I will provide an overview of the project, explain how the condition assessments were completed, and then review the seven segments that were identified as stream restoration priorities. Patrick will provide a summary of how community feedback was obtained and what that feedback was, and that feedback shaped the staff recommendations that will be reviewed at the end of the presentation.

[01:14:05] The last comprehensive stream condition assessment of the Akatink Creek was done in 2007 and 2008 and it generated a static report and condition map that informed stream restoration project areas. Those ended up being Daniels Run stream restoration behind Daniels Run Elementary in 2016, the Tusco branch stream restoration from Keith Avenue to Cambridge Road, and the ongoing Stafford Drive stream restoration project. The current assessment project was completed in 2024 and the purpose was to obtain current information on the condition of the Akatink and then use that data to identify high priority areas for stream restoration. It was

[01:14:43] important for those results to be shareable and easily understood so GIS was used to map and display data so that we could receive informed community feedback Patrick was able to develop a system to collect this data and he'll talk through how those assessments were done so the first thing we did was we looked at the previous assessment from 2007 and looked at what we kind of what we wanted to improve upon so the most important thing is figuring out what

[01:15:18] segments were the best to prioritize for rehab and how many segments we can get and put together. So in 2007, they came up with 31 segments. We wanted to get a little bit better granular look, and so we were able to use folks walking in waiters using iPads and GPS devices to go and collect this data with one pass and create 128 segments that ranged about 435. We were looking for about 500-foot segments each, and we were able to accomplish all 10 ½ miles of the Akatink stream system.

[01:15:55] So this is a look at the old data versus the new data. In 2007, we were provided a static map that was symbolized for what areas were good for rehab.

[01:16:14] The picture on the bottom right is, the iPad is of the actual assessment that folks use to collect the data. And then that's a picture of the dashboard where we can see all the different colors, and we can actually do a virtual walkthrough of the stream.

[01:16:31] So on the next slide, we'll look at the categories that we looked at the assessment. And on that dashboard slide, we can actually look at those observations and see each of these different characteristics.

[01:16:47] So we took a look at stream bank erosion, vegetation, site accessibility, location whether it was publicly or privately owned, what the overall drainage area was for that particular segment, and other important things to city residents like the presence of mature trees.

[01:17:07] So through the data collection process, we analyzed each of the 435 foot or each of the 128 segments and came up with a collection of seven, basically compiling the highest risk areas with the adjacent areas that provided good benefits for restoration as well.

[01:17:35] And these are the locations of the seven that we came up with. So basically we have, and Satoshi will go through those seven segments in more detail.

[01:17:58] Stream restoration projects can be controversial because of the disturbance that's required to construct them. And the reason that we're doing them is partly because the city has mandated pollutant reduction requirements for the Chesapeake Bay and our local waterways. And stream restoration is the most cost-effective way to generate credits to make progress towards those goals.

[01:18:17] Local projects credit towards the Chesapeake Bay pollutant reduction requirements as well as local requirements for the Accutane Creek. They also provide tangible local benefits that include reducing erosion of local waterways, improving local water quality, and removing and controlling invasive species within the project areas.

[01:18:39] There are alternatives to stream restoration, but they are costly and have limited benefits. The city is small and urbanized, and so stormwater pond retrofit is an option. However, there is only one public pond, it's Ashby Pond, it's currently being retrofit now. Credit purchases are an alternative.

[01:18:56] However, the per credit cost is approximately double what it would cost to generate credits through a stream restoration project. Credit banks are environmental projects in the Bay watershed that generate pollutant reduction credits that can be purchased.

[01:19:11] So this is an alternative. However, these banks are generally located outside, far outside of the city. They are within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, but they are not within watersheds for our local waterways. So by purchasing credits from those, we can make progress towards Chesapeake Bay pollutant reduction goals, but not towards local waterways.

[01:19:35] These pictures are stream restoration projects that were completed approximately 10 years ago. The top two are projects in Reston, and the bottom two are the Daniels Run stream restoration project that were completed in 2016. So these, during construction, the appearance of a stream restoration project can be shocking as all the trees are removed and you see bare earth.

[01:19:57] But there are robust landscaping plans that are implemented with these projects to offset those impacts. And given time, they take three to five years to begin to establish, but given time, it quickly matures into a natural area. And before we get into the seven priority stream restoration project areas, I'd like to touch on one technical aspect of stream restoration, which is floodplain connection.

[01:20:24] And it's the reason that tree removal is required. The goal of stream restoration is to control bank erosion, and eroded stream channels are narrow and deep. They create high-velocity, high-energy flows that erode stream banks like the image at the top. And bank erosion is controlled by giving the water a wider area to flow through, and that reduces velocities.

[01:20:45] An analogy that I like to use is a garden hose that flows out onto a driveway. As it spreads out, it slows down, it loses energy, and that's the goal of stream restoration. The preferred approach is to raise the stream bed so that the stream can reconnect to the floodplain.

[01:21:03] That gives it a wider area to flow through and reduces erosion. And this can be done when there are no adjacent properties that would be negatively impacted by an expanded floodplain, which is not common in the city. Instead, what we tend to have are properties that are in or very close to the floodplain adjacent to the streams.

[01:21:23] And raising the stream bed in these cases would cause the floodplain to expand and negatively impact those properties. So the alternative approach is to lower the floodplain around these properties. This requires more extensive tree removal, and it creates a corridor that the stream can spread into. Those impacts can be mitigated by implementing robust landscaping plans with the stream restoration project, and this approach can also provide improvements to floodplain conditions in the project area.

[01:21:50] Both approaches widen the stream corridor, reduce velocities, and control erosion. I'll go through the seven stream restoration project options that were developed from the data that we collected. The first restoration area is 2,100 feet long.

[01:22:06] It's located between Fairfax Boulevard and Country Club Hills. It's next to the Country Club Hills Common Area and behind Fire Station 33. This project area overlapped with the canceled Country Club Hills Connector Trail. However, stream restoration project is not dependent on or related to trail construction.

[01:22:27] As you can see in some of these photos, the embankments next to the stream are very steep, and the stream is at a much lower elevation than the adjacent properties. that protects the properties from the floodplain and allows for some design flexibility that can minimize tree removal. There's also sanitary sewer infrastructure next to the stream banks that can be protected from exposure due to erosion. And most of the segment runs through city-owned parcels, so it would limit the amount of easements that would be required on private property. One constraint is the limited accessibility of the project area. And in the community

[01:23:03] feedback that we'll go through, projects that can be interacted with were important to the community. The second segment is in Daniels Run Park. This is one of the segments that we'll be recommending moving forward with, taking next steps on. This is the longest project area of the 7 at 3,800 feet. The area is downstream of the Daniels Run stream restoration behind Daniels Run Elementary that was completed in 2016, and that restoration is holding up well. The segment that runs east-west on the screen is 2,800 feet long. Because most of the stream is contained within

[01:23:42] park property and the floodplain is not near any homes in the in the in many areas there's the potential to apply the stream restoration approach that minimizes tree removal by raising the stream bed a preliminary engineering will need to be done before we can confirm that this is a viable approach there's also an existing trail system through the park that provides visibility and accessibility to the project area from Oldley Hills Little River Hills and Fairview subdivisions the segment that runs north-south is the Little River Hill's tributary to Daniel's Run. It's 1,000 feet long. And again, for this project area,

[01:24:22] most of the stream segments run through city-owned parcels, which limits the need for easement acquisitions. The highly degraded condition of this stream and the high potential for future

erosion means that this would have a high cost-benefit ratio in terms of the credits generated towards Chesapeake Bay and local waterway pollutant reduction goals. And this This was also the highest ranked segment from the citizen survey responses as to where the next stream restoration project should be.

[01:24:54] The third project option is an 1800-foot segment of the Akatink Creek North Fork with Fairwoods Parkway at the downstream end. This area is located immediately upstream of the ongoing Stafford Drive stream restoration project and it's adjacent to the west side of the Mosby Woods subdivision.

[01:25:14] A restoration project here would tie into the Stafford Drive stream restoration project And the North Fork of the Acatink along the Mosby Woods and Cambridge Station subdivisions would have a continuous restored stream. However, there are two constraints. The western portion of this segment runs through private property, so easements would be required.

[01:25:32] And there are no trails through this area currently, so there would be limited access and visibility to a project here. However, the George Snyder Trail would provide some visibility. It would get close to the stream, but not provide direct access to it. The fourth project option is also within Mosby Woods.

[01:25:55] it's within Dale Estina Park. This is a 2,500 foot segment that's nestled between properties on Bluecoat Drive and Scout Drive. And some positives about this project area is that the majority of the segment is on public park property. There's also an existing trail through the park and along the stream that would provide access and visibility to a project here. And although this segment has the lowest concentration of mature trees out of all of the project options, the floodplain impacts properties on both sides of the stream. And so expansion of the floodplain

[01:26:31] is not an option. To implement a restoration project here we would need to lower the floodplain which would require additional tree removal. This next segment adjacent to Fairfax Circle and the one following are two others that staff is recommending taking next steps on.

[01:26:50] This area is just west of Fairfax Circle. It's a 2,100 foot segment that runs behind the Harley Davidson dealership and behind the Fairfax Circle Shopping Center. It runs from the bridge at Fairfax Boulevard to the bridge at Blenheim Boulevard. The existing Wilcoxon Trail would provide visibility for a project here, and stream corridor improvements are proposed for this area within the Fairfax Circle Small Area Plan. Portions of this segment impact private property, so easements would be required. However, there is the opportunity to improve floodplain conditions for

[01:27:24] these properties by evaluating the flow capacities under the Blenheim Boulevard Bridge. The potential for flood mitigation also allows for additional funding sources to be leveraged, such as the Community Flood Preparedness Fund. Because private properties are so close to the stream banks in this area. Elevating the floodplain is not an option and there's little room to cut in an expanded floodplain. So in these cases, imbricated stone walls can be used to control erosion and an example is on the photo in the lower left. So it's essentially a stacked stone wall. The next

[01:28:02] segment is immediately downstream of the prior segment next to Fairfax Circle. It's a 2,600 foot segment from Blenheim Boulevard to Pickett Road and includes the area where Daniel's Run meets Accutink Creek the stream runs behind the Home Depot the National Asphalt property and along the city's property yard it's the most downstream segment of the Accutink in the city and it also has the largest drainage area again the Wilcoxon trail provides accessibility and visibility to a project here and

improvements in this area are also proposed within the Fairfax Circle small area plan again private properties are close to the stream and are impacted by

[01:28:40] the floodplain so easements would be necessary and there is also an opportunity here to provide flood mitigation by evaluating the flow capacity under the Pickett Road Bridge. Because the stream corridors fairly narrow and constrained by private properties to the north and the property yard to the south, those stacked stone walls would likely need to be implemented to control erosion in this area. The last segment is 3,000 feet long and located downstream of the ongoing Stafford Drive stream restoration project. It runs behind the Fairfax Racquet Club and Town and Country Animal Hospital properties and

[01:29:16] along a portion of Draper Drive Park. There are multiple eroded storm sewer outfalls in this area that can be repaired with a stream restoration project. Private properties would be impacted by a restoration project here, so easements would be necessary. And floodplains also impact properties in this area, so the floodplain would need to be lowered. A stream restoration project here would look very similar to what is being done right now at the Stafford Drive stream restoration. Areas where private properties are close to the stream would likely

[01:29:50] need to have their banks stabilized with those stacked stone walls as well. So that was the last segment, Patrick developed the application to obtain community feedback. So he'll go through how that was done and what the results were. Thanks, Satoshi. Yeah, so an important part of this project is sharing what we've collected with the community and trying to get some informed feedback. So we did that a couple of different ways. We've created an Engage Fairfax project page, which highlights some of the work that we've done and takes residents to the website that we

[01:30:28] built to showcase some of the analysis. Many of the photos that you saw on the slides presented by Satoshi are available publicly and residents can go through and click through the highlighted segments and view that information. But what we really were interested in was hearing from people in the community and seeing what kind of things were important to them. We know that mature trees and preserving those are important as that's something we wanted to prioritize but what were some of the other things how do we you know is maximizing the cost benefit or minimizing construction near residents

[01:31:05] how can we reduce the erosion and tree loss and and have a sustainable stream so we reached out to the public in person at the Sherwood Center we created the website and created a public survey. So through the period from June to August, we met with residents and shared this information and asked for their feedback. We got 45 residents to respond. We'll state in previous presentations, we talked about how this information is publicly

[01:31:41] available and shared. But what we took from was the first pulse of respondents. And that was people that were attending the Sherwood Center community meetings and presentations and getting their feedback from the information that we were able to share with them.

[01:32:00] And this is a picture of the survey. The barcode scanner is still active, so if you guys have any additional thoughts or feedback, you can click through that website and share your opinions. But what it allows you to do is click on each of those buttons at the top. The map will zoom to, and the slides will pop up to showcase the photos that we captured and some of the more important characteristics of the project that you all just were presented.

[01:32:33] And so this is what we got back from residents, is for the most part, residents agreed with the staff recommendation to move forward with Daniel's run. It has great site accessibility. There's a lot of mature trees that we can preserve, and it's very visible.

[01:32:54] So that was something that was mentioned earlier was some of the other project locations are, you know, if a tree falls in the woods, does anybody hear it kind of thing. People want to know what's going on in their community. And Daniel's Run is a big park that people see the stream eroding and people see the damage on their daily walks.

[01:33:14] So that feedback was important to see. The word clouds are actually from respondents providing full sentences and some paragraphs on what they felt. But the most important impacts of positive stream restoration, you know, water quality, reducing erosion, protecting the mature trees that aren't going to fall in if we fix those banks and those erosion problems.

[01:33:44] And then the last, how would you evaluate the success of a stream project? So, again, improved water quality, reduced stream bank erosion, better stability. As part of the community feedback, here's kind of the breakdown on what we received.

[01:34:05] So, again, Daniel's run received the highest priority, and that goes along with staff recommendation, followed by Country Club Hills and Accutane Creek Northport. Positive impacts from the project, important to the community, was decreasing future flood risk.

[01:34:29] So we explained kind of that slide that Satoshi showcased where, you know, elevate the floodplain and create that slower moving water. Residents agreed with that and saw that as an important factor. So, again, tree preservation and decreased flooding associated with erosion.

[01:34:52] So really trying to hone in on some of the most important factors, both for the TMDL and for the community, is reducing that erosion, that sediment loss, protecting those trees, and slowing down the water. And then, again, evaluating the success of stream restoration, we had a, most people said, stream bank stability, protecting the trees, and it kind of echoes through what we've hit on.

[01:35:26] And then additional feedback, folks want our transparency with clear communications, projects, putting projects on engaged Fairfax, things like that. Residents seem to really echo and like the fact that we're transparent about these projects and showing this kind of information.

[01:35:53] We presented these stream restoration project options to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board on June 12th and we received feedback. They recommended that improvements to water quality and controlling erosion should be the deciding factors in selecting the next stream restoration project. Daniel's Run has the highest potential for water quality improvements in erosion control.

[01:36:12] It also happens to be the most requested area for stream restoration by survey respondents. PRAB also recommended prioritizing restoration around the Fairfax Circle Small Area Plan and finding opportunities to reduce impervious areas around the stream. They also requested that staff ensure that a future restoration project would be compatible with the pending redevelopment of the Gateway Regional Park.

[01:36:35] And those plans for the park redevelopment are nearly complete, and they can be considered in the design of a stream restoration project here. PRAB also provided suggestions to improve public

outreach, including posting signage with renderings of the completed stream restoration project at the project site, so that people could get an idea of what it would look like after it was completed.

[01:36:57] They also recommended evaluating the number of trees that would be lost to erosion over time if the stream restoration was not done, and this was to help offset concerns of tree removal required to implement the project. They also recommended clarifying to the community that trees that are removed are reused to construct structures for the stream restoration project or recycled.

[01:37:16] And we also presented these stream restoration project options to the Environmental Sustainability Committee on June 18th, and their feedback was that they recommended emphasizing the large amounts of replanting that will occur with restoration projects.

[01:37:34] They also recommended evaluating the effects of the floodplain beyond the 100-year storm to identify improvements to floodplain conditions. They also encouraged staff to continue looking for funding opportunities to satisfy the local match portion of the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund and Community Flood Preparedness Fund grants.

[01:37:55] They saw an opportunity to collaborate with George Mason University to evaluate water quality after a restoration project. They thought that macroinvertebrates in the stream, which are an indicator of water quality, would be something that GMU students may be interested in evaluating. And lastly, they recommended engaging the student community in the outreach process for future stream restoration projects so that they could learn more about them.

[01:38:23] Based on the data obtained from the assessment and the community feedback that we received, staff recommends moving forward with three of the stream segments, And those are Daniels Run Park, which was segment two. We recommend moving forward with for preliminary engineering. And this segment was selected because it was the most desired project area.

[01:38:39] It meets criteria important to the community and has the greatest potential improvements to erosion and water quality. Projects that are both visible and accessible are important to the community, which the existing trail network provides. Tree preservation is also important. And because the floodplain is less of a constraint here, we may be able to implement a stream restoration approach that minimizes tree removal.

[01:39:01] And the segment is also expected to yield high credits for costs towards the city's pollutant reduction goals. And the other segment we recommend is Accutane Creek from Fairfax Boulevard to Pickett Road, which is segments five and six. And although this is a challenging area to implement a stream restoration project with floodplain and private property easements that need to be considered, there is a unique opportunity to improve floodplain limits for the adjacent properties by improving capacities underneath the Blenheim Boulevard and Pickett Road bridges.

[01:39:31] The flood mitigation aspects of a project here would make it eligible for Community Flood Preparedness Fund grants as well as Stormwater Local Assistance Fund. This would be a large-scale project that requires significant upfront coordination and public outreach, but we do think that it is a project that is worth pursuing.

[01:39:53] And lastly, preliminary engineering allows for public outreach to begin and grant applications to be submitted. This early stage of engineering answers the what, where, and how the project would be

done, why it is needed, and what the benefits are. Cost estimates allow for budget planning and allow for grant funding requests to be submitted.

[01:40:11] And DEQ SLAP grant funding was not part of the state's FY26 budget, but we'll keep updated on its status for FY27. And Community Flood Preparedness Fund grant funding remains available for flood mitigation initiatives. That concludes the presentation.

[01:40:29] We'd be happy to take your questions and your feedback. Thank you very much. Councilmember McQuillan? You'll have to forgive me because I haven't gone back through my slides. So segments and the names, but can you, I'm curious as to the recommendation by staff, why it didn't include the Fairfax Circle, did it, or did that segment five and six include?

[01:40:57] It did include the segments adjacent to Fairfax Circle, yes. Okay, perfect, thank you. That was going to be my question as to why it didn't, okay, thank you. Council Member Hardy-Chansler? First a comment and then a question. I REALLY APPRECIATE SLIDE 9, BECAUSE THESE PROJECTS CAN BE JARRING, BUT REALLY PROVIDING THE BROADER EXPLANATION FOR WHY THEY'RE IMPORTANT.

[01:41:24] I THINK YOU DID A REALLY GOOD JOB CONTEXTUALIZING WHY THESE PROJECTS ARE SO IMPORTANT, NOT JUST FOR THE IMMEDIATE IMPACT, BUT THE LONGER-TERM IMPACT. SO THANK YOU FOR INCLUDING THAT CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION.

[01:41:41] I WAS CURIOUS ABOUT THE PROPERTY YARD, AND WHILE THERE ARE A NUMBER OF FACTORS THAT YOU TOOK INTO CONSIDERATION IN TERMS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS, I WONDER IF IMPACT TO PROPERTY WOULD BE, NUMBER ONE, A PART OF THAT PROJECT, AND IF SO, HOW WAS THAT FACTOR CONSIDERED IN TERMS OF THAT MAYBE NOT MAKING IT TO A TOP, TOP PRIORITY, RIGHT?

[01:42:12] So, I mean, we recognize and we've toured the property yard, and we know that there are flood concerns there. And number one, would that have addressed some of those? And number two, again, were the property considerations a part of the metrics used to make that decision?

[01:42:35] Yes. Properties in general around that area are located within the floodplain. And so we don't expect that we'll be able to remove all the properties from the floodplain entirely, but rather improve the floodplain conditions potentially by improving flow capacities underneath Pickett Road and Blenheim Boulevard.

[01:42:56] So by retracting the floodplain limits, some parts of those properties would be relieved from flooding during the 100-year storm event. So I guess my question, for my understanding, is the two that are recommended for moving forward immediately, right, are Daniels Run, makes sense, and Accatink North, right?

[01:43:23] Accatink Creek from Fairfax Boulevard to Pickett Road, which is the areas adjacent to Fairfax Circle. Okay. And just curious about the impact on the property yard piece of it. I mean, since that was like a separate consideration, right, but not selected for sort of the immediate recommendations.

[01:43:46] So the considerations for the property yard are that we would not want to make the flood conditions worse there. But the goal, along with the other properties in the area, would be to improve the floodplain conditions. How much we can improve them would be something that would come through with preliminary engineering.

[01:44:04] We don't have that data right now. Oh, okay. Thank you. Councilmember Amos so when you were especially for the portion segment 5 and segment 6 surrounding Fairfax circle How much of the conversation around the small area plan really play into that because I know a lot of it was focused on Getting rid of some of that impervious surface kind of reintegrating more of the green space aspects Was that a factor in here or was this more of an independent localized look it definitely Considered the Council's goals for the Fairfax Circle small area and that plan.

[01:44:44] We took a look at that, and it does show expansion of pervious surfaces adjacent to the stream, which is something that we can look at during the design of a stream restoration project in this area. We would need the support of the property owners in that area.

[01:45:01] Much of this stream segment is encumbered by private property, So we would need easements and buy-in from those property owners to convert paved areas to pervious. Anything else, Council Member Amos?

[01:45:23] Okay. Council Member McQuillan? Thank you. Going back to the Fairfax Circle project, you had mentioned that additional funds could be rendered. Could you go into a little bit more detail on that and explain that? So the Community Flood Preparedness Fund is eligible for flood mitigation initiatives.

[01:45:46] the city is eligible for design and construction of construction projects because we developed a flood resilience plan which council adopted in i believe it was 2023 so that was a prerequisite to being eligible to apply for grant funding under this program flood mitigation combined with water quality improvements allows for both community flood preparedness fund and deq stormwater local assistance fund to be leveraged so a unique opportunity to leverage two funding sources a single project. Thank you for that explanation. And then this is just a question coming from

[01:46:24] ignorance of really just not understanding stormwater restoration. I know that the circle itself and certain homeowners there do experience some flooding. Would this help mitigate some of that, or is that exactly what we're going for with that project? It would improve the floodplain conditions. For example, Foxcroft Colony is one community that's adjacent to Pickett Road.

[01:46:49] is in the floodplain if we can improve the capacities under Pickett Road we may be able to retract the floodplain limits for that community similar with the properties around the Home Depot and the the car dealerships further to the north so thank you so much for that thank you councilmember Peterson thanks lots and lots of work here so you have conferred with, as I understand it, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, as well as the Environmental

[01:47:29] Sustainability Committee, both of which seem to be really helpful and appropriate, but at the same time, I wonder whether this is a case where it might be worth considering putting in place a stakeholder stream restoration plan or a stakeholder watershed management land that more directly involves people from the communities that are affected and looks at a broader set of options that potentially could be undertaken. Part of this, I think, is in response to the sensitivities that have been expressed with the stream restoration project and Mosby Woods,

[01:48:06] where the community certainly, I think, feels like it could have possibly been more involved in scoping out the options, et cetera. But I'm just wondering, is that a possibility that could yet be considered here, given that these restoration projects are sitting in watershed-based communities that are affected pretty directly?

[01:48:29] It is something that we can pursue. These projects are very early. We have not started any engineering work. This has all been data collection up to this point and evaluation of that data. So it is at a very early stage in the project process where that is certainly a possibility.

[01:48:47] Well, it's great to hear. I think it, I'm not sure how other members feel about this, but I certainly think that that is well worth considering given the impact this has on the community. The other part of that that it seems to me would be very helpful would be looking at a range of alternatives that could be undertaken.

[01:49:07] And I recognize some cost more than others. On the other hand, there may be community benefits associated with other alternatives that will prioritize them, and that could come out of a community-based stakeholder process. And so there are stream restoration alternatives.

[01:49:24] There are various things, natural channel design, et cetera, that are alternatives to the approach. You've outlined a couple of approaches here, but there's a bit of a broader menu, if you will. And so I'm wondering, again, as a part of broadening this out in terms of public participation, whether it might also be helpful to broaden this out in terms of the range of alternatives that could be examined i think that through preliminary engineering we can develop options for stream restoration projects different approaches that would apply to a particular project area and then

[01:49:57] present those to the community i it would it would not be effective to do that for all seven project areas but rather focusing in on ones that we want to move forward with granted but for those if you are looking at a subset, it sounds then like it would be possible to take a look at a broader set of alternatives that might be undertaken.

[01:50:25] You mentioned you need to do an engineering study. Is the way for the engineering study to include and accommodate these alternatives, including these nature-based solutions, that might be examined and made available to the public for consideration? Yes.

[01:50:40] The design approach is natural channel design. That is the current standard. The various priorities that I went through as far as raising the stream bed versus lowering the floodplain are entirely dependent upon the project area and the topography, which is evaluated in preliminary engineering.

[01:50:59] Okay. All great to hear because, again, I think folks are interested in knowing what the alternatives are writ large and then also being involved in that. I guess my final question is more of a big picture one. Were it not for the need for obtaining credits, would we still be moving forward with the projects I would be recommending them regardless of the credit situation because of the erosion that's occurring around those streams the local water quality impacts so there are multiple benefits to implementing these projects beyond just the the credits which are more of an administrative benefit okay

[01:51:38] thank you very much thank you not a question but more of a comment I just just wanted to echo the recommendations by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board about providing renderings of the completed restoration at the project site. Not only renderings of the completed project, but maybe just even a sign before any work begins, letting anyone in the area, since you said that a lot of these areas are accessible and visible, something that just says, you know, coming soon. And so that people that use that area, frequent that area, are aware

[01:52:16] that that's going to happen. I know that regardless of what we do, someone will still say they didn't know it was happening, but I just think that's a great idea. I love that. So I just had to echo that.

Thank you. Thank you. Council Member Hall. Thank you. I'm actually glad you asked the stormwater credit question because I had the same one as whether or not we would pursue this. So I think that's good information. I think it's great that we did set up the resiliency plan a couple years ago, which now allows us to apply for that additional funding, which sounds like it would not have been available otherwise, so I think that's a big help. I do also strongly support

[01:52:51] the outreach to communities, be it neighborhoods, residents, businesses, that are going to be kind of in the direct path of the work, you know, people that may have been coming in out of their roads. I think trying to at least educate and make people aware of things as far in advance as possible is a great idea.

[01:53:14] The area that's a long rest curve there, it's got a specific name. I think that one area that was done that you showed, I'm blanking on what it was. It was the Tusika branch of a prior stream restoration project? Yes. You said that in three to five years is typically what you do for things to get established.

[01:53:35] Yes. Daniel's run, you showed this. This was in 2017. The pictures that are on slide 10, how far apart? So the pictures on the left, I assume, were taken before with all of the trees that are in there, and then it's a much smaller area there, and you can just see the, yeah, on the bottom right there.

[01:53:58] That's what's grown back in three to five years, or how far apart are those photos that were taken? All of these photos were taken within the last month. And these are all post-construct? There's no pre-construction photos that are here?

[01:54:14] Okay, I thought maybe the one on the left was pre, and it showed all the trees in there, and then this one was post, so I was trying to understand that. I see. These are all post-construction photos 10 years after construction had been completed. Okay, and the area, the width, the expansiveness of the project, I recognize there's a length, and then there's also a width to it, and we're talking about the Stafford Drive.

[01:54:36] how do these other projects compare, not just in length, but also in the width of the project, so that we can kind of visualize when you go into the Daniels Run area, and I recognize the topography is different, right? There's different trees in different areas. What type of tree loss and plantings then are we looking at in comparison to what we currently see at Stafford Drive Park that's being done now for both what's proposed for Daniel's Run and what is proposed for the Fairfax Boulevard north of Akatink. I might have screwed that

[01:55:12] words up, but you know what I mean. The width of a stream restoration project is also determined during preliminary engineering. Without going through that process, I can estimate that the stream within Daniel's Run, because it is smaller than the one that's running through the Stafford Drive area, the width the stream restoration project should also be narrower than what's going on there today okay so thinking what's there and probably not accoling myself to the exact same placement we would be

[01:55:43] talking just about less overall disturbance yes um okay and this might just be a naive question but recognizing how much is being done at stafford drive park um you know the the title basin or or whatever that's being done, how do those areas of impact that are dealt with, how does that affect things down the stream a little bit further?

[01:56:11] Because recognizing these are all kind of isolated projects that all sort of feed into each other. So if you don't do one area or you pick the wrong area to do it at that right time, I mean, how do those impact each other? The downstream effects are evaluated during engineering. One of the things that we

want to avoid is pushing more water faster through that stream corridor and then negatively impacting what's downstream of that.

[01:56:35] So that is looked at very carefully during engineering. The goal is for the floodplain limits to be the same at the end of the project. So we don't want those to expand and negatively impact downstream. These projects are engineered to function independently of what's going on up and downstream of them.

[01:56:59] That's part of the reason that they are so long, it's called tying out. You tie out the stream restoration so that it can function independently of the areas around it. Okay so just given all the crazy insane rain that we've had recently I have not been to Stafford Park lately I'm just wondering you know have any of the things that we've done there are we are we helping the water currently or because it's under construction are we in that phase of like I'm thinking my own house if I dig something out like it looks like a hot mess until we've finished right are we are we creating a bigger problem right now with all of the rain or is it functioning the way it should because we're in that

[01:57:37] intermediate phase and that has already been totally planned out and thought ahead and it's being stopped at certain places to not travel down further am I making sense yes so there are erosion controls implemented throughout the project that that prevent the downstream release of sediment during the construction process for the areas that have been graded and are close to being complete what we're seeing is that during the storms that we've been experiencing the water comes out of the stream banks and activates the floodplain as it should we're not seeing very much erosion so it's it's functioning as it's supposed to even at this early stage in the project okay

[01:58:14] that's reassuring for sure and again we've had an extraordinary amount of rain in very short periods of time so i'm happy to hear that that's functioning like it should so thank you other comments? Questions? Council Member Peterson? Just to take a step back and particularly for people who are watching, can you restate why we're having what I gather to be an increased rate of erosion in these streams? Yes.

[01:58:42] As stream channels erode, they become narrower and deeper. That creates a sluice essentially that channels water through them at high velocity and those high velocity flows continue to erode the stream banks. You'll have the stream start to meander and take trees with it as it starts to erode towards the other banks. By widening the floodplain or raising the stream bed, we give the water a wider area to flow through. That reduces the velocities and reduces the erosion. Controlling erosion directly impacts water quality. It improves the water

[01:59:19] quality yeah yes although I think what I'm after is an understanding of what has changed here because these are natural systems and as I understand it it's not necessarily a bad thing for trees to fall over in these streams because that has the effect of reducing the velocity of the water that goes through and so you have natural systems that are dynamic over time trees come down we used to have beaver dams built things like that and the natural systems have a certain level of erosion, but they also have within them natural dynamics that reduce that rate

[01:59:59] over time. It sounds like something is happening here that's changing that natural system from its normal state. Is that that we are having more development upstream and we have a higher influx of water, a higher discharge, and that's driving this? Or is there something else going on here that's really creating this new higher level of erosion that's taking place?

[02:00:20] There's a couple factors. One factor is development over the years, more impervious area. Stormwater management facilities really just came on board in the 80s. There was a lot of pavement and work done before that.

[02:00:36] So the combination of development has increased the runoff, the time of runoff to these localities, plus the climate change of the heavier intense storms that we're getting today than we used to get.

[02:00:51] As you look at, the FEMA maps are updated occasionally, and the rainfall data that's coming is increasing. The intensity and these flash flood type of storms have increased over the years. So that is contributing to the erosion of our natural streams.

[02:01:09] And that's one of the things why Satoshi has to meet these compliance requirements, It's because they're trying to stop this increased erosion and stop this water quality degradation that's occurring. And is siltation, the actual degradation of water in the TMDL, is that metric we're managing against?

[02:01:33] Silt is, sediment is one of the factors. The pollutants of concern are phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment. Phosphorus and nitrogen are bound to sediment, so by controlling sediment, you control all three pollutants of concern. And the source of the phosphorus and nitrogen, how is that getting into the stream?

[02:01:50] A lot of that has to do with runoff from fertilizer. People fertilize their lawns. We get the runoff. It gets it to the creek. And working with the sunlight, you get those type of nutrients in there. And would fertilizer control be one of the alternatives that might be examined as a part of a watershed management plan?

[02:02:07] Which is part of his credit program for his stormwater utility. And that could contribute here to the TMDL compliance by doing that and potentially reduce the need for some of the stream restoration. Is that possible?

[02:02:22] There are approaches to meeting the TMDLs, the pollutant reduction requirements, that are quantifiable and non-quantifiable. Having a stormwater utility credit program is an example of a non-quantifiable benefit.

[02:02:40] We know that it has some positive effects, but we can't actually measure that. When we measure the amount of sediment that's controlled from a stream restoration project, we can quantify that, and that produces an actual credit figure, a quantifiable improvement to water quality.

[02:02:59] So two separate things, but yes, they do help. Okay, I didn't realize that you're not able to credit phosphorus and nitrogen deposition. Is that correct, what I'm hearing? We can through a stream restoration project, which quantifies sediment loss, phosphorus, and nitrogen reductions.

[02:03:21] All three of those are creditable through a stream restoration project. Through the Stormwater Utility Credit Program, they are not. Okay, that's interesting and maybe a little bit unfortunate that we can't go to the source and do some controls.

[02:03:37] I guess my last question is, if you look at Akatink Creek from the end of the Fairfax City boundary at Pickett Road, It runs all the way to Belpore. And granted, that runs through a resource protection area, at least most of it.

[02:03:53] But I'm not aware that that has gone through any kind of stream restoration program. And I'm curious to know whether Fairfax County is contemplating any stream restoration on that stretch. It's like a 20-mile stretch or something like that.

[02:04:10] Again, it's Accutane Creek, same creek, natural system. But do you know if the county feels that needs to go through restoration or whether that should stay in its natural state? I'm not updated on the county stream restoration project schedule for the Accutane Creek.

[02:04:26] However, we do intend to reach out to the county to see if they would want to extend a stream restoration beyond the city limits and into the county and perhaps work with them on a larger restoration project in that area. Okay, thanks.

[02:04:43] Other questions or comments? Councilmember Bates. Thank you. first off a question you mentioned a lot of the older developments having 11 previous surface and maybe not the best stormwater management would you say it's possible that redevelopment of some of those parcels that perhaps improves on stormwater management could potentially mitigate that it's required it's required that if a property is redeveloped they have to meet the

[02:05:18] latest stormwater management. Yeah, exactly. And additionally, I just want to say that I have complete faith in the staff to see this project through and I support the recommendations in terms of the segments for prioritization. And I'm also very glad to see that stakeholder input was brought in early on in the process and i look forward to further robust citizen engagement

[02:05:57] because i think that's very valuable thank you anything else all right two things um the stafford drive restoration project what is the projected completion date between end of this year and early spring 2026 right so and i ask that because visually it as you said it's very stark and it's very upsetting to people, but we're also talking about in three to five years, it looks dramatically different. So I think it's good to remind people they need to reserve judgment until the project is

[02:06:34] A, complete, and we start looking at the clock between when it's done and the replantings occur, and then what it looks like each season after that. I think it will look dramatically different in fairly short order, because Daniel's Run Park, I moved to Providence Square in 2011 and walk that trail every day until we moved in 2019 so like literally every day the entire trail so i think people need to understand and nature has a way of coming back more quickly than i think

[02:07:10] people anticipate the second thing when we talk about development and increased development we have a lot of asphalt parking lots here and so when we talk about development to me building things like the N29 project on an asphalt parking lot is a net benefit to removing a flat impervious surface that creates high velocity water when we have very intensive rain events like we had today. And so I think it's important when we say development and increased development

[02:07:45] differentiate what we're building and implementing stormwater best practices for new development over the fact that we have enormous numbers of asphalt parking lots that are creating a problem that impact all of these creeks.

[02:08:02] Council Member Amos? Just going to say, if you all want to see something crazy, go to Layton during a rainstorm. You would be horrified by the waterfalls that show up there on our staircases. And there you go. So, again, appreciate the presentation.

[02:08:18] I think it's really important for us on the dais, but certainly it's important for people to understand the very thorough way in which this was analyzed I appreciate your the iPad and the waiters I'm just having a visual on that it's fantastic Patrick and the fact that we have done everything possible to include people in the process so thank you very much I echo Councilmember Bates that I have great confidence in the staff so thank you very much Ms. Clark the next item is a discussion on City Council policies and procedures regarding the filing of vacancies on and

[02:08:56] and certain required actions by city council appointed boards and commissions. Melissa Shinnever, city clerk, will provide the staff report. Good evening, mayor and council.

[02:09:13] City council ordinarily adopts a resolution for the filling of vacancies for the city council appointed boards and commissions over which it has authority. Since the beginning of this council term, the council has been evaluating whether to amend the process.

[02:09:28] The items that the city council could center in the resolution includes setting term limits requirement of reappointment interviews for all boards and commissions requesting notification of new and upcoming vacancies from the city clerk's office and staff to provide feedback to council regarding particular requirements for open positions on the boards and commissions when interviewing new applicants in front of you tonight is a draft resolution language that that was in the previously adopted resolution from the previous city council in 2023 that is still in effect until the city council decides to approve

[02:10:05] or amend the resolution this concludes my summary i'm happy to take any questions questions for ms shenanberry councilmember peterson just a procedural question so this is not something i gather that we're voting on this evening this would be something we would discuss and take action on at some later time correct councilmember amos i mean there's a number of things that we've discussed over the past few months, looking at CTA Chandler a little bit about that one-year term limit. I won't bring that up now. So I know that we've talked about things like a skills matrix and

[02:10:45] all that, but I guess maybe it would be prudent to start with, in terms of process, I feel like we were kind of getting to the place where, for example, term limits seem like a good idea to try to help improve diversity on boards and commissions and have a healthier rotation. I feel like a lot of these items that we'd probably be discussing are things that we would want the boards and commissions for themselves to evaluate and report back to us. Is that kind of the intention or the direction we're going, like with the skills matrix idea, with term limits, all those things?

[02:11:18] Ms. Shinaberry. So we were asked at the, I believe it was the January 21st special meeting to survey our staff liaisons and chairs to provide feedback on that. And I sent a memo out back in February. Yep. I just sent to you recently as well. So they did get feedback. What we had gotten, is pretty much saying they would be agreeable or suggested durations of three to six terms um i did actually look up before i came up to here um we have somebody who's been on a board

[02:11:52] for eight terms now and the second highest is seven terms and so but all the boards and commissions they do range it could be a two-year term three-year term or at most five years so if they're they're doing it two times they've served for 10 years in total is mr cunningham one of our long-term i bring that up because he was here with us this evening and he has a lot of excellent perspective because of his tenure on the planning commission so when you talk about term limits and

[02:12:27] things keep in mind that in the main that might be good to limit it but there are people who have chosen to serve and yet councilmember Hardy Chandler so I think I'm thinking about two different things number one the resolution feels very high level and I think the former provisions are generally fine I think some of the debates that we've had have been more procedural particularly I'm interested in procedures related to how we recruit people how we keep people who may not

[02:13:04] have been appointed engaged in the city and so i think those are separate from there so i think i'm i think we have um some work to do uh in terms of things like resident requirements and things like that that are that are um that could be more procedural so i guess i want to talk about what might be um valuable to this kind of document versus something that might be for lack of a better term standard operating procedures as they apply to boards and commissions I also think that

[02:13:42] those would be somewhat individual we've talked about the boards and commissions not being a one size fits all and I wouldn't want to be prescriptive with boards that have different and diverse needs so I just wanted to put out there that there are things that we may want to change or talk about here but there may also be more specific things that may be for a procedural discussion that we still might want to codify so that it gets passed on again thinking about future appointments and making the process more streamlined I

[02:14:18] think that from recruitment to waiting to appointment to terms maybe in some variation there and also again really wanting to encourage those who may not be appointed to to stay engaged in in ways of um um just keeping them connected so thank you other thoughts councilmember peterson just a paperwork question is this the same as the electronic document yeah that i emailed recently for this and that's posted for the meeting are

[02:14:57] these all the same yes so we're still working off the 2023 council adopted resolution so this is the same it's just a sample this is not adopted so this is just a sample of that okay yeah great that that's helpful um and i guess i had a question uh i'm trying to find the right place here which is the question mark about reappointments so first on the issue of the number of terms i mean my own view is that may well could be a case-by-case issue but we've talked about

[02:15:34] folks here we are i think it's item number seven um coming in for reappointment interviews and this lists a couple of boards and commissions but not all of them correct and so i'm just and i'm just wondering if there's any reason we wouldn't have the flexibility here to expand that list to additional boards commissions and committees well be at the will of the council if you want to expand it to all boards and commissions we can very much do that instead just limiting to just the planning commission economic development authority parks and recreation advisory board and the board of architectural review so we can expand it to everybody okay yeah and then if you could clarify

[02:16:14] for any and all of them including those that are listed here when a term expires do we advertise it then as an open position no currently we do not because depends some people don't seek reappointment and then there's other people who do but then they don't do applications like i just had somebody recently who expired and i had to reach out to ask are you seeking reappointment or not she said she was so she's going to do a reappointment but we can at the will of the council we can start doing

[02:16:52] a month advance notice for that person's term who's going to expire and advertise so it would just be at your you know guidance for us okay it's it's helpful because i i think it would be helpful to do something consistent on that. The other thing is that the question mark of whether when a term expires it

continues to be occupied and let until somebody else is appointed and I'm not sure what our standard policy is on that although having served on and chaired the ESC

[02:17:30] I believe that at the expiration of terms people left and those seats were empty because we had a number of empty seats because of expirations so if the term ended most of them would either email the city clerk's office or let the staff liaison know i'm not going to seek reappointment but if they haven't let us know that then they want to be reappointed and they did a reapply a reappointment application then the seat still stands until either they have a new appointment Take that spot, or they get reappointed.

[02:18:06] Okay, but we don't openly, or we haven't advertised on a consistent basis the positions, the terms that have expired. No, not for upcoming reappointment that's, or for upcoming appointments that are going to expire, no.

[02:18:26] Okay, it's one maybe worth circling back to. And Mr. Lubkerman is not here. No, but I tell him I can let him know any questions that were asked tonight and we can get back to you. So on number nine, I think this really is possibly something that is addressed through the issue that Councilmember Hardy Chandler raised,

[02:18:53] which is that this, whatever policy this is, there needs to be a translation of this to bylaws and otherwise to standard operating procedures in the board's commissions and committees. And so the issue, for instance, of conflicts of interest is one that would go to them to be incorporated in that.

[02:19:16] But I am curious, this states the state statute here, which, if I understand it correctly, says that members of boards and commissions have the same obligations for conflict of interest as elected members do here.

[02:19:33] So it's a substantial responsibility. And I'm wondering what has been said beyond just this short paragraph here to our knowledge to the boards and commissions to let them know that they need to be compliant here.

[02:19:48] Do you know if that has happened or not? So I know for the main boards, like Planning Commission, Board of Architectural Review, Economic Development Authority, all those boards, and of Board and Zoning Appeals, they all fill out a conflict of interest and they get a packet for the FOIA, Freedom Information Act, just so they can have that information.

[02:20:10] But for the other boards, they don't get that information. With the Virginia Conflict of Interest, the boards I mentioned, they were the ones who are required to file with us, with the clerk's office, but the other ones are not. So that is a point that I think would be great to double-check.

[02:20:27] My reading of that law is that it covers all of them as advisory committees, but that's something perhaps we could have double-checked with the city attorneys. Yeah, and I believe with that and the bylaws and everything, we're going to come to a future work session in the fall to expand on those items.

[02:20:46] Okay, and one last question of clarification. Item number two, when it says any board or commission, is that referring to a board or commission within the city? I'm thinking this refers to a regional board or commission. Is that correct? It just says board or commission. Okay, so that's the representative of the council.

[02:21:10] So your term would just end when your council term ends. but it's it's representative on any board or commission right what is the board or commission so let's just say like uh you know council

member hardy chandler she serves on the fairfax village advisory board so if let's just say if she was not re-elected to council she would not be serving on that board anymore and her term would end when her term ends okay so that's helpful to know um that's all i have for the moment although just to clarify you will be you and corporately will be coming back in a work session and can you tell us a little bit more about the scope of that what

[02:21:49] that's going to include are you talking about the conflict of interest and the bylaws yes yeah yeah i will work with the attorney on that so we will come back in the fall to work on the work session with everybody just to clarify you know the guidance of how you would like us to proceed with you know setting guidelines for the boards and commissions okay fantastic because i know that's come up and I know the concept was there's kind of a checklist of things that need to be covered by bylaws etc so you'll be coming back at us with that yeah good good to know thank you council member hall thank you um so I I'm glad all these things have been brought up tonight um and I do

[02:22:29] appreciate the opportunity to discuss resident requirements terms things like that um I think one of the things that I did just want to say was that it this evening we had a reappointment meeting with someone who is not one of the listed boards on here. And I did just want to publicly say that I thought it was very, very helpful, especially because the board that was discussed tonight is actually a five-year appointment. And that's a very long time. I mean, that could actually span essentially three different potential councils, depending upon how long people were serving. So I would strongly suggest that while it might add a couple more meetings or

[02:23:09] times. I would strongly consider that we do have reappointment interviews with these people as their terms are coming up, just because I think it's important for us to get to know them and vice versa. I mean, there was, you know, not a relationship, I think, with some, you know, I didn't know the person and it was very nice to have an opportunity to meet with them and hear a little bit about them. So that's just my comments to all of council. Thank you. Councilmember hardy chandler did i hear you mention something about some of the boards being required under

[02:23:47] state provisions to file certain documents so are there can you talk a little bit more about that like which boards and commissions have state mandates for lack of a better phrase and which ones are really kind of locally governed is because i think we talk about different kinds boards and maybe those requirements impact some of the decisions we make around it so to start off the elected officials so mayor and council they all fill out a conflict of interest school board fills out a conflict of interest planning commission board of architectural review

[02:24:24] board of zoning appeals also board of equalization and economic development authority because they make um they make actions that involve money sometimes or even like actions like planning commission with developments and such since they make a higher action then i will just say like compare to commission for women they're not making any kind of actions that's coming out of there that's going to be like reflective to the city and like in that major way does that answer your question yeah to some extent so in terms of understanding why there might be different

[02:25:02] requirements it's what might be additional risks or liabilities to the broader city that could determine some differences and and how we you know do oversight of and appointments perhaps and some fiduciary responsibilities it sounds like right okay that's helpful thank you thank you council member amos yeah i mean going back to the reappointments real quick i mean you all know how i feel

about that i personally don't think we need to do an interview for each reappointment but if we were to i mean for example in the staff member it does list we do want to make sure we're

[02:25:38] looking at attendance and participation very closely i would also acknowledge that if we are going to go through a process where we want to bring in all the reappointments i would at least extend a virtual option to them so i mean we're transitioning to a virtual world we've i've personally been a part of a virtual meeting i think you can get it done and it still covers the basis of what we're trying to get at and getting to know the person and more about the commission so extending a virtual option i think would be fair and a good compromise so i believe we could do that I just know the mayor and council can't be virtual but the applicant can

[02:26:12] for that to happen yeah councilmember Bates and then councilmember hall kind of in that same vein one other alternative I've been considering is for those boards that are not listed as requiring a reappointment interview we might consider instead of having them come in for you know an in-person interview each time you know we they might be given the option of sending in a video that we could all view at our leisure or something along those lines just an idea

[02:26:50] councilmember hall thank you one thing I know we didn't get to at our previous meeting on Tuesday was the discussion about compensation for some of the boards and commissions so I do hope that can be brought back around I know don't know that we're going to make the potential timeline for the July of the 81 days in advance deadline but I do think that that would be helpful information to know and also if we could see what other localities are doing as far as do they only pay certain boards and commissions do they pay all boards and commissions do they pay no boards and commissions just so we can kind of get a good gauge on what is the norm at this point we can

[02:27:27] definitely pull that thank you councilmember amos uh this is just because you brought that up and having worked for the county so i do know that not all their boards and commissions do but if i'm correct i think the planning commission makes more than we do their planning commission I think makes more than us I think they're in the yeah are they not in the 20,000 range for the county oh I don't know the county no I thought you meant for us no I think I think the county planning commissioners actually make more than we do so fun fact okay so speaking of fun facts some of the things don't have to be decided by July because they'll go to

[02:28:04] the General Assembly like as a charter change you know we talked about removing the being a registered voter to be on a board of commission that just needs to be done in time to send it to the general assembly in 2026 the only thing that had a time requirement was anything we put on a referendum for the november election but these things wouldn't go on that so you've got time on that um so you know pay for the boards and commissions we did talk about whether or not we wanted to devote a registration mainly because we have a lot of green card holders here and long-term permanent residents who aren't voters and so we're kind of

[02:28:42] cutting out some of the diversity we said we kind of wanted for people who live in the city so just putting that back out there again and as far as pay for city council not really related but sort of related there are time constraints on that you can't vote you can't vote a raise for yourself you have to vote on it and there has to be an intervening election in between so we missed that opportunity with the last council I wouldn't say we missed it it was a three three tie and so it didn't move forward which is why we all make

[02:29:18] less than a lot of other smaller jurisdictions in our northern virginia region um so if this council were to consider that at some future point i'm putting it out there because you would be doing it in 20 at least in 2026 yeah i think the i think you have yeah you could you could adopt it or propose it and then it would take effect after the next election yeah you have to an election before it can take effect correct so you take action first then you have an election and then whoever wins gets the benefit right and i don't think that there's a um like a particular

[02:29:56] time there's i'm sure there's an ultimate deadline but you could do it probably in 2025 if you wanted to because it's still not going to take effect until the new council in 2027 but but that didn't happen with the last council so if you all want to noodle on that and think about what you want to do before the next election that that might be helpful to you know people who end up sitting here. Anything else related to this topic? Anybody? Anybody? Well, all right, Ms.

[02:30:27] Shinneberry. I think that we've got what you've presented to us, plus what we have, has been asked for, for the bylaws and the conflict of interest that is coming up in the next discussion we have on this. Do you feel like you've gotten sufficient direction? I believe so. If there is any comments, you can send that to me. And if there's none, I can go forward and bring this to, I'm not requiring a public hearing for the July 22nd meeting for us to adopt.

[02:30:54] Councilmember Peterson? Just to be sure we include in that a double check on the coverage of conflicts of interest. I actually have a different reading that it's not limited. It's complete in terms of advisory boards, commissions, and committees.

[02:31:10] Okay. I can talk to our city attorney regarding that line. Anything else we'd like to share with Ms. Shinneberry? Councilmember Hardy-Chandler. It just occurs to me that there might be a template for bylaws that has some of the core things that we've been talking about for the board or commission to tailor to their specific needs.

[02:31:38] But we might want to cover some key areas that they include in their bylaws so that it isn't just open and unstructured, but we're actually giving them some structure that's customizable. That's the word I was looking for. They're the experts on what they need.

[02:31:54] They're the ones doing that work. They're the ones having that conversation, and I really do believe we should honor their expertise on what they need. Anything else? All right. Thank you, Ms. Shinnevere.

[02:32:10] Ms. Shinnevere, we appreciate it very much. Ms. Clark? The next item is a discussion on council requests for staff support, messaging, and communication. I will recognize Brian Foster, city manager, for the discussion. Yes, good evening.

[02:32:25] This is a carryover from Saturday's retreat. We didn't get to this topic. No presentation, just wanting to know the interest and how we can help in that regard. Council Member Peterson. Were you able to retrieve and review any notes or related information from Jane Dittmar?

[02:32:52] We don't have any information. We have reached out to Jane. She unfortunately was not available. She is doing work for another locality at the moment. She's not able to get us definitive answers.

[02:33:08] So we're still trying to follow up with her, but we don't actually have anything specific from her on this specific topic. But if she has it, we will get it, but we haven't been able to yet. I think it would be

helpful, although we perhaps can even talk about it at least initially without her, but she had raised a suggestion that, and I can't recall actually the venue in which it was raised indicating that it is not uncommon for local governments to support council members with communications activities

[02:33:46] and that that's an area that we should explore. And it would be helpful to know where things stand currently with our communications program here in terms of its authorization, if you will, to help council members with communications issues.

[02:34:04] And in addition to knowing where things stand, if we want to do more, for instance, along some of the lines she suggested, how could we go about doing that? Because it's not clear at this stage that the communications function of the city is something that is able to be responsive to council members in kind of the ways that she was suggesting.

[02:34:26] I think, Mr. Peterson, what I would like to suggest is let us be able to follow up with her and clarify that, and then we would be in a better position to have this conversation. So not to delay it again, but just we could do it at a future work session if that's acceptable.

[02:34:48] So as soon as we, I mean, we can do it as soon as we get the information. We'll share it with you if that's acceptable. I'm seeing, are people okay with that? Okay, I'm seeing consensus. We'll get that and we'll get in contact with them and get that information right back and then schedule a follow-up session as appropriate.

[02:35:10] That would be helpful and I don't know whether we had like a couple commas and a couple items in this same sentence wherever it may be. There was communication support. There was how we handle information requests, staff support.

[02:35:27] If it's best to fold that into the conversation that we have after you talk with her, that'd be great. But, you know, just to give you an example of one element of that that would be helpful to know. Let's say, you know, for instance, one of us or two of us, whomever, has a community meeting.

[02:35:46] Folks say, gee, we've got a bunch of questions. And can you help us get answers to those questions, right? and perhaps even have a staff person come back out and sit down and tell us about this thing. Just would be great to know what we do with that.

[02:36:03] Sure. So what I would say to that is as far as having community meetings, certainly any time you get questions from citizens and you need answers, all you need to do is let us know and we can get you those answers.

[02:36:20] As far as having a community meeting and having staff there, Conceptually, especially if it's on a specific topic, you're having a meeting on, say, I'm just making this up on the comp plan, and you want some planning staff there, for example.

[02:36:38] That certainly also could be a possibility. The thing I would caution, and this is the challenge for staff, is at what point is this truly a sort of, I'll say, a council-endorsed community meeting that not all of council is that versus it has the appearance of being a political event or you're doing this because you're running for office, running for re-election. That is sort of a nuance that sometimes can

[02:37:11] be hard to determine. So that's where I would say it would stray into and as far as having staff there might not be as appropriate. But it's certainly any time you get questions that you would like answers for we can certainly provide that um uh that's not to say so again i mean i've seen this in other places uh

we've done this in other places where there has been a you know uh you're you're you're having a there's a specific say a specific project that's

[02:37:48] in your neighborhood where you have to live not that you represent a certain district but you have to live in that neighborhood and you're wanting to have staff come by and explain the thing that Those kinds of things are, I would say, generally fine. It's when you're, say, you happen to be, it happens to be an election year and there's a controversial topic, whatever, pick your topic, and you want to have staff come and because you want to have a specific position that may or, you know, that's where, it's like, well, that's probably not as inappropriate.

[02:38:18] And so, I would say it depends, but there certainly are ways, I think, that we can, that the staff that we can be helpful and supportive when you're doing, you know, doing things with the residents and folks in the community?

[02:38:34] So I'm sure that's not the clearest of answers, but I would just, like anything else, it depends. Well, so I think it's helpful because it strikes me there are different ways to handle this also, and, you know, one question is if you do a follow-up meeting or whatever, whether it's a publicly noticed thing so that all council can attend, for instance.

[02:38:54] But let me just give you a specific. So, yes, I live in CCH, and we have the Blenheim Boulevard project, and there are a lot of neighbors there that would love to have staff come back out and answer a bunch of questions, right? And so I'm guessing, and I would be more than happy for everybody to join if we do that, but that would be just an example.

[02:39:13] So, I mean, I think so what, not to put words in your mouth, what I'm hearing you describe is some sort of like you're facilitating a meeting with the neighborhood to get answers because they're asking lots of questions. Well, and I just... So, I mean, what I was saying...

[02:39:28] They came to me. No, no, no. I didn't reach out. They said... No, no, no, but what I'm saying is what you're asking for is you're trying to help, not that you specifically want the meeting, but you're trying to help. People have asked you in your role as a council member. You also happen to be a neighbor, but they're also, hey, I have questions.

[02:39:44] Can we do something? And what I would say is that, yes, if there's requests for a neighbor, to have something like that we can we can certainly accommodate that it doesn't necessarily even have to come through a council member i mean if an hoa or a specific neighborhood reached out we'd certainly try and be accommodating i i i feel certain that there have been times where like say you know an hoa say hey we're our hoa is meeting on such and such a date and we have questions about such and such can somebody come by i i feel confident that that has probably happened

[02:40:19] in the past and would also happen in the future as certain circumstances arise. The Stacey's, Council Member Hall and then Council Member Hardy Chandler. Thank you.

[02:40:35] So I think my interpretation of Jane's suggestion was, I think, somewhat more along the lines of if we all wanted to, hopefully all of us could attend, but if we wanted to do like a coffee with your council members or, you know, open house at here to let people just come in and not in a public setting and in a public hearing setting, not in a, you know, in a much more casual approach was, was to be able to, could we send out something that way saying like, Hey, your council members are going to be here.

[02:41:08] You know, could we do something that's a little bit less formal, but still provides opportunities and, you know, could we consider doing that in other neighborhoods or other areas, not as a campaigning strategy by any means, but just as a, we know there's a lot of things we know you can't always come to a council meeting and so you know trying to kind of meet people where they are i think it's one of the things that we talked about before no and i would say absolutely so certainly if it's when i could say that like the whole council so i'll give you an example not that this is something you'd want to do or that and i'm not aware that this specifically everyone say you want to have like i said we're going to have coffee with the

[02:41:44] council on the second thursday of every month and you all are going to like rotate who shows up because you all can't do it, but you're something like that, if that's like a quote-unquote a council something and some number of you may or may not be there, absolutely, we can certainly do that and accommodate that and facilitate that, and through the staff, we can certainly help with that.

[02:42:09] To the point of even if there was a specific topic that you want to discuss and can we have the appropriate staff person there, we can even do that as well. But if this is like Council Member Hall and Council Member Hardy Chandler, we're going to have some specific event that we want to talk about.

[02:42:27] The Stacey, that's right, Stacey, you want to have Stacey Fest. I would say that's probably not, not that you're overtly making it a political event, like you're going to fundraise or anything, it's just the appearance. And so, you know, we as the staff, you know, as I do, I work for the body and the staff can we work you know and do things collectively as a body so when you start to get into individual requests or individual things not that that automatically says no we can't help you it just kind of depends but exactly what you're describing is like hey we want to do some events

[02:43:06] some non-traditional events or non you know something like that and and all the council wants to do that that's we can absolutely help with that sure council member hardy channel i appreciate that because I think some of the concepts better suit a model where council members represent a particular ward but in this case we all represent the whole city correct so I am in favor of events like snacks with the Stacey's

[02:43:38] or whatever you know and others at all but I like it being a coordinated all council kind of thing where we may or may not be available but it is a one council sort of one voice supported by we have a model for that that worked really well when the suggestion was made for an open house on the budget the staff pulled that together it wasn't a formal thing the vast majority of us you know were able to come there at some point so we have a model for success but

[02:44:12] I think just remembering that we all represent the whole city and even if some opt not to participate in certain things because of other obligations or whatever, at least it's a whole council effort and I think beyond the logistics of that, I think we also need to portray a unified voice to our community as opposed to, you know, certain individual efforts. I think that conveys a collective sort of thing and I've said repeatedly that I think that a council can be

[02:44:48] a microcosm of the city as a whole and the way that we coordinate things can also you know ripple out to how we want neighborhoods to work together we recognize they have their individual identities but we're one city and so since we represent the whole city I would I love I would love for any sort of informal event to be a decision of the whole.

[02:45:14] Other thoughts? All right. So we'll, again, we'll get back with Jane, make sure, you know, try to clarify or get the additional information, and then we can, I'm happy to revisit this. Okay. Other, Council Member Peterson.

[02:45:30] One of the other things on the list, and happy for this to be an item we circle back to is the question mark of instances where a majority or all of us want to get some staff support on an issue. And the procedure for that. So I'm not sure whether we have a written procedure for that that we could be referred to.

[02:45:50] If we don't, I'm wondering whether we might, just so that it's something that we have clarity and consistency on. Because I think that's come up a bit, right? And it might be nice. And, again, if we and you would like to circle back on that, that's just fine. But I think it would be worth chatting a little bit about.

[02:46:08] We can circle back on that as well. Yeah, that's fine. And if you've got another thing, you don't have to share it right now, but offline, if you have a specific example you're referring to, we can get information about that. We can work on that. We circle back.

[02:46:23] Sure. Okay. Anything else before we move to the final agenda item? Okay. The last work session item is a follow-up discussion on the community survey. I will recognize Brian Foster, city manager, for the discussion.

[02:46:41] I just got one pass. Take one down. Pass it around. Okay. I just want to share. All right. Okay. Thank you. This is a follow-up from the last meeting where we went over, you know, Council wanted, you had some comments and questions. We took those down and narrowed it down.

[02:47:05] So what you see before you, I want to just quickly go over those and make sure that we've captured everything and make sure there aren't any additional comments or questions. So, just as a reminder, things that are highlighted in yellow are just to denote, that's what we benchmark.

[02:47:24] So, that's the same as before. Most of the changes you'll see since then are highlighted in a different color. And so, I would like to start, I will come back to item number one that has a green highlight.

[02:47:40] But start with number two. This is the one, Council Member Hart, where we're just asking about the four priorities instead of three. On item number three, we wanted to ask about, in addition to those things listed, natural environment and open space, small town character of the city of Fairfax.

[02:48:03] So hopefully we captured those as well. If you move on to page three, number 12, was a question or comment about uh a quality and amount of development in the city when we're talking about these other things so we've got that in there as a as a sorry my question and concern continues to be that those are two different things and i i'm feeling like we should either have two questions or that should be simplified so it's just one of those things quality and the

[02:48:38] the amount are different things okay do you I suspect we can just looking I suspect we can separate them is that the preference make them two items quality is one and I'm just looking remember we had space limitations I'm flipping the page I think we have enough space to make that work is that okay so we'll split those councilmember Amos I we let's see we have availability of quality

[02:49:12] housing which uh we should probably leave housing as its own thing i i don't see the necessity of splitting into two personally i would be fine with probably just reducing taking quality out just leaving amount uh we're already trying to assess quality and some other questions it looks like for example looking at housing um because we ask quality questions i need to go back through a little further but i guess what is the what are we trying to get out with that one i'm sorry with

[02:49:51] which one for number 12 sorry that was mr. Peterson suggested that that was an addition that he had asked the to consider right now it's got two things in it quality and amount and it would seem to me that we either shrink it down so it's just got one of those either quality or amount or we have two separate questions because it's two different animals in the same gauge yeah I think because we have so many questions about quality throughout this maybe just shrink it down and just do amount okay with that well of others on

[02:50:27] this is just amount on that number 12 are we good on page 3 just amount instead of quality and amount good councilmember Bates something else that occurred to me is that let's say that someone is dissatisfied with the amount of new development we don't know whether just at face value that means they're just you know they think that there should be less or more you know there might be some people out there who might think that we need to be doing more to redevelop some of the aging or

[02:51:01] mostly parking lot parcels in the city. So another suggestion might be to reword the options there instead of how satisfied they are. Is it way too much, somewhat too much, just right, too little, way too little or something like that just an idea council member amos no that's a great point and uh maybe to to help simplify what we could do is instead of amount we could do rate of

[02:51:37] development in the city and i think that would capture kind of both aspects well just if i might i'm so sorry um because i know we're trying to keep this simple sure all of these seem to me Well, I would guess all of these are basically starting places for initial understanding of how people feel about certain things that then would lead to a bit more detailed exploration and examination of what's underneath that.

[02:52:11] And so just in the interest of making it easy for people to do the survey, I would favor, you know, simplify this, keep it under the same satisfied knot, but that becomes an area for follow-up. but people are not satisfied, you can flag that and you can follow up. Absolutely. That's correct.

[02:52:28] If they're not satisfied, and remember, the follow-up question for all of these, but the next question for this specific one, when they ask about which three should receive the most emphasis, that's where you get to really establishing the priorities because if they say this is something that should be an emphasis and they're not satisfied, that's going to bubble up to the top and say that's an area that the residents think we should focus on.

[02:52:59] They may say that it's not very important, and they may be very satisfied, and so that wouldn't necessarily be something to focus on. So it just depends. So going back to that, are we then going to just leave amount only, or did you want to change to rate?

[02:53:22] Council Member Hardy-Chandler? Yes, I'd keep amount only. And just keep in mind that although we may be curious about other types of data to the point of the comments made previously, it is a satisfaction survey. So we don't want to start measuring other things beyond satisfaction and taking us down a little bit of a rabbit hole.

[02:53:43] But I support amount. And Mrs. Zipp just pointed out to me, you'd get quality. You do have your rating quality of economic development, so that gets to that. That's in question one on the first page.

[02:53:59] So you are asking a quality question already. Councilmember Hall. I'm okay, I think, with removing quality. The one thing I will say is that when we do read the responses to amount of development in the city, if someone is very satisfied and someone is very dissatisfied, I don't necessarily know what we're actually going to glean from that.

[02:54:27] And I say that because some people may feel like we're doing a lot of development in their mind and others may feel like we haven't really scratched the surface on it yet and we should be doing more. So as we're talking about this question, I'm just not totally sure that we're actually going to get enough information out of that one thing to be able to tell us if it's too much or not enough in general.

[02:54:52] I don't have another suggestion right now as to how to reword it, but I just wanted to share that with all of you and see if you had a thought on that as well. I think you're correct. The way it's worded, I mean, again, I think it was earlier stated, if it just says amount or rate and if it's too much or if it's a lot and you're in favor of it, you'd say it's great.

[02:55:16] But if it's a lot and you don't want it, but you don't know that because of the way it's worded. you know, if you look, the other ones in this category are slightly more granular in terms of, because they're talking about more specifics, such as, you know, ability for, like, jobs or single family or a variety of housing types. So there's a little bit more specificity than what this one gets at, and so, you know, we took it as it was suggested.

[02:55:54] I did not try to come up with a different way to word it, and again, so I'm not saying don't include it, but I mean, the other question is, as we've been talking, is it something you still want to include or not at this point?

[02:56:12] Council Member Peterson? I'd be happy to withdraw this if it's just too confusing, and we're not going to get meaningful information out of it okay I mean I I think the concept is important but I'm sensitive to the point okay well they're not that I'm open to everybody else's take care to other thoughts on removing the question entirely councilmember Amos yeah I mean the councilmember Hall's point if it stays as we already asked about quality if it stays as amount you're right because it's extremely subjective so I mean for example even certain areas I don't like a particular project one project they might not like and they'll think it's

[02:56:47] too much development even though there's that's not the summation of what's going on around the city uh i i would be open to just taking it out or changing it to rate as i think rate would be a better analysis in the amount but i'm not sure what we gleaned from that either i was gonna say if mr peterson's fine with removing it that would have been my yeah i think that probably makes more sense i think that i think that's probably easier oh council member hall um were we able to circle back to look at the actual housing study that was done to see if that asked questions specifically that would be in line with some of these things we were doing? I know that

[02:57:27] had been discussed on Tuesday. I don't know if we had a chance to refer back to that or not. I glanced, honestly, I haven't had a chance to fully look at it. I did glance at that study, And I don't think that it gets exact.

[02:57:48] It does for some things, but I think it's because part of what it was talking about when I was looking at least some of the information, it was like a point in time and it was referencing like what was on the market, you know, like what like houses for sale, apartments for, you know, those kinds of things.

[02:58:06] Because I think one of the things we're talking about was, like, number of units, and it didn't, I don't think it focused completely on, like, the total number of units, at least not in my cursory review. Yeah, no, I'm just trying to remember. I feel like there were questions like, are there enough, is there enough X housing or Y housing?

[02:58:25] But I just, I don't remember exactly. I should have looked at it myself, too. Yeah, I'm sorry, I can't answer. No, no, that's okay. I think by removing this question, I think it's probably better to take it out because we might not get what we want. And then maybe we can further look and see if there's anything else.

[02:58:41] And I think we can certainly revisit it. Trust me, you will get a lot of information from this, what you're asking. And hopefully we'll be very pleased with the results. Folks will be very satisfied. But we haven't ever asked. So now we're asking, and you'll know, and that will help you.

[02:58:59] And the timing is good because if there talks about we'll get these priorities that will help identify priorities prior to next year's budget work and so forth. So, I mean, I think that it's going to work out, their time out to be very, very helpful.

[02:59:17] Mr. Foster? Yes, sir. Yes, Council Member Patterson. So sorry to re-ask this, but I just did notice on the Section 12 thing, And all of the 1 through 11 questions start with efforts to, ability to, and 12 did not do that.

[02:59:35] And I don't know whether it changes things to add efforts to, and I would say the words would be control the amount of. If it's still too confusing and not worth doing, I'm happy to have this out. But I did want to note this changes quite a bit when you put the same words in front of this sentence, which is efforts to.

[02:59:54] effort to do something like say control so if folks think that's worth keeping in there with that you know adjustment i'm open to it but if this is just too confusing i'll move on from this council member hall i actually like that and i think if you said efforts to increase the amount of development in the city i think that's a much more specific question um and i think it would need to be clarified with is it a housing question or is it a business question but i i could see how that could capture more applicable information councilmember Hardy Chandler I would I think it's

[03:00:33] confusing and to leave it out because by parallel if we say efforts to increase it doesn't talk about decreasing and then it gets into why do we increase as leading you know so we want to be as objective as possible so I would still be in support of removing it okay I think we're still I think we're still with removal okay okay gotcha there we go all right so again moving on and again I'm just covering what you not revisiting but just the things that we needed to change or would suggest to be changed so on

[03:01:07] page 4 15 item 15 again we're changing that to 4 instead of 3 as far as asking that on page 5 number 18 there was the we added the two-way communication and shared decision making that was at Mr. Peterson I think asked thought that was important and so that's where we put it Council Member Peterson my only suggestion there would be the same one which is a number of these ability to ease up something does

[03:01:45] it help to add a little bit of verbiage there or is it enough as is maybe it's enough as is Council Member Amos I was going to say for me if I objectively if I looking at this i'd understand where it's coming from yeah okay all right great all right moving forward uh number 24 so you see i put a thing in green only reason i just a different color is because the question i think that came up was asking future focused this was already in there and i just wanted to highlight it as something like looking we're looking towards the future so

[03:02:24] this does uh we think get to that um asking sort of a future look forward um so it's already there wasn't it wasn't a change all right so number 27 is and I will I it was my attempt based on the conversation to capture what you asked for in terms of soliciting the feedback on two-year four-year four-year staggered that is

[03:03:00] the end and and to and to clear clarify that what we currently do and what the options are so take a moment to read that and that would that is what we are suggesting okay okay everybody's good fantastic number 28 this is the open ended question we were asking for so this was the question that was suggested based on a different community it basically anything else that the city should be doing or anything not addressed in the survey that you would

[03:03:39] like city leaders to know so that's your open-ended so we and we will just get the raw data you know won't be i mean just we'll just get we'll just get all the comments um on 38 we added the work remotely and demographics 39 we added the other category that was asked for and then so that's everything was i'm sorry i just had to quickly google because i did not know that the fairfax city resolve is also called ready 311 okay can we just put on their ready 311 app so that people maybe think

[03:04:17] like, oh, I should go download this app now that I'm going to do that when I leave here. Sure, you can do that. Thank you. And remind me, I'm sorry. Question number 18.06. Oh, yes, I'm sorry. I did not highlight that. Thank you for, I did add it. I didn't catch that. That's okay. I was looking for the Fairfax City Resolve, and then when it said Ready 311, I was like, what is that?

[03:04:41] I should probably know the answer to that. So are you saying you want us to just use Resolve or Ready 311? No, I'm ready for your one. I think it's fine. Just if you can add the word app after that. Oh, app, for sure. That way people know it's an app they could go and download. Yeah, yep, yep, yep. I'm with you. Yeah, thank you. Done. That's easy.

[03:04:57] That's easy. Okay, that is all the changes. I would now like to redirect you back to the first page. Question number one, item number 13. I know that you all received correspondence from Chair Pitches from the school board about this and her desire, I guess speaking on behalf of the school board, the school board's desire to remove this question.

[03:05:24] They didn't think that it was, and I'm paraphrasing, an appropriate question for council to ask. I sent you all an email just, again, just sharing my perspective and rationale.

[03:05:41] Ultimately, if this is a question you don't want to have, that's fine. We can remove it. But I just, I highlighted that for conversation since there seemed to be, you all were getting comments about that from the school board.

[03:05:57] And so we just need to know whether you want to leave it or remove it. Council Member Amos. So if someone could try to explain it to me. I don't understand why we would take it out personally. Outside of, there's a very budget-based approach here, but this isn't a budget-based survey.

[03:06:16] I mean, I feel like most community-based surveys would include some kind of question about education. If we take this out, there's none, and I just don't understand that. Councilmember Hull. Let me ask a question, and then I can answer your question. Did the survey ETC, did they give us a response as to were they aware that we do not operate our own independent school system when considering this question?

[03:06:40] And did they also tell us if they now know that information, why or why they would not suggest keeping it in? I didn't ask that question of them because this issue didn't come up when we were having our discussion. What we did ask was, do other places ask?

[03:07:00] So you have to remember, in Virginia, no locality or no governing body, city council, county board, whatever, has responsibility for the school system. Yes, we do it via contract with Fairfax County Public Schools, but the governance issue is the same in every locality.

[03:07:24] Most localities, and in my email I shared, certainly, and I readily state up front, some chose not to ask, and I don't know if that's what the reason was, but other localities do ask the question about the public education, the quality of public education.

[03:07:42] The only thing I would offer was the same thing I offered in my explanation, which is public education is the single largest expense that the city council puts in your budget. And I would think that everyone would want to know what the citizens or residents think about the quality of the education, regardless of who's providing it.

[03:08:11] Because the hope is that everybody's extremely satisfied and we can celebrate that success. But if there was some level of dissatisfaction, I would think we'd want to know that. And then how do you attack that or if that's the answer, take it to the next step, what do you do about it?

[03:08:30] Certainly that's the school board, that's in their purview in terms of how they would want to address that or attempt to address that. But often there's probably a price tag that comes with that, which then it comes right back to this council to say yes we will appropriate additional funds for for that or for any other issue so again i was again i can i can tell you my manassas experience manassas is is you know we we asked it in every survey at every survey this it was asked and unfortunately for manassas that's also one that there was a unfortunately a high level of dissatisfaction um in terms of and that

[03:09:09] was always the highest priority of not as much satisfaction as you'd like and no you know high importance for the residents and so that that's one of the things that um comes up in that survey or has come up in the past um and so if you don't ask the question you won't know but that's but again it's it's where it's whatever but we but in terms of asking etc why it's in there i don't think they would answer that it's this is this is based on what other communities typically ask

[03:09:44] and as you can see it is a benchmarked question so we can benchmark that just concept just the general do our do people in Fairfax are they more satisfied than our peers and other communities are they less satisfied is it about the same etc because that's that is a benchmarking question Councilmember Amos. Yeah, I mean, just to follow up on that, I mean, I understand that outside of the concern of governance responsibilities, if you don't know how municipal government works, at least in Virginia or in the city of Fairfax, I could see concerns of being maybe some confusion about that.

[03:10:23] But in the email, it seems to prioritize more so about the budget or the contract or tuition, which is not included in this question. Someone filling out this survey, especially like the, you know, just a

person who's not involved in local government is not going to know we have a contract with the county or how that even works.

[03:10:42] Or it seems that it's very detailed in the email rather than what's actually on the survey. I mean, overall quality of public education could mean so many different things, like access to resources, how do you feel your students, after school programming.

[03:10:59] A LOT OF THINGS THAT AREN'T INCLUDED IN OUR CONTRACT OR ARE INCLUDED IN OUR CONTRACT THAT PEOPLE DON'T READ OUR CONTRACT, PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT OUR CONTRACT WITH FCPS. SO I DON'T THINK THIS IS ACTUALLY A MAJOR CONCERN. COUNCILMEMBER HARDY-CHANDLER. I'M GOING TO GO EVEN MORE BASIC.

[03:11:16] PEOPLE MOVE TO COMMUNITIES IN PART BECAUSE OF THE SCHOOLS. THAT'S JUST A BASIC COMMON SENSE THING. HOW ARE THE SCHOOLS, WHAT'S THE COMMUNITY LIKE? is a very and I think generic concern of residents and we are not asking a we're not conducting a satisfaction survey of the school district or the school systems or any detail like that we're talking about the community this happens to be an area of overlap where the other issues in this survey certainly

[03:11:53] include an overlap with people's satisfaction with the schools so for me it's 101 you know people talk about you know housing access to jobs schools it seems a simple thing to include councilmember Hall so I personally would like to see the question in the survey but I also recognize how strongly the school board felt that they did not want it in there and so I think my suggestion would be that they clearly have reasons for it and that we should consider that are honoring them. Thank you. So I think that's, I understand their perspective and it's

[03:12:32] very narrow. What we're trying to get at with this survey is people's perception of the community where they live. It's a perception question, but schools impact people's perception of what their homes are worth. How we perceive the quality of our education perceives whether people want to put their business here because they think we have schools that will attract employees who want to live here. To me, it's a perception thing, but people's perception of whether the schools are

[03:13:06] good or not good literally impacts things like housing values. So you talk about Manassas, not to pick on Manassas, but if you've got people looking for housing and they have to decide whether they want to move someplace where the housing is more expensive, but the perception is the schools are excellent, or you want to move someplace else where the housing is less expensive, but the perception of the schools is they are not as strong as other areas. There's real world

[03:13:36] monetary impacts of people's perception and schools add value to the businesses and the houses in the city. So to not ask how people perceive education is not giving us as the governing body a full picture of how people consider this as an asset.

[03:14:05] At public education, our schools are an asset, and I just think it would be weird not to ask that. And while I understand the school board's perspective, like I said, their perspective is very narrow, and what we're trying to get at with this survey is something way broader than that.

[03:14:24] And as people move in and out, and over a period of years as you're trying to benchmark, Over the next five years, we want to see whether the perception of our education being strong or being good or being desirable, whether we can maintain that or whether somehow, somewhere it declines.

[03:14:42] I just, from our perspective as the governing body, I just think education is incredibly important and to not ask the question is not giving us a full picture of one of the greatest reasons people choose to buy a home or rent an apartment or establish a business here.

[03:15:02] That's just two cents worth. Yes, Mr. Foster. I think another issue that, not to belabor the point, but if I could get you to flip to page six, number 26, item one, if you wanted to strike, that would, to me, would be the more appropriate question to eliminate because of the tuition contract.

[03:15:32] If you wanted to, I mean, because these are budgetary questions, I mean, if you wanted to eliminate one, that would be one you could eliminate if you wanted to. Or you can leave it as is. But the only other thing I would say is if the rationale, and I'm not criticizing the rationale, don't mean this as a criticism, but if the rationale was a governance issue and you shouldn't ask it because you don't directly control it, there are other questions that you're asking that fall in the same bill that you fund,

[03:16:11] such as library services, such as social services, things that you fund that you don't directly control and that you're not the government, you know, so whether it's by a contractor or other methods. So, again, if that's the lens in which you want to look through, then you might should ask yourself if those are questions you want to keep or not as well.

[03:16:37] Council Member Amos? I just think we should keep it as is and keep them both. Should we just ask council member McQuillan? How do you feel council member Bates? How are you feeling we both in council member Peterson?

[03:16:56] How are you feeling council member Hardy Chandler council member Hall? I will defer to the school board, but I do think that 2402 should definitely stay but if they have a problem with the other one my vote will be to remove it Well, it seems to be the majority opinion that we should keep both the questions in okay All right, so with that that concludes so so Other than, this is what I have to make sure just to reiterate, all the things we highlight

[03:17:31] and we went over, we are keeping as is with those changes with the exception of we are eliminating the one we added for question 12 on page 3, the 12th item in question 12.

[03:17:48] After discussion, we decided to leave that out. I'm also going to make sure that the ready 3-1-1 says app That's and other than that from our perspective. This is this is I'm sorry Did you do something else? Okay? Sorry County member Hall. Sorry. Sorry I just I on the very first page at the top We say your feedback will inform city leaders and then on page seven We also say city leaders, but city is capitalized there, but it's not on the first page So they should just both be not capitalized. I'm sorry. I know I'm sorry. Thank you It's a question we did on our own, I think, which is why it's different, because we all like to capitalize city, and I support that, but it's inconsistent.

[03:18:30] Okay, not a problem. We are going to make it lowercase both places. All right. All right, no problem. If that's the only other concern, we're good.

[03:18:49] so again so with that we're tomorrow we will reach out to ETC and we will tell them to proceed and then once they get started and all I can probably give you a better time frame but based on the previous information we gave they said you know we decided by the 30th which of course was yesterday up and we'll think one day is going to matter that this will we should be able to have results that will have been conducted the survey and we'll have results in the mid September timeframe so we'll keep you updated and we'll actually we will have

[03:19:25] they will actually come back and present the findings and everything to you and we'll set that up in a work session just so we won't just be we'll get a document they'll actually come from present walk you through it and be able to answer questions and so we'll once we know when that'll be you know we'll certainly let you know but that but certainly in the late September early October timeframe is when we would have that the first available work session when we get the results back. All right councilmember Peterson. So general question and not to stop the train from leaving the station but I'm curious

[03:20:04] perhaps you've already asked them or you might whether as a part of their survey design process they sample or in some way allow public review and input and I say that partly because I thought that when we did the presentation and people watched it and that we got some helpful feedback based on that. People really tuned in. And some valuable things came up. Chair pitches, for instance, but other people looked at it and said, gosh, you know, this is something that you might consider changing, et cetera. It would not be uncommon for the design

[03:20:41] of a survey to go through some sort of public review and input. And I'm just curious to know whether that's something that they have done as a part of this or on a going forward basis, they might do that? I mean, I can ask the question. I'm not aware. I don't know. I can tell you we did not do that in Manassas. I mean, the public, I mean, quite often, this is the review. This is an instrument for you all to help in your decision-making. And so, I mean, I think, you know, we've asked the professionals to give us, and this is what

[03:21:20] they're doing all over the country and how we can, the ones we can benchmark, the ones, excuse me, the ones we can't, and you all have, I think, given a nice thorough review as far as the things you wanted to add and subtract. So, I mean, honestly, I don't think that's necessary, but if that's something that council wants to do, we can look into that.

[03:21:43] At a minimum, it would be nice just to be able to answer questions that are raised in the community about why there wasn't an opportunity to take a look at this. I don't think there's any hue and cry, on the other hand. There is a curiosity factor, and it just would be great to know.

[03:22:01] And if this is based on already having done so many rounds of public review and input that they've got a pretty good gauge here, that would just be great to know. Sure. We could ask the question and we'll get you an answer. I honestly just don't know the answer. I can just tell you from other communities I've done it, that's not been something, but that doesn't mean that they haven't done that in other places.

[03:22:24] Council Member Amos. Am I allowed to ask a question that has nothing to do with this discussion? Yes, we'll entertain a question that has nothing to do with this discussion. This is just to quickly pivot to the Safe Street Steering Committee. Would everyone be okay if they told us that both Council Member McQuillan and I could serve on it together?

[03:22:44] Would Council be amenable to that? Is there everybody good with that? Unrelated question, but an important one? Council Member Hall? I feel like you already bailed on it. No, just kidding. No, I think having both of you on there is actually a really good idea.

[03:23:02] And I think you'll both bring a different perspective, and it'll be helpful. Just because I let my team down as spy master doesn't mean... All right, but thank you. Okay. So that's great. Everybody's good with that? Stat, we had shared, I think I shared with council members.

[03:23:18] She had asked a question, sidebar question, and I said that was fine with the stat. I checked, and it's fine. I have two council members. Works just fine. Okay. Okay, that's great. So that's another issue that has been resolved. Anything else for the good of the body?

[03:23:33] Seeing none, we will now adjourn this meeting at 10:25 PM. Congratulations, Council Member Amos. We are adjourned.



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