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City of Fairfax City Council Meeting, Tuesday, January 13, 2026

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[00:01:47] Good evening. I'm going to read a motion to conclude the closed meeting we just had before the regular meeting. At 6.59 p.m., the city council concluded its closed meeting for consultation with legal counsel on non-litigation matters. I move that each of us certify that to the best of each council member's knowledge, one, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements in the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and two, only public business matters identified in the motion convened in the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered.

[00:02:13] All council members in favor of the certification, motion please signify by voting aye. aye those opposed to the motion vote nay the motion passes unanimously i would now like to call the regular meeting of january 13th 2025 to order we have a very full chamber and a very full agenda i do want to remind everyone that we have a public hearing on an appropriation for the george snyder trail we also have initial public comment initial public comment is for any comments you want to make that are not covered under this public hearing for this specific item of the

[00:02:50] appropriation. So anything not related to the George Snyder trailer you would like to share with us, that would be in the general public comment. Now, if you are able and so choose, please rise for the

Pledge of Allegiance. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, to the republic for which stands, one nation, under God, invisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:03:21] We can move to the adoption of the agenda. Is there a motion to approve the agenda? Council Member Stacey Hardy-Chandler. I move to adopt the agenda as presented. Is there a second? Second. The motion has been made and seconded a roll call vote.

[00:03:38] Council Member Ramis. Aye. Council Member Hall. Aye. Council Member Hardy-Chandler. Aye. Council Member Peterson. Aye. Council Member Bates? Aye. Council Member McQuillan? Aye. Motion passed unanimously. Initial general public comment, I had nobody sign up by 5 o'clock p.m. today, so we will skip on from there and go to the consent agenda.

[00:03:58] Okay, is there a motion to approve the consent agenda? Council Member Hardy-Chandler. I move adoption of a consent agenda for agenda item number 6A, consideration of the November 8, 2025 retreat minutes, Agenda item number 6B, consideration of the November 18, 2025 work session minutes.

[00:04:22] Agenda item number 6C, consideration of the December 2, 2025 special meeting work session minutes. Agenda item number 6D, consideration of the December 9, 2025 special meeting minutes. Agenda item number 6E, consideration of the December 9 regular meeting minutes.

[00:04:40] Agenda Item No. 6F, Consideration of Approval of the City of Fairfax Board Commission and Advisory Committee Handbook. Agenda Item No. 6G, Consideration of a Resolution Amending the Membership for the City Human Services Committee. I move to approve the Consent Agenda Items No. 6A through G and the motion accompanying the Consent Agenda Item as printed.

[00:05:02] Is there a second? Second. Okay. A motion has been made by Council Member Hardy Chandler and seconded by Council Member Peterson. Are there any items council would like pulled for additional discussion? Okay, seeing none, a roll call vote. Council Member McQuillan?

[00:05:18] Aye. Council Member Bates? Aye. Council Member Peterson? Aye. Council Member Hardy-Chandler? Aye. Council Member Hall? Aye. Council Member Amos? Aye. Motion passed unanimously. We will move on to public hearing. Our first public hearing is on the Fern Street Connector Path Project, and there's no council action on this item tonight.

[00:05:38] I'm going to recognize Chloe Ritter, the multimodal transportation planner, to provide the staff presentation.

[00:05:53] Okay, good evening, Mayor and Council. We are here, this item, to discuss the Fern Street Connector Path and have a public hearing on this.

[00:06:10] But before we get started, I would like to just briefly introduce our consultant, Megan Waring, who is from Kimberly Horn. So she'll be here helping me discuss the design of the project. And then we also have some other staff in the audience in case there are questions that we need to answer.

[00:06:28] So the purpose of the public hearing is to give some background on the project and give a design presentation. After we give the presentation, we'll answer questions and invite public comment. But this is a design public hearing where no city council action is required. So we're really here just to listen and take feedback.

[00:06:45] And then there will be a public comment period that goes on for another week, and then we'll give responses to all of the comments at the end of that period. So first, the project overview. The location

of this project is on Fern Street just south of Route 29.

[00:07:03] This came out of the Camp Washington small area plan, and it is a connection between the Fern Street dead end that is just south of Route 29 and the intersection of Fern Street and Park Road just south of that. And right now that is kind of a grassy area, and this project would build a pedestrian and bicycle connection to connect the commercial area with the neighborhood and activate that green space and that open space in the Camp Washington Activity Center.

[00:07:33] This is where we are on the project. We are here at Step 10. As I said, this is a design public hearing for the intermediate design plans this evening. And this is where we've been on the project so far.

[00:07:50] As I said, this came out of the Camp Washington Small Area Plan, which was adopted in 2022. And then the project was advanced in the two-year transportation program. We had an open house and endorsed the funding application in 2023. And then last year, we got the funding authorized, and we started the design of the project.

[00:08:10] And we're here this evening for the design public hearing. And now I'm going to turn it over to Megan to discuss the design. Great. So thank you all for having me speak this evening. As you see on the screen here, we have the Fern Street Path design. Just to orient yourself as you're looking on the screen, we do have the project twisted to the right.

[00:08:31] So north is going to be to your right, Fern Street and Park Road, that intersection is on screen left, and the Fairfax Junction Shopping Center is going to be on screen right. This project design is a 10-foot path connector trail. It's 10 feet from the intersection of Park Road and Fern Street.

[00:08:47] You see that there's two connections that tie to the existing sidewalk that goes along Park Street today. There is a new crosswalk just south on Park Road that exists today. that will be the crossing that exists in this design as well this path is about 200 feet long it meanders throughout that green open space that chloe mentioned along the path it has amenities similar to the hill street project that i know that you all are familiar with amenities such as trash receptacles lighting and benches native trees and plantings along there we also have a final connection at fern street right by that shopping center entrance where we connect to both

[00:09:26] sidewalks on fern street itself and we will be replacing the entrance at the shopping center to upgrade it to be ada compliant as part of the connection of this street some amenities that are part of the fern street projects that you can see here are very similar to hill street and you'll see a lot of images that you're familiar with from hill street so those park-like amenities with the trash receptacles the benches path level lighting along there so very similar to the hill street as well with those solar level path lightings and then those native trees along the path as well

[00:10:01] with some plantings at either entrance you will notice at the entrance of both sides at park and fern and also up at the shopping center entrance we do have lighting to show the entrance of that path and then along the path itself so those are the amenities that are planned as part of the the project itself and they go along the path for about that 200 feet they're making that closed connection. Okay, so this is a summary of the public engagement that we have done so far.

[00:10:32] Going back to the beginning of the project, there was, of course, public engagement as part of the small area plan and as part of the two-year program. Again, we had a funding open house in the summer of 2023 before we held a public hearing to endorse the funding application. Now, more recently,

since we started the design of the project, we updated the information on the engage page and this slide was created before the holidays so there's been a few more visitors I think there's been about 250 visitors to the engage page since November and since we put out exhibits at the park at the at the location to show what the exhibits would look like and we sent out information to

[00:11:11] the community and asking them for feedback and we've gotten about 10 comments so far generally supportive with a variety of suggestions for modifications to some of the amenities. We notified the public in a variety of ways with A-frame signs. We mailed letters to residents immediately adjacent to the project. It was in the city scene. We did a newspaper ad as required for our public hearing requirements and then put it out through the city email and social media accounts. And then this is the schedule looking

[00:11:47] forward. So tonight is the public hearing and then the public hearing record will be open through January 23rd. So any comments that we received tonight, as well as the comments that we've already received, and then comments that we received through January 23rd will be in the public hearing record and we'll provide written responses to all of those comments. And then following that, we will develop the 100% plans and then send this out for a construction award.

[00:12:13] So that would be towards the end of this year, we'd be looking to wrap up the plans and begin construction. And as far as the project budget, we do have approximately \$350,000 in transportation alternatives. 80% of that is federal money, and then 20% of it is the local match from our CNI fund, and that does fund the entire project as it's budgeted right now. That concludes our presentation. We'll be happy to take any questions. All right. Are there any questions for staff on

[00:12:50] this from the dais councilmember Peterson just a general question the ratio of engineering to construction and cost this is a relatively small project and so the ratio about a third of this is engineering and two-thirds construction as I see it is that pretty typical for this size class and does that stretch how much how does that stretch across other size classes so the ratio of engineering to construction does vary by project size so when you have a 20 million dollar project the percentage that's engineering is going to be a lot smaller there are some fixed costs that are hard to scale up there's do not

[00:13:28] oversight costs and then there's just a certain amount of fixed cost in terms of survey work that is hard to scale down to a smaller size so this is a ratio wise a smaller project doesn't have a slightly higher ratio of engineering costs yeah like there are savings as far as in the plan set because there's less plan sheets, but when you have utility relocations and survey and other items where crews have to come out to the field and test, those are pretty constant. In fact, they might even be a little bit more expensive for smaller projects. So for, as Chloe said, for a large project,

[00:14:06] maybe a \$10 million project, your design fee is going to be 10%, maybe 12%. For a \$300,000 project it could be 30 40 percent it's not unusual and just to follow up and not to suggest a concern or a criticism of the project by any means but i'm just curious about kind of this type and size class does this benchmark out pretty typically in terms of the engineering and construction ratio and then the scale of the engineering cost on this yes it does okay so this is pretty typical

[00:14:42] offer okay councilmember Hardy Chandler I don't have a question but a comment as a resident of the neighborhood near this I've been very impressed with the outreach for input I get to pass by the signs that invite residents to offer input as I'm walking my dog I've seen the signage at the site that's really

helpful for envisioning what this is going to look like so I would just say it is hard for someone in that general area to not know that this project is going on and so I just want

[00:15:18] to highlight the amount of engagement that's been invited and how it's been invited in different ways so thank you for that other questions council member McQuillan thank you I too living in this neighborhood have to echo those sentiments because we do see the outreach and I appreciate all the effort in keeping our community so educated and informed going through the project schedule at what point will public comments or have public comments already been included or revised in the design so there were public comments at the funding application stage that were that we took

[00:15:57] and incorporated into the design as we started the design now we're at the stage where we're collecting another round of public comments and there will be i expect there will be tweaks to design based on the comments that we've received so far and any comments that we receive in the next 10 days okay so will that occur before the plans become 100 percent developed okay excellent thank you appreciate that other questions other questions or okay the only comment i'm going to make is that you know the hill street connector in my neighborhood has been a game game changer so

[00:16:30] and that was a long time coming but it has made a difference and again the walkability that we are bringing with these small projects just adds to the quality of life in our neighborhoods and connecting them to our small area plans and our activity centers. Can't say enough of how these small projects are major game changers for neighborhoods where two of our council members live and possibly a third of our council member might live. So anyway, I will open the public hearing. Ms. Shinneberry, has the public hearing been properly advertised? Yes, it has. I had one person signed up to speak prior to the meeting. So I will call that speaker up and then we'll

[00:17:10] open the floor if there's anybody else that would like to speak on this item. So our first speaker is Douglas Stewart. Good evening. Douglas Stewart, 10822 Maple Street. I too live in Westmore.

[00:17:36] We've lived there for 21 years now. I am unqualifiedly in support of this project. I think it's going to be a great project. It's only going to further the connections between our neighborhood and Camp Washington, they're getting better and better, and Camp Washington's getting better and better.

[00:17:52] It's really exciting to see as somebody who's looked for more walkable connections to the nearby area, it's really impressive to see how that small area plan is materializing. Just stepping back, when the small area plan for Camp Washington was being developed, the Westmore Civic Association was very actively involved in that, And I want to give a shout-out to the former president of Westmore Civic Association, Beth Iannetta, because she was very involved.

[00:18:23] She was working with Federal Realty, the developer of that shopping center where Aldi and CVS is, right adjacent to Fern Street. She was working with city staff. She was working with city council members and planning commissioners.

[00:18:38] And there was a lot of, honestly, there was a lot of division and different opinions about how that Fern Street connection should happen and what it should look like. There were some discussion and people in favor of a motorized connection.

[00:18:54] A lot of neighbors were very concerned about that. And I just want to just commend the city staff and everybody really for making this work and working with the community to develop such a great connection that's going for people who are just, it is just a two-minute walk to Haraz from Park Street.

[00:19:15] I mean, it's a very easy thing to do. And this is one of those connections that's just making it easier. It's going to be, and when you're getting Fern Street extended to where the Shake Shack is, when you get that light there, that's going to be a game changer. And these things are happening, and I've seen them happen.

[00:19:32] As somebody who's lived there for a long time, this is actually happening, it's happening fairly quickly. I've always wanted our son, who's now 23, to be able to walk to areas, and he's gotten to the point where he has his driver's license. He doesn't really care about walking, but we're seeing it happen for our kids, and I'm really excited about it.

[00:19:54] The only comment I'd make about the actual project is when you're maintaining it, I hope you'll work with the Environmental Sustainability Committee. We have a lot of expertise in the city, especially about the native plants and the landscaping, And this is a great opportunity to work with neighbors and other people, other residents, on maintaining that and even further improving it as we go along.

[00:20:20] So, great project. I'm very excited. Thank you. Is there anybody else in the room that would like to talk on the Fern Street? Yep, you may come forward, ma'am. And just please state your name and address with your comment. Hi, good evening. My name is Beth Ayanetta. I'm resident of Westmore at 10916 Berry Street.

[00:20:45] I'll have to correct Doug on my title, still president, also VP, partial treasurer, web designer, public outreach, PARF committee, transportation, you name it, we've got it, all in one house. So I just wanted to say Westmore is an unbelievable community.

[00:21:04] We mark our 75th year this year of when it was first founded in 1951, if you can imagine. And what they were talking about was extending gas to homes. Our mailboxes were on a public dirt street at the end of the road at Chestnut, and so we've come a long way.

[00:21:19] And so it's great to see these improvements happening, and so I am supportive of it. I will say, and I will shame myself in my support of it. I was a transportation planner for most of my county career, and I never rode the Fairfax Conductor bus. And they recently changed the route to serve near our community to go to the government center.

[00:21:39] So I've rode the bus more in my 25 years in the county rep just because of walking this path from my house down Fern Street across the grass area that the trail is going in to the bus stop. It's across the street near Chipotle. I will say keep pushing for a pedestrian connection across that roadway.

[00:21:56] I recently had my father visit, and he froggered his way across Route 29, and I was very concerned for him. So anyway, I just wanted to say I think staff has done a really great job reaching out. I know on Facebook we had some comments they were overwhelmed with the outreach so keep it up I greatly support it keep out the outreach and keep it going and so I just want to say I think everyone's done a really great job in trying to get these improvements that have our community has waited for for a very very long time we have a lot of missing pieces but this I think will help we also have the new businesses coming in when we're working with federal realty they've also changed

[00:22:33] their the front of the buildings and done some improvements we have a mural out there now that you'll walk by when you use this this walkway so there's really been a lot of investment coming in like inches and you know meets and bounds but I think this is yet another piece that'll get you there for me personally the only comment I will say I wish it was eight feet not ten I know it's a it's a nitpicky thing but I

would just want to be a more context sensitive solution to the size of the shape that it is it's very small it is defined as right-of-way it is not a park it's a street and so what lies in streets is utilities that you don't see under the ground and so I think

[00:23:11] a lot of the costs are what they're reflected in that because there's drainage that you don't see there's a lot of utilities that you don't see that run through there because it's designated as a road even though it's not a road but anyway thank you all I greatly appreciate it for the time and I just want to say we support the project for myself and hopefully to look for more in the future thank you very much is there anybody else in the room yeah ma'am you may come forward and

[00:23:35] sir you can go after her hi my name is Romy and Joe we are the resident of 11,000 Park Road which is directly affected from this path maybe we are there the only residential area facing this like path so we we are happy to have this um like a lovely path but i have a couple of questions

[00:24:10] and comments um the first of all we have a fence along this path but the uh the fence height is limited um because many people will pass by um the path is it possible if we can get the higher fence like seven feet. That's our one question. And then my second question is, are you going to have a security camera somewhere? Because we are next to this path. That's my question. And then

[00:24:48] also the third question is, you are going to have a construction end of this year. And then how that construction is going to be uh will be because we'll have a tenant we have to notify them what what's the impact of their life there so those are the three comments i'm i'm happy to have this wonderful path but uh also i have a decent concerns because we are directly affected from this path

[00:25:20] And my comment is, there's high-rise trees about 80, 90 feet high, but there's some high-rise trees about 80, 90 feet high, and when I checked today and then a couple days ago, high wind and then some branches drop down, and I'm pretty sure you have a plan to maintain a trim or some cut, whatever.

[00:25:51] So we have experienced other properties, so in the future, I'm not saying cut tree tomorrow, but maintenance trees or trim, whatever you can do.

[00:26:06] But second, a fence company builds a fence. It's kind of falling down. They talk about the impact of a tree growing, root growing.

[00:26:24] And when I'm digging, there's no impact by the tree. But my concern is that when construction starts, how deep they're going to dig in underground and foundation path.

[00:26:44] So, possibility touch the tree root. Oh, I'm sorry. Can I have one minute more? No. Your comments will be addressed by the city staff that made this presentation. So, our staff will get in touch with you to address your concerns.

[00:27:02] Thank you. Thank you. Is there anybody else in the room that would like to talk on the Fern Street connector? Okay. So, I will close the public hearing. There is no council action tonight on this issue.

[00:27:18] Our next item is a public hearing and council action on an ordinance amending Chapter 102 in Parson Utilities, Article 2 in Parson Fees and Charges, Section 102-33 pertaining to sanitary sewer connection fees, frontage charges, and wastewater lateral repair and replacement charges.

[00:27:41] an article for wastewater division 3 connections to public sewers section 102-180 pertains to connections to public sewers i'm going to recognize annie theory because utilities coordinator yes okay yes for the staff report good evening mayor and council my name is ann fury i'm the utilities coordinator

with the department of public works um this item proposes two changes to the utility ordinance. The first change would be to the wastewater lateral repair and replacement program.

[00:28:17] City Council established the lateral repair and replacement program in January of 2017, along with a dedicated lateral repair charge to reimburse property owners for eligible sewer lateral repairs and replacements. The program also promotes trenchless rehabilitation methods to extend the life of aging laterals in a cost-effective manner. Since the program's adoption, inflation has significantly increased material and labor costs. With input from the finance department, Public Works recommends increasing the maximum reimbursement amounts

[00:28:50] by 30%, from \$2,500 for a partial reemplacement to \$3,250, and then from \$5,000 to \$6,500 for full replacements, which both align with cumulative inflation. These updates will help ensure the program continues to provide meaningful financial assistance and also support timely repairs the second amendment for this ordinance is a revision which clarifies how sewer availability charge credit is applied to existing structures the city is moving sewer availability fee

[00:29:29] processing and payment into the electronic acela portal and we're coordinating with code administration, our department, Public Works, as well as the IT department. Currently determining credits for demolished structures requires extensive staff research and is often hindered by incomplete records. The proposed amendments place responsibilities on applicants to identify prior structures and provide supporting documentation of that information with their plumbing permit applications. That's typically when we receive availability and connection fees is when the

[00:30:04] trade permits are submitted. We are also planning on noticing the applicants during the building and demolition process of this change that they will need to provide us the existing structure information. If documentation is not submitted, fees will be assessed without credit. These changes will create a clearer and more consistent process for the plumbing permit and building permit applicants. It improves the accuracy of sewer availability records and also supports the implementation of available availability fee payments through the portal as a part of the city's broader goal of consolidating permitting and fee processing into acela um that concludes

[00:30:43] the staff report for these two changes and i'd be happy to answer any questions you might have okay are there any questions of staff council member amos uh thank you uh i only had one question kind of broken into two parts so why the gap since 2017 why wait for cumulative inflation instead of incrementally doing it or was that just missed it i'll go i'll let satoshi go ahead so the um we had not revisited this ordinance since 2017 um it is the the reimbursement rates are codified they are not part of rates and levies uh and and so we are bringing this before

[00:31:23] you now for adjustment okay and do you have recommendations on when this will need to be reviewed again or i would um be consulting with the finance department okay as to when would be appropriate to revisit. And I believe that during when we were looking at this, J.C. had suggested that we look at this annually or certainly more regularly. Councilmember, to your point, I think this is very similar to the tax relief program that should be evaluated on an annual basis to sort of account for inflationary factors or pressures that the economy is putting. I think

[00:31:58] this is very, it's a little late, but it's proactive from staff trying to catch up for the past seven or eight years where there has been no adjustment and then going forward we will be reviewing this on an annual basis thank you councilmember Hardy Chandler thank you for covering my first question

councilmember Amos my second question is about the second amendment to this the applicant certainly is the most direct source of information about the structures for sure my question is will their submission of documents or plans in any

[00:32:38] way delaying the application process or add any additional bureaucracy it won't add any additional time to the review because as it stands right now when a plumbing permit is routed to public works for review staff has to do extensive extensive research as it is and so it does hold up the permitting process and i think that the goal in this is to kind of start at the demo point of the review process to say hey we're going to need this information and it should actually my hope is help

[00:33:12] move forward in you know if not the same way that we do now just um it shouldn't add any additional time good to hear thank you other questions other questions councilmore bates uh councilman ramis's comments reminded me that um i've uh believed that i've seen um at least at the state level? Some legislation that incorporates a provision that allows for rates and whatnot to be adjusted for inflation on a yearly basis kind of automatically? Is that something that we might consider here? Is it just kind of better to, you know, have a conscious decision-making

[00:33:52] process behind that? One of my concerns about this big annual is when we started the program in 2017, we weren't sure how many people were going to apply. People pay a little bit on their bill to build up this account, but Mr. Thosin, who was utilities director back then, we talked about there's a lot of old homes in the city, and we wanted to make sure we had enough money in that account in case we got bombarded by lateral replacement requests. So one of the things Satoshi and I and Annie would do is keep track of that account. And when we felt comfortable enough

[00:34:31] where we could refund people more, that's why we kind of started talking about this because we saw the account. But a few years before we're like, we don't know how many people, I mean, this is open to everybody with a home in the city. So it could, that account could go away real quick if a lot of people apply for that help. So we wanted to make sure we had a pretty good cushion. So doing it Every year, you know, I'd like to be able to keep track of that account, see how much is in there.

[00:34:59] Yeah, thanks. I thought it might, you know, be something like that. Okay. Council Member Hall. Sorry, it was still on. I'm just curious how many people, if we know, have already taken advantage of this. And just a secondary question, you said that the goal is that people submit essentially what they know, but if they don't know and they're a new owner or something like that, the city would still go and do all the background that they had done previously, correct?

[00:35:24] Correct. Yeah. So the availability fees apply, so it's kind of, your first question was about the wastewater lateral charge, I think. What was the question? How many people have taken advantage or had to use this? Okay, so let me start there, because that's kind of the first amendment.

[00:35:41] So I looked earlier tonight, and it is generally somewhere around 20 to 25 properties a year per fiscal year that have applied for the reimbursement since the implementation. And then your second question in regards to the availability charges, yes.

[00:35:56] The city will still do their due diligence to see if we have the records on file. This will likely be more beneficial for larger developments, such as Capstone is a great example. There was a commercial building that had several units, and when it came time to figure out or calculate the availability fees that they owed, that building had already been demolished.

[00:36:20] And so it was really difficult with the records that we have now because we didn't have a system like Acela to really determine how much credit they should be owed based on what was existing. So we will still do the research and we'll still help the applicants the best we can to find that information.

[00:36:37] I think the point of this is to actually streamline it and make sure we have the records as well. Yep. Other questions? Okay. Seeing none, I will open the public hearing.

[00:36:53] Ms. Shinaberry, has this public hearing been properly advertised? Yes, it has. No one has signed up prior to the meeting. Is there anybody that would like to speak on this agenda item? Well, all right, then. Is there a motion, Council Member Hardy-Chantler?

[00:37:08] I move that the City Council enact the attached ordinance amending Chapter 102, Utilities, Article 2, Fees and Charges, and Article 4, Wastewater, Division 3 of the Code of the City of Fairfax, Virginia. Is there a second? Second. A motion has been made by Council Member Hardy-Chandler and seconded by Council Member Peterson.

[00:37:27] Is there any discussion on the motion? Seeing none, a roll call vote. Council Member Amos? Aye. Council Member Hall? Aye. Council Member Hardy-Chandler? Aye. Council Member Peterson? Aye. Council Member Bates? Aye. Council Member McQuillan? Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

[00:37:43] We'll go to the next public hearing, which is a public hearing in Council Action on an Ordinance Adopting Printed Supplement No. 16 to 26, inclusive to the Code of the City of Fairfax, Virginia. I'll recognize Brian Lovekman, our city attorney, to provide the staff report. Good evening, Mayor and Council. This one is a brief housekeeping item.

[00:38:02] The staff report is self-explanatory. The city code was last recodified in 2000, as you're aware, from time to time. Ordinances come before the city council amending provisions of the city code. The recodification, when we did that, had a provision that said those automatically became part of the city code.

[00:38:20] Municode, the company that puts up most municipal codes in Virginia and in other states as well, will periodically publish supplements. And as noted, there's no requirement that we incorporate those by action, but I believe it's best practice from time to time to do this.

[00:38:36] So the item before you this evening would formally incorporate supplement numbers 16 through 26 inclusive into the code of the city of Fairfax. Happy to answer any questions. Are there any questions for Mr. Lubkerman on this? Okay, I will open the public hearing.

[00:38:53] Ms. Shinneberry, has this public hearing been properly advertised? Yes, it has. I have nobody signed up prior to the meeting. Is there anybody in the room that would like to speak on this agenda item? Seeing none, is there a motion, Council Member Hardy-Chandler? I move that the City Council enact the attached ordinance adopting printed supplement numbers 16 through 26, inclusive to the Code of the City of Fairfax, Virginia.

[00:39:18] Is there a second? Second. A motion has been made by Council Member Hardy-Chandler and seconded by Council Member Peterson. Is there any discussion on this motion? Seeing none, a roll call vote. Council Member McQuillan? Aye. Council Member Bates? Aye. Council Member Peterson?

[00:39:34] Aye. Council Member Hardy-Chandler? Aye. Council Member Hall? Aye. Council Member Amos? Aye. Motion passed unanimously. We'll go to the next public hearing, which is a public hearing in

council action on an ordinance admitting Chapter 2, M-Parent's Administration, Article 3, M-Parent's Officers and Employees, Division 2, M-Parent's Disclosure of Interests, pertaining to required financial disclosures by certain enumerated officers and employees of the city.

[00:40:00] I'll recognize Brian Lovekman, a city attorney, to provide a staff report. Thank you. This one is also a little bit of housekeeping. As you all are aware, the public may not be aware, but there's a statute in Virginia, the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act, which establishes standards of conduct for certain officers and employees of state and local governments in the Commonwealth.

[00:40:21] The city has a corollary ordinance, which goes beyond the simple requirements in the state and local government act with respect to individuals or positions that are subject to annual financial disclosure requirements. And this ordinance would also update filing deadlines.

[00:40:37] There have been changes over the past few years, as well as continuing obligations and also update the provisions related to violations and penalties. Just for clarification, previous to this ordinance, in addition to the enumerated positions, There was also a requirement, in addition to the department heads filing conflict of interest forms, that their deputies would file.

[00:40:58] In looking at this and comparing with what other jurisdictions do, we could not find any other jurisdictions that require that level of disclosure, certainly by folks who are not in decision-making positions. So the recommendations are to adopt these changes. It also includes some updated title positions.

[00:41:14] We now have a chief financial officer. We also include the commissioners of the economic development authority and its executive director as well as members of the retirement plan Administrative committee and then again as noted as all the part all department heads It updates the requirements the the state requirements now are that these annual disclosures be filed by February the 1st There are also requirements for filing additional forms by certain enumerated individuals this also Reflects the state definition of what constitutes the immediate family of any of the enumerated positions And that's defined as being any other person who resides in the same household as and is a dependent of persons subject to the scope of the division.

[00:41:54] The dependency requirement was a change at the state level, so we're reflecting that. And then we also updated the penalty provisions to correspond to the state enabling authority. With that, happy to answer any questions. Do we have questions for Mr. Lubkerman? Councilmember Peterson.

[00:42:10] I think we talked about this once before, and the issue of the deputy came up. So it sounds like our conclusion, I think the issue at the time was, should that be done in the event that somebody steps in as an alternate? And it sounds like we've concluded that's either unnecessary or that could be addressed on an as-needed basis.

[00:42:32] Is that fair? That's correct. I think the thinking on this would be there are obviously many circumstances under which is sort of a temporary deputy acting as a department head, you know, illness, extended absence. We don't believe, certainly, that that's an occasion for requiring a disclosure form.

[00:42:50] If the person's acting in a significant period of time, we can always alter and require disclosure at that point. Any other questions for Mr. Lubkerman on this? All right, I will open the public hearing. Ms. Shinneberry, has this public hearing been properly advertised?

[00:43:06] Yes, it has. No one has signed up prior to the meeting. Is there anybody in this room that would like to speak on this agenda item? Okay, seeing none, is there a motion? Council Member Hardy-Chandler. I move that the City Council enact the attached ordinance amending Chapter 2, Administration, Article 3, Officers and Employees, Division 2, Disclosure of Interests, pertaining to required financial disclosures by certain enumerated officers and employees of the city.

[00:43:33] Is there a second? Second. The motion has been made by Council Member Hardy-Chandler and seconded by Council Member Peterson. Is there any discussion on the motion? Seeing none, a roll call vote. Council Member Amos? Aye. Council Member Hall? Aye. Council Member Hardy-Chandler? Aye. Councilmember Peterson? Aye.

[00:43:48] Councilmember Bates? Aye. Councilmember McQuillan? Aye. Motion passed unanimously. We will go to the last public hearing, which is a public hearing and council action on a grant supplemental appropriation resolution in the amount of \$4,600,000 for Transform 66 outside the Beltway concession funding for the George Schneider Trail.

[00:44:10] I will recognize J.C. Martinez, Chief Financial Officer, for the staff report. Thank you. mayor council as discussed at the november 4th city council work session and introduced at the december 9th city council regular meeting the city of fairfax has previously been awarded 20.6 million dollars in i-66 outside the beltway project concessionaire funding for the george schneider trail project the city recently received construction bids that exceeded the 16 million dollars remaining in the project budget the estimate to complete the project with additional

[00:44:44] costs such as contingency, construction management, and VDOT oversight will exceed the remaining budget by \$4.6 million. There is additional concessionaire funding available in the balance entry account at VDOT to accommodate the city's funding need. Accordingly, the city requested this funding via the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, NVTa, which is the entity that makes recommendations for this funding to the Commonwealth Transportation Board, also known as CTB. On November 13th, NVTa recommended approval of this funding to the CTB, and the CTB approved

[00:45:23] this funding request at their January 6th, 2026 meeting. Happy to answer any questions. Are there questions for Mr. Martinez? Seeing none, I will open the public hearing. Ms. Shinneberry, has this public hearing been properly advertised?

[00:45:40] Yes, it has. We have 35 speakers who've signed up before the meeting began tonight, and I have received two video testimonies that will be played after the in-person speakers um i will call the speakers who have signed up first in the videos and then i will open the floor to anyone else in the room that would like to speak so i will go ahead and call the first speaker up which is josh silverman

[00:46:15] i'm josh silverman and i my residence is 4111 sideburn road in the green acre district and i with regards to the uh the trail um from the point of view with the pedestrian or the biker fairfax city is separated from the remainder of the county we do have a trail the cross county trail which as the name suggests is supposed to connect the communities of the county together

[00:46:52] but it falls to pieces in the fairfax city area to the southeast of the city there is a choice of two routes. The official route, as it currently stands, goes over Lake Lane and Germantown Road.

[00:47:10] It's all road walking. There is an alternative, the Wilcoxon Trail, which connects to the Cross County Trail, but that dead ends into Route 50. From there, it is well over a mile before you can connect to

the underpass under I-66.

[00:47:32] And from there, they use the trail network to get across to Germantown Road. And from there, there is another trail that gets back to the Cross County Trail. And this is where the Snyder Trail comes in.

[00:47:52] The gap that we would currently have to fill by blocking along Route 50 in Eden Place, that is where the Snyder Trail would take its place. And this route would divert pedestrians and bikers from highly trafficked and high-speed roads.

[00:48:19] And if it is, this alternative is available people passing through the city will be more likely to patronize the local businesses in the area that the proposed route a trail at the Snyder trail route is supposed to pass pass by so I urged the council to take these factors into account increased safety increased revenue for businesses and

[00:48:54] and just better impressions that the visitors will receive going through the city. Thank you. Our next speaker is Mike Fabio. Happy New Year.

[00:49:14] Mike Fabio, 3920 Chambers Road. First of all, congratulations on your \$4.6 million award to complete the trail. Today, I'm sure you will hear testimony for and against the trail. I'm not here today to discuss in detail the many advantages of the trail.

[00:49:34] You've already heard this. that the trail will be available to people of all ages and abilities, that it will take people out of their cars and reduce air pollution, that it will connect neighborhoods and bring people together to establish a greater sense of community, that it will allow people to get out in nature and enjoy a safe environment, that it will provide overlooks and stations for educational opportunities, that it will replace more trees than it will take down, that it will be good for city businesses and tourism

[00:50:06] as it will draw people throughout the region to Fairfax City that will enhance housing values, that trails are the one thing that young people want for their first home. They want to be near one, and that city residents have told you that they put trails high on their list of desires.

[00:50:29] I know you've heard all this before, and you'll hear it again probably. In fact, at 10.15 p.m. on June 10th, 2025, after 12 years of planning, after reviewing the actions of previous city councils, after being briefed by numerous staff presentations, and after hearing hours of public testimony, you voted, and I quote, to proceed with the entirety of the project as designed

[00:51:04] and construct the George Snyder Trail. Tonight, the ball is teed up for you to hit it out of the ballpark as you accept the additional funding. Take a victory lap as you capture this general opportunity to add a major element to the city's infrastructure. \$25.6 million without any tax burden to the public. Fantastic. In a few minutes, I hope we can all join in the celebration of this

[00:51:41] crowning achievement. Thank you. Our next speaker is Art Hammerschlag. Good evening, Mayor and City Council, Art Hammerschlag 3843 Far Oak Circle. I am speaking tonight in favor of the George Snyder Trail. I will not repeat the many arguments you heard in favor. Instead, I would like to address the implications of refusing to appropriate additional funding provided to the city. We all

[00:52:20] recognize that this issue has divided city residents into two camps, those in favor and those opposed. Both camps have legitimate reasons for their position. The passions that have arisen over this issue are very strong indeed, as you can see from the number of people who are going to speak tonight. If

the council appropriates these dollars, the matter is settled, over and done with. The trail will be built, no dollars need to be repaid, and the matter will fade into

[00:52:52] the past. Some folks will be unhappy, but the issue of the trail is over and done with. The residents can move on. But if the council fails to appropriate these dollars, what happens next?

[00:53:08] Bottom line, the council will have an ongoing series of unpleasant decisions to make, and the trail will continue to divide, inflame, and frustrate Fairfax City residents on both sides of the issue. The council might try to downsize the project to bill it with unavailable funding if you can get the votes to do that, but I don't think you can.

[00:53:33] But redesigning the project would require more engineering, more design, expenditure, more funds. And if the trail is not built, you will have more funds to pay back. Does the council really want to continue to deal with this issue?

[00:53:53] Do you really want to go down this road? Have the trail continue to be an ongoing, volatile, contentious issue with more votes, more public hearings, and paying back millions of dollars? I think it's in the best interest of the Fairfax City, its residents, and the council to resolve this issue once and for all.

[00:54:17] End the squabbling, appropriate these dollars, build the George Snyder Trail, and then you, the council, can look forward to dealing with more important issues the city has to deal with. Thank you. Our next speaker is Janet Newhouse.

[00:54:37] Good evening. Janet Newhouse, 9706 Cardinal Road. I'm against additional funding for this trail.

[00:54:54] I have not spoken at a council meeting before, and I deeply regret not doing so, and know there are many others who are against the trail who have not come forward. With 25 parks, 28 miles of trails in Fairfax City, we do not need this trail.

[00:55:12] Several nearby streets already provide neighborhood connections for bikers and for pedestrians. No studies have been done showing how many people might use this trail. How can it be built without knowing the potential users? Many presentations made by organizations and individuals concerned about the trail's environmental destruction seem to have been dismissed.

[00:55:36] There's an irony to Fairfax City's urban forest plan when substantial damage will be done to trees, plants, and wildlife in an area which includes forest, floodplain, and a resource protection area. Yet hundreds of trees will be cut down, 6,900 feet of asphalt poured, and a huge amount of soil removed.

[00:55:57] In this vulnerable area, when the city's 2024 Resilience Plan states, it is anticipated the city will experience increases in rainfall, rainfall intensity, rainfall depths, and frequency and severity of extreme weather events. Water levels exceed the height of bank and they flood in Cambridge Station Park, Ranger Road Park, Accotink Trink, and there's a concentration in the Cambridge Station area, residents experiencing more frequent adverse flooding.

[00:56:29] I live directly across the street from the stream, have had years of flooding, yard, basement, etc. Extensive plumbing work, basement renovation, have spent almost \$20,000 correcting this. Another concern I have is the e-bikes and scooters on a paved path shared with pedestrians.

[00:56:51] Shared paths include collisions from speed disparities, crowding, inattention due to smartphones and headphones, with increased risk to slower pedestrians, seniors, and children. A recent

report from the American Journal of Public Health says the rate of e-bike injuries almost tripled between 2019-2022 with an expected increase of e-bike use of 10% to 16% in the next few years.

[00:57:20] Will this number increase? I am already cautious when I walk because few bikers bother with signals, bells, horns, or verbal warnings, and it's dangerous walking out there.

[00:57:36] And I want to know who will be monitoring the use of this trail. Thank you very much. Our next speaker is Tom Ross. Good evening, Mayor and Council.

[00:58:05] I reside at 3520 Country Hill Drive in the city of Fairfax and been a long-term resident for this place we call home. and one who has served in a variety of leadership roles, from civic engagement, boards and commissions, to sitting where you sit tonight as an elected official.

[00:58:23] I want to focus on the decision before you tonight, and especially for those of you who are uncomfortable voting to appropriate the additional money. The amount of \$4.6 million concession funding for the George Schneider Trail Project.

[00:58:42] You've heard from many people in the community over your service on council, as I did. I know there are people in the community that are strongly supportive and many who are strongly opposed. To paraphrase Will Rogers, who once said, some of my friends are for it and some are against it, and on this one I'm standing with my friends.

[00:59:06] That's the easy way out. The decision before you is whether to approve the supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$4.6 million appropriation for the Snyder Trail to address the shortfall in this construction and proceed with construction or to reject the funding, ending a project supported by many in the community and region and placing the city in jeopardy of paying back \$3.7 million.

[00:59:37] I want to repeat that. If you vote not to appropriate money tonight, you will be putting the city in jeopardy of paying back up to \$3.7 million in funds that have already been expended, which works out to approximately \$0.06 on our current tax rate. That would be a tremendous disservice to every citizen in this community, both present and future. Serving as an elected official requires making choices, often ones that you may feel personally uncomfortable with.

[01:00:12] I know I and countless other individuals who have served in elected positions have faced this. A number of you oppose the creation of the trail, and I get it. Tonight is different. You can vote tonight to not provide the necessary funding, clearly understanding that you are putting the city and taxpayers in jeopardy.

[01:00:38] Furthermore, it will negatively impact our regional and statewide reputation as a partner who meets its obligations. Alternatively, you can be leaders. who understand the impact of your decision and do what is right for current and future generations of this place we all love.

[01:01:00] I'm not going to describe to you the benefits of completing the Snyder Trail. You've heard from me on numerous occasions of why I support this. Instead, I urge you with everything that I believe in to get this done. As elected official, there are many times when you have to weigh all the attorneys because it's the right thing to do.

[01:01:19] Tonight, as one of those, please do the right thing. Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker is Kenneth Bauer. Good evening. My name is Kenneth Bauer.

[01:01:42] I reside at 8th Cleveland Court in Rockville, Maryland. I'm representing the Coalition to Stop Stream Destruction. We urge you also to be leaders and to do the right thing and to not fund the Stantec-designed George Snyder Trail.

[01:01:57] An unpaved trail through the woods already exists, and a paved hiker-biker route along streets already exists, which could be improved and augmented by bike lanes along Fairfax Boulevard. Some of you may have known Armistice de Tora.

[01:02:14] She was the first chair of Fairfax's Parks and Recreation Board. She was a family friend. I recently spoke with her son, who said that she wanted trails, but would have been totally opposed to this kind of trail with its environmental destruction, the loss of hundreds of matured trees, countless smaller ones, shrubs, ferns, and wildflowers.

[01:02:36] And a previous speaker said, don't worry, they'll all be replanted. Well, yeah, they'll all be replanted with small saplings that'll literally take 100 or more years to mature. In addition, the large amount of pavement this trail would create will send huge amounts of stormwater runoff into Acton Creek, which I played along as a child. I grew up in Fairfax County.

[01:03:00] And this is going to cause a tremendous amount of erosion. I'm sure that the \$4.5 billion Stantec Corporation that designed this trail would be happy to build on a multi-million dollar stream restoration to fix the erosion that will be caused by their trail design.

[01:03:16] To see what that looks like, my written testimony has photos of Stantec's \$2 million Dewey Creek stream restoration in Prince William County. These photos show how Stantec clear-cut the stream side forest. And if you want a local example of what that would look like, go to the Stafford Drive stream restoration here and look at the stream segment between Stafford Drive and Fairwoods Parkway.

[01:03:42] You can see the photos of this on the city's website, and you'll see a corridor that was cut through the forest, clear cut, and a new stream channel was dug with exaggerated artificial sinuosity. In conclusion, we urge you not to fund the Stantec-designed George Snyder Trail since, as I said, an unpaved trail through the woods already exists, a paved hiker-biker route along streets already exists which could be improved and augmented by bike lanes along Fairfax Boulevard. Thank you for your consideration. Our next speaker is William

[01:04:20] Pitchford. Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening. My name is William Pitchford. I live at 10609 School Street in the city of Fairfax. Later this evening you will be asked by staff to approve a grant supplemental appropriation resolution from VDOT, and to approve a contract award for the George Snyder Trail. I am asking you to approve

[01:04:58] both the grant and the contract award as it is the best option for the citizens of Fairfax City and for the city's overall economic and infrastructure development. I'd like to offer a few points as to why you should approve these two measures. The George Snyder Trail is an important part of the multimodal transportation infrastructure that connects Camp Washington, North Fax, and Fairfax City activity centers together. And it is spelled out in the city's

[01:05:33] smaller area plans. In the next few years, these three activity centers will account for the majority of Fairfax City's economic development. Having the right infrastructure will be critical for this growth. The two measures complete the trail in its entirety. In June of this year, This city council, along with the citizens of Fairfax, voted to complete the full trail.

[01:06:02] The two measures fully fulfill the wishes of the voters. Not approving this grant would mean \$21 million already obtained would be in jeopardy, and the city would have to repay another \$3.7 million in penalties with no trail to show for it.

[01:06:22] All total, that would be more than \$29 million of economic activity lost by the citizens of Fairfax City with no trail to show for the years of planning and effort. The George Snyder's Trail has broad support from the citizens of Fairfax City, city officials, cyclist groups, and from the Fairfax City citizens for smarter growth.

[01:06:50] For these reasons, I'm asking you to accept a grant, approve the contract, which will fully fund this trail system and completes it in the most expeditious manner. Thank you for your time. Our next speaker is William Niedringhaus.

[01:07:10] Hello, my name is Bill Niedringhaus, president of Fairfax Trails and Streams. I organized the idea of the Fairfax Cross County Trail 27 years ago and organized several hikes across the county.

[01:07:31] As we entered the city of Fairfax, then Mayor Mason would greet our enthusiastic but weary hikers with very welcome refreshments. We hiked a route close to the George Snyder Trail as we envisioned a trail mostly away from traffic. With Jerry Conley's strong support from the top and our grassroots bottom-up effort, the trail officially opened in 2007.

[01:07:54] People loved this 41-mile trail across the county with one glaring exception. the three miles beside fast traffic on Germantown Road and Blake Lane sidewalks. The trail bypasses the beautiful parks in the city of Fairfax, which could be its keystone.

[01:08:11] We worked closely with the city of Fairfax for the last 15 years under various elected officials to help prioritize the long-planned wooded route for the Snyder Trail. We also worked closely with VDOT's I-66 widening to make the trail along Route 123 as scenic as possible.

[01:08:29] At our urging, VDOT improved the alignment. It's not immediately adjacent to Route 123. Instead, it uses the available open space in this huge intersection to make this route a pleasant future part of the Cross County Trail. It and the Snyder Trail together will fulfill the decades-long vision of a fully off-road Cross County Trail with the City of Fairfax at its heart.

[01:08:53] The Washington Area Bicyclists Association got it right in their recent letter to the city. We have a fully funded infrastructure project supported by the city's own long-standing comprehensive plan that multiplies the connectivity and utility of existing local and regional trail networks to the benefit of the city, residents, and visitors alike that was thoughtfully developed and revised by staff with plentiful opportunities for community input.

[01:09:18] The George Snyder Trail is clearly a project with enormous net benefits to the city, its residents, and the larger region and must be allowed to move forward. In our decades of following bike-related infrastructure, we cannot recall a jurisdiction backing out of a project this late in the project with so much dedicated funding at stake.

[01:09:37] To willingly hand back hard-won dollars at any time is eyebrow-raising, and to do so during a period of lean budgeting borders on malpractice. End quote. For the Snyder Trail, it's fourth and goal in overtime.

[01:09:52] Will you renege? Will you take a knee on fourth and goal in overtime? Will you break trust with VDOT, the CTB, and the state of Virginia? Please, no. Let's bring this trail home and support the Snyder Trail. Thank you so much.

[01:10:07] Our next speaker is Jim Gillespie, and then following him would be Frank Chinotola. Close enough. Good evening.

[01:10:26] I'm Jim Gillespie. I reside at 3604 Colony Road. I'm here tonight to support the supplemental appropriation and moving ahead with the trail. I'm particularly excited about the connection with the Cross County Trail and the opportunity for residents of the county and the city to use that trail and actually to bring some business here within the city as well.

[01:10:50] I trust that the project planners and the city staff have worked diligently to preserve as many mature trees as possible, and I also trust that they will continue to do so as the project moves ahead. Thank you.

[01:11:08] Next speaker is Frank. Good enough. Okay. And then next would be Jack Cole. Been like it forever. Good evening. My name is Frank Snotala. I live at 3222 Cambridge Court.

[01:11:23] And this is the first time I'm speaking. I'm speaking on the George Schneider Trail Transportation Project. I'm opposed to building this road through old growth forest because there are other better and cheaper alternatives available.

[01:11:40] Months ago, I presented a detailed plan for these alternatives, and I have received no response. I'm asking each and every one of you to please make the right decision and to save our woods, and I took the liberty of bringing one with.

[01:11:55] If I can give it to this young lady, if that would be all right. Thank you so much. All right, our next speaker is Jack Cole, and then following is Evie Infantides. Good evening, Mayor, members of the council.

[01:12:22] I hope everyone had a good holiday. My name is Jack Cull, 3228 Cambridge Court, and yes, I'm back again. In the past, I've come and stood before you urging compromise, urging that you look at different scenarios, more fiscally responsible and more environmentally responsible for the George Snyder Trail.

[01:12:45] Obviously, that train sailed, or the ship left, and now tonight, I'll get my analogy right. But tonight, I rise to urge the council oppose the 4.6 additional appropriations for the trail.

[01:13:05] I suspect this will not be the last time that the council or we will have to come before the council or the council will before the state or whatever to get additional funding for this project. Also, we're talking about grant money tonight, but it has not been discussed about the operations and maintenance funding that the city of Fairfax taxpayers will have to pony up for this project.

[01:13:31] And with each passing year, those costs are going to rise, and the taxpayers will be on the hook for that. But the fiscal issues aside, even more disturbing is the environmental impacts to this project.

[01:13:47] I shudder to think of what unleashing those bulldozers on that wooded area will do to the environment, but also to the stream restoration project that we just completed. The runoff of the damage and the destruction of wetlands, and yes, the destruction of several hundred more trees.

[01:14:11] Those of us who have lived next to this area in the stream for the last year or so, we've watched the destruction of all those trees for the stream restoration project. The damage is going to be immense, and I would say so unnecessary, so unnecessary.

[01:14:36] I'm also willing to predict that several years from now, either you or your successors will be sitting here again debating budget appropriations for a new stream restoration project to mitigate the damage already done to the stream restoration project from this ill-conceived George Snyder Trail project.

[01:15:01] The council has an opportunity tonight to grab common sense from this ill-conceived project. I urge the council oppose and vote against the \$4.6 million additional appropriation.

[01:15:20] Thank you. Our next speaker is Evie Infantides, and following will be Leslie Cullen. Hello. Good evening, council members and Madam Mayor.

[01:15:35] My name is Evangelia Ifantidis, and I've been a resident in Fairfax City since 1993. I'm here asking you to vote in favor of accepting the additional consension air funds and also to vote in favor of awarding the contract to construct the Snyder Trail to honor our past mayor and make a transformational legacy in all our future for decades to come.

[01:15:58] Bike commuters, runners, recreational cyclists, walkers, folks with strollers, kids, folks with mobility impairments using wheelchairs or walkers, park and nature enthusiasts, and so many others will gain so many added benefits from this trail. Well-constructed trails bring all kinds of humans outside, provide safe passage to school, work, fun, shopping, eating out, and give us a sense of community. Isn't this what we always say about the great

[01:16:31] city of Fairfax. Many of you know that I commuted 6.2 miles each way to work in Fairfax County Public Schools. I was able to ride a little over 10,000 miles in the nine years I commuted to and from work. On my thousandth ride, Mayor Meyer and Delegate Boulevard came along. It was fantastic.

[01:16:56] We stopped at Daniel's Run. It was great. The kids were wonderful. These 10,000 miles were made possible, mostly because of safe and passable trails. We need more safe and passable trails that create these connections. During that same time frame, I also rode on Sunday mornings with a friend around Fairfax City. We did a 10-mile or a 12-mile loop. The Snyder Trail would make this loop much safer. Additionally, I was a member of the Parks and Rec Advisory Board from 2011 to 2021. This actually is one of the reasons I started biking to work. Bike enthusiast Frank

[01:17:34] Linton worked with a George Mason student to put together a bike path for students taking Metro to Vienna and then biking to George Mason University. He came to Pratt to present this path in 2012. I asked him if he could find me a way to bike to work and two days later, on a Saturday, he showed me two viable ways to commuting options. Within the next two weeks, I started biking to work.

[01:18:01] You know, PRAB meets monthly. The Snyder Trail was added to the comprehensive plan in 2012. I remember Kathy Salgado, who was the director for most of my tenure, providing us updates during most, if not each of every of those meetings she ran. This trail has been talked about and discussed and worked on for thousands of hours in PRAB and other venues, including community forums, architectural, and staff work. It is time to get the funds approved and get the trail built.

[01:18:35] Thank you for your time. Our next speaker is Leslie Cullen, then following is Janice Miller. Good evening. My name is Leslie Cullen, and I live at 3411 Spring Lake Terrace. I'm here tonight, again, to

express my continued support for fully funding the George Snyder Trail and moving forward with awarding the contract.

[01:18:59] I believe the trail is an important investment in our community, supporting connectivity, safety, recreation, and long-term quality of life for residents. At the same time, I want to be candid in sharing that many of us in the community are growing weary of the repeated discussions, delays, and renegotiations surrounding this project and other developments.

[01:19:19] The George Snyder Trail has been studied, debated, revisited extensively. Continuing to reopen the same conversations creates uncertainty and slows progress on an initiative that has already broad support and a clear public benefit. I respectfully urge you to approve the funding and proceed with implementation so this project can finally move forward.

[01:19:43] Doing so would demonstrate a commitment to the thoughtful planning and decisive action, allowing our community to focus its energy on the next set of priorities rather than revisiting the same ones again. Thank you. Next speaker is Janice Miller, then following is Judy Fisher.

[01:20:05] Good evening. I'm Janice Miller, a long-time city resident. Mayor Reed, council members, city staff, thank you for the opportunity to address the matter of George Snyder Trail once again. Putting this matter to bed is welcomed. It's time to make a final decision and to move on.

[01:20:24] That said, the follow-up question is simple. What's next? If Council passes a Supplemental Appropriation Resolution in the amount of \$4.6 million for the George Snyder Trail and awards the contract, the trail moves forward. If the Council votes 2-4 or 3-3 on the Appropriation Resolution, there will be an adequate funding to award the contract and the project is dead.

[01:20:49] Next question. What are the unintended consequences of a canceled George Snyder Trail? First, repayment of funds. There is an ABBA song that's money, money, money. As per city staff, \$3.7 million will be needed to repay regional funding bodies. Question, where are the funds available in the city budget? Two, future outside funding. A council no vote or a 3-3 tie will send a message to regional funding bodies that the city council is not a dependable, reliable partner.

[01:21:27] and that the newly and that newly elected councils may not and will not in the future continue long plan projects question could grants for new city projects be at risk certainly that's possible number three corporate and charitable giving recently the city council established a parks foundation board it is my understanding the council also pointed members to begin the work of the foundation. One of the major tasks of this board will be to solicit funds from corporations

[01:22:01] and charitable entities to receive recreational capital project funds as well as funds for recreational programs. Question, will a no vote on tonight's appropriation motion affect the work of this group and hamper their efforts to solicit funds? Again, that is possible. Please remember, actions have consequences. City Council's stability, reliability, and consistency go a long way in sending positive messages not only to city residents and businesses, but to the broader

[01:22:36] community as well. City Councils have forever completed plans previously developed by former Councils. I would like to point out that last Saturday at the Council's retreat, Council Member McQuillan remarked that people need to remember that planned projects take seven to ten years.

[01:22:56] And at the same time, Council Member Peterson mentioned multiple times that the city needs to get a big bang for the buck. Trust me, George Snyder Trail has taken, it seems, forever, and it is a big bang for the buck. It's time to move forward. Please vote. Yes, move on, provide stability and reliability and consistency. Thank you for your time and attention.

[01:23:21] Next speaker is Judy Fisher, then following would be Tamara Harvey. My name is Judy Fisher, longtime resident of the city. I am speaking tonight as part of the large majority of city residents who favor completion of the George Schneider Trail.

[01:23:42] I believe a small but very vocal group of people have left the current council with the mistaken belief that a majority of residents would like to abandon longstanding plans to build the trail. Most of us thought this decision was finalized years ago.

[01:24:01] We are disappointed at the wasted time of the council, which has neglected needed business to discuss and discuss and then to renege on this plan. Do not think that delaying action again to allow the next council to act is a viable plan.

[01:24:19] Honor the decisions and financial commitments entered into by previous councils. We do not want to become known as undependable or for failing to honor commitments. Build the trail now.

[01:24:37] Our next speaker is Tamara Harvey. Then following will be Jean Uricoli. Well done. Good evening. I'm Tamara Harvey. I'm a resident of the city.

[01:24:53] I live at 10822 Maple Street. I commute to work by bike all year round, all weather, night, day. I do errands by bike. I walk a great deal in the city. I see the George Snyder Trail as an important east-west route that helps connect the city to the county and keep commuters like me safe.

[01:25:15] 50 is not a safe route, even on the sidewalk. We can't count on cheap and abundant fuel forever. We will have greater need of safe bike and pedestrian routes like this 10, 20 years from now, maybe sooner, maybe a lot sooner because of e-bikes and scooters.

[01:25:33] If we don't build this now with other people's money, we will build it in the future with our own. And until then, people like me will continue putting ourselves at risk as we seek roots across the city.

[01:25:51] Please accept this funding and build the trail. Thank you. Next speaker is Gene Uricoli, and following will be Jane Kelsey. Hi, good evening. I'm Gene Uricoli. I live in Mosby Woods. I've been here since 1986, myself and my family, obviously.

[01:26:09] And I recommend we do not take the money. Everybody's talking about it's a business decision. Everybody's talking about it's the right thing you do. I don't disagree with that. However, nobody's talking about the rape and the carnage of what's going on down there between Draper Park and 123.

[01:26:25] You're talking about going through a beautiful piece of ground with the Yakateek Creek runs through with its woodlands and everything else that's associated with the forest. I watched them take those trees out of that area during the creek restoration, all right?

[01:26:43] 250-year-old oaks, four-foot diameter trunks, hundreds of them, 400 of them came out of there. The next piece of ground that gets worked on, it's going to be 600-plus. I just walked the area twice over the past weekend. You could see it's going to be hard to do.

[01:27:00] Why would you tear up one of the most beautiful places in the city of Fairfax for a bike trail? You want to put a bike trail? Put a bike trail where it can be accessed. You're going to tear up one of the jewels of Fairfax City for a walking trail and a bike trail.

[01:27:17] I don't oppose that. I think it's a great thing. Do the right thing in that regard. I've been here for 40 years. I've walked through that place with my three kids and my grandchildren. It's beautiful down there. You've got the creek. You've got flora and fauna. I don't see how they're going to, when they tear that area up, try to connect the pieces of the Snyder Trail, it's going to be mixed and matched.

[01:27:41] I'd be treasurer. I don't see somebody ride a bike through there. You're going to have to go up and down and round and round. The ground is treacherous. So what I say, build the trail if you want to. Don't appropriate the money now. Get a plan.

[01:27:56] Rewrite the plan. If it's taken 15 years, fine. That means it's hard. It's hard work. You know, you want to get it right. Tearing up that piece of ground is not going to be the right thing to do. The segments I'm talking about, Draper Park to Stafford Drive, Stafford Drive to Fairwoods Parkway, which is right behind CVS.

[01:28:15] Go over there and look. It looks like somebody raped it with bulldozers and backhoes. And, of course, Fairwoods Parkway to Route 123. Let's see, one more piece before I'm done. You have a hard job. I respect that. There are existing walkways in this city.

[01:28:33] or existing past that already exists, they can be connected. Go through creatively, get somebody to do it, and connect them. Oh, I'm sorry. All right, so enclosure.

[01:28:49] Yeah, finish the trail, but finish the right trail. Don't finish the one that takes one of the crown jewels of Fairfax City and tears it apart. It will not be a good decision. Go down to Cambridge Station and see what happened down there. They ruined that whole area. They ruined it. Thank you very much for your time.

[01:29:09] Our next speaker is Jane Kelsey, then following is Mariana Fournier. Good evening, I'm Jane Kelsey, 4041 Autumn Court, Fairfax City. I've been in the city since 1961 and loved it, and I really want to tell you that I support the trail.

[01:29:32] I think they are very important, and not only from my personal standpoint, but I've seen what it does for the other people in the community. It's for recreation. That's fine. But it is also for people who want to go up to Main Street.

[01:29:50] It saves them getting in the car and driving a short distance. And if they've got a trail, instead of having to go up and down the streets to get to Main Street, they wouldn't do it. They would take the car. So I think that helps many environmental issues that we have.

[01:30:08] So I just want to speak to that issue as well as the issue of saving taxpayer money. And I just do not see the math of how you could turn this down when you've got \$21 million and we have to pay \$4 million.

[01:30:25] Just think about the difference between that. When you're just handed the \$21 million, why would you give it back? And it seems to me you would just finish what you started a long time ago when it was in the plan, I believe. originally and do it. It just seems so simple to me, but obviously I'm not having

to make the decision for everybody in Fairfax City. But thank you very much. Next speaker is Mariana Fournier.

[01:30:56] Then following would be Jeb Mann. Good evening. I'm Mariana Fournier, 10134 Spring Lake Terrace.

[01:31:20] The question we should be really asking ourselves, if this was such a great project, why wasn't it done years ago? Why did it keep going forward and forward and costing us more and more money?

[01:31:36] Probably because of the way the council handled it. I'm sorry you weren't up front with us. You weren't willing to listen to us. We gave you a petition and it was sneered at.

[01:31:55] If you think we're going to trust city council with spending more money, you've got to be kidding me. I saw the picture today of what you've already done. This isn't, this is environmental rape.

[01:32:18] I'm sorry, but if this was a good program, then you should have worked it out some way and have gotten it taken care of years ago. I believe it was because you dug your heels in, and there was only one way to do it, and you weren't willing to compromise, you weren't willing to listen to us, and you, and the prior councils just frankly blew it.

[01:32:55] why should we trust you anymore? And as far as spending money, this is a money pit. It's going to cost more and more and more because you haven't really done this appropriately. There are going to

[01:33:21] be additional costs that you are not even thinking about. And we're saying not a penny more. And if anyone wants to discuss the issue with me, you know where I live and I'll even make the coffee.

[01:33:44] But I wish you had the prior councils had been willing to sit down and talk to their citizens instead of assuming that they had the right answer.

[01:34:04] I mean, you know, disrespect, consider this a fraternal correction. Thank you very much. Next speaker is Jeb Mann, then following the Henry Mann. My name is Jeff Mann. I'm at 9744 Cardinal Road in the great city of Fairfax.

[01:34:35] I have heard many eloquent people tonight on both sides of the issue, but I encourage you to vote no. We need safety, and we need walkways, and we need things like that in this city, but we do not need the George Schneider Trail as proposed because it's bloated.

[01:34:58] environmental study that was done on it is flawed. There are protected species and wetlands out there that are going to be decimated. It's the last, one of the last stands in the city of Hardwood Forest, and it's beautiful, like the gentleman spoke about before. I've walked around it with my family, and it's wonderful. And the animals we haven't even talked about, the blue heron that's in there, the one that I've seen, there might be more. It's always there. The ducks, the fox, the raccoons. All of that is going to be messed up. Mr. Ito, word on the street is, has decided

[01:35:34] not to plant some of the trees in the stream restoration because it's going to mess up what's proposed for the George Schneider Trail. So that's even less trees that are going to go up because the Schneider Trail is going to decimate more trees. It's a tough decision, and you guys work hard. I know that. But you've got to think of your judiciary responsibility to the citizens and the future of Fairfax City and my son and the people who come in and move in here years and years and years from now.

[01:36:10] Don't get rid of those woods. Don't mess up those woods. It's the only thing we've got that really lets us know that we're a tree city. I mean, we speak out of both sides of our mouths, and it's kind of crazy.

[01:36:27] It's time to stop the madness. Just vote no. Our next speaker is Henry Mann, and following is Kathleen Brown. My name is Henry Mann.

[01:36:45] I live at 9744 Cardinal Road, and that was my dad that just spoke. And I wanted to correct him. There are actually two herons that we have seen together. I mean, I can confidently say I've lived in the same house all my life.

[01:37:00] I can confidently say that I know the woods that the George Schneider Trail is going to go through more than basically anybody in this room. I know when I think of the George Schneider Trail and like the area that it's going to go through, I think not necessarily of the woods as much as the people that go through it.

[01:37:21] I think that there's a lot of waste that I've had to pick up in the last week. I walked to school, going home, I've picked up at least 10 pounds of trash in the last three days. Wait, it's a Tuesday, two days, sorry. That's like that's where my mind's at right now.

[01:37:36] But if more people come in there, that's going to be more of an issue. we're going to have to worry about cleaning up trash we're gonna have to worry about i mean i've heard about policeman numbers too right we have to add more policemen to the staff and the police is understaffed as it is i might be wrong on that anyway um i wanted to clarify some more things that people have said though um the idea that the george snyder trail really crosses through the city and crosses and passes the city's businesses i mean no it there's a wall walk kind of near

[01:38:13] where the Wilcoxon Trail lets out, and that's it. I mean, if you go through those woods, there's not much else until, I mean, unless you want to check into the Best Western. That's basically it. It's Wawa to Best Western, and there's woods, and there's nothing else.

[01:38:28] If we really want to advertise Fairfax City as it is to the greater people, which we are very considerate of, to the greater county, we should pass it through the real part of Fairfax City, where the businesses are, where we want to showcase what we have.

[01:38:47] Also, we have plenty of great projects. Think about the Fern Street stuff that we talked about at the beginning. We have a lot of great small connector projects. And if we worked on those, connecting communities together, we would have a much, I mean, we would have a much stronger feeling of a unified city.

[01:39:05] We shouldn't have a line cutting off Mosby Woods from everything else. Thank you. Our next speaker is Kathleen Brown. The following is Chris Finch. Finch. Good evening.

[01:39:21] I'm Kathleen Brown. I live at 3231 Juniper Lane in Falls Church. In the words of sage David Attenborough, ancient trees are precious. There is little else on earth that plays host to such a rich community of life within a single organism.

[01:39:38] I speak tonight as a board member of Climate Action Now, an organization which educates through the presentation of environmental films and documentaries at Cinema Arts Theater right here in Fairfax City on the very urgent issues of our time, extreme weather, record temperatures, diversity loss,

ecosystem, stress, and among others. After these films, panel discussions with local experts and attendees from all over northern Virginia are a testament to your very residents' growing

[01:40:11] engagement on urgent climate matters. I also speak as a member of a group of residents in the Seven Corners area of Fairfax County, which successfully fought off paving of two acres of land in our area of the county with the highest socioeconomic needs and the lowest amount of park land. Half of Justice Park's 18 acres is an urban forest with a tributary of Trips Run, which runs into Lake Barcroft nearby. Justice Park's eight acre forest is a smaller version of yours. Having walked portions of your trail, the proposed extensions clearly struck me that while our

[01:40:51] two-acre paving inside Justice Park was a parking lot, this planned bike trail is an urban forest superhighway. It cuts deep, wide, and through the very center of the forest. Yort costs and tree loss, stress on Akatink Creek, loss of plant and animal habitat, and decades of soil enrichment are too high a price to pay. While improved pathways for bike and pedestrian travel are certainly valuable,

[01:41:20] The proposed route for the extension and its massive retaining walls are too intrusive, destructive, and costly in funding, tree and animal habitat loss, watershed stress, and soil degradation.

[01:41:37] Preservation over paving is the best path to take through your remarkable and rich urban forest. Your determination this very evening will be felt for generations of human, animal, tree, and plant life.

[01:41:52] not only for our common survival, but for our flourishing. Thank you for this opportunity to weigh in. Next speaker is Chris French. Following is Philip Latassa. Thank you. Good evening, Mayor and Council.

[01:42:09] My name is Chris French. I live at 3172 Stratford Court, and I'm the president of Northern Virginia Families for Safe Streets, an all-volunteer organization focused on advocating for street safety, specifically pedestrian safety, throughout the region. We have more than 2,000 members and have chapters in Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax.

[01:42:27] I do communicate regularly with Chloe Ritter regarding the city's transportation initiatives, and we were happy to be offered a seat at the table in the MOVE Fairfax City Advisory Committee. I've come today to speak in strong support of the George Snyder Trail. I'll start by sharing that our Fairfax chapter is a member of Fairfax Healthy Communities, a network of 22 nonprofits working in the intersecting areas of active transportation, smart growth, environment, housing, and food security.

[01:42:55] Network partners envision a region where people can live, work, and play in connected communities that are healthy, sustainable, and inclusive. We believe safe and comfortable routes to walk, bike, use transit, and get to the places we need to and want to go without relying on driving is integral to making our communities more sustainable and healthier and contributes to a vibrant local economy.

[01:43:20] This project works to achieve that vision. I certainly acknowledge the trails construction will not be without impact however I believe there are considerable benefits that will be realized the trail will provide a much needed currently missing connection between the 66 parallel trail and the CCT and Wilcoxon trails in addition to providing connectivity to this larger regional trail network the trail will provide benefits to local residents by expanding active transportation options for all ages and all abilities to get to school work metro and other transit restaurants and retail and many other destinations comfortably, safely, and with low levels of stress. Active transportation projects

[01:44:00] such as these reduce car dependency and VMT, or vehicle miles traveled, thereby aligning with regional climate goals due to the accompanying reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. But they also help in other ways, such as reducing acute tailpipe pollutants, mitigating traffic congestion, and suburban sprawl, while encouraging physical activity, social connection, and overall improvements to public health. Further, greater access to the outdoors for all ages and abilities can help grow appreciation for and stewardship for our natural resources. To close, I'll say that I often find

[01:44:34] myself at hearings such as this, speaking in support of policies and actions which put people's needs at the center of decision making to ensure safe, livable, accessible, sustainable, and green communities. Thank you for allowing me the time to do that, just that, again, tonight. Next, Speakers Phil Watassa, then following is John Russell.

[01:44:59] I speak tonight representing the Friends of Akateng Creek. Regarding the George Snyder Trail. Down, down, down into the darkness of the grave. Gently they go, the beautiful, the tender, the kind. The fish, the toad, the fern, the sycamore, the maple.

[01:45:18] Down they go for our convenience, for our whims, for our sins. Down they go that we adults may ride our toys upon their tombs. The year is 2026. It is not 1726 when colonists carved a new society toward the horizon.

[01:45:34] It is not 1826 when land without end was needed to feed and clothe our growing multitudes. It is not 1926 when the newly ascended automobile could spread its tracks over an unpaved continent. No, the year is 2026, when we find ourselves become the guardians of our last remnants of woods and wetlands.

[01:45:52] When the insatiable demands of humans have backed the natural world to the brink. When it is time to curb our desires in favor of protecting what remains of nature. We have learned now that the cost of the George Schneider Trail has become too high in dollars we can count.

[01:46:07] We should have learned before the start that the cost was already too high in those things whose value is beyond counting. Please do not continue with the George Schneider Trail or similar projects to pave through our last woods and wetlands. Thank you. Next speaker is John Russell, then following is Douglas Cox.

[01:46:34] Madam Mayor, members of the City Council, my name is Cappy Russell. I live in the Daniels Run Woods neighborhood. clerk has my exact address. My friend Brian has a useful taxonomy for understanding intractable issues like this. It's the difference between good reasons and real reasons. I've spoken to this body before and corresponded with many of you about the good reasons to build the George Snyder Trail, creating an amenity accessible for all of the city's residents, diversifying our transportation infrastructure so that all residents can choose how best to move

[01:47:13] about and beyond their homes into the wider world and back again. Integrating our community with neighboring towns and maybe introducing ourselves to visitors from further afield, attracting new customers for our local businesses, new residents for our city. Being true to our word and a reliable partner in the eyes of development organizations and government agencies we might want to call upon in the future. And then of course there's the matter of minding the city's finances carefully and not incurring a needless penalty, a penalty of more than \$3 million,

[01:47:48] no small matter that. From where I stand, this council has all the good reasons it needs to approve construction of the trail and help the city take this next logical step in its development. That we are still here debating this measure again so many months later suggests to me that all the good reasons in the world are not reaching the real reasons for debate and delay.

[01:48:11] My fear is that the real reason some on the council and some in the city say no is a certain allergy to any development, any growth, any change in our city. If that is what you on the council are feeling or responding to, if the real reason to oppose the trail is the desire to encase the city in amber and reject development in all of its forms, a trail today, an apartment building, a health center, Let me suggest that that is not what it means to be a city.

[01:48:47] Cities are living, breathing things. They grow and change and develop. And that dynamism is the point. It's what many people choose to live in a city for. It's the source of a city's prosperity. To curb it or to stall it is to risk the long-term health of your city.

[01:49:07] Cities that stop changing start withering. So please vote tonight with optimism about Fairfax City's future life. please vote tonight to fully fund and to build the george snyder trail thank you for your time okay next speaker is douglas cox and following is avril garland good evening douglas cox fairview drive you guys have my address anyways uh most of you have already made up your minds i'm not for

[01:49:44] it i've actually i'm like 99 of the city ridden all the way around to get to the 66 trail from fairview long way uh it's accessible it's easy it's not a big deal it's entirely safe so not a fan of this plus let's be honest you don't have metrics to say how many people use the i-66 trail at 123 it's built it's there how many people cross how many use it unique users individual users you don't know no one ever took metrics never figured out how much sediment goes into the stream if you build this thing you know you spend all that money on the tmdl and now you're

[01:50:22] going to blow it by wiping away and putting this trail so anyways let's get into some truth because It seems like a lot of people are confused here. This trail does not come anywhere near the Cross County Trail to the west.

[01:50:39] Cross County Trail goes up Blake Lane, Germantown, ends up going behind Oakmont. So people are going, you go through the city and you meet the Cross Country Trail, not even close. If Oakmont and the Moose Lodge are next to each other, that's fantasy liberal. Let's stop with that nonsense.

[01:50:56] And on the other side, let's be truthful, city scene, what do we say here? ADA, accessible trail, complete. There were important missing link between I-66 trail through the city to connect with the Jerry Conley cross-country trail.

[01:51:12] It does not. George Snyder Trail does not connect to the cross-country trail. Wilcoxon Trail does. So if you come down the Snyder Trail to the east, go down 50 little ways, the unsafe highway that we can't get on, catch Wilcoxon, then you hit the CCT.

[01:51:31] But saying they connect is like saying Washington State connects to Alaska, all right? They don't. So let's quit with the nonsense, quit with the lies. Let's all be honest about what this does, where it goes. And also, how did we get here?

[01:51:48] This thing almost got killed in the May-June time frame. And the city was supposed to have until December to talk amongst ourselves. And then all of a sudden, VDOT threw out, nope, in May.

[01:52:05] You have to decide by June. So talks were made, votes were done. June, you guys sent, June 10th, you sent a thing out to VDOT and said, yep, we're going forward. The bill came in, it was higher.

[01:52:21] Now here we are talking about it. And I've got to say, this is a bad look. Bill Cutler, who wrote the letter from VDOT that said, make your decision by June, two days after you made the decision, here's the mayor with Bill Cutler, thumbs up.

[01:52:39] It's a bad look. If there was collusion, shame on you. Our next speaker is Avril Garland, and following is Ellen Pence. Hi, I live in the town of Vienna. I'm a member of Friends of Akatine Creek, and it's very confusing.

[01:53:01] You have a terrible job ahead of you. I thank very much the three council members who have had the foresight and courage to oppose this wrong-headed recreational development, which is undesired by many residents.

[01:53:16] Honestly, I can't tell. Somebody said the opposing side said they have broad support. I'm against it. I see people here against it. But how many people are against the trail? How many people want the trail? Do we even know this? I know Arlington County did a survey on deer.

[01:53:33] Do we want to cull the deer? Sharpshooting, archery, private yards, parks. I mean, I don't think we know what residents want. I suggest you go and find out, go door to door. The other thing we're talking, the other issue that you talked about was the gain.

[01:53:50] Yes, you do have a certain amount of gain. I'm on a bicycle, and I don't particularly like using Route 50 or Route 66. I mean, a paved path through the woods, yeah, I'd like that, but look at the cost. I don't want that to come at the price.

[01:54:07] These barred owls live in the woods, the herons, the finches, the thrushes, the deer, the salamanders, the box turtles. These woods are, to feed 500 trees to the chipper, that's a terribly high cost.

[01:54:25] To replace the 500, 600 trees by little sticks and tubes that it's going to take 100 years to grow, as somebody pointed out, yeah, the trail would be nice, but the cost is really so terrible. You'd be losing. Think of what you would be losing.

[01:54:44] And I think what you're losing would be greatly more than what you're getting. So I'd ask you to please oppose the trail or find some other ways of making the roads safer. Thank you. Our next speaker is Ellen Pence and following is Sophie McNeil.

[01:55:04] I'm Ellen Pence, 3211 Adams Court. I just realized I have been a resident of Cambridge Station for 58 years now. I'm going to read a letter that was written to you today, was given to me.

[01:55:25] It says, Dear Council Members, I have asked Ellen Pence to read this letter on behalf of me, Rebecca Caldwell, President of Mosby Woods Condominium Association. I speak on behalf of the 168 families who live in our community.

[01:55:45] We were extremely disappointed to learn in the last two years that our entire forest would be removed with a creek restoration project and a bike roadway. A dozen years ago, we lost one-third of our neighborhood forest, but gained a field and playground in Stafford Park.

[01:56:03] Right now, we cannot stand to have any more large projects. We watched our mature forest be taken away by stream restoration. Initially, we were very excited about the prospect of lowering the

floodplain.

[01:56:20] However, the new creek has already flooded our homes. If the other half of our forest is removed, the runoff problem will be worse. There are also ponds of standing water, which will be horrible in about two months, as soon as the weather is warm enough for mosquitoes.

[01:56:40] We are told that they were a mistake and are going to have drainage ditches done, but there is still standing water. Who is going to maintain this properly? Our forest is already half gone.

[01:56:57] Please don't take the other half. The children of our neighborhood used to explore and look for wildlife in and around the creek and play in the woods. We liked the fresh air filtered by the mature forest. We had a barrier between us and Stafford Park and Fairfax Boulevard with all of the trees.

[01:57:16] We are now having problems with rodents and have seen foxes, raptors, raccoons, and deer coming in close to the buildings since there is nowhere else for them to live. The surrounding neighborhoods are fine with bike lanes going on Cardinal Road.

[01:57:34] Please use this route instead of taking down the rest of our mature forest. The wetlands to the west of us are protected so that that part of the project cannot go forward. Please leave things the way they are. My final thoughts for you are these.

[01:57:50] Our community does not want to be disturbed with any more construction, and we want to keep what small part of our mature forest remains. Thank you. Rebecca Caldwell, President, Mosby Woods Council of Co-Owners.

[01:58:08] Next speaker, Sophie McNeil. Then following is Toby Sorenson. Hello, my name is Sophie McNeil. I live at 3417 Newbury Road. And for my whole life, I've lived in Country Club Hills and grew up playing in the forest.

[01:58:28] You know, I'm speaking for myself, family, friends, neighbors who cannot be here tonight, but are also opposed to the trail. Not only are there numerous environmental issues with funding this trail, But now it's come to light that this trail is incredibly over budget and for such a short length of trail. As mentioned many times, a trail system already exists.

[01:58:47] And I'd like to ask again, how well are those maintained? How can we trust that the new trail will be taken care of? I can recite many environmental issues that this trail poses, but you've heard them all before. And I just graduated with a bachelor's, my degree in environmental science.

[01:59:04] I've worked on wetland restorations, forest surveys, all that type of stuff. and the trail would just destroy vital ecosystems and they just won't bounce back by planting saplings. Passing these plans, supporting the budget addition, that's not the right decision.

[01:59:25] It is the selfish one. Can we think about something other than our own personal benefit, these anthropocentric views, for once? I urge you guys to please stop these destructive plans and not to mention I've heard we may not even have to repay it.

[01:59:42] Thank you very much. Our next speaker is Toby Sorensen, then following is Jennifer Rose. Good evening, everyone.

[02:00:00] During the time I was a city school board member, I served as the board's representative to the Environmental Sustainability Committee for three years. I also served as the board's representative to the

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for five years. This was during the recession of 2008 when recreational funds were severely restricted.

[02:00:21] We spent a lot of time discussing how to deal with limited spending. Under the direction of the forward-thinking director, Mike McCarty, and later with his successor, Kathy Salgado, we worked with staff to develop a comprehensive plan that would set priorities and outline how to accomplish them.

[02:00:40] One of these priorities was the building of the George Snyder Trail as part of the cross-county connector. The county was considering bypassing the city, which is at the midpoint of the county. That made no sense to us at all, so we advocated to have the connector pass through the city.

[02:00:57] To have a small part of the trail give accessibility to the elderly, to people with mobility issues, and to parents with small children is a good thing. To have that part of the trail within the city is a good thing.

[02:01:13] Walking and cycling without having to breathe in automobile fumes is a good thing. This is an issue about trust as much as it is about trails and dollars. Taxpayers trust you to be good stewards of our money.

[02:01:29] Residents who need an accessible path through the woods are counting on you. Planning projects, especially joint projects, take a long time, longer than any one two-year term in office. The state and county had faith in our elected leaders that they would think beyond a single election cycle.

[02:01:51] So did all of us who worked toward the goal of having the Cross County Connector Trail pass through our community. Trees can be replanted. Habitats can be restored. It is trust that is hard to rebuild.

[02:02:07] Please maintain our trust in you and vote to fund the full George Snyder Trail. Thank you for listening. Next speaker is Jennifer Rose and following is Shelly Vance. Good evening, Mayor and members of council.

[02:02:27] I'm here tonight to express the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce's strong support for appropriating the additional \$4.6 million in Transform 66 outside the Beltway concession funding and to award the contract for the George Snyder Trail. We recognize that this project has generated significant discussion, as we have seen this evening and many, many weeks in the past, within the community.

[02:02:52] I'm often asked, why does the chamber have a position on the trail? Some of you have asked me this question. The answer is quite straightforward. This decision is fundamentally about economic development, fiscal responsibility, and the city's long-term competitiveness.

[02:03:09] From the chamber's perspective, the choice before you is clear. First, if this project is not completed, the city could be required to repay nearly \$4 million to VDOT. That repayment would come directly from the general fund and ultimately be borne by city residents and business owners.

[02:03:28] In contrast, the trail's completion does not require general fund dollars. It's a grant from VDOT. As council enters a challenging budget season, just like last season's, there's going to be difficult trade-offs and potential tax increases under consideration. The city can ill afford to spend millions of taxpayer dollars repaying funds for a project that's not going to be built.

[02:03:52] Second, while the George Snyder Trail may not run directly past every business, and I want to put Henry Mann in an internship, he's concerned about business, its value to the business community is undeniable. Businesses succeed within strong citywide systems, not in isolation. Trails improve

connectivity between neighborhoods, employment centers, and destinations, expand transportation options for employees and customers, and enhance overall quality of life, an increasingly important factor in business retention and expansion, as well as talent recruitment. Employers and workers

[02:04:30] alike are drawn to communities that invest in accessible, forward-thinking infrastructure. Importantly, this project represents a long-term return on investment. Economic development is not measured solely by immediate revenue, but by sustained growth over time. Through increased property values, stronger business attraction and retention, increased visitation that supports local businesses, and a city brand that reflects thoughtful strategic leadership, the George Schneider Trail contributes meaningfully to these long-term outcomes. Finally, there's the matter of

[02:05:05] reputation and future funding. This trail has been extensively planned, publicly vetted, and supported with external funding. Returning those funds or scaling back the project would send the wrong signal about the city's reliability as a partner in regional infrastructure efforts. It could jeopardize future state, regional, and federal investments and squander years of planning, coordination, and community engagement. For these reasons, the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce respectfully urge this council to appropriate those funds and approve the contract. This will allow the project to move forward. We appreciate your consideration and your continued commitment

[02:05:41] to the economic health and future of the city of Fairfax, and always we're grateful for your leadership and service to the city. Thank you. Next speaker, Shelly Vance, and following is Lauren Hillman. Hi, I'm Shelly Vance. I live at 3220 Cambridge State, Cambridge Court. The George Schneider Trail design through the woods with the loss of some 600 trees makes a mockery of our reputation as a tree city and our urban forest management plan. It is an unnecessary destruction

[02:06:18] of the environment and likely threatens the effectiveness of the recently completed Stafford area stream restoration. Do not build this trail through our woods and wetlands. We are not opposed to a trail and bike path that connects paths that lead to and away from the city.

[02:06:40] But there are other, better, less damaging routes for the placement of this trail. Thank you. Next speaker is Lauren Hillman. Then following is Jessica Locke. I'm a mayor, city council members.

[02:06:58] My name is Lauren Hillman. I live at 3307 Preserve Oaks Court, one of many locations I've lived in the city for the past 18 years. This trail was first conceived almost 20 years ago and was included in the city comprehensive plan in April 2012. We have had seven city council elections since then.

[02:07:17] This means the five previous councils have not felt the need to rehash this. It's only come up in the past three years. And frankly, in those three years, have we had a single city council meeting when we don't discuss this trail? It already takes so long to get things done in the city. I'm still waiting on the Blenheim Boulevard rehabilitation project to get started, and I attended meetings about that over 10 years ago.

[02:07:37] The trail, this trail has been in the works almost 20 years. Why are we still talking about it? Why can we not get it done? Fairfax City is a wonderful place to live, but the red tape and bureaucracy have got the city at a standstill. We need to move forward. We need to make progress. We need to stop vacillating over this trail.

[02:07:53] Too many city residents reject out of hand any proposal to move the city forward or to support people other than themselves. They demand that the city remain stagnant, the same as it ever was. That is

neither realistic nor sustainable, and it is not what Fairfax City is about.

[02:08:10] Fairfax City should be a place of inclusion where we plan for growth responsibly, welcome change thoughtfully, and ensure that progress benefits all members of our community, not just those who are already comfortable or those who have a voice. Residents complain about taxes, but they don't want affordable housing or a modernized health center and community center to bring more people into the city to help contribute to those taxes.

[02:08:32] They complain about the unhoused population while blocking the very projects that would give people in crisis training and places to live. They complain about traffic, but don't want to build trails to make our community more accessible, walkable, and bike-friendly. Please, let's stop talking and just get this trail built.

[02:08:48] Every vote the council takes to delay and rework this project, the cost of this trail continues to rise. Real dollars drained from our budget as construction costs increase. Real damage to our city's reputation, because we can't seem to get past this one issue that was decided 20 years ago.

[02:09:04] And real harm to the people who live here, by continuing to focus on this one project and taking time and money away from other concerns. I trust that you will make the right decision, accept the grant, and keep our city from becoming, frankly, an embarrassment. Thank you. Next speaker is Jessica Locke, then following is Anne Hanman.

[02:09:29] Hello. Good evening, everybody. I live at 10505 Cobbs Grove Lane, and my name is Jessica Locke. I'm a cyclist, I'm a runner, and I'm a climate and environmental expert, but today I'm speaking as a Fairfax City resident opposing the George Snyder Trail.

[02:09:46] I've presented to this council, not this council, the council, twice before, and my professional expertise was dismissed by some members in favor of personal opinion not supported by facts. So please let me be clear about my credentials tonight. I design corporate climate and environmental strategies, assess financial climate risks, and advise on sustainable construction for large global companies like Meta, Amazon, and GE.

[02:10:14] These companies trust my expertise, and they trust my ability to help them make financially sound decisions because I'm pragmatic and because I don't believe in preservation for the sake of preservation. So please allow me to share some facts with you tonight. Trees clean our air.

[02:10:31] They filter pollutants like dust and sulfur dioxide and reduce downwind pollution from high traffic areas like the I-66 corridor by 30%. 30% cleaner air. Trees reduce noise. That is an established fact.

[02:10:47] Research shows that trees reduce noise pollution by anywhere from 5 to 10 decibels and reduces perceived noise in surrounding communities by up to 50%. Trees contribute to better health. Research conducted by the EPA links trees and green spaces to reduced heart rate, pressure, and stress and anxiety. And finally, trees save money. 100 trees absorb 250,000 gallons of rainwater. That's the equivalent of the Oakmont rec center pool during every single heavy rainwater

[02:11:22] event. That in turn reduces loads on infrastructure, lowers flooding risk of surrounding communities, and increases motorist safety. I want to talk a little bit more about this particular metric. Because with the destruction of the trees for the George Snyder Trail, 1.5 million gallons of rainwater

runoff will be handled through gray infrastructure or the nearby creek that is currently mitigated for free by the existing trees.

[02:11:49] I can guarantee you, with that metric alone, that maintenance and damage repair costs will quickly and far exceed any amount that has been stated tonight. I believe \$3.7 million is the figure I've heard repeatedly that the city would have to pay back.

[02:12:06] In closing, the George Snyder Trail is unnecessary, it's harmful, and it is expensive. This, combined with other proposed or in-progress projects, sets a dangerous and expensive precedent. And I urge you, please, do not buy into the sunk cost fallacy that nearly everybody here tonight in favor of the George Schneider Trail has presented to you today.

[02:12:28] Please follow facts and data. Thank you. Our next speaker is Ann Hallman, and then following her would be Tom Blackburn. Good evening, Madam Mayor and City Council.

[02:12:49] My name is Ann Hammond. I live at 3226 Dunster Court, Cambridge Station. I have watched the trees be devastated there along a parallel to Cardinal Road and stream restoration. Now the proposal is to remove some more trees for the George Schneider Trail just adjacent to the trees that have been removed. I've heard many good arguments for and against tonight. Sometimes I almost got swayed to the foresight, but then reason took over and I

[02:13:27] remembered what I have to look at when the trees are gone. We cannot lose more trees. I don't want to lose any more trees. The little twigs and shrubs that they've planted now, they're going to take years. As you can tell by my gray hair, I don't have years for those little twigs and shrubs to grow into old growth. We took away a lot of old growth. I think that the lady who bragged

[02:13:57] about doing 10,000 miles of bike ride, get in touch with her. Find out where she rode. Maybe you can make some connections with some trails that she took for safety. And as far as business growth, unless you're in Vietnam and you look out the bus window and you see the scooters with all manner of things that they're transporting.

[02:14:27] I don't think I'm going to see a 2x4 from Home Depot going down the road on a bike. I don't see, I think I see a big load of groceries for a family of four on a bike going down the road. You can connect communities, but I don't necessarily buy that this is going to just go and flourish with all kinds of business growth.

[02:14:53] That's not the only reason. and the future maintenance of this trail is going to come out of my pocket out of the other pockets of all the people that are in favor of it because maintenance is not going to be covered by what you want to accept tonight for this trail so thank you for listening to me i know you've heard pros and cons some of you have made up your minds both either way and i wish you good luck

[02:15:22] thank you our next speaker's tom blackburn i can't because he needs to see that okay

[02:15:44] I really tried to get those in for a videocon to take a speech, but I missed a deadline.

[02:16:07] Thank you. Good evening. I'm Tom Blackburn of the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance.

[02:16:22] I want to give you a visual sense of the extent of the destruction at just a few of the points on the George Snyder Trail using photos taken at the locations shown on Stantec's design plans for the city's website. Slide 1 is the view from the start of the trail at Route 123.

[02:16:40] The first excavation starts just 150 feet away. Two-thirds of this trail is going to be significantly above or below the existing grade. Slide 2. At 280 feet from the start, the trail will be 8 feet below grade.

[02:16:56] On the right side, the slope to connect with the surrounding terrain will be 22 feet wide. And on the left side, there will be a retaining wall 10 feet high plus footers 3 feet below grade. Slide 3 gives you an idea of how far below grade the excavation will be at that point.

[02:17:13] And the excavation is 275 feet long. Slide 4. The trail switches from above ground to below ground at 425 feet from the start. Here at 500 feet on the slide, the trail will be built on 4 feet of fill dirt with slopes 32 feet wide to grade down to the existing grade.

[02:17:32] The trail will be on fill for 175 feet. Slide 5. A new section of trail begins on fill dirt 775 feet from the start. At 900 feet here, the fill dirt will be 3 feet high, with slopes to the surrounding terrain 23 feet wide.

[02:17:50] This section of fill is 255 feet long, and then the trail switches back to below ground again. Slide 6. At 2,075 feet from the start, the trail will be built on 8 feet of fill dirt to reach the first of four 14-foot-wide bridges.

[02:18:09] The slope to the surrounding terrain will be 40 feet wide. Slide 7 shows you just how far above grade the trail will be at the point where it meets the bridge. Slide 8, west of Fairwoods Parkway, the trail will be built on the side of a steep slope requiring retaining walls.

[02:18:29] 675 feet west of Fairwoods, the retaining wall will be 14 feet high, plus footers 5 ½ feet below grade. The wall will be 312 feet long. Slide 9, east of Fairwoods, there is a significant cross slope requiring a retaining wall 3 to 6 feet high and 175 feet long to make the trail level from side to side.

[02:18:52] Slide 10, 75 feet east of Stafford Drive, the trail will be up to 6 feet below grade requiring excavated slopes 36 feet wide to meet the surrounding terrain. That excavation will be 150 feet long. Slide 11 gives you an idea of how far below grade the trail will be at that point.

[02:19:11] If you vote to fund this trail, your legacy will be the destruction of much of Fairfax City's urban forest. Thank you. Mr. Blackburn was the last speaker who signed up prior to the meeting. I'm going to go ahead and do the two video testimonies that we received.

[02:19:29] Give me one second. All right. Our first video is from Marissa Perrone. Hi.

[02:19:47] My name is Marissa Perrone. I live at 9892 Cardinal Road. I'm speaking tonight in support of the George Schneider Trail. I have two small kids. That's why I can't be with you tonight. But they are big fans of walking and biking everywhere.

[02:20:06] They think it's so much more fun than riding in a car, and I do too. I think good trails build good neighbors, and I think that if we were more connected to places that are really within walking distance, We see a lot more people visiting city businesses and, you know, driving local traffic to those businesses.

[02:20:27] You look at places like Arlington, and that's just what we're lacking here in Fairfax is that connectivity and, you know, feeling that togetherness that trails bring. I want to share a story of something that happened recently. I was visiting Compass Coffee with my daughter.

[02:20:43] She was riding along in a bike trailer with me. So, you know, very obviously a mom and her, you know, seven-year-old daughter behind her. And we visited Compass Coffee on the way back. We pushed the button to get the pedestrian sign to cross the road at Eaton Place.

[02:21:03] And someone waited for us. Someone who is taking a right turn waited for us to cross the street, waited very patiently. Well, a line of five cars got behind this person, and they were laying on their horns, just absolutely raging at the fact that someone waited to cross.

[02:21:26] And it's because we're not used to seeing pedestrians in this area and bikers. It feels like we don't even exist. Everyone's just so focused on getting to where they need to be in a car-centric society that they're not really thinking about people on bikes.

[02:21:41] So I was very grateful that somebody was willing to wait for me, but a little shocked that so many people just thought it was ridiculous that someone would wait for me, even though it's the law. I think building more bike-centric spaces would create more of a sense of safety for all of us and for our kids, too.

[02:22:00] I think that I would love to see a world where our kids are able to walk to a coffee shop to hang out with their friends. That would promote a sense of independence that I think that our generations are really lacking. So I think that supporting this trail is supporting the future of Fairfax.

[02:22:19] And let's think about our kids when we vote. Thanks. Our next video is from Sherry Steele. Evening. I'm Sherry Steele, and I'm here tonight to talk about the George Snyder Trail Project. The project intends to transform the small footpath through the woods adjacent to Ranger Road Park into a 14 to 16 foot wide paved road, necessitating the removal of more than 500 mature trees.

[02:22:54] The project has several important fiscal, governance, and environmental problems. First, the current price tag stands at \$24 million and rising. Still, there has been, in my opinion, an under-budgeting of maintenance costs and security challenges.

[02:23:17] To be ADA compliant, the trail will need regular clearing, and staffing for such endeavors has not yet been addressed. Similarly, security and emergency services have not been discussed in conjunction with this project.

[02:23:40] In terms of other projects, we have just invested heavily in the stream restoration, and that project entailed creation of anti-erosion measures. The George Snyder Trail will circle very close to the Akatink Creek, and this video shows flooding even without the removal of 500 mature trees that the George Snyder Trail would entail.

[02:24:11] Next, in terms of governance, there is a NEPA document filed which stated that there is no substantial controversy to the project on the horizon. However, there is significant public opposition on record dating back to 2020 and more recently a petition with more than 3,000 signatures. There is a significant environmental impact that is well recorded with input from

[02:24:49] very specialized groups who have shared their expertise with the city. Even the city's own master plan with its chapter on environment and sustainability undermines the precepts of the project. Thank you to all those council members who continue to exercise fiscal restraint and environmental stewardship and I urge you all to factor in these considerations in making your

[02:25:22] decision thank you that was our last video testimony at this time if there's anybody else in the room that would like to speak to this item if i can ask you please line up by the window side and come up one at a time stating your name and street address and comment hi i want to respect

[02:26:01] everybody's time and the passion of all that have been speaking tonight. My name is Erin Mazze. I live at 106 or 10165 Fairwoods Drive in the Mosby Woods condominiums. So I rent, but I talk to my neighbors who are owners, and one of them has also asked me to quote her concerns, calling this an abomination of a plan and cost, and is highly concerned about what tearing down so much of this green space, protection from noise, all the construction is going to do to her own property

[02:26:34] values as well. I can't really speak outside as much of the context because this green space in this area was a large part of why I've moved here. These trails and the opportunities for transit have been such an important part of why I've remained in Fairfax for the three years that I have since I moved to this community. And I love that me and my husband both love that we don't drive very much already. We could walk to the CVS. We could walk and get sushi. And this is an area that already has significant access and good access along the roads to reach businesses and

[02:27:13] to go to these communities. And I see my neighbors taking it all the time. I hear a lot of wonderful things about building community, about the future. And I can tell you that my neighbors are already out there on these streets. They're already walking these trails. They're already using and experiencing and enjoying the nature.

[02:27:31] And this is not the correct way to move forward and to connect more people. It just isn't. It feels more like a way to put essentially a highway through our parks and playgrounds that we already have.

[02:27:49] And including, like, I'm just baffled to see that this trail, especially with high speed, it goes next to at least three playgrounds along the way or straight through them. as they go through i don't it and just seeing the the grade of the terrain seeing like walking on like it's baffling that this is the spot to build such an extensive construction i'm i again i love these trails i love everything that i've experienced about being in fairfax and especially when it comes to transit especially when it comes to the investment things like tree city and that means a lot to me and so far like we've we've had a wonderful experience i'll tell you though that

[02:28:27] like looking out my window at the stream restoration is already pretty almost enough to make us leave and move somewhere else and the burden has already fallen so significantly and it also baffles me to hear people talk about affordable housing to talk about business and about improvement when there is already one of the more affordable communities here that I live in that is bearing the brunt of the environmental impacts that is already, and it does make me doubt the sincerity of the people who say this.

[02:29:03] So thank you for all your time. I respect it's a difficult decision and the passion of supporters and opponents as well. Good evening, Mayor and Council.

[02:29:19] I'm Roger Custer, 10131 Cardinal Road. And we have the privilege of backing up to the forest that is proposed to be cut down for this project. And one of the animals who lives in that forest, my kids have dubbed Freddy the Fox.

[02:29:35] And we love it when he comes into our backyard and explores through Mosby Woods. But I fear that this project will be cutting down his home, along with many other animals and species that we enjoy in our wonderful city. And you've heard about all the other environmental impacts.

[02:29:55] I don't need to repeat that. I'd like to urge you to consider not appropriating the money and canceling the project. And I have a unique proposal for what we can do as a city to achieve our common goals here, to be a tree city, to have an urban forest, and to be proud of our wilderness and our trees, which is I think we should work together to obtain federal funds for open space.

[02:30:22] We have the Parks Foundation, which potentially could raise money. I'm a professional nonprofit fundraiser, and I would personally be happy to help put together a coalition to save this forest and really make maybe even an example for other cities that are having this discussion about development or not development. And really, I think we could work together to do that, to have a positive solution here that really meets the goals of everyone who's been speaking tonight for our city. So I hope we can do that. I hope we can save Freddy the Fox

[02:30:54] and move forward with Fairfax together. Thank you very much. Good evening. My name is Beth Sayonetta. I live at 10916 Berry Street in the Westmore community. Tonight I'm speaking on behalf of myself and in support of this trail. I usually write my remarks down but I didn't tonight so I'm going to kind of wing it but I've listened to a lot of a lot sides of the arguments and one thing

[02:31:28] I want to point out from my perspective I've worked for the county for 25 years. I had less gray hair when I started, but I also had less perspective in terms of this project is what is defined as a generational project. And you've seen it because of all of the opposition and support and multiple perspectives that come forward here. And my experience from being a transportation planner was the I-66 project presenting the opportunity to provide those connections on a highway project with pedestrian and bicycle facilities built into the infrastructure.

[02:32:05] One thing people don't know is that VDOT was only required to build sidewalks or to consider sidewalks as part of their projects in 2004, not 1960. It only became a policy of theirs in 2004. And so that's why it's taken so long to get to the point where ped and bikes are considered a priority to outweigh the vehicles that have taken over in terms of priority.

[02:32:29] So this project came at a time when they did consider a ped and bike facility that has already been built. additional signals for crossings on 123 have been built to tie into this project things have been put in place more than just a comp plan but other infrastructure to support this project I for one didn't originally come from Virginia but I moved here after school being a Virginia Tech and I come from Rhode Island very tiny state and so a very tight-knit community but Fairfax City has been my home and I found that so same values here one thing that I do want to point out is that

[02:33:06] you know these these opportunities in this little city six square miles of this infrastructure don't come along very often and it creates a legacy that you can be a part of or you can also be part of the legacy of its demise of this project so please take all that into consideration not just the just the impacts but really the kind of the softer human parts that come into it in terms of being infrastructure opportunities that are here being connected so i support this project i also support that the CCT be rerouted to be part of the city of Fairfax and not along Blake Lane, which is what this project would also help provide. So there's a bigger context in here,

[02:33:44] and hopefully you can see that, the forest, the trees. Thank you very much. Talia Schultz. I live on University Drive in the city of Fairfax. I have questions. I know we can't discuss them in my three minutes, but they seem worth asking. The cost estimates are already over budget, even though the project hasn't broken ground. What happens if construction is underway and it goes over budget further. This

seems likely considering increasing costs that we're all experiencing. Part of this project is going through a floodplain, removing trees whose

[02:34:20] roots stabilize the floodplain and also help soak up water. A hundred year floods are becoming more frequent. Assuming this is built, how much money has been allocated to maintenance, repairs from flooding, and stream restoration. We've also been talking about how we can just plant saplings to replace the mature trees.

[02:34:42] There was an article in the DCists saying local forests are failing to provide the next generation of trees all along the East Coast. In the DC area, nine out of the 11 parks studied were in imminent or probable failure category.

[02:34:58] They urged preserving the existing forests. I actually went through and Google mapped and put the city boundaries to find out Like where the, what forest do we have in this area? And really other than Daniels Run Park and what we have at Van Dyke Park, this is very developed.

[02:35:18] So I can give you copies of that. I'm also unclear how it's good for business to direct people through a forest. It doesn't seem like you can shop well there. And I'm not against having a connecting path.

[02:35:37] This is not an easy decision. My concern is this project, as proposed, could just end up being an ongoing money pit, more than the \$3.7 million already discussed, as it encounters further unexpected costs. Thank you.

[02:35:58] Hello, I'm Jennifer Gere, and I live at 10013 Orchard Court, and I'm calling here to, I don't have prepared remarks, but I'm here to speak against this particular project.

[02:36:15] I'm all for development in the city, in particular, projects that benefit a lot of the residents. The Theis Park Project is fabulous. That's a great place for our children to gather and for families to meet and be involved in sports.

[02:36:30] We have a lot of great trails in the city, all behind Daniel's Run. I personally love to walk behind there on the Country Club Hills Park trails. Those are fabulous trails. The ideas being presented about this trail, that it will connect people to the businesses, makes no sense to me.

[02:36:47] The Moseley Wood community is far away from our downtown area and a lot of our businesses where people would be going by foot. We have a lot of great areas to walk in the city. Perhaps we need to focus on making sure that all of our streets have sidewalks because I live in a neighborhood that does not have sidewalks on all of the streets.

[02:37:05] So residents have to walk on the road. I know we're studying projects to add more sidewalks, but if we want to connect the city, we need to focus on the sidewalks, focus on the larger projects that most of our residents can use. I don't recall ever seeing any type of survey sent out to residents asking, is this a project that we want?

[02:37:22] Is this how we want our tax dollars to be spent? This would not be something I ever would have said. I'm all for approving all of our parks, Radcliffe Park, the Thice Park, of course, any of the different parks with the playgrounds.

[02:37:37] I think we need to work on those. But a trail that we don't know how many people are going to use, to be honest with you, I have seen very few bike riders around the city. We may have some people that

are biking enthusiasts, and there's lots of bike paths for people to ride all the way down to D.C. We can have an opportunity through other paths in Fairfax to offer this type of mode of transportation for people that want it.

[02:38:00] But the majority of the people, to me, in the city, they tend to walk. So I think that this is a project that's very costly. Environmentally, it's absolutely horrible. I grew up in Ohio, and we had lots of woods and trails. I spent a lot of time there as a young person, and it would be really horrible to see the devastation to the forest.

[02:38:19] A lot of people, great people, have spoken about the environmental impact, so I won't go back into that again. But I wanted to, again, come in person to express my request to please vote no on this particular project. The money does not, it appears it may not have to be paid back.

[02:38:35] That should not be a reason why we move forward on a project like this. Thank you. Good evening. Shannon Daniels. I'm 3800 Mode Street. Didn't prepare to speak tonight, but want to just ask you all for your strength and discipline in this situation.

[02:39:01] I think we arrived at a point where we knew we would need this funding, and we had some good ideas for alternatives with Mr. Bates at one point, and some compromising was going on. And there were discussions, and then the funding, I guess we knew would kind of come through.

[02:39:22] Um, I think it's time to kind of establish ourselves as, you know, we are, we have some discipline, we have some sense, we're going to do the right thing. Even if it's the hard thing, we're going to do the right thing now, because we're at a point now where all of these projects are piling up. I'm looking at close to probably 48, 50 cents, um, tax increase per hundred dollars, um, on the real estate tax, just with three projects I can think of. Um, we speak as if

[02:39:58] this is a grant. These are tax dollars. Let's not kid ourselves. These are tax dollars you've already paid out that are coming back to us. And we're competing against other municipalities for it. I think the county executive was fair to pull in our mayor and Supervisor McKay regarding another project unrelated but i think we have a similar problem a little bit of a

[02:40:33] discipline making decisions hard decisions problem i'm asking for your strength thank you hi i'm val morgan uh 3617 cornell road uh in those pictures that tom gave you i'm one of the posts

[02:41:07] i was usually over on the left when we were over there measuring um when we started right next to the Moose Lodge, and we're looking to go have big equipment, dig through that. We're standing on a damn sidewalk, which is right across the traffic light from where it's coming from across the street. And there goes the asphalt path there, and then it comes here. And I go, well, we could just walk down the sidewalk, and then we could walk down the sidewalk on Eaton Place. And then there's

[02:41:39] Cardinal Road, which is big and wide, that ends at both ends. Then there's the path behind CVS. what are we doing? Use the sidewalks and the streets. And then you won't have so much maintenance because that's going to be hell. And instead of just doing something for your selfish self, there's a lot of living things that you're going to kill. All the trees,

[02:42:14] all the birds, they can't live just with no trees. And we got the birds that come that migrate here at this time of year and go someplace else. What are going to come at this time of year won't be anything and the same in the summer we have migrating birds that come here to breed and raise their young well

that's out um it's just kind of mind-boggling that we would be doing this and i was looking at the pictures of the devastated stream restoration um and the one side that's on

[02:42:52] the george snyder trail side they didn't plant anything there i wonder why they didn't plant anything there because when the george snyder trail falls apart and washes down they don't want to wipe out the little tiny trees and bushes because if they don't plant them they can't wash away it's just going to wash away all the soil that's there and people's houses are going to have more water and it's going to be a mess and that's going to cost more money ka-ching ka-ching ka-ching

[02:43:21] so um just vote vote no save save some trees there's some really cool trees in there um um yeah there's the sycamore i remember the river birch and the little skunk cabbages there's some great things that don't need to die. And there's some ironwood trees. Those are gorgeous trees and very angular and different, and they're precious. We should just save all the living

[02:43:57] things that are there. Thanks. I'm Katie Johnson, 10132 Spring Lake Terrace. Many of the speakers tonight show by their words they have not walked the area, let alone through the magnificent forest.

[02:44:20] Looking at maps and aerial photos do not tell the whole story. 20 years ago, this was a \$200,000 stone dust trail that already exists. Cardinal Road, Park, Draper Drive already exist, already connected.

[02:44:36] Cardinal Road is slated to become a neighbor way, which has been identified as a safe, underutilized neighborhood street. I have worked adjacent to this forest for the last 34 years. I have spent literally thousands of hours in these woods.

[02:44:55] I have heard the sounds of frogs, so many, that I would run outside every time it rained to watch the copes gray tree frogs climb the walls. I must echo the alarms of Rachel Carlson. I have not seen or heard a copes gray tree frog in many years.

[02:45:16] They are harbingers of what is to come. Much of this trail already exists. I would love to take anyone interested through these woods, as I have with all of you. A tour of our beautiful oak hickory forest that is actually quite special and worth protecting.

[02:45:34] The skunk cabbages, as Val mentioned, are in bloom right now. I agree with the speaker that said we had beautiful parks in the city. We would like to keep them that way. The George Snyder Trail did not receive funding when it was first submitted because it was not a good project.

[02:45:53] The forests on the East Coast are failing to regenerate. We have an opportunity to do the right thing and preserve this amazing oak hickory forest. The loss of additional 600 trees will all but decimate a functioning forest system.

[02:46:10] These are not just trees. These are an entire forest system that depend on each other. This trail will not take enough cars off the road to offset the loss of a forest. In the day and age of climate crisis, forests are one of our most powerful tools to mitigate these changes.

[02:46:30] We should be protecting the forest, not paving it. Forests are living, breathing things. The cost is far too high, both in dollars and natural resources. We must no longer view every patch of green space through the lens of recreation.

[02:46:50] Fairfax County, they're no longer building hard surface trails in the stream valleys. We must remember that. It took them 30 years to come up with that. We can be smarter than that. This is, in

perspective, this is less than two miles, 1.78, less than a 10-minute bike ride for \$24.7 million.

[02:47:14] Please do not appropriate the funds. Hi, good evening. My name is Judy Fraser, 3514 Spring Lake Terrace. We've heard tonight that there is broad support for this project.

[02:47:30] That's simply not true. Yes, people support trails, but the point, that's the point, isn't it? At the critical juncture when this project turned from a footpath into a transportation project, that was the time to hit pause, honestly, and go back to the community and say, is this what we really want to do? It didn't happen.

[02:47:52] And in fact, council members sitting where you are asked for that to happen. They asked for citizen engagement. They asked staff, what will happen? They were promised robust community engagement. Ms. Salgado promised reaching out to every corner of the city on this project.

[02:48:09] Mr. Steli promised to help make that happen, but nothing materialized. That was 2015 to 2017. By the time of the singular public hearing on this project during COVID, the few members of the public who had heard about it were 80% against it.

[02:48:24] Mayor Reed noted not too long ago that even her own neighbors have never heard of this project. If the community had been engaged, the all too real concerns of the community you've heard here tonight in great detail would have surfaced much earlier and this project altered in a timely manner.

[02:48:46] The Fern Street project was a great example, night and day, much more robust. It works. It works if you do it right. This didn't happen here. I also want to say about changing direction from previous councils. Ms. Miller, Mr. Stelly, and Ms. Schmidt are on record as asking staff what would happen if a future council who came to the bidding of this project wanted to change course.

[02:49:14] And staff said, well, you all make the best decision now. They will make the best decision they can then. No, you don't have to stick to what they said. And they even recognized that at the time. And rightly so. We're concerned about that. The city did not sign any contract or make a commitment to repay expended concession funds.

[02:49:36] There is no such thing as a binding contract on this project. It'd actually be great if there were, because then we would know what the repayment terms are, if there are any, wouldn't we? Moreover, in the MOA that governs the concession fund in general, there is an option in black and white to actually cancel if a project comes in over budget.

[02:49:58] VDOT doesn't want you to build this just to avoid some threat of repayment. In fact, it doesn't want you to build it or not build it. It's your decision. They're not going to put the thumb on the scale by threatening repayment. They will help you once you make the decision to figure out what needs to be repaid.

[02:50:15] That's their job. That's what they told me. It's not all these histrionics about payback, I think, are overwhelming you. Thank you. Hello, I'm Susan Kyler, 9742 Cardinal.

[02:50:40] I was not going to comment tonight until residents forwarded me some emails from an elected official that contained misinformation about the George Snyder Trail. And still I wasn't going to comment until the elected official posted the same misinformation on Facebook.

[02:50:56] I will address only the salient points now that have not been previously noted by others, I hope, and the other points offline because you cannot build anything on misinformation. It is not true that the

George Snyder Trail is, quote, has been part of a regional trail connectivity plan since the 1990s, unquote.

[02:51:13] It was strictly a city affair and a walking trail and not a biking trail. Yes, there have been years of delay that increased construction costs. Everything is increasing in cost, and the city's taking of the private property for GST has taken a very long time. However, whether the city has a strong record of delivering multimillion-dollar projects on time and on budget is debatable.

[02:51:35] Let's look at the timeline. 2015 to 2017, VDOT did not approve the GST for smart-scale funding because it did not meet transportation priorities. Using a much lower bar than smart-scale, NVTAA recommends and CTB approves the GST for concession funds.

[02:51:52] The GST estimated cost is \$13.96 million, of which \$360,000 is federal money. Also in 2017, the city issues its first multimodal plan, which shows the GST as a proposed trail. It does not include the GST as a connection to the cross-county trail.

[02:52:10] 2020, the GST design is modified to include bridges. The cost increases to \$17.6 million, and the federal portion increases to \$300,000, \$95,000. 2002, GST design is modified to comply with federal ADA accessible requirements and to connect to the cross-county trail.

[02:52:29] The cost increases to \$20.6 million. 2025, the lower of the two bids comes in higher than funds appropriated and the cost increases to \$24.9 million for a 1.7-mile trail to accommodate the difference and add project management and other costs.

[02:52:46] Yes, residents value environmental health and community benefits of accessible trails, but not in the abstract, not when the trail will be built on floodplains and in resource protection areas in violation of the Chesapeake Bay Act. The state is spending millions of dollars to preserve our wild spaces.

[02:53:02] The county has said transportation projects should only be built in RPAs as a last resort when there is no other alternative to meet the pressing need. There are alternatives to the GST, including using existing roads, but they were not explored by the city. No, the \$9.5 million grant for the GST extension is not at risk if the GST does not proceed.

[02:53:24] The extension improves Fairfax Boulevard so the project can proceed with or without the GST. Canceling a questionable project, an unnecessary project, will likely enhance and not, as it is asserted, jeopardize the credibility. It would be irresponsible to build a GST on misinformation.

[02:53:41] Thank you. Good evening and Happy New Year. I know it's pretty tough for each one of you sitting here to make that decision.

[02:53:59] And I stand here as, obviously I had to state my name, I'm sorry about that, Faiza Alam 10112 Radcliffe Manor Drive. I stand here as a teacher, and I know I've spoken before, and that's my job as a teacher to repeat what I teach.

[02:54:15] So I've been teaching for 30 years now as a science teacher, and I support trails. I tell my students, 600 of my students, I mean, of our Katherine Johnson are right now in the middle of designing an eco-stewardship project in which they have to show an impact, human impact, reduction of human impact, and how it impacts the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

[02:54:40] where we live and what we do here impacts that and i keep telling them that you know we need to look at the whole footprint they actually have calculated their own human footprint in terms of transportation water use and everything we talk here i'm not gonna dispute for and against the gst that's

not my reason to stand here today we need to i have a question what is a trail i think we have lost the definition of a trail is trail to preserve the wooded

[02:55:12] trees and path and go through that or destroy it and make a concrete where does it serve the purpose will the people stop going to work using their cars and start biking in this if we make this concrete with the destruction i have we have got this money from vdot yes we have got a gift we take it we lose it we take that money yes but what are the future maintenance of this we have

[02:55:47] approved, the council before has approved stormwater utility fee. Why? Because it was an issue in the city, and it is an issue, and the cost of maintaining everything is only going up and up, right? This maintenance of this is only going to go up. Will it create more runoff? I don't know the answer.

[02:56:12] Experts can tell me, but my science background says yes, it will. If we do deforestation, It will increase erosion, runoff, and yes, now we will increase the stormwater utility fee. City citizens are already hurting with the cost of living going up.

[02:56:34] Is this a need or is this a want? Do we have to, if we don't do this trail, will we be really worse? Will we really destroy the city? Or are we leaving the freeze and protecting the environment for the future generation to come as our forefathers left for us?

[02:56:53] that's the question for you all today thank you is there anybody else in the room that would like to speak on this item okay is um uh yes we'll have a five minute recess we'll be back in five

[02:57:23] minutes right we are back and i would like at this time to close the public hearing is there

[03:06:51] a motion council member hardy chandler i moved to approve the supplemental appropriation resolution in the amount of \$4,600,000 from Transform 66 Outside the Beltway concession funding for the George Snyder Trail Project.

[03:07:08] Second. A motion has been made by Council Member Hardy Chandler and seconded by Council Member Amos. Is there any discussion on the motion? I'm going to guess that there probably is. Council Member Bates. Thank you. So I've spoken before about the fact that this project would produce a shared use path compliant with state guidelines where one does not exist right now along what is perhaps one of, if not the most busy corridors in the city.

[03:07:43] And it would provide a direct connection to the Jerry Connolly Cross County Trail via the Wilcoxon Trail and the George Snyder Extension Project, which is a separate project that has been funded and is not simply designating sidewalks as shared use paths.

[03:07:59] It is constructing shared use paths along Fairfax Boulevard from this project to the Wilcoxon Trail with the crossing at the crosswalk. Now, I've never supported canceling the project, but I have supported building only the portion west of Fairwoods Parkway.

[03:08:16] However, if I could go back and change things, after the January 2024 vote, and this is how long I've been voting on this project, this is how long this decision has been before us. It wasn't something that was just sprung on us over the course of a couple months. It's been before us, you know, most of the time I've been on the council.

[03:08:36] On this, the 2024 vote on this option failed, I would have pushed forward with only the full trail. I have been so disappointed by much of the rhetoric surrounding this project, and particularly by the article that was retroactively designated an op-ed by the publisher despite it appearing on the front page

with no such label or disclosure of the recent candidacy of one of the authors which heavily focused on this very project the article falsely claimed that our staff had misled us regarding the project agreement from which it took a small section out of context in which i read a more extensive excerpt from word for word last meeting i have complete faith

[03:09:16] in the integrity and competence of our staff and I've seen their dedication and objectivity firsthand. There is no place in civic discourse for baseless attacks on our staff and our neighbors when we want the best for our city. Other comments? Councilmember McQuillan. This is a very difficult vote obviously for all of us. It's not one that I take lightly. I've spent significant time

[03:09:50] reviewing the record, the data, the long-term implications of this decision. I support Trails. I support connectivity and accessible infrastructure, but I also have a responsibility to evaluate whether a project, as currently designed and priced, remains the most responsible choice for our community.

[03:10:10] This past Saturday, I visited the future trail alignment in person during active rainfall. I wanted to observe the stormwater runoff conditions following the recent stream restoration. Seeing the site under real conditions reinforced the environmental, maintenance, and safety complexities associated with this project.

[03:10:35] The George Schneider Trail concept dates back to the early 2000s and was incorporated into the city's 2035 comprehensive plan. I know this because I went back and watched every single video on our city website archive page that had anything to do with George Schneider Trail.

[03:10:56] I wanted to see for myself from the very beginning what led to this point. Over more than a decade, it has undergone repeated study, redesign, and public discussion. By September 8, 2020, the project had reached 60% design.

[03:11:15] At that meeting, council members Harmon, Lim, Yee, Miller, and Ross all raised concerns about environmental impacts, safety, maintenance backlog, and rapidly increasing costs, which were already approaching roughly \$7 million per mile based on the design at that time.

[03:11:37] This was never a simple endorsement, but an acknowledgment of trade-offs. When bids were received, I'm sorry, subsequent revisions reduced the project footprint and lowered estimated tree impacts from 42% to 28%.

[03:11:53] However, those changes added complexity, including additional bridges, boardwalks, grading, and alignment modifications. As a result, total project costs increased to \$17.6 million. When bids were received in 2025, they came in roughly \$4.6 million over the available funding.

[03:12:16] Once construction management, VDOT oversight, and contingency costs are included, the total project cost now exceeds \$20 million. While the exact per mile figure varies depending on how costs are allocated, what's clear is the cost per mile has increased substantially.

[03:12:33] from early estimates. City staff deserve credit for securing significant outside funding, including more than \$13.6 million from I-66 outside beltway concessionaire funds and CMAQ allocations. That work has been strong and diligent. However, tonight's decision is not just about construction costs. ADA-compliant shared use paths require ongoing operational commitments, including debris removal, vegetation management, snow and ice clearing, surface upkeep

[03:13:09] inspections, and liability mitigation. Available data suggests annual maintenance costs beginning around \$25,000 and increasing over time, creating permanent obligations in our operating budget that compete with public safety, stormwater, sidewalks, and course services. This project has also required multiple additional funding requests. In mid-2024, an additional \$3 million was requested as cost estimates increased. Now an additional \$4.6 million is required to award the current bid.

[03:13:44] Repeated cost escalation is a signal we cannot ignore. This vote is not a rejection of trails or accessibility. It is a vote for responsible planning and right-sized solutions. Connectivity can be improved through lower cost faster to implement alternatives one such option which i have not heard at all through this entire discussion is amending our sidewalk ordinance to explicitly allow cyclists to use sidewalks in areas where roadway conditions are hazardous

[03:14:18] or unsafe this approach is already used in many jurisdictions and would require minimal funding It could be implemented quickly and would provide meaningful east-west connectivity without committing the city to a highly engineered project with escalating capital and long-term operational costs.

[03:14:36] Responsible governance requires us to reassess when facts change. Cost escalation, environmental complexity, and long-term obligations matter. We owe it to current residents and future generations to weigh those realities carefully.

[03:14:52] For this reason, for these reasons, I will not be supporting appropriating funds for this project. Councilmember Amos? No, I appreciate it, and I'll just be brief. I wanted to say thank you to everyone who spoke.

[03:15:09] Obviously, this is a very passionate subject. Nice crash course for our new city manager. Welcome to your first official meeting. When I first heard about the trail, which was 2024, I was like, oh, it's a trail, no biggie. And then next thing I know, it stuck around for quite a while.

[03:15:26] And it turns out there were a lot of interested parties. And granted, from where I grew up in Germany, for example, we have trails everywhere, often around the size of this. It's not a shocker. Hawaii, there's a lot of natural trails where you don't see trails as extensive as this one or as large.

[03:15:43] And so it's been an interesting perspective to listen to the community, hear your feedback. And it's a rare topic where everyone is, to some degree, correct. And I think we tend to forget that.

[03:15:59] You can like trails, you can even like this trail, but acknowledge that there are environmental concerns with it. And I think that's completely fair and valid. And so I don't want that to get lost as we progress forward because whenever this subject comes up, we tend to lose our neighborhood spirit and we tend to go after one another with such vitriol and that doesn't need to be the case.

[03:16:21] And so I initially opposed this project and then I was actually intending on supporting the third option back in June until I heard the public testimony from both supporters and detractors who pretty much said, we don't want the third option. Either go the full thing or cancel it. And so I decided to support the full thing. And I won't get into money. If you've heard me speak before, you know very well how I feel about that. From a developer perspective, from my day job, which I've been in a year to today, when it comes to pro formas and financing, if I were to apply for financing from

[03:17:00] either state bonds or federal for a 9% or 4% LIHTC deal, and then canceled the project after I was rewarded the funds, they would have some concerns. And that's something that does rest with me and

that I have to take into consideration. So regardless of what happens, there's going to be some risk. And, you know, I hope I'm wrong. I really do. And even during this past year, there's been surveys, the community survey, park survey. And I know that part of the question is, what is a trail? That's a good question to ask. But in our community and park surveys, both of

[03:17:36] them cite that people do want trails. And that's something that we do have to contend with as a council and that we're trying to figure out. When it comes to crime and trash, which is in some of the testimony tonight, I do want to acknowledge that most, if not nearly all, studies highlight that actually trails lead to often a reduction in crime. And then with trash pickup, similarly.

[03:18:01] So while I do intend on supporting this, I want us to acknowledge that there's legitimacy to everything that everyone said in this room today but i also agree that it's time to move on we've dealt with this long enough we keep going at each other's throats and personally i think this is an unhealthy thing for our community to keep prolonging and so let's get it done councilmember hall thank you i had a small statement prepared but i left it on my home computer so i'm going to do my best to just wing it and uh we'll go from there um i do first of all want to thank

[03:18:41] everyone who has sent emails over the past year, those who have come out to speak not just at this meeting but at previous meetings, those who have spoken up at budget concerns, those who have, you know, tracked me down at a coffee shop just to talk about this project. Whether you're for it or against it, I do want to thank you sincerely for being an involved participant in your community, in your neighborhood, and in your city because we don't always get that, especially in other cities and towns across Virginia. We had nothing like this in Delaware where I grew up. I mean, people didn't go to meetings like this, even though I'm sure they had them, but we just didn't do that.

[03:19:18] So this is a whole new experience. And I think it says a lot for our community. I will also agree that this has been a huge burden and a huge thorn in the side of our community. I think it has split communities, it's split neighbors, it's split friends.

[03:19:38] You know, if it's kind of like politics, it seems, where if you're not on exactly the same page sometime at some day, it's like your friends don't want to talk to you anymore just because you might disagree on one thing. And I refuse personally to let a trail be something that's going to separate me from people that I care about and I thought care about me.

[03:20:00] So with that, I do understand that residents want trails per our survey. I want trails and I answered our survey. So I was one of those respondents. And when I think of a trail, and from what I've heard from many of you, is that when you think of a trail, you think of Daniel's Run Woods.

[03:20:17] You think of a trail that runs through the woods, that looks like it belongs there, that does not have these huge walls to protect you from the side of a hill or a mountain or to keep you from falling off the side of something into this stream restoration area.

[03:20:37] That, to me, is not a trail. By definition, I guess it may be the fact that it requires transportation dollars to get us to this trail really makes me wonder, is it a trail or not? So, you know, what this started out as with Parks and Rec and with all of the other individuals that went into this truly was a trail.

[03:21:00] It was a stone dust trail, \$200,000, and I would love to get us back to that option. back to an option where if you want to ride a bike, you can go along Cardinal Road. You can go along a designated area that is paved and has an opportunity for bikes. If you also want to walk or hike, you have some other

more rugged options. The issue of accessibility I know has been brought up a number of times. And months ago, probably even a year ago at this point almost, I did reach out to our Parks and Rec Department and asked about the wheelchairs that you can go on in order

[03:21:38] to go into rugged terrain and while we were away over Christmas break one of the friends that we were with she hurt her knee and she had to go in a wheelchair we were at the beach we went and we found the little tent where the rescue people were and they put her in a wheelchair with these giant wheels and they wheeled her down to the water and we were able to let her enjoy the beach let her enjoy the pool just like everybody else was you know I it was a temporary wheelchair for her fortunately, but from what I've heard from people that have durable equipment like that, they don't want to put it on a trail. They don't want it to be subject to getting hurt or getting

[03:22:15] harmed. So the fact that Fairfax County also is no longer doing paved trails in forest area, to me, is a big concern. I think that we can be a leader and say, you know what, let's stop this. And it doesn't mean that we're not a good partner or not a good leader if we choose to go a different direction than you personally might think. On the flip side, I would say that that shows that maybe we're a good leader in our community supporting other voices or other ideas or

[03:22:48] other suggestions. Council Member Hall's suggestion about the sidewalks and potentially changing the ordinance. That could be a game changer. Is it something that everybody wants? Probably not. Will we know? No, because we don't talk to everybody, but we certainly try.

[03:23:08] I'm sure I'm rambling here, and I don't really mean to, but all I ask is that this one moment, I think I said this the last time we voted on this trail, this one moment in time should not define who you are individually, what you individually stand for.

[03:23:24] There's so much more that makes up you and our community, and I truly am ready to put this to bed, but in a different way, and so I will not be voting to support this trail. Thank you. Councilmember Hardy-Chandler? Thank you.

[03:23:40] I, too, really appreciate all of the input and engagement from the community on this, and both in terms of coming here and speaking and in terms of emails and other ways that people have expressed their positions.

[03:23:58] For me tonight, one of the most poignant times, although I listened very closely to everyone, one of the most poignant times was just hearing from the people who were here from the very beginning and talking about how they still are committed to this after seemingly decades.

[03:24:17] For me, the question isn't whether or not this is a trail. The trail is about something much bigger. There's a saying, I believe it was Maya Angelou, who said, don't let facts get in the way of truth. And I really believe that this is about, the trail is sort of an example of things like promises, things like reliability, things like credibility, things like partnership, thinking larger.

[03:24:49] It's about acknowledging the history and the origins of what brought this before us. And I do believe it is about investing in the infrastructure for things that will be a part of the future. So I do echo the sentiments that there is truth in all of the positions.

[03:25:07] But for me, the trail is certainly important in and of itself, but it's more important in terms of signaling something larger than ourselves. And I feel like our council needs to be challenged to think

beyond ourselves and what this means in a much broader way, both in terms of the story behind this trail, but also the future we want to build, also in terms of governance decisions.

[03:25:38] I really think that we do have to do a better job acknowledging those who came before us on this council and certainly preparing for the decisions that future councils will make. I will be supporting the appropriation. I believe it's the right thing not only for this trail, but in terms of good governance.

[03:25:57] Councilmember Peterson? Oops, I'll be brief. It's hard to really add too much to what everybody else has said. I think it's very important to thank everybody who attended, not just who came this evening, but obviously all the people who are watching and those of you who submitted video testimony.

[03:26:20] It's really great. All of that information is extremely helpful, and it has been all along the way. So I'll tell you that one of the difficulties that I had with the setup for this public hearing this evening is that it was based on the premise that we had only four options, and that's clearly not the case.

[03:26:43] We have a great many other options. We began a process last year to begin looking at those very much with the agreement and encouragement of VDOT and the community, and people were genuinely excited about the opportunity to look at different approaches here that could reconcile the conflicts that so clearly exist with this project in comparison with the desires that people have to have the kind of trail you've heard talked about this evening, something very simple.

[03:27:13] and at the same time be able to make improvements on the way we can use bikes on our streets in the city. Unfortunately, that process was terminated very quickly to this very day. We don't know why we did our best at the council to try to understand why it didn't happen. It's past history. We ended up with where we are today. And I think what I've heard this evening is that that has been seen as very difficult proposition for most people in the city and that has been the case for a very long time I do think it's time to move on and I think that we

[03:27:53] have really a lot of good reasons not only to move on here today but to look forward to other opportunities and options I will just close by saying that it's a bit fitting that we will be making a decision this evening through an appropriations vote. And just a reminder that an appropriations vote ended the Vietnam War.

[03:28:21] And I think it may be time to end this war. We've been at this a long time. It's time to move on. One of my brothers was number one in the last draft of the Vietnam War. He did not go to Southeast Asia because of the Hatfield McGovern amendment on an appropriation. He was greatly relieved that he didn't have to go to war. But it did not stop his patriotism, and it did not stop his service to his country. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, and he served many

[03:28:56] years. We have a very dear friend in the same situation, the exact same time, who went on to become a Navy fighter pilot, active duty on carriers. He served his country. He was a patriot. Neither of them wanted to go to that war. Neither of them believed in it, but they believed in their country, just as we all here believe in our community. They served because they thought there was a better way. They thought there was a better venue for them to serve. And I think there's a better venue for us all here in the community to approach our interest in trails

[03:29:32] and our stewardship. This particular course of action that we've been now looking at for a great many years does not appear to be that course. There are other courses out there, and we can recommit

ourselves to looking at new opportunities by moving on and i will not be appropriating excuse me i will not be um supporting the appropriation um for those reasons and i think one other that was alluded to by a number of speakers but i i don't think it's a great idea

[03:30:04] to build a project simply because you'll be penalized if you don't and i don't think vdot wants that i don't think we want that i don't think that's the right way to proceed there is in fact a better way for us all to move forward. Thank you. Okay, so we'll take a roll call vote, but prior to calling the roll, I want to remind people that I do not have a vote. As the mayor of the city, our charter does not allow me to have a vote. I do want to address the fact that I do sit

[03:30:39] on NVTa, which recommended us getting this VDOT concessionaire funding, and somebody showed a lovely picture of Bill Cutler and I earlier. We sit next to each other at NVTa. We call it a working relationship. I guess some people call it collusion. But anyway, NVTa did recommend to the CTB that we get this money. And to intimate that there is not going to be any financial burden,

[03:31:10] I mean, I just, I want to be clear that we operated in good faith with NVTa. NVTa went to for us and to say that we can simply start over with another project is true but understand that we have reneged on a commitment that we made and and there are always repercussions for the decisions that we make it's not my decision to make so with that we will simply call the roll councilmember Amos

[03:31:50] aye councilmember Hall no councilmember Hardy Chandler aye councilmember Peterson no council member Bates aye council member McQuillan no motion failed three to three mr. Lubkerman so where that leaves you is you have not appropriated additional funds sufficient to award the contract that is the next item on the agenda staff's recommendation is based on this vote that you consider an out-of-turn amendment to the agenda this evening to remove item number 9a which is consideration of the contract and

[03:32:28] substitute it with a consideration of a resolution canceling the George Snyder Trail is there do we need a no someone would need to make a motion and they would need to be seconded and voted on to amend the agenda okay is there a motion councilmember Peterson I move to do exactly what mr. Lubcom and just suggest okay so to clarify for the record to remove to replace item 9a with consideration of a resolution to cancel the George Snyder Trail project and the VDOT number which you

[03:33:05] can which you can put in there I do have a copy of the resolution since it was not on the printed agenda I think it appropriate that I read it into the record because obviously the public will not have had a chance to see it and we'll make a copy of the resolution available either way depending on how it happens it's not very long so if if the council will indulge okay resolution to cancel the george snyder trail project v.upc 112816 whereas the city's adopted comprehensive plan parks and recreation strategic plan and other adopted planning documents recommend construction of the george snyder trail an off-road two-mile paved trail between chambridge road and approximately

[03:33:42] draper drive north of fairfax boulevard and whereas the city pursued and received i-66 outside the beltway funding in 2017 and in 2025 2026 yeah 2026 so we'll need to change that as well as congestion, mitigation, and air quality funding, CMAQ, to complete this project.

[03:34:01] And whereas the city executed a project agreement with VDOT to administer this project in accordance with the guidelines for locally administered projects on May 8, 2018, and whereas the city conducted the project design process, including public engagement and a formal public hearing in

October 2020, and whereas the city developed final engineering plans and commenced the right-of-way acquisition process, And whereas the city council has now determined that it wishes to cancel the project, and whereas the city council is aware of the actual and potential financial costs associated with project cancellation, now therefore be it resolved by the city council of the city of Fairhurst, Virginia, that city staff is directed to undertake all necessary action to cancel

[03:34:39] the George Snyder Trail project, UPC-112-816. Is there a second? Second. Okay. There has been a motion. And mayor, just for the public certification on this item, the mayor can break the tie if need be great um just great so we have uh is there discussion on the motion council member

[03:35:12] peterson uh recognizing that we've just seen this uh so forgive me for asking um an obvious thing or two here but is this the minimum amount of information that needs to go into this resolution Correct. It is identical with the change to adding the second tranche of I-66 outside the beltway funding to one that was before the council in 2024.

[03:35:47] It's the minimum required to terminate the project. Any other comments on the motion, Councilmember Bates? i just find the earlier comment about the appropriateness of this having ended on appropriation vote interesting given that as as was mentioned the mayor cannot vote on an appropriation vote despite the fact that the mayor was the only one of us up here who received a majority of all ballots cast in her favor in the last election any other discussion on the motion

[03:36:24] before we take a roll call vote okay uh council member peterson just a uh maybe a logistical question Mr. Lubcom and my understanding is that under any circumstance if we do wish to restart a project for instance to pursue other alternatives that would involve a cancellation of the trail staff has been told by VDOT that at this point there are no modifications to this project

[03:37:02] permitted and that any new project even if it's a modification of portions of this will be treated as a new project application and run through the process for funding and everything else through ordinary course. And I think the parlance for that is a project restart, is that correct?

[03:37:22] How does that? Ms. Sanford is coming up. Good evening. We would treat this as a new project that would go through the two-year program, go through a concept planning phase, and then if the council wanted to proceed with the project at that point, it would go through the funding application.

[03:37:43] So it would be as if it were a new project from scratch. Okay, and back to the earlier point, in order to do that, we would need to cancel this. Not necessarily, because we had talked about this earlier, that doing a different type of project does not preclude continuing with the George Snyder Trail.

[03:38:08] So this project could continue. In addition, there could be a second project or another project along the lines of what you had talked about earlier, having an on-road trail. The other question, without necessarily getting into the details, is that by canceling the project now, we would immediately stop incurring additional expenses in the existing project?

[03:38:41] Immediately is a strong term. We would be turning the spigot off because there are, without getting into details, there are expenses that are not controlled by the city related to aspects of the project that we're continuing up until this date.

[03:39:00] But yes, generally, we would be stopping the expenditure of additional funds to the maximum level possible going forward. And that, again, without necessarily getting into details, could reduce our

exposure by maybe several hundred thousand dollars.

[03:39:19] I won't characterize that publicly. There's an appropriate venue for having those discussions. Respectfully, just not in this venue. All right. Council Member Hardy-Chandler. And I believe our financial officer talked about having to...

[03:39:47] Okay. If I could just... Okay, sorry. If I could just ask that, yes, there are consequences to a decision to cancel, just like there are consequences to a decision not to cancel. There isn't the cancellation of, as it says here, financial costs that may be otherwise associated.

[03:40:07] Correct. Okay. Any other discussion before we take a roll call vote? Councilmember Bates. And I've asked this before, but just to clarify, even if another project is started, there's no guarantee that that project would be funded.

[03:40:29] And even if it is, it would probably be a lot longer before it ends up being completed. Is that correct? I apologize. We were talking about a procedural issue. Could you ask your question again? There's no guarantee that if a new project is started that it would be funded and even if it is it would be much longer Most likely before that project is completed. Is that correct? Yes as as Miss Sanford stated earlier There's the whole process of getting the application the funding

[03:41:03] Going through the six-year plan and etc. So you are correct. Thank you anything else before we could have just one moment certainly mr. i'm glad i have people listening the current motion on the floor is simply to add this to the agenda and to remove the contract so that needs to be voted on first and then there'll be

[03:41:38] a vote on consideration of the resolution so council member peterson would you like to make a motion to amend the agenda the motion we just haven't voted on it it's already on the the motion has already been made and okay seconded perfect so we're taking a roll call vote on amending the agenda there was a second second right so all of that's happened so we can call the roll for amending the agenda yes all right councilmember McClellan aye councilmember Bates aye councilmember

[03:42:15] Peterson aye councilmember Hardy Chandler aye councilmember Hall aye councilmember Amos aye motion passed unanimously and so now it would be appropriate for someone to make a motion to approve the resolution as presented. Is there a motion, Councilmember Peterson?

[03:42:32] I move to approve the resolution as presented. Second. Second. Okay, we have a motion that has been made by Councilmember Peterson and seconded by Councilmember McQuillan. Any discussion on this motion before we take a roll call vote? Looks like we're going to take a roll call vote. Councilmember Peter, sorry, Councilmember McQuillan? Aye.

[03:42:56] Councilmember Bates? Aye. Councilmember Peterson? Aye. Councilmember hardy-chandler no council member hall i council member amos nay motion passed four to two mr lukiman that concludes the george snyder trail discussion that concludes that we can go on to second general public comment is there any is there anybody in the room that wants to talk about

[03:43:35] anything that was not on the agenda for public hearings yeah yeah you come up

[03:43:48] Good evening. My name is Beth Ayanetta. I live at 10916 Berry Street in the Westmore community, and I'm here to talk about the Westmore community recently. As you know, the carts have been distributed and delivered, and the Westmore school site was used as the staging area for that project.

I want to first say a big thank you to the project manager, Melissa McDonald, who spoke to me and was kind of a point of contact as things were happening and kind of going wrong.

[03:44:19] Overall, she's great. She handled some of the projects, some of the problems that popped up. I will say that a Fairfax water contractor knocked our power out on Thursday because they are using the Westmore School site as a constructive laydown area.

[03:44:36] On Friday, the 18 wheelers that were coming through on Chestnut pulled down power on two different residents. Hardy Chandler, you might, we're neighbors with them, so you might have seen it. And so my point is that I am going to be speaking with park staff and do it through other means, but a conversation on how that Westmore quote-unquote park is used needs to happen sooner than later.

[03:45:01] We are basically using it as a city extra site for storage, construction laydown areas, delivery carts, and things of that nature, and it's really not appropriate for the things. We use it for parking for the leaf trucks when the city site floods.

[03:45:19] We're using it for things that are not parks. And I know it's formally not a park, but I think we need to have a strong conversation about how we're going to be using that and make sure its future is solidified as a feature and an asset to our community and not someplace we can just go dump some things when the city needs a place to put it.

[03:45:38] It's deep in our neighborhood. It's not really an appropriate place to be used for that. and so I really welcome your help in getting those conversations moving forward with the appropriate staff. But a big shout-out to Melissa McDonald, who did an excellent job in troubleshooting these problems as they happened, and so I just wanted to go on the record and make sure she gets some recognition for that and the hard work that she's doing.

[03:45:58] So thank you very much. Appreciate your night, and talk to you later. I would like to say that many times we don't take the moment to appreciate what is happening in the city.

[03:46:16] There's a lot good is happening in the city, And we absolutely need to reflect. I mean, I wrote a note to my principal that I need to pause and appreciate what you're doing in writing. And I would like to do that for the city public works.

[03:46:32] And it goes hand in hand with the entire Department of Public Works. The way our Fairfax City is maintained, you cross the city limits and you can see the curbs where vegetation is growing. You can tell where the Fairfax City begins and ends. So a big applause to the public works staff who maintains the common ground.

[03:46:51] It's a lot of work to do that. And I truly feel proud of being a Fairfax City resident. Being part of the ESC and seeing the work of Stephanie and Melissa and Anna, I'm so proud that I'm part of that committee. Such big work is being done there by the members, and this whole cart has been a bit controversial.

[03:47:14] But once it comes, it is going to be a great thing. And I know you people have seen my picture with the card. So, hey, yeah, you know, I was happy that I was part of that program. And thank you for everything you guys do. It's very tough. Whether you run for the election again or you don't, your effort, each one of you, has been appreciated.

[03:47:35] Because the amount of time you spend until 12 and 1 that you sit here while we lay in beds is hard. It's not easy. And then to read those piles of files that you guys go through, it's hard. So please do understand that when we come with a passion, each one of us have our passions.

[03:47:53] We shouldn't be divided. This should bring us together, that we are all humans. We have our passions, and we need to just be together as one human being. Thank you. Anybody else in the room that would like to speak?

[03:48:15] We can move on to future meeting topics. Good evening, Mayor and Council. Starting with January 27th, 2026 regular meeting, we have a proclamation acknowledging Black History Month.

[03:48:36] We have a Metropolitan Washington Council government presentation on the history of COG and DMV moves. On consent, introduction of an ordinance amending Chapter 38, Environment, Article 2, noise to amend the noise regulations in the city. Consideration of adoption of the resolution for the city council policy for remote participation in meetings.

[03:48:58] consideration of resolution of endorsement of the DMV moves funding proposal for public hearing public hearing and council action on the adoption of the urban forest master plan for work session FY 2026 second quarter financial review discussion on revising the fee for the use of the publicly public city-owned electric vehicle charging stations and before I move on to the next couple meetings any questions on the 27th council member peterson just a quick schedule check if i might

[03:49:34] it sounds like we are not doing a special meeting on january 20. so the next time we're to be together we'll be in two weeks 27th correct okay great um then the urban forest master plan we had i think a long session on that earlier i think the question i have on that we're um being offered to and expected to take action on the adoption of the plan i'm not sure what sort of additional information we will be receiving about it but it's a very very lengthy and detailed plan and

[03:50:15] i probably need to spend more time looking at it but would appreciate any assistance i might get an understanding what it means practically speaking for it to be adopted by the city again there were many many many recommendations in there and if there's just a little bit more that could be provided to put this in context of what an adoption of the plan does and does not mean i i personally would find it helpful i don't know about other members of the committee but it was a pretty big document so okay thank you i think we will talk to staff about how we can socialize that with you

[03:50:52] to give you a better understanding other comments on this particular item council member harder channel uh you just finished uh going over the 27th and i might be getting ahead of myself but i um requested a work session on the status of older adults and the older independent adults um do we and we talked about potentially scheduling that earlier in the year rather than later

[03:51:25] is there a projected date for uh that work session topic on the horizon or is that i'm gonna ask not identified yet to zip to chime in on that one i can chime in oh yeah um so miss sebastian she sent an email after five today requesting that it be added for april 7th thank you perfect i just had that time to update the future list all right i have a couple of other things that i'll ask

[03:52:02] offline council member peterson just one more about january 27th but i think it is going to repeat in the subsequent meetings, and that is budget. Kind of the where and when and what in terms of our schedule for doing budget determinations, I don't have the date in my mind exactly, but I know it will sneak right up on us in terms of when we have to establish that initial real estate tax ceiling, et cetera.

[03:52:36] Anything you can say now about what that looks like in terms of where and when the budget starts to appear? Well, definitely on the 24th, I'm going to look to JC to give us more specific information on that.

[03:52:53] But I know we have our meeting on the 24th. We've committed to, just so you know, to getting with mayor and council ahead of the city manager's proposed budget, which is something we've done in the past, but we intend to do moving forward in the future.

[03:53:09] But aside from that, I'm going to let JC speak to more specific dates if he's ready. Sure. I think the managers basically covered the talking points that I was going to reiterate of yes February 24th the manager will present his budget for about five to six weeks thereafter of meetings We will go have a work session every single work session along with some public hearings that are required The work sessions very similar to last year will have specific topics that we can cover Council can definitely add or subtract to that and then as a manager stated this year similar to previous years

[03:53:45] We will be engaging with council via one-on-ones or one-on-twos prior to the 24th to sort of get some feedback and then, if need be, try to adjust accordingly, depending on what the manager feels is appropriate. Does that answer your question, council member?

[03:54:04] I think so. So my quick translation is we're going to get a head start. Yes, sir. Thank you. So moving on to very quickly the next two meetings on the third the work session joint meeting of the Planning Commission and City Council regarding the draft FY 2027 2031 CIP that speaks to another part of our process for budget joint discussion with environmental sustainability committee and programs that are associated with that program

[03:54:39] Solid Waste Management Plan update and then a discussion with city departments on assigned staffing tasks related to public safety and the ordinances and articles and chapters are listed there for the third. And I'll just quickly jump to the 10th update and discussion on the citywide level of service study, which will assess impacts and cost implications of new development on city services and infrastructure.

[03:55:04] Introduction of draft small area plan zoning ordinance amendments, discussion on the development of the green building policy, and discussion and update on the Willard-Sherwood Community Center. That's the next two meetings. Be happy to answer any questions associated with those meetings.

[03:55:21] Councilmember Peterson? The third is a packed agenda in terms of the information load and I would say quality. These are things we all have been looking forward to. I'm guessing there's going to be a lot of reading in advance.

[03:55:39] Probably, I know we'll be seeing presentations, but if there is reading that we're expected to do or would be helpful, given the volume of that, I would just ask that we have it as early as possible so that we can be prepped up. It's a lot of information, and we'll be in better shape, I think, to ask smart questions if we do that.

[03:55:58] Thank you. And then on February 10, item two, the introduction of the small area plan zoning amendments, just as soon as possible, whether it's this evening or some other time soon, it would be helpful to understand the gist of what is being proposed and why in terms of amendments and to get started early on the thought process around that.

[03:56:25] I know the small area planning process involves a lot of history and a lot of complexity, so I'd love to get a little bit of clarity on what exactly we're trying to accomplish and what we'll be looking at as part of that. Thank you.

[03:56:40] Any other comments on those items? Do we want to move further into the futures list at this point? Okay. All right. In that case, we will just go to manager's report out and then council comments.

[03:57:00] Mr. Alexander. Thank you again, Mayor and Council. Just within the last week, I want to thank everyone again for the warm welcome. Had a lot of contact and engagement with community, able to meet with council members, got to all the department heads, our school superintendent, constitutional officers.

[03:57:16] So we're making a lot of rounds, doing a lot of meeting and engagement starting out. So appreciate that. Also appreciate the work council put into the retreat last weekend. We'll be reporting back to you on some takeaways and deliverables associated with that.

[03:57:33] One thing that I've noticed is the volume of communication that we receive. And I know at times we've used a weekly update to communicate back to you on some of those communications that come in. I'd like to get on a cadence that's a little more aggressive in getting responses back to council when they come in.

[03:57:52] There's oftentimes a week that goes by before you receive some type of reply or response. So I'm going to try to, without objection, get that information to you more expediently, more quickly as we go. So that's a little bit of a change in that process.

[03:58:12] One final point, we brought it up earlier in terms of proclamation. The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. statute will return to City Hall this week honoring his legacy. Associated with the holiday, City Hall will be closed. Q bus service will run on a modified schedule Monday Tuesday Tuesday refuse and recycling will be picked up on Tuesday January 20th and that is my report for this evening thank you again okay we'll start with you councilmember McCullen councilmember Bates already said pretty much

[03:58:51] all I've meant to say other than I want to wish a happy belated law enforcement appreciation day to our law enforcement officers. Thank you. Council Member Peterson. I think the first thing I'd like to do is thank Melanie Zip for all the help that you have given us over the past year as we have gone through the process of bringing in a new permanent city manager.

[03:59:16] Dan, it's really, really good to have you, but Melanie, it's really, really good to have had you and everything you did to help us over that past year, which I found really helpful and done with a fair degree of grace. which was doubly helpful under the circumstances. So thanks again for all that.

[03:59:34] Just a kind of a regional note. So we serve, all of us, on various regional boards and commissions, and Mayor Reed and I both serve on transportation-related boards and commissions. I attended a couple of them this last few weeks.

[03:59:51] The Transportation Planning Board, I stepped in for the mayor on the Northern Virginia transportation commission nvtc i know the acronym but the words uh escape me i think that there just to pass on maybe two takeaways from those conversations that took place one is we're in a period of leadership transition and we're now looking at new people stepping into place at the state level but there's a lot of that filtering into various positions and it's particularly filtering into everything in the transportation network.

[04:00:27] So there are going to be a lot of new faces and a lot of new things discussed in different ways as a part of that. At the same time, the other big theme that came out on the environmental side of things, it is, I think, more necessary than ever for the local jurisdictions themselves, like the city of Fairfax, but other cities and counties and towns, to take direct action on the environment as it relates to transportation,

[04:01:05] as opposed to expecting the regional bodies to take that action. I think the environment we're operating in right now is pushing that leadership down to a lower level here. So I particularly appreciate everything we're talking about on the environmental front, you know, in the upcoming meetings we have, But really, the consideration of environment is about as front line as you can get right now.

[04:01:31] And I think it's going to stay front line for a while, although we are certainly looking forward to new state leadership. David Boulevard will be secretary, and that is certainly an enormous benefit to us here.

[04:01:46] But I just wanted to note that this is an area of sort of active recognition in these regional bodies right now, that we're living in a different world in terms of the need for us to step up to the plate on the environmental side. Thank you. House Member Hardy-Chandler?

[04:02:07] In addition to Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, we had the opportunity to attend the Fire Department's promotion and awards day, which was fantastic always.

[04:02:24] a great opportunity to hear the heroic stories of those who are serving our cities through the fire department and the volunteer fire department as well as the EMTs and really appreciate that. I want to, I feel a little bit compelled to issue both an apology and an invitation. An apology because I do believe that there are consequences to each council's legacy. And I believe that there will be consequences that future councils will certainly

[04:03:03] have to navigate. But I also want to issue an invitation because I do think that while it's very wonderful for people to acknowledge how difficult it is to be up here, I want to invite people who don't see themselves as being a part of city council to consider running this is that time when people are collecting signatures and getting on the ballot I do believe that there is room for a very holistic voice on this council so I definitely first of all if you haven't thought about it I really

[04:03:43] encourage you follow up with your engagement by serving your city in this way and and consider getting on the ballot and serving on City Council so Thank you councilmember Hall. Thank you I just really want to thank everyone up here and everyone that came out to speak tonight for your most cases professionalism your respect towards others and Just the way that we were able to have differing and disagreeing opinions and still be able to maintain A lot of decorum this evening. So I think that's really important and I think it speaks volumes for our community Thank you councilmember Amos

[04:04:22] Just echoing thanks to everyone who showed up today. Thank you, Dan. Welcome to the show. You probably won't see the room packed like that for a little while anyway, so sink or swim. Otherwise, letting folks know this upcoming Monday is MLK Junior Day.

[04:04:38] Volunteer Fairfax will be doing their day of service. Please go out, volunteer in your community, be a part. They're going to be doing events everywhere. I think this year they've done it at Sherwood before. I know they did it at NVCC, so I'm not sure where it's at this time. but you can just Google volunteer Fairfax and find it.

[04:04:56] You know what? I'll touch on that another time. I'm going to London tomorrow, so I will catch y'all in a week. So if I'm slow to respond, it's because I'm not allowed to take my city equipment with me. So my bad. And, well, spoilers, I'm buying a house. So I will be, you know, for those who complain about me renting in the city, I'll be a homeowner now.

[04:05:16] I pay taxes either way, but there you go. All right. Have a good one. So I'd like to offer congratulations to Delegate-elect Gretchen Boulava, who won this evening in her special election with 68% of the vote.

[04:05:32] She will be sworn in tomorrow morning when session starts in Richmond as our representative here in Fairfax City. Congratulations to Gretchen. As we close tonight's meeting, I want to share an important announcement. I will not be seeking re-election as mayor of Fairfax City in 2026.

[04:05:51] It's been an honor to serve in this role. Every day I have worked to uphold my oath of office and to serve this city to the very best of my ability. I intend to continue doing so for the remaining 351 days of my term. Sitting in this middle seat with two different city councils has given me a perspective that only 12 people in our city's history have held before me.

[04:06:12] No combination of thoughtfully considered words could accurately convey or effectively communicate the complexity of the last three years, so I won't try. What I will say is this, our city charter is outdated and ill-equipped to meet the demands of a modern 21st century community.

[04:06:32] There have been recommendations by charter commissions in the past to make changes since its adoption in 1966, but apparently no political will to actually do so. From my vantage point of occupancy, the chair I'm sitting in is broken. As I prepare to leave the seat for someone else, I am committing myself to being an agent of change and improving our system of governance.

[04:06:54] I was active in city affairs long before becoming mayor and will continue to speak up when I am no longer in elected office. I am deeply committed to supporting those who step forward to serve our democratic institutions at the local, state, and federal levels. Now more than ever, defending our country's founding principles requires engagement and effort beyond what many of us have been asked to give before.

[04:07:17] You will see me knocking on doors in 2026 elections on behalf of candidates I support, And I invite you to engage in conversations about how we can move Fairfax City forward toward a bright, healthy, and prosperous future. I care deeply about this community, its residents, its businesses, and the exceptional city staff whose dedication makes our quality of life the enemy of this region.

[04:07:42] To my colleagues on the dais, I look forward to working together through the end of our term. And with that, we are adjourned at 11.08 on Tuesday.



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