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Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Health and Human Services Committee, Tuesday, January 30, 2024

Date	Tuesday, January 30, 2024
Place	Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Virginia
Length	1h 33m (video)

- Official meeting video (Fairfax County): https://video.fairfaxcounty.gov/player/clip/3185
- 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 2026-11-02. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:00] Good morning, and welcome to our Health and Human Services Committee meeting of January 30th, 2024.

[00:00:16] It does not look like a full agenda today, but we do have two very important topics this morning. The first one, and we are so grateful to have not just our county team, but also Dr. Presidio here from Fairbanks County Public Schools to discuss our community schools initiatives that are joint initiatives between the schools and the counties and has been presented to the SCIPT.

[00:00:41] So Supervisor Lusk and I have had the opportunity to review the presentation. We're excited to have them here with us today to share where we are in this collaborative effort. And then those of us who feel like we were trying to get Taylor Swift tickets this morning signing up for Park Authority classes that are so popular, um i know many parents of the county had the reminder on their agenda that today was the day we will have uh i hope ample time to have a discussion and to see the presentation from the park authority i know j cole and her team are here to discuss the equity initiatives and

[00:01:20] the research and a lot of history um that the park authority has done into where we are today and what the long-term plans are for that before I hand it over to Chris Leonard I do I know he and I both want to make sure we're all aware that there are no budgetary asks in this you will see some numbers in there but this really is just planning and long-term planning on how to improve our resources how to

focus on the one fair acts policy both in access to our community schools programs as well as our park authority offerings for the community. There are some price tags next

[00:01:59] to those items just so we're aware what it would cost if and when we start implementing some of these programmatic changes in there but just wanted to make sure I share that before anyone has a heart attack this morning looking at those price tags. So to that I know this is really important work and we are very much looking forward to it and very thoughtful work and look forward to the conversations about how we better meet the needs and address some of the long-time inequities that we have in our county in both of these programs. So to that, let me hand it over

[00:02:34] to Chris Leonard to kick us off. Thank you, Chairman Palchuk, and good morning, board members. I just wanted to, before we get started, indicate that both of these are kind of returning items. You got a briefing about a year ago on some of our park authority equity issues that we wanted to make sure that we were sharing with you and that we needed to do additional research, so that's a returning.

[00:02:59] And then the community of schools actually goes back to when Chairman McKay was on skip, so thank you for your work throughout that. And this is a long desire on both the side of the county and the schools. And I'll also say the community, just a reminder, our successful children and youth policy team is equal parts county staff, school staff, and community members.

[00:03:22] So what you're going to see today has been through a lot of discussion amongst those community members, county and school, and we're really excited about what you'll hear, which we believe both of these will be core equity initiatives, and you'll see that as we go through the presentation.

[00:03:41] And with that, I'll turn it over to Marla Zubetsky. Marla. Thank you. Okay. So we've already done the introduction. And also Carla Bruce, I want to just acknowledge Carla is here today as this community schools is a equity, key in equity initiative.

[00:04:03] So Carla is also on our presentation list today. There we go. just the goal that we have today is really to give you a very quick and brief overview of the updated framework for community schools.

[00:04:20] You've seen the previous framework in the past, and so a lot of effort and work has been done to update that framework. Key components of the framework that were updated is the program model, the process site selection, process site prioritization, and site selection.

[00:04:36] And we'll go a little bit deeper, but not too much in some subsequent slides. And then to talk about funding need projections based off of that updated framework. So as Chris has already said, this is a skip initiative. And the updated framework was presented to the school board in October, on October 10, 2023.

[00:04:57] And so they had an opportunity to see in detail the updates that were made to this. So just a very brief history about community schools in Fairfax County. It's a key equity strategy. As you know, SCIPPT is a collective impact.

[00:05:14] We use a collective impact approach. And so the community schools initiative really looks at the student and the youth from a holistic framework, looking at students. Their success is very much dependent on the success of their family, the surrounding community, their neighborhood, access to resources.

[00:05:33] And so that is the whole premise of a community school. So they're best positioned for success if they have all those supports. As you know, we have opportunity neighborhoods, and we have community schools. They are intertwined with each other, but they're not the same.

[00:05:53] Community opportunity neighborhoods, which we have, are, again, a collective impact approach. And they bring together targeted and effective solutions for the community schools and for the surrounding community.

[00:06:09] Opportunity neighborhoods are in designated neighborhoods and regions in the county. ONS lead that collective impact approach, and they're specific to that geographic area. For community schools, they don't duplicate the work of ONS, and ONS don't duplicate the work of community schools.

[00:06:29] Community schools are very targeted, So they aim to align those existing services, develop partnerships to address identified gaps, and then engage the local community to best address the gaps. They also adhere to the following principles.

[00:06:44] SKIP, that's the equity, as I mentioned, importance of the whole child approach, improving access through co-location, and then shared accountability through the schools, the community, local government, and again, emphasis of both ONS and community schools on the engagement of the family.

[00:07:08] So just as a reminder, we currently have three community schools. Those are the existing community schools. They're run by our community or by our CBOs, by our nonprofits. They are part of an existing array of services that focus on the local community, and they work with other local schools, faith, community centers.

[00:07:32] They are located in or near an opportunity neighborhood, and they're all managed by different CBOs. So this, but, and they all have a different funding source, and they operate without a consistent framework, although they have a shared goal of supporting students and families for their success.

[00:07:54] The frameworks were a bit different. And so through a multi-tiered evaluation, which I know that you have been presented in the past, the new framework seeks to improve upon that. Some things on this slide, the big takeaway here is that we have a model to move forward.

[00:08:15] And the components that you see on this slide are the things that we focused on from that multi-tiered evaluation. There was an emphasis on the site selection process. We used to look at clearly defined metrics that would help with the site selection process.

[00:08:31] We would be working with administrators, the regional administrators, the FPS school board, community schools, prioritization, and prioritization, sorry, mouthful, selection committee would come together to look at a list that had been identified as a prioritization.

[00:08:51] So that's an improvement. And then the program support staffing model. As I mentioned, the three current schools each have a CBO that manages that staffing model. Under the updated model, there will be a central office coordinator.

[00:09:10] And then the schools that have a community school will have a community school specialist. So there'll be an increased accountability and increased consistency across community schools. And then, of course, continuing the lead community-based organization, there's a deep and valued and necessary role for community-based organizations.

[00:09:37] Each one, each community school has varied needs, and that comes from the assessment and evaluation. So each local community has a standardized process now for a needs assessment. And so while the community schools will have varied needs, there also will be some consistency on how we would measure community schools across those schools.

[00:10:01] And then, of course, enhanced communication. And so that is something through that core team talking about how we would increase our, enhance our communication. So moving forward with the community schools model, I've just touched on this, each partner has key roles and responsibilities what's key here is that there are key roles and responsibilities and that they're all connected each plays an important role collaboration service delivery collaboration between the county and FCPS which has been a wonderful collaboration in the

[00:10:39] improvement of our community schools and then also key collaboration with the identified community-based organization working to support that entity. So moving forward, community schools, again, they're part of a broader collective impact and prevention and equity initiative that we have here in the county. So key, so governance and oversight, opportunity neighborhoods and community schools, there's the core team. So they would be ongoing

[00:11:10] technical and collective impact capacity building that this core team would continue to provide the technical assistance to the future, ongoing and existing and future sites.

[00:11:27] And then, of course, there's vital expertise that's established with the CBOs and our relationships with the school sites within their localized community and then across the service system. I've already mentioned how they're connected with community opportunity neighborhoods and school readiness teams.

[00:11:47] And the SCIPT will continue to maintain its review of the ongoing initiative. So that is an important element that continues. The site's prioritization process, I mentioned that on a previous slide, was one of the key elements that was enhanced based on that multi-tiered evaluation. And so there are primary and secondary measures. I won't go through all of them, but I will note that from the primary measures, this is where, again, you'll see the importance

[00:12:25] of equity and the use of the vulnerability index in here in the primary measures. And then, of course, in the secondary measures, reading, math, the kind of standard things we would look at but now you can see here that there's a primary and secondary and it's very consistent very mindful for the approach and then of course we would ensure that the fps fcps school board and the principal have awareness of the expansion of the considerations of the expansion

[00:13:00] we would be looking at for those sites that are up for consideration to be expanded if the school is ready if the community is ready and then any other implementation needs and then it would go back to the school board for their final approval so funding so moving forward these are just some estimates and these are good estimates based on historical knowledge and then looking at community schools around the country so in our again we talked about the some of the staffing

[00:13:37] changes that we would make to the model so having a centralized administrative coordination which would be a yearly kind of ongoing recurring investment we're looking at about 250 000 and then each new community school so when we're thinking about expansion we have a range there between 400 000 and 500 000 for each new community school as it would come on site and that would be for

implementation, partner for community-based organizations to provide the services that come from that local needs assessment that's been identified, and then, as I mentioned,

[00:14:15] the community school specialist. The funding approach, though, we have a vast array of funding opportunities in our county and in the country, and so we would be looking at grants for community schools.

[00:14:35] So we would be looking at what grants might be out there. The Biden-Harris administration has made this a key focus for their schools initiative. So we would be looking at what grants are available here in our community, philanthropic and other resource opportunities that could be explored.

[00:14:53] And then no additional funding is needed for county staff supports. We have existing staff in the county that focus on community schools. And then the existing community school that is funded would continue. And so the new model allows for flexibility also as new funding is identified.

[00:15:17] So moving forward, you can see that the updated framework looks at increased technical assistance and coordination amongst the three entities, the county, the schools, and the CBOs. We now would be aligning metrics and the community assessment process.

[00:15:37] The FCPS and Fairfax County would be reigniting the community schools core group that I mentioned, which is Opportunity Neighborhoods core group and the community schools core group. And then the SCIP would continue to champion, of course, community schools as one of its key initiatives.

[00:16:04] Excellent. Thank you so much, Marla. I know you tried to put quite a big topic into everything that was in there before. I speak and ask for questions since we have Dr. Presidio here with us today and Carla Bruce who have been so instrumental in this.

[00:16:21] I just want to see if you have some additional words. I know this has gone through quite a process from the first community school to where we are today and why you're proposing this model. Yeah, thank you very much, Supervisor Palachuk. And thank you, everyone, for the invitation to be part of this important discussion today.

[00:16:38] I just want to probably more than anything say I'm really here to help answer any questions on the school side that you might have. But I've been part of this initiative really since the beginning of 2018, and we've made, I think, dramatic progress in terms of thinking about what we could really do with the Community Schools Initiative to really support students and families in our communities that really have the most significant risk factors that they're facing in our community.

[00:17:03] And the partnership with the county, with Chris and Marla, Sarah and Jesse previously has just been incredible. So I'm very excited to support this initiative in any way that we can on the school side and happy to answer any questions that you might have. Thank you. Sloan. Carla?

[00:17:21] Yeah, I would just briefly give – good morning, everyone. Carla Bruce, County Chief Equity Officer. I would just give some sort of historical context. Marla mentioned it, but this has been something that the Skipt has been looking at for a number of years, and I think the initial three sites really gave us an opportunity to demonstrate the value in solidifying the model.

[00:17:51] We were fortunate to have some initial partnership with the United Way of the National Capital area, who in this predates 2018 actually, approached us to invest in a community school in Fairfax County. And through that, we were able to leverage those resources to lead to the second community school. And

then eventually a third was added. And so I think what this presentation demonstrates is that the initial community schools taught us some lessons, some lessons about how to do things, some lessons about, you know, what needs some work, but it really did give us that

[00:18:30] foundation to understand the effectiveness of the schools and counties coming together in community and working with community, realizing that the success of students is not something that the schools alone can address, and I think it really has helped us to leverage those resources.

[00:18:48] Thank you so much for sharing that, Carla, and I would say I know it's an initiative that, you know, when I was on the school board, we talked about how to move it forward, and clearly there are some lessons learned. Before I pass it on, I think you mentioned lessons learned, right, and why we're shifting this model. My main question is, number one, what, you know, what we're hoping, we don't have to go into all lessons learned, but what we're hoping the major improvements will be from this new framework. And number two, while we're not asking for specific funding today,

[00:19:23] hey, you know, it does look like we just need, you know, some coordination centrally and then are able to bring on schools. Have we started to sort of look at what kind of timelines we're looking at to begin to do that prioritization if it hasn't happened and start to bring on additional schools? Let me jump in first with one of the things that was most frustrating throughout the 2018-20, really pre-pandemic, was a lot of what I would view as unnecessary noise around why those three schools got selected and we don't have enough time to go into why each of

[00:20:01] those individual schools were selected. A lot of times it was funding directed. I mean, it was all over the place. So the fact that we now have a model that we've all agreed to that we'll be able to place metrics and they're very clear metrics and you'll see in the primary, you'll see the vulnerability index and that's what really drives this into making sure that our future investments are targeted investments in areas of need so i think from that perspective that was a huge lesson learned in terms of we were all excited everybody wanted to do this i think a lot of people big

[00:20:40] hearts wanted to do this but it was all over the place and it really drove some unnecessary noise people were upset why not why not my school why not my district so now we have that framework and then I'll just say from the funding model I think the one thing very much like what we do with opportunity neighborhoods I mean we we there there are some years you'll see a request for opportunity neighborhood funding some years you won't but you'll always see it on our long-term kind of resource plan that we always want to make sure that we know it's out there so if opportunities come if businesses come in and want to invest or if we've got opportunities to be able

[00:21:15] to invest in something like this, we want to make sure it's always available on a resource plan, even if in a given year, we're not actually coming forward with a resource ask, if that makes sense. It does. And if I could just clarify, I think it's in here that, and it's tricky to have this be a joint initiative, but it's also, there's a lot that comes with that.

[00:21:37] I believe in slide seven, it really shows the governance and oversight and the coordination. If someone could just clarify for us that there will be coordination in the county and there in our regions and our programs, including opportunity neighborhoods and the FCPS regions and programs and schools, including that, and that there will be that coordination, both in site selection, but also in continued, you know, involvement with each CBO and each school.

[00:22:06] Let me jump in and then maybe slow in a few games. From the county side, it was really important for us to maintain that CBO engagement. As all of you have known, certainly since the pandemic, I've said frequently to all of you, there is no human services in Fairfax County without our CBO nonprofit network.

[00:22:26] We are blessed in Fairfax to have a wide array of CBOs that do wonderful things. So it's really important that the wraparound services that really are what we're talking about as part of a community school, Those CBOs are a part of that because, again, that's the human services network in Fairfax County.

[00:22:44] It does not exist without that CBO network. Yeah, I would agree with everything Chris said. I think this initiative has been very collaborative from the very beginning. But when you're dealing with different entities, sometimes it's really difficult for the end user, that student or that parent, to try to figure out how to interface and go through those different organizations and entities.

[00:23:05] And as we think about expanding and growing this initiative with more sites, hopefully in the future, that's only going to become more complex. So that was one of the reasons that we really felt like we needed some additional central coordination for this initiative. But in terms of the roles of all of those entities, the county, the schools, and the nonprofits, that's worked really, really well, and that model, obviously, is something that we want to continue to see in the future.

[00:23:30] I think Carla has one more thing. I'll turn it over to the chairman. Yeah, I just wanted to add, Chris is right, the initial identification of the three sites was really driven by the funder interests. We had funding from the United Way, the National Capital Area, and we also had funding that went directly to the schools through communities in schools.

[00:23:55] And we based it on hunches, right? People heard stories about how communities were doing. So while we didn't have the data at that time, what we did have were stories from people, stories from service providers about how children and their families were doing. Marla and Chris mentioned the use of the vulnerability index as one of our indicators. And I just wanted to sort of bring back to your attention the retreat you all had when we introduced the Communities of Opportunity Index. And I think the significance

[00:24:30] of that is that that looks at vulnerability and its relationship to opportunity. So while this is using vulnerability to identify where community schools could go, when we talk about the strategies that will be implemented within community schools, we're looking at communities of opportunity, because what we want to do is not just address vulnerability. We want to think about the structure of opportunity that children and their families live in and target our resources, not just on the child, but the context in which they live. So I think we've had, you know, Our hunch, I think, led us to the right place.

[00:25:09] We now have data to inform the direction of where the community schools go. But I think probably most significantly now we have data to really inform what we're doing to address the needs of those children and families in those particular neighborhoods. Yes, Sloane.

[00:25:25] Carla keeps raising great points. Just one additional point to add on to that just real briefly. We also did a comprehensive evaluation of those three sites. So we did surveys to all of the students and the families, the teachers, the community-based organizations. We did interviews and focus groups with all of those different stakeholder groups to really figure out, like, where we needed to improve this framework.

[00:25:47] And moving forward, we're going to continue to do those comprehensive evaluations, but also needs assessments for any new schools to really make sure that we're targeting the services based on, again, what the families and students are saying they most need. Excellent. Thank you. Clearly, we have the right team working on this, and while we know the pilots are worked, understanding how to manage it, target it, and really be thoughtful and strategic rather than sort of free-for-all. Okay, thank you. Mr. Chairman? Yeah, just very briefly, I'm obviously glad to see this. I realize that, you know, the pandemic disrupted some things here and maybe made

[00:26:25] some of the needs less clear because of the stability issues that existed I guess what I'm a little bit unclear on is is obviously expansion is good if you have the capacity to do it but it's sounding like there is for good reason no one-size-fits-all programmatic scheme here so to speak like you can't take take Whitman for example very familiar having been a student there and it has maddened me since that day that this school is 100% bust. Subject for another day, wrong.

[00:27:03] But as a result of that, the challenges for those families are very different than the challenges in other schools. And so obviously that's a huge driver of access that might not exist at some of the other schools that are being evaluated. So how do we take what we've learned from these three simply apply them to other schools, but also have to deal with the inherent inefficiencies of different programming in each of them based on the community needs.

[00:27:33] So what I'm trying to understand here is the capacity of the CBOs, our capacity to expand beyond these three, recognizing that each potential future school that we go into might have to have a self-tailored set of programs to meet the needs of that community, knowing how big the county is and how many schools are in need, how do we tackle that?

[00:27:56] Are there core elements that go into all of these and then some tailoring around the edges? And how difficult is that to do on a case-by-case basis based on the three experiences we've had here? Yeah, lots of great questions. I think first I would say, you know, our expansion plan is still limited at this time, right?

[00:28:15] It's going to be funding dependent. So as Marla mentioned, we're looking at, you know, extensive grant funds that maybe could help us expand. But we're not interested in expanding until we've got a model that's working really well on the three sites that we currently have. And we know that we've got some improvements to make there. What I think that we were able to do as a result of the evaluation and the process that we went through to kind of get to this updated framework is to clarify some of those key elements that you're talking about, right?

[00:28:42] so that we know that students are going to need additional academic support services to close achievement gaps in some of these schools. That's the responsibility of the school district, so we're looking at doing some things differently in some different ways in those schools. For example, we've expanded, you know, after-hour tutoring programs that we're funding and running in those schools.

[00:29:01] But there's also a lot of social service needs that families and students have, right? if they've got, you know, food insecurity issues, if there are issues just about educating the families about how to be better advocates and supports for their students in the system. Those are all value-add things that we can do as part of the community schools initiative.

[00:29:19] But we've got to do that, again, based on what the priority needs are for that particular site. So that's why that needs assessment for any new school is going to be really important, to make sure that we're targeting our services to really address what the families and the students are saying that they most need. Whether it's social services, additional academic services, health services, right? Any of those additional wraparound services are going to be targeted based on what the families are saying they most need. And we can do that if we do that from the very beginning. We didn't do that with the implementation, as Carla mentioned, of our three schools. So we've kind of had to try to retrofit those services and that program model in our three

[00:29:57] existing schools. But moving forward, dependent on new funding, right? And so we're aggressively looking at external funding sources to do this, dependent really on what the students and the families are saying that they need the most, and based on this comprehensive framework that's an evidence-based national community schools framework.

[00:30:14] Okay, and one other quick question. The existing three we feel like is, in terms of service delivery models, is a constant and perpetual evolution, or do we feel like we're at a point with these three that we're maximizing opportunities there. I think what I heard is that there's still some work to be done on these three. So if you're these three schools, you're wondering, well, what's going to happen to us now if the county goes out and does an expansion? And is the message that we're nowhere near done

[00:30:48] identifying exactly all the needs that those three communities need to maximize our presence there? And so we're kind of continuing that evolution on these three as we go. I think you stated that really well we've had significant conversation with the administrators in those buildings the CBOs in those buildings to really talk about you know our continued investment and support in those schools and you know they helped us develop this model this wasn't an externally developed model this was all collaboratively developed so I think they're very supportive of the direction that we're moving in okay good thank you if I could add chairman the one thing

[00:31:25] too that you mentioned that I don't want to lose this is also not just about about bringing services and programs to schools. That's an important element of the community schools. But I think it's gone to reveal to us some institutional challenges, right? And so whether it's the location of Whitman Middle School or, you know, there are barriers that are not the fault of the people who are attending the schools that we also have to tackle. And so bringing those forward, and I think the association of the community school model through SCIPPT will give us that sort of pathway to bring these things through.

[00:32:02] So I don't think it's sort of a continual sort of dumping of programs and services. I think we're learning as we go, and as we learn, I think we can go deeper in terms of the strategy that really helps us to really influence our practice and policy.

[00:32:19] Thank you. Thank you. I saw, okay, I'll start with Kathy and move down the line. Thank you. So this line of questioning and responses is kind of where I wanted to go to understand more concrete examples of what you do. So what I'm hearing is sometimes it's bringing the services into the schools for the families.

[00:32:40] And, you know, we all know it's the whole child, it's the family, it's that impact for achievement. But if you can kind of give me any examples of things that are happening for families in those schools, it would help me to have some concrete examples.

[00:32:58] Yeah, so, again, we're doing a lot of additional academic supports, obviously, for students in those schools, and we're investing pretty heavily to make sure that we can extend the school day there, both for academics and for academic enrichment type of activity. So that's something that's really the school's responsibility.

[00:33:13] But then when you think about some of those systematic barriers and challenges that families might face, whether it's having access to health care and being able to get their students, you know, immunized so that they can attend school, whether it's, you know, making sure that families have the support that they need to overcome any barriers that they might be facing whether it's housing insecurity food insecurity we're essentially kind of case managing those families needs and trying to get them connected to the right county and community services to really address trying to remove some of those barriers and mitigate them as much as as much as we can so you know it's a comprehensive academic support social support kind of you know targeted

[00:33:53] based on student and family needs. I appreciate that. I think the other part is like reaching families, right, and having them take advantage of the services that are offered. If I may, I realize it might have helped to take a step back and sort of define community schools.

[00:34:09] I know we're all coming with different understandings. I just pulled up the NEA one, and I know we're going to continue to define what we're talking about, but community schools are developed with the understanding that every community is different and recognizing that education is a shared responsibility.

[00:34:28] Community schools ensure families, students, and community members have a say in deciding what will work best for student success. I think that's another key component of not just bringing services and bringing things to people, but ensuring that all the families have a seat at the table, that they have a voice, and that they help understand, because they know best, what the challenges are in each unique community, whether it's distance or access or school culture, to realize that we really want to pull together these collaborative teams to help identify those root causes and challenges.

[00:35:03] I don't know if that's the best definition. That's the one I just pulled up. Okay, thank you. All right, we're going to do a speed round, if that's all right, because we've got another big presentation. Pat, go ahead. How are you measuring the success, and is it working?

[00:35:18] Are you seeing decrease in absenteeism? Are you seeing a reduction of the achievement gap? And how are we going to measure that going forward? Because I think making sure it works is as important as giving it a try. No, it's a great question.

[00:35:35] And, you know, our initial evaluation looked at, you know, those typical kind of, you know, measures in terms of attendance, in terms of, you know, student course performance, in terms of student test performance. But the reality is, it's like I think we've got to, in future evaluations, tie our measures more directly to the service that was provided.

[00:35:53] you know so just measuring if only let's say you know 30 students in a school of a thousand had access to a particular service you wouldn't expect necessarily to see a huge increase in that so the short answer to your question is we've got to be better about evaluation it's got to be targeted to the services that we've provided we've seen some growth but not the type of growth that we need to see there happy to hear that's part of the plan going forward yeah thank you thank you walter uh thank you just a couple quick

questions first of all how many opportunity neighborhoods do have around the county i believe we have uh five current ones funded and about to be implemented

[00:36:31] and one is yeah planned but not yet funded okay and it's is one of the goals here to try to associate community uh these community schools with the existing opportunity i mean is that one of the hopes i guess okay if you could thank you and if you could put up the community school funding information slide um you know particularly because i know there's several uh opportunity neighborhoods in the rest in herndon area um and i guess one question is um as we know of potential

[00:37:06] community interest and funding um so that is something i guess we're open to is that right it looks like it's a range of different non-profits and donors that uh have stepped up Absolutely. We're open to a lot when it comes to this.

[00:37:23] All right. Very good. Thank you. Thank you. Excellent questions. I think that's why this model is definitely being looked at. I think I had Dan and then Rodney. Thank you, Madam Chair. In some ways, I'm in a unique position with this because on the school board, obviously in 2004 to 2007, we were looking to community schools.

[00:37:48] I advocated very strongly for community schools. and again community school is in the eye of the holder in many ways that point was just looking to get when we build or renovate a school that we provide an opportunity for the community to be engaged in part of the school whether it's accessing the library or having social services that are there available for the community so and i don't think to my mind opportunity neighborhoods which was the way that we launched that and carline you know you and i had many conversations at the Highland Center about that. And it's one of those things that I still don't think, I think it's underperformed from the beginning. And I think that's kind of what we're

[00:38:27] hearing today is like, well, how do we address that, fix that? But this is somebody who deeply believes in community schools. When we went to build the middle school at South County, I worked very hard to try to get those kind of services and get that design and that facility to support that, and we didn't.

[00:38:45] And it was, at that point in time, in my mind, it was an inability of the Board of Supervisors and the school board to really work together, not, I mean, Skip really has done the opposite of that. It's really brought those pieces together, and I think for that we should congratulate ourselves because prior to that it really was a struggle.

[00:39:02] But I still don't see the power, the impact of opportunity neighborhoods and in general community schools, and I think it's still an underperformer. I'm not sure what to do about it. I, again, still deeply believe in the philosophy, still know that it can make a difference.

[00:39:20] I've spent my whole life started working with Head Start Administrator in a very low-income area, ran low-income programs, worked with the community there, and Head Start, we all know, is the foundational part of that is, in essence, a community school model. But we struggle.

[00:39:36] I don't think we've got it, and I think we need to be looking differently and maybe even blow up what we got to do something different. And I recognize, and Carla, your point about Whitman, in some ways is right on. It's not a community middle school, even though, I mean, it's still very close to the community, but it's still not, if you will, physically part of the community.

[00:39:58] That makes it difficult. But, you know, Mount Vernon Woods is, you can't have a more community elementary school than Mount Vernon Woods, and I know that Supervisor Les can speak far more about that. But so I think we need to be thinking out of the box a little bit differently. I don't think, I don't believe, or at least I haven't been informed where the results have shown that this is a successful model and that we can point to lower absenteeism, greater parent involvement, you know, reading by third or fourth grade.

[00:40:28] I mean, that kind of stuff. So I'm not all in with what we're doing. And I'm very, very willing, as one board member, very willing to look at other ways of approaching this, Even if it means we stop doing what we're doing at some point in time.

[00:40:43] I don't want to stop it without having a follow-on, but I think we need to look very long and hard and do and try something different. I don't think this has really worked, at least not in terms of what our vision and our goals, and I think we consistently can show that that's been the case.

[00:40:59] So Cal Mien is somebody who's all in and deeply believes in it, but I need and we need to figure out a better way. Thank you. Thank you. And I'm seeing head nods. In the interest of time, we'll keep going. And I think we all want this to succeed and to make the improvements necessary. So I appreciate your sharing that. Rodney and then Andreas, if that's okay, we'll move on to the parks.

[00:41:22] So thank you very much Madam Chairman. I'll say I'm extremely excited about the work that's being done around this framework. I think it's gonna help. I would imagine that over time we'll see some benefits as a result of this sort of collective review. So having schools as the kind of coordinator of the information both collection and then kind of dissemination I think it's going to be helpful. I see this too in Mount Vernon Woods as being clearly positive in terms of the improvements with the students there and then going and

[00:41:57] visiting and have an opportunity to see it in action is really pretty cool I'll also say that I like this idea of being able to share best practices so I think what I'm imagining which is something that has not been done to the point that you just made Supervisor Stork is that we're going to be able to define what those best practices are the learnings and lessons that we get from each of our individual community schools and we can bring those into them collectively so there's going to be things that we can implement over time that we see is

[00:42:33] working in other schools so I'm just excited about where this is moving I think Skip's been talking about this a long time and to be able to have this as Because the place that we are I think is really positive. So I just wanted to state that.

[00:42:49] Thank you, Madam Chairman. Absolutely. Thank you, Rodney. Andres? Well, thank you very much and thank you for your presentations and for the interest of time. I'll be brief. One, I just wanted to highlight the importance of what was said right at the beginning, the importance of the collaboration between school boards, community, and the county.

[00:43:06] That's a winning trifecta in my book. But we also need to make sure that as we move forward, and you have talked about this, we always keep one Fairfax in mind because that has to be at the root and the foundation of everything we do moving forward here with this. You know, Chairman McKay has mentioned in the past the importance of data being one of our best indicators, and I think that that's how we move forward. We move forward with the data that we have, and I think that that will be our strength.

[00:43:33] That will be how we're able to understand the needs of the community, but also share that data with the communities that they understand. And so I'm looking forward to having more conversations around this. Thank you very much. Well, thank you so much. We've got the incredible team here, the partnership.

[00:43:51] I know Carla has some parting words. One quick thing. I just want to add this because I think the conversation about metrics is critically important. But I don't want us to get too caught up on it at the moment. And the reason why is I think that the strength of what we're talking about in this model is getting the right solutions to a community.

[00:44:12] It's going to take time to see the metrics shift. I will say that while we sort of brought partners together, that was a stage of the work, we're now really focusing on getting the right solutions to the community, and I'm really convinced that we will start to see the metrics shift. But starting with the metrics shifting, I think, gives us a false understanding of the significance of the model.

[00:44:33] It's been huge to align these two systems to get the right approaches going into these community-driven approaches. So I absolutely hear you, but I think we are positioned now to start to see the types of results that we want to see out of community schools.

[00:44:50] Just real quickly on that, Carla, I'm glad you brought that up because it reminds me of diversion first. When we started that, we talked about long-term savings and benefits to the community, and there were skeptics that that would ever happen. And now look what's happening with the results of that.

[00:45:06] that is exactly what's happening. It did take time, took resources, it took investment, it took focus. But like this, it takes full collaboration. Any element of that was not a part of the process, the process would fail. And so we do expect to see some metrics to support what we're doing in these communities is working, because we're putting resources in. And I would just say that while it takes time, I think all of us operate under a sense of urgency, too. Because we started this several years ago now, those kids that were in first grade when we started this are about ready to go to middle school already. So every year that goes by, we miss opportunities. We're missing

[00:45:45] potentially generations of kids. And so we definitely need to stay the course and understand that these types of metrics that we want to see improve take time. But we also operate under the sense of urgency that we don't want to lose a whole generation of kids while we're trying to figure out what works. So I think, you know, we just need to be cognizant of how those work together, but appreciate that comment. Absolutely. Really appreciate everyone's work on this and bringing back to the big picture. Thank you for visiting us today, Dr. Presidio. And to my colleagues, I forgot to review the minutes before we started. So while we transition to the Park

[00:46:22] Authority, if you would kindly just take a moment to review last year's meetings of the HHS minutes, and let me know if you do have any questions or concerns. Yes, Mr. Sork, Dan? And it's maybe offline, but I just, we know the Medicaid transition has been a rough one, and just if we could get some at least initial comment about where we are with that, if things are going okay, and blah, blah, blah. I mean, since that was in the minutes, it's probably a nice least reminder where we are with that. Thank you.

[00:46:57] Certainly we can get a nip out. Absolutely. Okay. Thank you, Chris Leonard. We'll get that to us thank you all right as we transition to another power team here in the county we have the review of the

equity of Famous County Park Authority's revenue and operating fund with us is executive director Jay Cole Stan wall the managing partner at HR and a advisors thank you for joining us and we do have Carla Bruce I also see Kyle Stone recently reelected I believe as chair of the park authority board uh and i see like tucker with us here today the the director

[00:47:36] of neighborhood and community services um so to that and i know it's a robust presentation i hope everyone's had a chance to read it and look at the details really really appreciate uh both the history and the detailed um implementation proposals um to that am i turning it over to chris or jay all right jay it's all yours uh good morning still good morning um welcome us back We were here last year at the HHS committee meeting to discuss our revenue fund and its ties to One Fairfax.

[00:48:13] I will say that we're sort of at the end of the beginning right now, and we are very fortunate that the BOS voted to approve funding for this study, which Stan will go through. The people at the table are all here because this really is a group think exercise.

[00:48:32] We've been working on this for years, years now, and this is just the beginning of the beginning. So I'm going to first turn it over to Carla, who's going to give, there's two presentations, one in your binder, about the history. We're not going to go through the entire history, but we just wanted to put everything into context.

[00:48:50] So, Carla. Hello again, Carla Bruce, County Chief Equity Officer. And I would just make the connection that, you know, we've talked about how agencies have been looking at their missions and their work and really interrogating and better understanding where inequity is present and looking at strategies for how to address it.

[00:49:15] And so the work that the Park Authority has been doing has been deep, and it's really sort of followed the model that we suggest that while we sort of look to the future and what we hope for the future, we have to take a look backwards to understand our past and to understand sort of how we got into this situation.

[00:49:35] So I won't read through all of those history slides, but I did want to begin with just saying, you know, it's not our intention today to suggest that there was any ill will in the initial design of the park authority. But we know that things that were designed in 1950 or 1979 reflect the values in the situation in the community at those times. And I would suggest that it's incumbent upon us to take into consideration what the values were at that time and to consider

[00:50:09] whether or not they align with our values and whether or not they reflect the priorities of our population today. And so I would just point out to you, you know, that the Park Authority was formed in 1950.

[00:50:25] It was formed sort of as the county was transitioning from its rural landscape to a suburban landscape. You know, what was happening in our country, what was happening in our state, what was happening locally is that it was formed during a period of segregation.

[00:50:44] And as many of the actual parks came to be, black people were prevented from being able to enjoy the benefits of those parks. While that was happening, though, the black community in Fairfax County worked to bring their own programs and social opportunities to the community.

[00:51:08] Over time, those programs transitioned to operation, many of those programs transitioned to operations to what we now know as neighborhood and community services. So what we see in looking at this history is this intersection, this sort of parallel nature of the evolution of the park authority with neighborhood and community, what we now know as neighborhood and community services, but also a real shift in our understanding of the value of recreation, right? So recreation in sort of the programs that were initially accepted to be funded by the county, it was looking at recreation for the purposes of solving

[00:51:47] a social problem you know taking care of those people um and so and again whether it's it were and i will say very frankly it was black people at the time because we didn't have the diversity that we see today um low-income people seniors right that's sort of what led the creation of neighborhood and community services what was happening at the park authority is again and there's a whole other presentation we could do about sort of how the um how many of the parks sort of came to be established as parks, but it was really driven by especially the programs and

[00:52:25] the camps and the actual rec centers. It was driven by people's ability to pay. And so you have the park authority operating on a trajectory of, you know, when it moved beyond just sort of the management of the parks to operations, is if you can pay, you can attend. Neighborhood and community services was operating on a trajectory of, you know, caring for social problems. And I would say we're in a much different time today. And I think it makes sense to think about the continuum of recreation opportunities in the county. It's been a tremendous opportunity to

[00:53:03] really, you know, test our One Fairfax policy to really understand the magnitude of what it's directed us to do. And so with that, I'm going to hand it over to Jay and Stan to talk about the study. So before I turn it over to Stan, sort of the end side of this one is as the results of what Stan will be talking about, and the Park Authority has this 100 percent fee-based model has gotten bigger and bigger and bigger, as Carla had said, we shifted out and then

[00:53:38] In agencies like NCS and libraries, there's been a void because recreation is for everybody. And so agencies like libraries and NCS has had to fill that void that's left because Park Authority can't provide those services for all of our residents.

[00:53:56] So this is a bigger, which is why Lloyd is here. This is a much larger conversation. The first fix of that conversation is the one we're about to have. And that will help sort of break down a lot of those silos and allow us to sort of get into our respective lanes of which we are all experts.

[00:54:16] So with that, I will turn it over to Stan. Thank you, Jay. And good morning, Chair Palaszczuk and members of the board. My name is Stan Wall, a Managing Partner of the Washington, D.C. Office of HRNA Advisors. I'm happy to be back again to share an update on where we are with the study of Fairfax Parks and funding for equity.

[00:54:38] HRNA is a national expert on parks and open space, including funding strategies and evaluating and designing for equity. We also have extensive experience here in Fairfax, supporting accounting of a number of initiatives, including market studies, economic development strategy, as well as housing policy and strategy. The Park Authority engaged us to help support its efforts to better serve its population. We all know the importance of parks, recreation, and open space. These benefits are made more clear during the COVID-19 pandemic. Parks provide exercise opportunities, mental health benefits, child care, community gathering space, and social celebrations and cohesion. They also

[00:55:17] provide economic benefits. They're an important part of making Fairfax an attractive place to live, work, and play, ensuring that we continue to attract employers and residents that grow our tax base. Parks and recreation are also public goods, much like our school system or libraries, and we need to make sure that everyone who lives in Fairfax has equal access to our top-tier system that benefits that the participation provides. We've seen these graphs before, but we can see quite clear that Fairfax isn't serving its residents equally. 71% of summer camp families own over $150,000 a year, whereas only 40% of the Fairfax population falls into that highest income

[00:55:56] bracket. The county population is 50% white, but rec center members are 79% white. And we can see a hint behind the context of these numbers. The bars on the far right, RecPAC, which is not operated out of the revenue fund and is therefore much more affordable and able to serve a different slice of the county's population. And that really underscores the fact that having such a large portion of Fairfax Parks budget relying upon fees and charges means that fees need to be high enough to support expenses that continue to grow every year. These high fees make programs unaffordable and therefore inaccessible to a large portion of your population and it hampers the Parks

[00:56:32] Authority ability to provide equitable services. I want to return to the idea of Parks and Recreation is a public good and all the benefits they provide. The Parks Authority's funding model diverges from most of your peers and from best practice in that you do not currently consider community benefits when setting cost recovery targets. For example, we might expect that an individual Pilates lesson or renting out space for a private birthday party, that residents would pay the full cost for that. But an after-school youth rec program where kids can be in a safe environment and learn new skills, or kids swim lessons that will have significant health and

[00:57:07] safety benefit, residents are also asked to pay full cost for those. As we'll discuss in the next slide, we're actually asking folks to pay more for these than the full cost of these programs. So now I want to talk a little bit about how, why such a large percentage of Fairfax Parks budget comes from fees and charges, and why your funding model forces these really high charges.

[00:57:29] These models were put in place in a different time period to address specific revenue concerns, but we're now realizing they don't align with the county's values. The Parks Authority's revenue fund works differently than most other places, and that 100% cost recovery requirement applies to both covering direct program costs, like the camp counselor's salary or the basketballs, and indirect costs, such as the paper towels in the rec center or the computer in the office the graphic designers use to print out a flyer. Many of these examples represent what is necessary even to say that Fairfax has a public recreation system, that we can open the rec center doors even if we don't have any programming, and we're required to have all of those costs covered by

[00:58:06] fees and charges. And this is really why the fees are so high. Other agencies are rarely required to recoup indirect costs. And these policies, again, were put in place in a different time period to address specific concerns, but we're now realizing, again, that these do not align with our values. Together, the fact that we ignore community benefits from any of our programs, that we need to cover indirect costs, both of which are out of alignment with best practices, these are what are making our fees so high. As you can see in these charts, 59% cost recovery looks really different than other agencies that represent larger populations with a 17% cost

[00:58:43] recovery and the median of all agencies with a 25% cost recovery. In looking at the Parks Authority versus Neighborhood Community Services, it's a tale of two recreation systems. One which receives public funding share that's closer to the median Park Agency Pinsquark, the other which relies on escalating fees and charges and as a result is inaccessible to many Fairfax residents.

[00:59:06] When we think about implementing best practices to ensure equity, there are a few key recommendations. First, implementing a cost-recovery pyramid that will reduce fees for some programs for everyone, regardless of their income, in recognition of the public benefits they provide. Second, introducing supplementary subsidies to help lower-income families afford all of our programs.

[00:59:25] Because we don't want to create a system where only wealthy kids can join in a specialty camp that is getting less subsidy. If the Parks Authority were to target the national median of 25% cost-recovery across these recommendations, that would represent a revenue gap of approximately $32 million.

[00:59:43] We recognize that with all of the services that the Parks Authority provides in unique context here in Fairfax, that perhaps 25% cost recovery isn't necessarily the goal for the county, but with the targeted approach to the cost recovery pyramid, we think you can reduce fees and make these services and these benefits more accessible to more residents.

[01:00:02] On this slide, we can see what the cost recovery pyramid might look like in Fairfax specifically. Personal training, retail sales will remain in the top tier, while items such as general admission to rec centers might target 20% to 30% cost recovery. And things like the summer concert series, which is so important to the community, would remain free. The Parks Authority is still working through what this would look like for you all, but the Parks Authority is proposing a modified implementation based on core areas with significant community benefits and health benefits like camps and swim lessons. There would still be a public engagement process to determine final

[01:00:39] categories and tiers, but the Park Authority estimates this modified pyramid would cost around $9.4 million annually. Another important part of these recommendations is implementing supplementary subsidy programs to further make our programs affordable. A sliding fee scale would recognize that even if summer camp is only at 30% cost recovery, that still might be too expensive for some families. And a flexible annual voucher for low-income families will help ensure that certain residents aren't excluded from more individual benefit services, like renting a public shelter.

[01:01:12] Administering these programs is quite costly and requires coordination with other agencies that operate similar programs like the SAC. Sliding fee scales offer a range of financial support across income distribution, allowing agencies to provide services at an unsubsidized or less subsidized rate than the highest income households, while preserving affordability for low and medical income households. Program-based sliding fee scales can be adjusted to align with the program's community benefit versus individual benefit. Sliding fee scales are resource intensive to administer as eligibility is not binary and requires a verification of income. Parks Authority

[01:01:48] will likely require additional resources in partnership with another Fairfax agency to administer a sliding fee scale, as is already done for RecPAC and SAC. The park authority estimates it would cost approximately $7 million to make a sliding fee scale available for summer camps, swim classes, and rec center access, but this might change after community input. A flexible annual voucher program for low-income families will help ensure that even programs with high individual benefit that might

otherwise be subsidized can still be accessed by low-income families. The way this usually works in other places, like Reston as an example, is that there's

[01:02:24] a deferred defined annual benefit voucher amount for eligible low-income families, typically $200,000. There's a nominal entrance fee for a co-payment per program to ensure attendance. And again, because these programs are expensive to administer, participation is also tied to eligibility to other income-verified programs, such as free school, lunch, or disability payments. The park authority estimates the flexible annual voucher program would cost approximately $3 million, though the exact amount would vary based on need and uptake.

[01:02:56] Finally, underlying all these recommendations is the cost of administration and outreach, which is critical to the success of any of these programs. The Park Authority must build out the infrastructure that's needed to actually implement these programs, conduct significant outreach to engage communities that have not been historic users of recreation programming.

[01:03:13] The Park Authority estimates approximately $7.2 million for administration, software, and outreach costs. This estimate for administrative costs is only if the Park Authority handles this work on its own in a bubble rather than working with centralized countywide approaches to reduce the cost of that administration.

[01:03:32] In total, the Park Authority estimates that we need approximately $26.6 million annual funding to implement a modified version of the recommendations. And these amounts may shift slightly since they're estimated prior to extensive community and public engagement that the Park Authority will be planning to engage.

[01:03:48] And again, I want to underscore that the administrative amount read cost is really necessary to support all of these recommendations. We've talked about the necessity to reduce fees and charges to increase equity outcomes.

[01:04:03] And in doing so, the park authority will need an additional $26 million in public funding, which is less than the $34 million it would cost to meet the 25% cost recovery. There may be other sources of revenue that we could explore, philanthropy, for example, but those sources will definitely not be enough to fill the gap.

[01:04:19] Increasing public funding for recreation will allow the Parks Authority to reduce its fees and charges, price programs according to their community benefit, and offer additional subsidy to low-income people. If we think about why fees are so high, that they're required to cover both direct and indirect expenses in the revenue fund, if we reduce fees to change the structure of the cost recovery requirement, that does require additional revenue from another source.

[01:04:45] The good news is that many other places have dedicated tax streams for parks and recreation, whether property tax levies or other creative public funding streams, and these measures consistently have high levels of voter support. I want to wrap up with a reminder and discussion of what our goals are. We really want to make sure that we progress toward equity and make progress toward a public recreation system where the users match our county's population more closely. 71% of your summer camp families are in the highest income bracket. 69% of your summer camp families are white. That's due in large part to the high fees that make recreation

[01:05:20] inaccessible. The recommendations that we made, implementing a multi-tiered pyramid so that cost recovery is based on community benefit, which lowers the cost of critical programs for everyone, and implementing subsidy programs through a sliding scale on fees through a flexible household voucher program, which provides support for low-income families, especially to access the full range of our high-quality programming. In combination, these programs will make sure that fees are not a barrier to participation. They'll expand access to all the benefits of public recreation, and together these represent an alignment with the national practices and correct for why the parks authorities' fees are so high to begin with.

[01:05:58] Our hope is that these are important first steps in the county's equity goals. Thank you, Stan. So the first thing, the first bullet, especially in the climate that we are in right now, I want to make it very clear that this is not a budget ask.

[01:06:14] It did not take us one year to get there here. It's not going to take us one year to get where we're going, but it's a very long journey and we first have to figure out the direction that we need to be going. So, you know, we have to, when we decide on where we're going to go, we have to first build the house, which is not the most exciting part of things.

[01:06:35] But we have to build it, and then we have to go where we're going. So it's going to take a very long time. So our next steps are we're going to be engaging with NCS to do a very intensive, inclusive public outreach process that's going to likely go through the summer, possibly into the fall.

[01:06:54] We're going to do a multi-pronged approach to outreach We're going to be collecting comments from the public across the county the BOS the Park Authority Board We're not going to be doing the standard outreach, which is one of the reasons why we're working with NCS We're really going to be getting into the community because we want to hear both from our as you saw from the slides We can't just send out a flyer to our users. We need to find out from the people who are have barriers to access Which is why we partnered with NCS and their inclusive community engagement team

[01:07:23] And then we are continuing to work with the deputy county executives, DMB, and both the BOS and the Park Authority Board to return, possibly in the fall of this year, to talk about what we've heard from the community and any edits that we've made for this.

[01:07:41] I also wanted to add, as always, that this is not the only equity thing that we're working on. If you know me, that's, as I say, equity is kind of my jam. And so there's a lot of other things that we're working on. Again, thank you. We'll be unveiling the Mobile Nature Center activation soon.

[01:07:59] You'll be hearing later on about our coordination between RECPAC and NCS. That's a large equity action. We had the partnership at Sully Community Center that we're working through through the summer. The GARE study, we have an impact plan for implementation of equity.

[01:08:15] We're continuing our equitable hiring process. PROSA that we presented last time at HHS. That's a large equity study as well. And we've built upon the county's vulnerability index for our PARA. So this is the big rock in the bucket that we really need to solve to really get someplace.

[01:08:32] But we just wanted to assure everybody that this is not the only answer to equity in the park authority. We still have other things that we need to be working on. And with that, I will turn it back over to you. Thank you so much, Jay and Stan. You went through that very quickly. I know there's quite a bit of information here, and there are probably some questions from our board. As you will see, the important

piece being here is that this is, as Jay said, did not happen in a year. Luckily, we're not in a pandemic again. And so it will be a thoughtful approach, both to really engage the community and appreciate

[01:09:06] that NCS is at the table for that, and that you all will be back in the fall of this year with the proposal, I assume, for the next steps. Before I turn it over to the chairman, I also want to state from what I'm seeing, both this presentation and the previous one, we're talking about the implementation, right, of this one Fairfax policy that we discussed and that we are so, I know, not just embedded in, but that we are also thoughtfully, I think, fighting to ensure it actually gets implemented.

[01:09:42] And so I appreciate that you shared, I've learned so much about both the history of the park authority and NCS and why we are where we are, but a little bit of why it's going to take that continued coordination and investment to move to a better place without judgment, as Carla mentioned.

[01:10:02] And then finally, I want to point out the important thing is I don't see anything here that is taking anything away from anyone, right? This is really about a plus, an added benefit to the community. And I think what really stood out to me is that community benefit pyramid, right?

[01:10:21] That's really at the top. Let's really look at what's a benefit to our whole community. You know, how are other systems looking at their park system and the rec system as what benefits the whole community, while also ensuring that we have access through vouchers or the fee model that I think SAC has been able to do so well to really ensure that there is equitable access to everything we do. So I just want to thank you all for the work on this. I know it is not easy work, and there will be a lot of community outreach, and we'll be hearing a lot from our community. But I think it's really important to see that this is being done in that thoughtful

[01:10:56] manner of giving and ensuring equity and without taking from what is, I think, a really exceptional system that we have. So to that, I will turn it over to the chairman. We can have a little extra time if we need it, but I will start at that end and go pretty quickly after the chairman.

[01:11:14] So I'm going to be quick first, because you stole some of my good thunder, which is great. I mean, when we put One Fairfax in place, this is exactly the type of hard conversation we wanted to have. This existing platform has existed, has served some members of the community very well for a long time.

[01:11:35] And unless we go back into that history and look at the root causes and compare it to the data that actually proves that the system is not as equitable as it could be right now, not serving all of our residents, which I know is a fundamental responsibility of the park authority.

[01:11:51] And so while these are hard conversations to have, they're necessary. And that's the point. What I would say is a couple things. One, I think the community outreach that you talked about is essential, and I think it's also essential to set the stage properly.

[01:12:08] Supervisor Pouchik said something, you know, that I have to repeat all too often when we talk about one Fairfax is that the false narrative of taking away from one to give to another can't enter this process because that's not what we're talking about here. But in order to do that successfully, I think we also had to be cognizant of the capacity issues that exist in a system that we have here and manage people's expectations.

[01:12:33] And so to that point, you know, I like the various options that are in here for us to consider going down a path of implementation, and I think we have to balance those against the capacity issues that

we have within our existing facility.

[01:12:48] And so Proza, some of the other things that we're looking at, I think will point to some enhancements that will be necessary in terms of capacity to be able to support the full implementation that is envisioned that could be many years from now, as was acknowledged earlier. We didn't get into this challenge in one year. We're not going to get out of it in one year, but we're not going to get out of it at all unless we address it and we start to address it in a systematic way. The other comment that I wanted to make is, you know, for folks who are in need of assistance in the county at whatever measure, whether they're in a sliding fee scale

[01:13:27] at SAC, whether they are in our program, getting federal support, whatever that is to help elevate people who have financial challenges, we have to understand that one of their biggest challenges is having the time, energy, and capacity to be able to enroll in, accept, fill out paperwork, travel places, submit documentation. And so I say all of that because whatever we do here, in terms of an enrollment platform or a benefits assessment that has to take place, let's use as close as we can to something that we already have.

[01:14:05] That is an automatic qualifier for a family that is already challenged. And, you know, I stress this a lot. We went over this when we went. We were talking about school bus passes or connector bus passes for kids. We had this conversation about schools and why can't a kid in our school have a pass that gets them on the connector, gets them in our public libraries, gets them access to our rec centers, gets them all of the things that they need that are county in one place.

[01:14:36] And so it's a dream I have. I know all the challenges associated with that. But when we're looking at this and we're talking about potentially starting from scratch, and I know you're already looking at the other platforms that are out there. It's not only efficient for us in terms of staff and the cost for us to enroll and qualify people, but it's also really efficient for the people that need the most help from us.

[01:14:58] And so it's a short way of saying let's be cognizant of that, not overcomplicate it, take advantage of data that we already have on folks and make sure that wherever we go with this equity initiative that we're using all the intel that we already have and trying to apply it as smartly and as efficiently, not just for county government, but for the end user.

[01:15:18] as well but finally great presentation i'm not can't say i'm terribly surprised by any of the data in here i don't think any of us hopefully on the board are the challenge we have now is how we get to a better system that that is more equitable and i think we're going to have to have that cooperation and that phasing that managing of expectations the proper messaging in the community the extensive community outreach and an understanding of what our end goal is but how we get there might be not a straight line, and we'll have to work together on that.

[01:15:55] So thank you. Thank you, Chairman McKay. A couple of things. I just want to put a finer point because you're absolutely right. The asterisk next to the $7 million for admin was specifically, I have a saying that I say, stay in your lane. Verifying income and doing that is not FCPA's lane, and which is why we are partnered with, you know, everybody to try to put ourselves where we are all experts in.

[01:16:20] And so that was if we did it in a bubble ourselves, that number can go down or shift to someplace else or whatever. That's part of the conversation we're going to be having this summer. I totally

agree with you. Having people have to go to 17 different places with different documents for different things is not an equitable way to serve our residents.

[01:16:37] For your capacity comment, I think you're absolutely right. And when you look at this in the very large picture, it's what I mean about the first rock in the bucket. And you'll hear about our work with NCS and RECPAC later on in the budget process. But the more that we can align ourselves where our strengths are, the more we break down those silos, and that actually opens up capacity for everybody.

[01:17:00] So we are not, our two agencies aren't competing with each other, so there's no reason why we can't be programming in different places. and we can focus on a location that's in need and then figure out what the county entity that exists there that we can program in or go outside of that.

[01:17:16] So I just wanted to make that comment. Thank you very much. Thank you so much, Jay. Because of time, I'm going to say, please, I will start there, limit to one comment or question, and then I will turn to staff afterwards. So take your notes and we'll come back at the end.

[01:17:32] Jimmy, go ahead. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. This would have been a question, but it'll be more of a comment because of where we are at at time, which is, you know, I started, wrote down, how can we better measure community benefits? I mean, the $26.6 million estimate here, I think, doesn't necessarily factor in community benefits.

[01:17:54] So the question is, what can we say about the added recreational benefits and where we're going to be bringing down costs elsewhere in the county? I think that will be key to moving forward with this plan and implementation, and I'm sure that Mr. Wall has done this many times before and could give us more stories about how exactly that's done, but would love to see more of that.

[01:18:18] And then the second point, actually, to build on what Chairman McKay started by saying about how this doesn't need to take away from anybody, obviously there are certain programs with capacity issues that we obviously have to work out, but I think the other interesting opportunities here are what we get with economies of scale.

[01:18:37] Sometimes if you have more people involved, the actual price per person goes down. And so by being able to bring more people into some of our programs, that may actually help us also in pricing, you know, in bringing down total costs.

[01:18:54] So we should, I would hope we'd look into that as well. And thank you. Thank you, Jimmy. Andres? I'll be super brief. Just one thing, the capacity issue really worries me. It worries me today, and it worries me moving forward. And that's something that I think we're going to really need to pay attention to.

[01:19:12] But my commitment to working with you and to the parks, because I understand how absolutely critical and important they are, especially in Fairfax County, is unwavering. So I look forward to working with all of you. And thank you for being here. Thank you. Rodney? Thank you, Madam Chairman.

[01:19:28] I'll go quickly as well. I just want to say, reading through this report, I felt a little tinge and a little bit of pain as I was getting through the beginning section, Just thinking about the history here and acknowledging that there are some things that happened in our past that are not so great.

[01:19:46] And then second, slide 24, program participation by race. That one's also just causing me a little pain as well, just in terms of the fact that we really don't have proportionate access and participation

in these programs.

[01:20:05] And that's something we definitely have to figure out. And I understand that this is the mission and focus. but I just want to acknowledge that I can see how difficult this is. And I just want to maybe posit one other point here, which is it could be that it's income-based, but it could be something else.

[01:20:25] So I don't know the answer to that question. So I'm wondering if we can try to figure it out what might be the issue with the disparity, particularly with Hispanic and particularly with African-American, because I think that is just the most glaring and most obvious.

[01:20:41] And then I just want to compliment HRNA again, your presentations, just the way that you lay them out, the data that you provide, the graphics, they're some of the best. So thank you very much. Absolutely. Definitely want to second all of those thoughts. I have Dan and then James.

[01:20:58] I want to thank everybody. This is an excellent presentation. Definitely informs us very dramatically. Now we have to figure out a way to perform because we know that that is an essential part of what we want, obviously clearly part of our Fairfax values. The other thing I would add, because I know it's expensive, but I'm going to add one more element to the conversation to this, which is the hours of our community centers really don't align with the needs of some of our communities.

[01:21:24] That's especially true during when there's no school or we have school holidays or, for example, we have a holiday on a Monday and we close our community centers on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. I know that's another big ticket, but I think that there's an equity piece of that, particularly with some of our community centers and the education and the importance, I think, of learning is beyond that, as well as some of the other elements and the benefits of a rec center for that.

[01:21:56] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, James. Thank you, Madam Chair. I bit my tongue in the first presentation because I definitely have thoughts on this. First, I really appreciate the work done on the sliding fee scale issue.

[01:22:11] As Cole knows, that's something that I have asked about repeatedly, so I appreciate seeing that. I would want to have a better understanding of the administrative costs and what it would take there and how you came up with the numbers, but I think that's real progress.

[01:22:30] It won't surprise anyone to know I was really enthusiastic about the history slide. The one thing that I would add to it, and coincidentally, I've gone down a rabbit hole of reading about the history of public authorities. And just in terms of definitions, public authorities are agencies created by governments to engage directly in the economy for public purposes.

[01:22:52] They differ from standard agencies in that they operate outside the administrative framework of democratically accountable government, generate their own operating income by charging users for goods and services. They can avoid input from voters and regulations that control agencies. Now, that doesn't perfectly define our park authority, but in some ways it does.

[01:23:10] And historically, I think it is likely that when you delve into the history of the park authority in the 50s, one of the tools that segregationists use to avoid Brown v. Board of Education and movement to integration is the creation of public authorities that were fee-based, right?

[01:23:28] So those who can afford to pay, a.k.a. those who are white, get access to the services. So segregation is tied up not just in the fee structure, but also in the governance model. And that's an

uncomfortable thing to say. I think we have to acknowledge that and think about that.

[01:23:46] And this isn't the first time I've said this. I do not think we can have separate conversations or we can separate conversations about the governance model and the funding model. And I don't say that because I have any lack of confidence in members of the Park Authority Board or the chairman, especially, who I have a lot of confidence in, nor do I feel that we don't have a good working relationship or collaboration or communication with the Park Authority and Park Authority staff, because certainly from my perspective, we do.

[01:24:18] But we have a Park Authority Board that, by definition, sets policies and priorities for the park system. I cannot in good conscience delegate the authority to set policies and priorities if a majority of funding is coming from the taxpayers, from the general fund that we here on this side of the dais are responsible for.

[01:24:43] I am very uncomfortable going in that direction. I think I have a responsibility to state that and to advocate for us to evaluate that model and that relationship if we're going to seriously evaluate the funding structure. The rationale for creating the public authority likely tied up with segregation, but it is quasi-independent because it operates based on user fees. Now, we've slowly changed that over the years, and maybe we'll continue to do so, but I think that

[01:25:21] has to be part of the conversation. Again, not a statement about any members of the Park Authority Board or the great job that I think they do. I just think philosophically that is important for us to consider, and I guess the question I have for Mr. Wall, maybe you can get us an answer, is in your work around the country, you've obviously looked at, in this work and in your work, other park and rec systems how many operate with independent or quasi-independent boards as public authorities yeah let me i know this is a critical point and i think we're all happy to

[01:25:57] just to stop for a second um if you would like to respond to that mr wall or come back to us feel free yeah i need to come back i don't have that that data but we can get that thank you yes mr Alcorn. Okay, thank you. Just very quickly. Yeah, some of the history, I think I'm just old enough to know personally when the park authority shifted to a primarily fee-based model. It was the late 80s. Bill Beckner was the director. And basically the point was to relieve the taxpayer, general taxpayer, and we were going to go to user fees. And that was it. And he basically said, yeah,

[01:26:37] that's not going to be that big of a challenge. We can do that. This was after segregation. So I think, you know, there may be something in the authority that was set up in the statutory law, but it was just a straight tax relief measure that was pushed back then. And then we had the recession of 1989, 1990. And yeah, the general fund money really fell back, never came back.

[01:27:06] So – but that's the history here. This is a great exercise to basically review our priorities, how we fund this, and I think we probably can do it more smartly.

[01:27:23] And Chairman McKay, thank you so much for talking about the enrollment and qualification and how we can do that smarter because that's so important. And then the last thing I'll say is, you know, user fees are very valuable in financing various public services.

[01:27:43] But I would just point out one thing we haven't talked about much. Our state partners have not blinked an eye in terms of user fees for use of our highways. One day we may have to come back and have that conversation, too. Thank you. Thank you.

[01:27:58] And I just want to appreciate you sharing that date. It explains why I learned to swim thanks to the YWCA and the Jewish Community Center. I did not step foot in a park authority building until I was much older. So definitely an issue that I appreciate is being brought to light and needs to be addressed for our future generations.

[01:28:18] Pat, and then. All right, I'm going to try to be quick. I'm going to do something I don't do very often, and that is echo the words of Supervisor Walkinshaw on the look at the separate authority. I mean, it creates so many silos, and I see it in Sports Tourism Task Force.

[01:28:39] I see it in a bunch of other things. And, again, no offense to park authority members, mine or any others, or the park authority staff, but I think it bears looking at, as does the revenue model, and that's really what I think got us in trouble here.

[01:28:54] We clearly have some severe funding issues with the parks. I mean, when I can't get $3,800 to line to pick up all courts that the community really needs and have to fund that out of my office budget, that's a problem. We don't have the money in our capital for new stuff because we're renovating rec centers.

[01:29:14] We got a lot of challenges coming with our park authority funding, and I think it is time to look at the whole structure, the revenue model, the separate authority, as we move forward. On what we're talking about to kind of get to, I would have appreciated, as we discussed earlier, to look at age, too. I mean, we hit income and race, but we didn't really hit age. It's something that I think we need to take a look at. Not opposed to sliding scales. You know, starting benefits at $130K. You know, I know you're not proposing one. That seems

[01:29:49] a little out there to me. And, you know, we say it's not taking from anybody, but some people consider taxes not taking. I happen to consider taxes taking. It's got to get funded somewhere and it's coming from our taxpayers. So there is taking. Clearly centralized administration.

[01:30:08] I mean, that's, again, you've got a system already. And if I could get feedback on your uptake assumptions, I mean, those are key to whatever the number is. But I just, if you've got anything that's not too too complicated i can't imagine what the spreadsheet looks like but anyway if you do if you can send it thanks thank you um before i turn it over to staff if you'd like to close um i think something that was shared number one i want to thank you i want to thank

[01:30:40] um our park authority our chairman um lloyd tucker jay cole um with the support of stan And Carla and the others, in my mind, you have taken that first step. We do have, you know, boards and authorities and commissions.

[01:30:56] But the fact that I've seen greater communication and collaboration and ways to start to coordinate, which is I think we're hearing a lot of, those are not hopefully cost-reducing, but definitely not cost-adding measures of coordinating the work of NCS and the park authority and our county and what our goals are.

[01:31:20] It's been very clear both in my conversations with you and in what you're proposing and what you're already doing from looking at Camp Fairfax and the rec pack program in the summer and looking at how we help reduce those barriers, both internal silos and barriers, which also lead to reducing the external silos and barriers and hopefully getting to that pipe dream of the one Fairfax card.

[01:31:47] But in the meantime, I know that you are doing a lot of work, and I think there's a lot of interest in those administrative costs and programmatic reductions that we're asking for. Taxes are how we fund society, as was famously quoted. So I know that we want to make sure that they are used smartly, that we are addressing what I appreciate you've shared, are a very, very clear segregation that were created in our systems and why we now have a system of two systems instead of just one.

[01:32:22] And so I appreciate the work that's being done to help address that. One thing I did want to add before I turn it over to you that came to me is as we do the outreach, definitely thinking and understanding the role currently that the external community centers, we have some community centers that were created by specific minority communities for our seniors, for our families, and to understand where they are and what role they're playing and how to bring them into the system and help understand how the work they're doing can be part of this coordinated effort, I think is one thing I want to add that I haven't heard yet.

[01:33:01] So to that, let me pause and just turn it back over to Jay or anyone on your team. If you have any-- I think we're good. OK, excellent. So only 10 minutes over. I want to thank all of you for your work today. And we look back to seeing you again in the fall. But I know there will be a lot of engagement between now and then.

[01:33:19] And to that, we are adjourned. And we will, in just a few moments, turn over to the Land Use Policy Committee. Thank you.

