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Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Economic Initiatives Committee, Tuesday, September 19, 2023

Date	Tuesday, September 19, 2023
Place	Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Virginia
Length	1h 31m (video)

- Official meeting video (Fairfax County): https://video.fairfaxcounty.gov/player/clip/3021
- Official Board of Supervisors page (Fairfax County): https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-11-03. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:00] Good morning, and welcome to the September 19th meeting of the Board's Economic Initiatives Committee. I have a very interesting agenda, once again, for the committee.

[00:00:16] Before we get started, the meeting summary was circulated in advance. Did anybody have any questions or suggestions for revisions of that summary? If not, let it stand as a summary of our last meeting.

[00:00:36] The agenda today will have a very, I think, really interesting presentation on commercial revitalization murals. Staff's been working for some time on developing the concepts for a murals program for us here in Fairfax County.

[00:00:54] It would be a major piece of our placemaking approach to economic development and revitalization of our older communities especially. We're going to have an Investor Entrepreneur Forms Program proposal, and that's going to be presented virtually by Paula Serral, who is the Associate Vice President of Innovation and Economic Development at George Mason University, And it is a follow-up to a board matter that was done very recently, September 12th, asking that this be looked into.

[00:01:33] And finally, time permitting, and I think it will permit, but we will see. Board members have been provided a copy of the Local Economic Initiatives Project Status Report. Very interesting, something

we will review quickly and give you an opportunity to ask questions about if we have time.

[00:01:53] Otherwise, you have the report and you can take a look at it at your leisure. So unless someone has anything, before we get started, I will turn it over to Elizabeth Haag and for the presentation on the Commercial Revitalization Murals Program.

[00:02:15] Thank you so much. My name is Elizabeth Haag, and I am the director of the Community Revitalization Section in the Department of Planning and Development. So good morning, Chairman and members of the Board. Today, we are presenting a proposed mural program for the county's commercial revitalization districts and areas for your consideration.

[00:02:40] Now, in recent years, community revitalization has been exploring opportunities to use placemaking as a revitalization strategy to foster economic vibrancy in our commercial revitalization districts and areas.

[00:02:56] One facet of placemaking is to build on an area's unique assets and history through public art such as murals. Now, the board has previously expressed strong interest in encouraging murals in the community revitalization districts and areas, and so we have developed this proposal for your consideration.

[00:03:17] If the board should confirm that this proposal is on target, Our intention would be to come back to the board to seek funding through the Economic Opportunity Reserve Fund. Now, as with any new program, it is expected that as experience is gained, there may be need for refinements.

[00:03:36] Thus, we are proposing this program as a pilot initiative for the commercial revitalization districts and areas only. However, as experiences gained and lessons learned, we expect to share what we have learned for possible application in other parts of Fairfax County.

[00:03:56] So now I will turn the presentation over to Janae Padmore, who is the Community Revitalization Section's new placemaking planner. Take it away, Janae. Thanks, Liz.

[00:04:12] Good morning, Chairman McKay and members of the board. Our proposed program was developed by researching best practices and utilizing my prior experience working with DC Walls. We had in-depth conversations with Arch Fairfax to learn about their knowledge and practices in recruiting and retaining artists.

[00:04:32] We have interviewed numerous mural artists regarding their experience and preferred public art processes, and to obtain costs and requirements to develop murals. We have researched previously established mural programs and spoken with their coordinators.

[00:04:49] Additionally, we have utilized academic research to develop our approaches. We have also met with each of the supervisors who have a CRD or CRA in their district and have attempted to incorporate their suggested changes to the program.

[00:05:09] Murals as a placemaking tool assist in shaping the physical and social character of an area. For the purposes of this program, a mural is defined as a painting or work executed directly onto an exterior surface as accessible to the public without a commercial message.

[00:05:32] Murals can be part of a larger strategy to revitalize our older commercial districts in areas that can contribute to the economic competitiveness of these areas. Tools can be used to promote resources

and advantages of a locality, celebrate unique local aspects of a community, and create excitement and buzz about a place.

[00:05:59] We will be establishing a body to assist in forming recommendations for both the selection of a mural site and the selection of an artist for that site. It will be called the Site and Artist Selection Committee or S.A.S.C.

[00:06:16] The S.A.S.C. will have seven members. membership will be comprised of three persons: the Painted Fairfax Murals Program Manager, a representative from Arts Fairfax, and the CRS Section Director. There will be four rotating slots that will be specific to each CRD or CRA. This membership will be comprised of the property owner or the representative, a representative from corresponding supervisor's office, the revitalization program manager for that district, and a revitalization partner

[00:06:51] representative. A mural site must first be identified before an artwork can be commissioned. CRS staff will work with community stakeholders to identify potential sites as well as potential aesthetics and themes for these sites. Once a site has been chosen, CRS staff will confirm a property owner's willingness to have a mural on that building, then the SASC for that particular

[00:07:23] site will be formed. The SASC will have access to the artist database to identify three potential artists that can fulfill the mural criteria. The identified artist will be sent a call for submission, request that asks each artist to submit a concept to the committee. The submission must incorporate The artist's required community engagement and public education process.

[00:07:51] The SASC will select the project artist for the designated exterior surface. The artist will create a draft mural concept for review by the SASC. Zoning Administration will review the proposed mural concept to make a determination that it is not a sign.

[00:08:09] The design will be finalized and the SASC will make its final recommendation to the Director of DPD for approval. The mural then can be funded and installed. Finally, we will celebrate the mural's installation. It is essential that murals be seen as a strategy with longevity.

[00:08:33] All site owners that agree to a mural will be required to allow the mural to remain for a minimum of five years. This will be codified in a written agreement between the muralist and the county. The program will establish policies to address any damage or vandalism to a mural.

[00:08:52] All murals must display the painted Fairfax logo, which is still to be developed. We have researched the cost of various murals of different sizes and with different materials or techniques. To successfully attract artists for a specific site, we'll be paying three artists to submit presentations for the project for a total of $1,500, $500 per artist. The selected artist fee is estimated to range from $6,000 to $35,000,

[00:09:29] depending on the size and nature of the project. The fee will include materials, travel, work costs, public education, and mural touch-up for up to five years. A key component of our proposed program is that the community be engaged in the process of developing the mural design.

[00:09:49] To maximize our effort, we are budgeting $500 for the development and execution of a robust community engagement process. We are proposing to establish a pilot revitalization murals program with the goal of funding at least two murals per CRD or CRA. For cost estimation purposes, we are assuming one small and one large mural per CRD, which breaks

[00:10:24] down to approximately $8,000 to $37,000 depending based on their size. The total cost for two murals in each CRD or CRA is estimated to be $45,000. However, because the Richmond Highway CRD is so much larger than the other CRDs, we are proposing more funds for this area, $85,000. The total for the eight CRDs/CRAs is $400,000. However, we further assume that we can be successful in obtaining approximately 25% of the cost of these murals overall from

[00:11:03] grant funding. Thus, the estimated total requirement for this pilot program is $300,000. And with that, we will take any questions you may have. Thank you very much. That was an excellent presentation. Everything we need to touch on, I think. I guess I would like to ask a question before I turn it over. In a lot of towns and communities, I've seen high school students

[00:11:40] perhaps do a mural, are we going to have an opportunity through this program to have, you know, whether it's a community group or a high school group or what have you, something other than a paid artist to do murals, is that going to be part of this program?

[00:12:00] Someone would encourage? So we certainly want to draw from local artists to the extent possible. And so I think we would put that out and see if we could, from the local schools to the local colleges, part of this program is to create an artist database that can identify potential muralists or art programs that could produce that.

[00:12:34] So I think when we go, when we find a site, depending on the site and whether that is appropriate, we could absolutely fold that in as part of this program. But we know that some of the muralists, as we've shown in the slides, you know, do expect to get paid for their work.

[00:12:56] And so we do have the funding requirement to make this happen. Okay, well, I'm going to Lay out there. We're trying to want to determine whether we as a board want them to go forward and if so You know if there's any tweaks we want to make to their what they've proposed the the next step if it is the economic opportunity reserve We'll have to go through the whole process again of going aboard matter and coming back to the board with you know more detail and then making a

[00:13:32] decision. So Mr. Chairman, did you have something? Yeah, thank you very much. And to answer that question, I do support us, you know, moving forward with the appropriate funding source. I do want to follow up on something Supervisor Faust said, because I'm looking and the pages aren't numbered in my presentation, but where we have the choosing sites and artists, we have the small town, big community that was done with, looks like some artists and Madison High School art students.

[00:14:01] Is that our Madison High School or some other Madison High School? Because it piqued my interest simply from the standpoint of there's no cost on it compared to the one on Gaithersburg and Frederick, Maryland that are on that same thing. Right. So that is Madison High School.

[00:14:18] Our Madison. Yeah, our Madison High School. So I think just following up on what Supervisor Faust said, I think we actually literally have to do more outreach to our high school school board partners here because, you know, regardless of the cost, I mean, there's a cost for schools to do this to materials and other things, but in terms of the size of the county and what some of these may cost over time, if we're going to do this in a bigger way, I think it's a multiplier effect, and we have some very talented art programs in our high schools.

[00:14:52] I also think it helps the kids feel a little bit more vested in their community rather than, you know, maybe hiring an artist who might not be in that general area, but I'm thinking of our revitalization

areas in particular. And many of them have high schools in them or certainly adjacent to them.

[00:15:08] And I think there's more to just the art. It's the doing of the art piece that adds value back to our young people in schools. And so I think we have to be aggressive in that space. My question was, we talked about all the research best practices and all these interviews that we did.

[00:15:28] I am presuming in putting forward the proposal that you have, that that already incorporates everything we heard from them. Because I didn't really hear anything about challenges that they might have faced. And maybe the proposal is written to offset some of those challenges.

[00:15:44] But I didn't hear any of the challenges or things that they face that we need to be aware of going in, per se, unless they're already built into the proposal. We have built that into the proposal. In fact, we talked directly to muralists to understand, you know, what do they like to see in a program, what works from their perspective.

[00:16:08] And overwhelmingly, we heard that they don't want to create a concept and not get paid for it. Thus, the upfront $1,500 for three artists to create a concept. We've also learned from our local partners about how important it is to make sure that you have the property owner on board and that that's coordinated with the community engagement piece.

[00:16:33] Because ultimately, you know, they have veto power over what goes up on their building. So there has to be a balancing of that. And Janetta, if you want to add any other ideas. I echo what Liz is saying about artists being able to get paid for their concepts.

[00:16:56] They work on proposals and if they're not chosen, that is time lost. So all of them that we've spoken to have really emphasized that it's important and it allows them to also put forth their best work and they can put forward enough time to make a really great proposal okay I appreciate that and then and then my last question relates to the property owners themselves because one of the first steps is identifying a site and then signing with a property owner we didn't really talk about all the details of what the requirements of the

[00:17:33] property owner are but and we don't need to I just want to make sure for this to be successful you know we're gonna have to have some flexibility and and that piece of it because we've had some challenges in the past before we had a program in place liability issues legal issues some other things that have come up with some of the property owners and so we want a strong agreement but we don't want to write an agreement that's so strict we're discouraging property owners from participating and finding that sweet spot you know is going to be important if we're going to have people who are coming in and wanting to do this.

[00:18:10] Yes, and I would say that that's been part of our research. We work closely, did a lot of talking with some significant programs in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in Greensville, South Carolina, and Richmond, Virginia. We've been working with the county attorney's office on how we will craft that agreement there also needs to be an agreement between the artist and the property owner and the artist and the county and we have built into this

[00:18:45] program the idea that the mural should stay up for five years because we're making that investment and murals generally should last longer than that but we felt that was a good balance talking to these other programs about what's a reasonable expectation of a property owner we also built into the program that the muralist or their agent can come back and do touch-ups should there be just you know

something deteriorates or God forbid some kind of you know vandalism or something so we those are other ideas in talking to

[00:19:23] others and learning from other experiences that we have baked into this program okay thank you thank you thank you this is really exciting stuff um in annandale we actually have two murals that have been done in the private sector without any encouragement one that's going up right now on the side of the annandale shopping center that is jackie robinson sliding into a base and spider-man climbing over the but there also is going to be a sign on that

[00:20:02] one apparently. And so I think we need to be careful about the signage piece because that gets us into some code issues. But I wanted to ask a couple of questions. Let me just sort of give them off and then you can answer them. What does large mural and small mural mean? What is that size? Will county facilities be eligible for this? Because in some of our revitalization areas, we have county facilities which would be great for murals and this is not to discourage the private sector from doing their own murals I think we need to

[00:20:37] make sure that that's very clear and then could we also talk a little bit about the explanation of what the mural means we have the one picture of course in my district of the mission lost parking deck that's not exactly a mural It's a way to soften the hard edges.

[00:21:01] But the really cool thing about it is it's built, because Mission Lofts is, you know, focused on the military, that paint scheme is what the ships used in World War I to be as camouflage on the open sea.

[00:21:19] Without somebody telling you that, you just think it's a bunch of, you know, arrangement in black and white. So I think there needs to be something added to this program that the county would run about an explanation.

[00:21:34] You've got down painted, you know, Fairfax, but maybe there's some sort of a little motif that goes along with it that says, you know, look for these things in this mural or something. So size, county facilities, signage. Thank you. So absolutely, county facilities. And as you are well aware, one of the first that we're looking at is the side of the ACCA building as we are about to unveil a new civic space in Annandale.

[00:22:02] So yes, they're absolutely eligible. And I like your idea of the explanation of the mural. I think that's something we can look at. In terms of mixing up with signage, so that is why we, and we've been working closely with zoning administration to make sure, and the county attorney's office to make sure that what we're allowing is not a sign, is not commercial speech.

[00:22:31] And so we're kind of setting up our program that way, and it would be reviewed by that staff to make sure that there is no chance of interpreting it that way. And I'll turn to Janae for the sizes. So I'm going to scroll to this one mural.

[00:22:50] So the bottom mural, what lifts you, that would be determined to be a large mural. And this mural is about, I believe, 20 feet by 20.

[00:23:08] It's about 20 feet by 20. And so that would be considered large. And so we also, after speaking with mural artists, we've determined that they usually are charging about $40 to $60 per square foot.

[00:23:25] So we took that into consideration also with the determination of what would be considered large and small. So as long as it's around, you know, $8,000, we're considering that as a small mural.

[00:23:44] Does that answer the question pretty much? Thank you. When we get all these murals up at some point, I think we need to have sort of that walking trail kind of guidebook to these. because this could be really really cool yeah we would absolutely get it on arts fairfax uh their existing public art website and as well as probably have our own internal um you know collect all you know 20 or whatever kind of thing yeah uh yes thank you so much mr chairman thank you both

[00:24:19] uh for being here again today and for our pre-presentation um you know i i share the excitement I know there's some of the murals you shared here that are my community I also share some of the concerns and I think I shared those with you before this meeting I don't know that they've been addressed here so I'm gonna bring some of those up again so number one is looking at hearing about students and then I'm thinking even broader about our community as you know we've worked with neighborhood and community services to do quite a few community murals we've been working with community artists both for our public facilities as well as the engagement piece so you know my big concern about

[00:24:58] this is the order I think you've got the financing down the legal issues down kind of the compliance side of it down but the community piece number one seeing that it's the smallest budget for it for the engagement number two the timeline so thank you for for pulling up the program process to me I think that the engagement piece and the community piece needs to come sooner I think there's an attempt to address that here but understanding both in the piece and

[00:25:34] then who's involved in the rotating membership I would love to see and I know we've got some NCS folks here as well that piece needs to be earlier and more involved so whether it's you know NCS you know Arts Fairfax does a great job at the art piece but the community engagement piece I just don't feel that we have that membership here who really understands each community so strongly that can both know who are local artists who are students and what where our areas and the equity piece that the community needs to look at and address I

[00:26:14] think that's the one area where you know in the previous slide I think I I understand the standing membership, knowing this as a pilot, but the rotating membership. You know, if we don't know what properties we're doing yet, I'm not sure which property owners are involved. So I think that engagement piece, along with our offices being here, but we have two revitalization pieces.

[00:26:37] I think one of those should maybe, or adding one, that really is someone who knows the community really well. And so I think just the process is the area where, as was shared, the art is really important. But what this brings to the community, how this engages and listens to the community is critical.

[00:26:59] I think I had shared I love the Arts Fairfax new app or program that's showing where murals are. And I started going around my district taking pictures of what would be cool murals. And so maybe thinking about ways that the committees can think about how to engage the community and how to get more input and buy-in into this work rather than us just saying, feeling like we're dictating, this is where we're going to put art and this is who's going to do that.

[00:27:26] So I think, you know, we had that conversation before, and I just want to reiterate that here, that that's still the piece that I would like to see a little bit more refined before we move forward. Okay, if I can respond to that. So we did adjust the process, and we do now have more upfront working with community partners on both the identification of sites and themes.

[00:27:52] and what I would say is we never believe one-size-fits-all and we can work with each district each supervisor to involve the the community members that you feel are relevant so I think we have kind of a box for that I think the specifics we can absolutely you know again it's not a one-size-fits-all what what is it going to be for Merrifield versus somewhere else. We'll work with that area, with that supervisor to craft

[00:28:28] who should be involved in identifying sites, in looking at themes, and all of those aspects going in up front before we even talk to a property owner or form the SASC. And we can also look at, Again, we have flexibility on those positions and who can be on that for each project.

[00:28:52] Okay, I appreciate that. And then I think that would be very helpful. And then the only other reason I bring that up is sometimes the owner is the tenant, sometimes they're not. And so keeping that in mind, I think you may have had some conversations already. And just making sure that, you know, both thinking about the tenant and the property owner being engaged in that process.

[00:29:11] Absolutely. Thank you. Supervisor Lesk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. i'll just make a couple points one is i'm really excited about this pilot project um i think in my district we've already seen similar to the points that were raised by supervisor gross that we have two projects where the private sector has made this investment themselves and we've been able to see kind of the transformative impact that it's had and i just appreciate and right now i'm looking at the borough and I just every time I drive along Leesburg Pike and look over it I'm just in awe of it every single time I've looked at it so many

[00:29:51] times so this is a really good idea the other thing I wanted to say is I agree also with the point about using student artists in our district we are developing the bus rapid transit and we're also looking at having the windscreens covered and we've gone to the high schools to ask them to give us their best advice and counsel on what we could put on those windscreens and the artwork that the students have developed has been just phenomenal and one of the pieces is so phenomenal that we are trying to see if it might be able to be

[00:30:28] used on our community center at some future point so the idea is we do want to leverage the talent that we have in our community and could you imagine if a student gets to take that initiative and put that art and that is associated with them for the length of the time that it's displayed i think that's just a great story for them so the one question i have is um looking at the the time you have for any you know vandalism or repairs that are necessary to the mural and you've got a minimum of five years is that like is that a best practice

[00:31:05] then I'm just trying to get a sense of how we arrived at five and then what happens after the five because I'm just thinking out loud here because in our revitalization areas we don't want things to deteriorate because we're trying to obviously do the opposite and if we get to a place where a mural's been up for say seven or ten years it starts to maybe fade and it starts to not look so new so how do we address address that right yeah so I think once the mural starting to fade or deteriorate that would be a great

[00:31:42] opportunity for another artist to come in and do their work is if you look at other mural mural programs they have rotating canvases right and so it gives other artists an opportunity to display their work and get their get a moment of moment to shine also so that would be something that you know we know that that property owner has allowed us to have a mural up for five years okay now we're at now we're at 10 years it's starting to fade let's let's go up to him and ask him or her and say hey can we can we replace this mural with

[00:32:19] another one from one of our amazing student artists or a local artist and get that taken care of. And what I would say to that too is in, you know, you have to plan, unfortunately, for worst case scenario. Yes. If, you know, maybe the ownership has changed, whatever, that that is not a possibility to do a new mural. I think what we'd be looking at in our agreement between the the property owner in the county would be that if at some point beyond the five-year time frame, because in the five years we have a process for the artist to do touch-ups,

[00:32:58] beyond that, if the thing starts to look shabby, at the very worst, we are allowed to paint over it, you know, just a solid color. And that's unfortunate to lose that, but there's really, you know, And we would certainly try to get it either touched up or get a new one.

[00:33:20] That would be our first option. The fall safe would be to have it painted over. So, Mr. Chairman, just so I'm clear on this, so is that something that we're going to have as a part of the program then? Acknowledging here that this could be a problem.

[00:33:36] If we get the confirmation to proceed in this direction, we're working with the county attorney's office, And our next step would be to create the templates for these agreements. There's, you know, we've got to paper this to a certain extent, knowing that we, of course, want to not make it onerous, but we have to protect, you know, the public interest.

[00:34:01] Yeah, I appreciate that thought and would fully support that possible amendment. So thank you very much. Thank you. Supervisor Harry. Yeah, a couple of things. I want to echo some points real quick. we've got a bunch in springfield district too there's a couple actually they're down rolling both sides both shopping centers have them so i would want to make sure we're not discouraging private sector from doing these um at all um echo the comments on you know students and community members i mean i use eagle scouts all the time to do things that the government can't do or doesn't have the money to do but

[00:34:39] i think we need to work that in to this pretty clearly Sony, but let me go back to the financial 300K. I saw a program manager in there somewhere. Is that a full-time program manager for this? And is that included in the 300K or?

[00:34:56] So the murals program manager is Janae. So we just made that title up for, excuse me, it's on my throat. So no, it's not a new position.

[00:35:12] So some of her costs is in that 300K or no? No, no, no. That is strictly the cost for, go back to the cost slide. So that's strictly the cost of the artists and all that other stuff. It's the artist fee, it's the public engagement. Yes, it's this.

[00:35:27] So the $8,000 to $37,000 is a small and a large, or $45,000 per area, unless you're Richmond Highway, you get a little bit more. So that cost is strictly for the artwork and for the artist to be able to come back and do touch-ups in five years.

[00:35:46] Is there any zoning and permitting costs? No. These will not be considered a sign, so they don't have to get a sign permit unless they put a QR code on it, in which case that would be a small fee for a sign permit for the QR code.

[00:36:04] Okay. And obviously, I didn't see, I think if I went back and looked at our website, Criteria Investments will seek a reasonable return on investment. A benchmark evaluation of return on investment over a 10-year period will be used. So that's the EOR process that you're referencing?

[00:36:24] So when, again, if this is confirmed to move forward, we would come back to you with how we aim to meet those requirements. Okay. All right. Supervisor Stewart.

[00:36:41] I just want to thank Liz and Janay for this. I think it's a great opportunity to further create placemaking. I think it's an essential part of how we create Fairfax as distinct from a factory area or a data center or whatever.

[00:36:59] I think that's what makes us unique, and I think we need to be, if you will, getting even more all-in on this. I particularly appreciate the recognition that there are different links to these CRDs and CRAs and fund that, and last but definitely not least, I want to thank Evan Kaufman who really has led this process.

[00:37:19] I know particularly for Supervisor Lesk and I, he's really made a difference in trying to create that and got those private sector, and some, I think public money is probably, but got that going on the highway, and obviously a lot more to do, but I'm very appreciative of all the work that's gone into this and creating that placemaking.

[00:37:37] Thank you. - Excellent, okay. basically i think what we're at is that that sounds like a lot of support for the concept uh we will test the level of that support when we come back with an eor request asking so i will uh prepare the i think the uh the first step is to do a board matter and uh anybody who's interested certainly welcome to join that board matter uh where we will ask that this be studied

[00:38:11] by staff even further to address some of the issues concerns were raised today brought back and then ultimately uh bring it before the board for approval if that's the decision that we make so thank you uh kind of jealous i think what you're doing is it would be fun right i love these murals and i i see them in a lot of towns when i'm traveling they really just they almost make you you know they just make you feel better about being so So anyway, keep up the good work.

[00:38:45] Thank you. All right. Our next item on the agenda is supporting the entrepreneurial investor ecosystem. And I think everyone will recall, since it was just last, very recently, we did a board matter, several of us asking that this be explored and brought to the board as part of the EOR process, If, you know, today we're going to hear the specifics, George Mason University is very

[00:39:24] interested in what we're proposing to do and is actually, you know, we would need someone to do it with and they're stepping up and it's pretty exciting the possibilities. So we'll go through the presentation.

[00:39:42] Paula Sorrell of George Mason University, who is the Associate Vice President of Innovation and Economic Development at George Mason, will make the presentation. She's virtual at a meeting out of state, and then we'll decide if we want to go forward with this.

[00:40:05] Before I get started, Rebecca Modry, the Director of our Economic Initiatives Department, did you have anything you wanted to add? No, but Etta and I are both here if there's questions, along with Paula afterwards. Okay. Paula, can you hear us?

[00:40:24] I can. Can you hear me? Yes, we can. Thank you for taking the time. We realize you're on an important business trip, but we appreciate you taking the time to present to us today. And I turn the floor over to you.

[00:40:40] Thank you. And hello from the International Economic Development Council annual meeting. I so appreciate you giving me the opportunity to present remotely. I realize it's not ideal, but we'll try to make this exciting. First of all, I just wanted to thank all of you and to particularly thank Fairfax County.

[00:41:02] You know, I've been working in economic development for a while. I've been working in entrepreneurship way longer than that. And the county has been really not just great partners, but very forward-thinking in what they do in entrepreneurship.

[00:41:18] And just to give you just a reminder on my background, I'm not an academic at Mason. In my background, I've overseen seed funds, pre-seed funds, convertible debt. Right now, I have responsibility for the CDFI, that's a community business partnership.

[00:41:37] I've been in national venture capital, international venture capital. So the perspective that I'm bringing to this is what's possible and what I've learned about the ecosystem here in Fairfax County and how to leverage all these terrific assets.

[00:41:55] And I'm not sure if you saw the most recent messaging about Mason. A lot of the university rankings have come out, and Mason has jumped in several areas.

[00:42:12] In particular, economic mobility has been our biggest leap. So we jumped into the top 50 universities in the country. So for a 50-year-old institution, it's pretty amazing. So some background considerations, next slide, Ada, the right now there's, you know, there's, there's a lack in early stage capital and I'll tell you how we, you know, why we say that and how we got to that.

[00:42:41] Early stage tech companies solve problems and there are plenty, plenty of problems to be solved right now and if, if those big problems, those big intractable, you know, national and international impacting problems can be solved here, there's capital to be had.

[00:42:59] So I mentioned I'm not an academic, I'm a capitalist first, but I also believe in capitalism that benefits everyone and all groups. Since I've come into this region, I've heard over and over again what a great venue the Grub Steak Breakfasts were.

[00:43:16] I never actually attended one, but I have an idea of the model. I've seen it in other venues, and it sounds like it was a great idea. And so it was this group in particular who was interested in bringing it back. and I think that's a terrific idea just based on what I've learned so far.

[00:43:33] And, you know, the assets and the trajectory that we're on here in the region, this is an opportunity certainly for Fairfax. The launch of the Founders Fund and similar funds in the region are a nice plug-in and a nice add.

[00:43:51] In addition, Mason continues to increase year over year on its research And we're building, we're continuing to grow the culture at Mason so that researchers are more interested in having their research, we can't say commercialized because it sounds bad, to researchers we say support their research so that it can have societal impact.

[00:44:17] And so we're looking at getting those technologies out the door and at Mason I oversee the Office of Tech Transformation and other things. So by background, there were three research, I'll call them studies, that were conducted.

[00:44:32] One was my own coming into this region and trying to understand it better. That was three years and four months ago. One of the best decisions I ever made was to come to this region. And in trying

to understand the lay of the land, I conducted about 100 interviews with stakeholders, with local counties, with some of the cities, with investors, with entrepreneurs.

[00:44:56] and the nonprofit organizations, and we'll talk about, and the findings were similar to those that Fairfax County conducted its own research, where they were trying to find out how can Fairfax County bolster its entrepreneurial ecosystem to drive investment.

[00:45:12] The questions I was asking was, when I did mine, was what do you think is needed in the region, and what role do you think that Mason should play? And the answer that came back consistently about Mason was that we should be conveners, You don't have a dog in the fight, you can get investors together, and you can help catalyze some of the relationships and develop entrepreneurship more consistently.

[00:45:45] And then Go Virginia Research for Region 7 was actually a project that we had run that I'll tell you about in a second. So the findings for early-stage founders was they felt like they needed to increase their visibility.

[00:46:05] They weren't always aware of the available business development resources. And that really comes from connectivity. How connected are all of the assets? There was a lack of early-stage non-diluted funding in a region. And, you know, I've heard both sides of the coin. I've heard, you know, there's not a lot of funding and there is plenty of funding to be had.

[00:46:25] And if you pay attention to national rankings in this particular area, you know that women actually flip backwards. So this past year, nationally, women have accessed less than 3% of all venture capital available, but yet represent 11% of startup companies.

[00:46:44] They would represent a larger percent of companies if more capital were available. And people of color access less than 1%. So it is not an even playing field when it comes to access to that capital. And as far as investors go, they want to see quality deals.

[00:47:06] And anyone will tell you the term that we use is deal flow. They want to see better deal flow. They want to see investment-ready startups. And there's a lot that goes into an investment-ready startup. An investment-ready startup means that you have a great team behind you, that potentially you have some customers, and you're making some, and you have some market traction in order to convince someone to give you funding.

[00:47:32] And this is, you know, this is a long game. We keep hearing anybody who's done this anywhere in the country, and there are lots of best practices, examples of that, is that it takes a long time with consistent funding to be able to make this happen.

[00:47:54] So next slide. The regional entrepreneur initiative. We convened 40. This was funding through Go Virginia. We convened about 40 organizations who participated, some from D.C. too, and many in the region. And we had three consecutive meetings. We called them unconferences to identify what the biggest problems were.

[00:48:20] These were the top five problems that were identified, and, you know, numbers one, two, four, and five are the same that you would find anywhere in the country, in any city, in almost any state, they would say that they have these to some extent.

[00:48:41] Number three is one that's unique to our region. What we're proposing today actually can address each of these problems in some form. Go Virginia is expecting a large grant request from us, from the ecosystem, with Mason as the lead with subcontractors underneath that are addressing with one or two projects that addresses each of these areas, and that's not insignificant.

[00:49:10] They're also requesting one-to-one match to go with that large request, which is probably something we should also discuss. So there's plenty of capital investment opportunity with this thing as a venue.

[00:49:28] And what we really want to do is for the capital that exists close to home, we want to make sure these investors are shopping close to home, that they're not taking their capital elsewhere because they're finding better deals, they're finding more qualified deals. We want to make sure these entrepreneurs are prepared.

[00:49:44] And it takes a lot to go into preparing a company. As I mentioned before, you know, they need to be polished. They need to be confident and they need to show that they know they're clear on their business model. They're clear on who their customers are and that they can sustain and grow a significant business. Next slide.

[00:50:06] So the solution, you know, explored during the interviews and the REI program, so this is interesting because, you know, you all brought it up in a meeting that you'd like to see Grubstakes reinvigorated. This also came up separately during interviews and when we ran the regional entrepreneurship initiative program for Go Virginia.

[00:50:29] This also came up that people would like to see this venue for showcasing founders and investors and an exposition of existing programs. not new to the country, not new to the region, but something that we should, everyone recognizes is something we should be doing. Next slide. So what this would support is relationship development between entrepreneurs, investors, and investors. Often we recommend that entrepreneurs start talking to investors before they're going to ask for money. Develop the relationship,

[00:51:06] tell them what you're going to do, and then go back and do it and show that you've, you know, increased your milestones. It's much easier for someone to invest in someone they know and trust and they're excited about than to start cold. Investor education to help identify growth and potential and assess financial risk so that they know the types of businesses that are in the region and they're more comfortable with knowing how those companies grow and expand and connecting the founders with resources to prepare them for funding. So the mentors in the

[00:51:44] region, the customers, the financial resources that are available, all of those things need to be connected. The next slide. So the Accelerate Investor Conference, this was based on an international conference that I used to run with a partner many years ago with a company that's now based in San Francisco, and we brought about $1.3 billion in capital to early stage companies that were specifically in the clean tech sector. Then during the Detroit bankruptcy, pre, during, and post,

[00:52:21] we needed to bring capital in to diversify the economy, and we were in pretty dire straits. And so we recreated the investor conference. We made it technology agnostic, and we doubled the amount of outside capital that was coming into the region, and we got a lot of companies funded.

[00:52:38] Those companies today are in the $3 billion mark for FOMA1 funding that they've accessed, the products that they've launched, and how those companies have grown today. So now we're in this region. This region says, well, we need capital, so we set up the Accelerate Investor event.

[00:52:56] I'll say that, you know, I am so grateful to Fairfax County for being a consistent supporter of this. The Fairfax County EDA has given us funding. They've been one of the 28 sponsors. One of the things, by the way, that I've noticed that's very different in this market versus a lot of other markets I've worked in and run similar investor events is that where the large service providers that are interested in this investment space, so those would be lawyers, accountants, consulting firms, who would typically write us a $25,000 check, sponsorship check, or a $50,000 sponsorship check.

[00:53:35] I'm not sure why, but the difference in this market is those same groups will be in the $3,000 sponsorship realm or $5,000 sponsorship or zero dollar sponsorship. They'll participate, but not financially sponsoring.

[00:53:51] I'm not sure the reasons for that. You all may have some thoughts on why that is. But it's a gap, and right now, Mason is very much shouldering a lot of that burden in building that up.

[00:54:08] But we have had success so far. So next slide, Ed. So the results of 2022, I don't know if you recall. 2021 was the first year we ran the event. It was during COVID. It was definitely a Hail Mary pass in trying to determine if it was going to work or not.

[00:54:25] And we had 300 people show up, which was great. And we showcased about, I believe the first year we showcased 28 companies. This past year, in 2022, we had 400 attendees.

[00:54:41] We had 56 investment firms from 10 states attend. And these are all relationships that we've leveraged from the past and said, come on, you have to come and see what kind of tech companies are here. Place your money in the region. And then we were able to showcase 36 companies.

[00:54:57] so far those companies have gone on to uh to raise 11.1 million and we haven't even done our annual survey yet that's just the that's just what we know about anecdotally um we'll be doing uh we do a an annual survey we try to just do it once a year and we'll be doing it in january so we'll have these this data in march for what the total number looks like but already a total of a 500k investment, it's $11.1 million in follow-on funding in these companies. So the request was for a

[00:55:34] quarterly Accelerate Investor event. So I think this is a smart way to go. What it does is it gives the companies more practice and more opportunity to polish. And by comparison, you know, the most recent ecosystem I worked in was in Southeast Michigan. In that particular region, not one that you would normally think of as being particularly savvy for a tech economy but but the quality of pitches were good were were actually better than what I'm seeing today in our region not the quality

[00:56:10] of technologies we have just as good technologies as what I've seen in Silicon Valley and in Boston and New York and in the Detroit area but but the investors the entrepreneurs need a lot more a lot more exposure and we could create a more cohesive ecosystem that supports them and that's pretty critical. So the next slide is the budget request and before we, you know, go into detail of the budget request, I wanted to make a statement here. I don't look at these, the reason I mentioned

[00:56:47] early on is that I'm a capitalist because I don't look at programs like this as an expense. This is not an expense line item. This is a revenue generating line item. So the return on investment back to the

economy is significant. So if you want more funding to spend on great projects like murals and other social aspects that help lift up the rest of our ecosystem like daycare centers and all of the really critical infrastructure and social support, this is a way to make an investment that helps increase the amount of money that's coming in the top end. So that these companies

[00:57:24] become more successful there are more tax dollars associated with them and in general it's a better connected ecosystem so the total request that we're asking so i have done a five-year ask initially there's a reason why is you know we had mentioned long-term sustained funding and how important it is it means a lot being able to hire somebody higher expertise recruit talent into the region and certainly we know that we have that challenge and i have to tell you being at the IEDC right now a lot of people are interested in paying attention what's happening in our region

[00:58:00] the amazon hq2 win is continuing to have a ripple effect and everyone's asking about it and i'm getting lots of hints too about oh well if you ever need any help let me know so so there is a potential of bringing in some really great talent it's hard to do with we can't do that on a two-year grant and as you know our biggest source of state funding is go virginia who wants us to put in a proposal to this effect and that will get us two years worth of funding we still intend to do this this will provide match funding or at least over the first two

[00:58:35] years you can get matched funding for go virginia but we should think about this as a more holistic long-term play and i just want to give you um as you're looking at these numbers i know these are They're not small numbers, these are big numbers in the scheme of things.

[00:58:50] We're also leveraging the costs that exist that are not in here. We're leveraging much of my staff, my operational staff, the space that we use, and Nathan for a lot of the events whenever we can.

[00:59:12] I sat on the finance, local development finance authority board for the city of Ann Arbor for many years, for about eight years. And Ann Arbor's annual investment in their tech ecosystem, that's one city, and it's a city of 150,000 people.

[00:59:28] Their annual investment is $3.5 million a year into their tech ecosystem. And the reason is because it has a return on investment. So just as a comparison. Next slide. Go Virginia. So the requirements to submit, I know you are all very familiar with GoVirginia.

[00:59:49] I have to say that Mason has been very successful at getting GoVirginia funds. We enjoy a good relationship with the funding authority. I've made my belief, very strong belief, very clear with regard to it needs to be more than two years worth of funding because what we're doing is setting up a lot of pilots and we're getting to the point where we're going to, we're going to experience death by pilot. We need to take some of those successful programs and we need to be able to continue them long term. For this particular ask, we have to

[01:00:28] have $1 for $1. They just increased their match requirements. It was 50% for a while, now it's 100. 20% of that has to come from local match, which are the local economic development groups. And we have to have numerous partners that support and they also want to see corporate support for this submission.

[01:00:48] So thank you for your time. I very much appreciate the opportunity to talk to you today. I wanted to see if you have any questions, thoughts, follow-up. Thank you, Paula. Thank you very much. I would say that what we're talking about at this point is something we've actually had on the table and

talked about probably for at least 10 years since we started talking about what what's missing here in Fairfax County. We have so much going for us but bringing the

[01:01:26] investors, the people with the money together, the people with the ideas is a challenge and this has been brought up. Some version of what has been presented has been brought up a couple different times over the years and you know with George Mason and Paula stepping up it really creates an opportunity i believe but the issue for us is are we as a board prepared to make the investment which is estimated at 450 000 for the three-year startup period as explained in this

[01:02:05] document so that's that's basically what we have in front of us we've done the board matter this is the the the board presentation at committee and the next step will be if the consensus is to go forward that we would bring a um uh a board area it would become to us as an action item uh at a

[01:02:25] board meeting so that's kind of uh yes quick update on funding yeah go ahead um i just wanted to know so in paula's presentation she noted that we would be engaging with prince william county and arlington county on their interest in participation so as you discussed today we wanted to share an update and we had fantastic conversations with our economic development teams

[01:03:04] did not require any convincing both of them immediately said yes this is something that we know is needed and we want to participate so on Arlington side they would they are committed to supporting a three-year program we're at three years now for our funding request their budget cycle is annual so they are in for a first year and then we'll make annual budget requests in addition to that on Prince William's side they have put in a budget request that will be discussed by their board in December, so we'll have updates there, but there's a lot of support

[01:03:43] and participation, and we think that we'll be partners. And if this is to move forward, we would also probably go out to our larger region and ask for other interest or support from other jurisdictions as well.

[01:04:00] Excellent. Okay, Mr. Chairman. Yeah, on that point, it's noticeable Loudoun's missing from this, And I don't know if there's a reason for that. And I guess the other question is, how did we determine? We didn't talk dollars. We talked about their budget cycles.

[01:04:16] But is there going to be a formula or some way to determine what the contributions based on their relative sizes are? Yeah. Since we're relatively early in this process, meaning this hasn't been approved on our side, we actually just started and we worked with GMU on where GMU has a presence right now, which is our three counties, Fairfax, Arlington, and Prince William.

[01:04:38] But I think Loudon would be an obvious partner going forward. And in terms of, yes, we did use a formula. We used kind of a basic breakdown based on population and what GMU's anticipated costs were for the three-year program.

[01:04:56] And then kind of put together a ratio based on population for each jurisdiction. Okay. I appreciate that. I think, you know, having some scientific way to determine that is important. because as i mentioned you know my support on this is contingent upon this being a regional effort and what we just heard from george mason and what you have confirmed in preliminary conversations with arlington and prince william that that seems to be everyone's feeling that this has to be done on a regional standpoint with george mason university and not be a county initiative as was mentioned in here there are a lot of county initiatives already underway and we want to play

[01:05:34] a meaningful role in this but we don't want to just solely own it and so I think that's going to be that part of it is going to be really important so thank you for the update and progress that's already been made on that. If I could add to you know this this three county relationship is kind of the trifecta that overlays with the innovation corridor development that connects the mason three campuses and the strategy that we've been working on to further bolster our our three research institutes, basically one-fifth on each campus, and the strategy around creating more of that

[01:06:11] research, making it to the market. I will say that Buddy has been supportive of Accelerate. He's been vocal in his support, which we've appreciated. Loudoun County hasn't financially supported yet the annual investment, however.

[01:06:28] Okay, yeah, I mean, I think this, we know that our economy is a regional economy and, you know, you can't isolate these types of things from having a benefit to everyone in the region.

[01:06:49] Certainly, it's only fair that everybody be at the table in terms of cost. But, you know, one thing that's been missing for a long time in terms of us trying to do things regionally is to have that convener like George Mason. I mean, we've had updates from George Mason on what they're doing from Paula.

[01:07:10] We don't have enough time today to go through all the things that George Mason's doing to strengthen and improve our local economy. And this would be just one part of that process. So I had Supervisor Lusk and then Supervisor Schmidt, Supervisor Herdy.

[01:07:27] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll say thank you to Paula for a very informative presentation. I appreciate the points about the development of the ecosystem and making sure that we are providing some infrastructure to support our entrepreneurs in getting access to capital.

[01:07:46] I also appreciate, which is probably not known to everyone here, is that the original program that this is being modeled on was housed in George Mason. George Mason operated and managed the program previously, and the way that they did it was on a regional basis.

[01:08:07] So the history, the precedent here is that George Mason has previously done this, and it makes a lot of sense for them to reactivate something that they've done in the past.

[01:08:23] And I'm excited about the opportunity because, as she showed on her Accelerate slide, the amount of investment that has come to the companies that were a part of the Accelerate program shows the value of creating these connections. And I just am excited about that.

[01:08:44] I'm also excited about the point that we have our local economic development entities stepping up and saying they want to participate because it helps their companies. It helps our region. This is like a no-brainer in the sense that you can leverage the investment for something much greater.

[01:09:04] And the opportunity for outside investors to be looking at our community and making decisions to invest their capital here is also really important because what venture capitalists tend to do is they tend to flock around investments that have gotten capital before.

[01:09:27] And the beauty here is if you've got these investors in all these different places, that means we have the opportunity to get even more investment coming into our region. And that's been something that we have seen happening more and more, but I will be clear in saying that in the early stages, that has not always been the case.

[01:09:49] So I'm excited, and Paul, I might just ask one question of you, if I could. Under the budget request, you talk about the company pitch coaching and the ongoing advising and support. Could you talk a little bit about that in terms of how we're going to help the companies get prepared for their presentations, and then how are we going to help them as they're thinking about maybe growing their businesses?

[01:10:17] Are there other services that we can provide in supporting them as well? So that's a great question. With regard to mentorship and support, we leverage the Mindshare Network.

[01:10:32] They have been great in donating their time to be able to help review pitches. They've been fantastic. But besides the volunteer network, it's really critical to have a full-time paid group of people who also have experience in entrepreneurship and can provide coaching.

[01:10:52] That was why we created the ICAP program. So the ICAP program had been at Mason about a year before I got there. And, you know, and it's a lean startup program. So it puts early stage companies through a process.

[01:11:08] What we added to it was a mentorship program layered on top, and that was to catch up, really, Virginia with 20 other states that had tech mentors that sit on top of their Small Business Development Center program.

[01:11:25] So one of the things we do for the Accelerate Investor event now is we make it mandatory that these companies get help. They use a software system so that there's ongoing follow-up. We make sure that we track companies and what happened to them and we follow them throughout their lifetime.

[01:11:45] We have mentors with different areas of expertise, and we engage, depending on what the company needs at the time, whether it's industry specific or if they need a finance expert versus a marketing expert, we make sure that they are attached to the mentor that can provide them that support at the time they need it.

[01:12:08] So with regard to the companies and matching, the intent is to involve companies and government as well in the, especially federal government, in these events. The reason why is because companies become more attractive to venture capital when they've obtained customers.

[01:12:29] And one of the missing things in the ecosystem, I'm working on it, but I need a little more time to develop it, is the first customer program to help get companies, that first customer, it helps them, one is it reduces their need for government funding and helps them become more sustainable and reliable, but too as it makes them more interested to investors as well.

[01:12:53] Now, I'll say thank you very much for that clarification and that first customer model. I really like that. I had not heard that before, so I'll be interested in learning more about it. So thank you very much. Thank you. Supervisor Smith. Thank you.

[01:13:09] I guess I want to understand the cost and the budget a little bit better. We're talking about $450 for three years. Now you're talking about other localities coming in. So are you looking at this is still us and the other localities are providing more revenue or they're taking a piece of this to be involved in it?

[01:13:30] I'll start. Rebecca, do you want to? Yeah, sure. So the 450 is our portion. And the board matter was written and we're continuing operating, I would say, up to $450,000 for this three-year period.

[01:13:46] And so we do have, and we could share after this meeting, a little bit more detail on the budget and what that includes. Some of the broad topics were listed, but we do have line item budgets under that. So the up to $450,000 is our portion.

[01:14:05] I think the benefit of EOR is that it is kind of, the funds are spent as needed. so those would be allocated to GMU on an annual basis so for example if we were to receive additional funding from other jurisdictions then our portion could potentially go down and so that's why I'm kind of continuing to say up to 450 that's our amount of no other jurisdictions come in but that does kind of include Arlington and Prince William coming coming in so I don't

[01:14:43] anticipate that our portion would go down significantly even with Prince William and in Arlington does that answer your question yeah I think that would be helpful to understand okay where you see the costs you know that's always a question about are we creating redundancies what work is already being done and or is it redundant what we're doing so that's something I want to hear about and then sometimes when you do these requests it's it's the biggest best-case scenario so we're talking about doing it three more times well there's no thought of well what if we did it once more with the accelerate conference that GMU has or we do it twice more just to have some options to

[01:15:22] consider you know I said at the board meeting the other day I'm just I hear that this is investment but I need to see that and understand it because I think we're at a time with our budgeting that we need to be a little careful Thank you. Okay. Thanks.

[01:15:40] Thank you, Supervisor Smith. Supervisor Herod. Yeah, real quick. First, Paula, thank you for outstanding conversation. I mean, presentation. This thing is way overdue, and I hope we do move forward with it.

[01:15:55] I'm not ready to limit it on other jurisdictions' participation, although I understand the desire and want to, and I think we should do everything we can. Chairman mentioned Loudon. Alexandria is kind of missing from this, too, and I understand why those three jurisdictions were there, but I think we try to broaden it to include Loudon, Alexandria.

[01:16:17] You know, on the Y three times, making a total of four times per year, I think the goal here really is to get private sector investors here. I mean, and you need this stage to get, you know, the venture capital stage and the early stage investors here.

[01:16:34] So the more deals you get, the better. So I think, you know, at least quarterly is the right answer, clearly. And I'll take a stab at answering your question, Paula, is why investments seem lower here than elsewhere. And we've always thought, you know, in the financial community, it's because most of the money that's made here is made here in a very risk-adverse industry, which is government contracting.

[01:17:00] So they tend to be more risk-adverse. So some of this needs to be investor education as well as just prepping the presenters. It's also prepping some of these people who have made multi-millions of dollars in an industry that's not really risk-taking to a large degree, as early-stage investing is.

[01:17:23] But the rewards are a lot better, obviously, in early-stage investing. So that's all my comments, but I hope this gets moved forward. Thank you. Supervisor Sturck. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And obviously, this is, I think, a wonderful approach to increasing what I would call the frequency of opportunity.

[01:17:44] And the frequency of opportunity, I think, is directly correlated only to success. I don't think it has to necessarily be the highest quality. I think it needs to just happen. And organically, I think things then only work out, and there's kind of an opportunity that emerges if it's truly going to be a successful opportunity.

[01:18:03] So I think we clearly need something like this. We clearly need to be creating a place that people want to come. I know that we want that to be successful, but I think initially we just want people to come and try to see if we can build off of that and kind of stair-step our way into, if you will, the major leagues.

[01:18:25] I mean, we know we're a significant player nationally, but we know we're not in the major leagues. At least that's the surveys and stuff that we've looked at. We still have our ways to go to get there. So I'm all in on the frequency part of this. I think that will help not only the potential investors, but especially, absolutely, especially the entrepreneurs.

[01:18:43] You know, you pitch once and you realize, well, you know, I heard somebody else and they did this or that, and I need to think about this or that, or they're asked tough questions, and that gives them an opportunity to not have to wait years for maybe another opportunity, but hopefully a quarter or two.

[01:18:59] I'm not 100% clear on the big government impact. I recognize kind of what that means, but I guess I wanted to make sure that I got an explanation as to what or how you all see that. Slides aren't numbered. It's the one about regional entrepreneur initiative.

[01:19:18] And number three is develop a successful entrepreneurial ecosystem not crowded out by big government. And, again, I sort of generally know what it means, but is there a particular intentionality with that statement? Paula, do you want to ask that question?

[01:19:35] Yeah, so this was an outcome of the 40 organizations that I mentioned in the region that people who are particularly interested in entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial development.

[01:19:52] One of the most obvious elements is talent, and so while big government, especially big government contractors, pay a lot for talent when you're trying to convince someone to meet. So it's talent-related.

[01:20:11] To be an entrepreneur, it's quite hard to do. Although we lost you for a minute. My information is anecdotal, but can you hear me? Yes, go ahead. Okay.

[01:20:28] So I don't know if you heard that part. It was about talent, and big government can take a lot of the talent resources out of the space. There's also, you know, this is something that I saw firsthand as well when I was dealing with big auto.

[01:20:48] a company can work for a big government contractor and make a large salary, or they can take a big risk and do an entrepreneurial startup, and big government contractors have a lot of the, they take a lot of the prime real estate, they take a lot of the wind out of the sails, and because the region, and this comes back to the economy report that was done, I think it was 2017, 2018, somewhere in there, because that is such a huge part

[01:21:25] of the industry, it has made a less diversified economy, which has impeded innovation in the region. That's helpful. I better understand that. Thank you. And last point is just, I know we need to do this first, and I know that this is our focus for lots of reasons as a county, but it is tech focused. I think there are

more, plenty more entrepreneurial opportunities beyond just tech. You know, healthcare sector, and I realize those aren't specific, you know, strengths of Fairfax County at this point in time. I think that changes

[01:22:04] over time, so I'm all in on focusing here now, but I think we've got to look at other ways to encourage and support and develop these other kinds of talents that go beyond tech. healthcare and obviously social services and other opportunities for growing those creative minds and creative businesses that I think will be the future. So thank you. I agree. Yeah, I agree with you. And because we, my team is also, the Small Business Development Center is part of my team as well. We look at, we work with non-tech companies. The majority of the 10,000 businesses that we

[01:22:40] support in Virginia each year are non-tech. About 1,500 are tech-related. So of those non-tech companies, I would love to work with Fairfax County on other ways that we can encourage the types of businesses that are needed right now in the region. Consider me one of those individuals who's happy to work with you because I believe, and particularly for the southern part of the county, I think it's a more essential element of our success long-term. Thank you. Thank you.

[01:23:09] Well, I think what we need to do is have your team, Rebecca, address some of the issues that have been raised and answer some of the questions. I mean, they're not really issues, but, you know, what will the regional participation be, for example?

[01:23:31] And I think the redundancy issue and just, you know, demonstrate that this is money well spent, I guess, is the bottom line. And I think the next step in the EOR process is to bring it before the board as an action item.

[01:23:55] So we will do that when you tell me you've reached out and provide the information that the board members are looking for and that there's a consensus that they're satisfied with the response.

[01:24:11] Once we get that, I think we're ready to do the action item. And, of course, we meet the answer yesterday. Paula, thank you so much.

[01:24:30] You know, all of these programs are great individually, but the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. And I think George Mason's done an amazing job of bringing these things together and just building on one success after another, one good program after another.

[01:24:49] So thank you, and we look forward to continuing the wonderful relationship between the county and your group. Thank you. Thank you so much. Anything else? There is another presentation, but I'm not going to squeeze it in in two minutes because it's just an update on where we're at on about five or six different economic development programs.

[01:25:16] Rebecca, was there anything specific you wanted to highlight without going through the whole presentation. Are you sure? It's lunchtime. Are you sure you guys don't want to stay just a little bit longer? No, absolutely. There is maybe just two quick points, maybe three, but I'll be very brief. First, this is a presentation only of our major initiatives that are currently launched or have a kind of a significant update.

[01:25:44] We included in there some of the important points about the impacts that we're seeking namely growing jobs growing businesses supporting economic mobility and supporting businesses to increase increase and maintain their sales so that they can increase or maintain their commercial

presence but I would like to jump really quick to the thrive program we're very excited this is the thrive small business things at a technical assistance grant program we have been working extremely hard this is a complex initiative with many many

[01:26:22] partners we were excited to receive more than 300 submissions from businesses to provide the technical assistance to the upcoming applicants so we are reviewing those RFPs now and those are RFPs in many categories across business operations, marketing, finance. The next phase, this is a new approach that we're taking to really double down on our efforts to reach diverse business owners in Fairfax County. We have an

[01:26:55] RFP open to bring together partners that have experience and qualifications and are very connected to local communities so that they can help us reach small and diverse businesses and let them know about the thrive program so that RFP is open now again that's for organizations that work with small and diverse businesses and there's more information of course on our website and in the RFP and that is due October 2nd I believe so more information is is on our site and if any

[01:27:35] of you have any other questions about the additional programs that are listed here then of course we'd be we would be happy to answer questions at any time you don't want to have anything today they wanted to ask anybody do their homework and come in here with a question okay very good it did you have I was just going online to look, just a one-page, maybe two-sided at most, summary of all that we do to support small business entrepreneurism.

[01:28:08] I mean, even what the program we just were talking about, I know we do the Entrepreneurship 101, what EDA does that, et cetera. But just something that I can wrap my head around it or hand to a small business, hey, here's a list of opportunities and happy to work with you on these kind of quick and dirty, or even, obviously, a link that you could click them.

[01:28:29] I know there's some things on you, and I was just looking to see what it is, but I just want to make sure if that's not available, if you all could look at putting that. We would be happy to do that, and I can't miss the chance with that transition to put in a plug for the initiative we're working on, Fairfax Core, which is listed here as well, connecting opportunities and resources for entrepreneurs, which is really the massive effort to bring together our dozens and dozens, almost hundreds of partners that work in the entrepreneurship support and small business support space. We are now working with over 70 of our resource partners to

[01:29:07] kind of populate a resource navigator with the goal that pretty soon it will be one place that entrepreneurs could go to find more customized and direct connection to connect with the resources they need when they need it. So that will be launching in the spring. Much more information to come, but in the meantime, I'm happy to put that together for you. Thank you, and I just can't, I can't emphasize enough the difficulty, the degree of difficulty of an entrepreneur trying to do be all things to all people and having it simple and

[01:29:41] easy to follow on a roadmap of sorts is, will make all the difference in the world to some of their successes or failures. Thank you. Thank you. Very quickly, first of all, I'm just thrilled to see all of this I know coming into the seat I was a little jealous of things I was seeing at Arlington no longer they should be jealous of us I think these are just excellent programs a quick question and I know we're back again I talked briefly about this last night we had a wonderful SSPA meeting with the Merrifield area and we did

hear from a couple of local businesses questions about space about class B and C and also industrial and the smaller scale

[01:30:21] industrial so I don't know if that's something you're already looking into I don't want to add more to your plate but I think as we go through some of these SSPA and other redevelopment processes understanding the needs or the gaps and impact on our small businesses first areas around space and having that ability to space that's a ongoing discussion and another topic that we included in here is something that I'm calling an economic roadmap which is looking at I would say a comprehensive consideration of not only office space

[01:30:57] but also emerging opportunities of that space and and needs kind of across the spectrum of different commercial and business owners so I would say my office but particularly along with the EDA but but we work often with small businesses that are looking for unique space so if you ever receive those requests we'd be happy to engage as possible so I'd love to talk with you about that further okay absolutely and I think if we start to see a greater trends that we need to

[01:31:33] address more on our whether it's development or licensing or other issues that you're seeing I think they'll be helpful but we'll send them all your way and then as you see trends or anything we need to address I know you'll share them with us. Okay. Very good. Thank you. If there's nothing else to come for the committee, the meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

