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[00:00:14] Well, Andres set the bar pretty high this morning, starting exactly at 930, so I guess it makes sense that I'll be a few minutes late. And he finished half an hour early. No promises here. You know, never make promises you can't keep.

[00:00:30] Anyway, welcome to the Transportation Committee meeting on June 18th. We have a full agenda here. We're going to be talking about bus rapid transit. We're going to be talking about VRE. We're going to be talking about cut-through traffic, my least favorite but also favorite topic.

[00:00:50] And with that, we'll start with approval of both summaries of the December 12th and the February 13th meeting minutes. Does anybody have any changes or concerns with the meeting minutes? I didn't think you would.

[00:01:09] So with that, I would like to turn it over to our folks from the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. I actually had the benefit of seeing part of this presentation the other night with our other NVTC commissioners.

[00:01:25] But we're going to talk about our Route 7 strategies for bus rapid transit along Route 7. And with that, go ahead and take it away. There we go. All right.

[00:01:45] Well, thank you. My name is Alan Fein, the Director of Programs and Policy from the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. So thank you all for the opportunity for us to come out and talk about this program. Apologies, Vikram couldn't be here. A family issue came up, so he'll be back next time that we come out and talk about this.

[00:02:01] So I'll jump right into it. So Vision Route 7 is a BRT project we've been talking about for several years. And NVTC, in partnership with Fairfax County and the other jurisdictions along the corridor and along with other funding partners, have made a great deal of progress over the years.

[00:02:23] I know we've heard a lot of feedback from folks. Is there any way we can kind of speed things up, move things along a little bit quicker? So we took that feedback to heart and had a lot of conversations internally, both at NVTC and with our partners. And we kind of came up with the idea of let's do a strategic implementation plan that kind of identifies opportunities where we can speed things up and where we can keep things going, working very closely with everybody.

[00:02:48] So I'll start out with just we'll zoom back out to like 40,000 feet and talk a little bit about the context. So the regional context of Northern Virginia is pretty expansive transit network. We have a significant number. We have Metro Rail. We have VRE, which you'll hear from shortly.

[00:03:04] We have six different bus providers that operate in Northern Virginia. So a lot of different transit out there. That's really, really comprehensive across the entirety of Northern Virginia. If you zoom in a little bit, you look at the bus rapid transit networks. There's a lot of work going on over the years about BRT, which is a premium, high-capacity, high-frequency transit systems out there.

[00:03:28] Right now, there are multiple out there being planned in different phases. I know you all are advancing a couple of them yourselves. We have Metro Way, which opened up in 2014. It's been up and running. It runs at Alexandria and Arlington. Very successful BRT.

[00:03:44] West End Trans Way, also Alexandria, Duke Emotion. That's BRT on Duke Street. The one, obviously, I don't need to tell you about that one. And then the Envision Route 7. So we see this as part of a fundamental part of connecting the transit network across the entire region. A big part of it that's a little bit different is our traditionally, you know, VRE and Metro are very focused on moving from Northern Virginia into DC, that kind of more peak into the core.

[00:04:10] These networks are taking a little bit different approach of moving people within Virginia. They're still connecting to those high capacity networks, but they're moving within Virginia. And that's kind of who your core audience is, connecting the things that are important to the economy and mobility for us. So the vision, I'll start with the vision of where this is going. So a 14 mile corridor that connects Tyson's all the way down into Alexandria. There's a lot of texts on there but basically as you can see it connects all within virginia connects some really big employment centers connects multiple metro rail stations so the idea is to move people within

[00:04:46] virginia this is the alignment that we've been working on for several years it's adapted and evolved over time based on feedback from you all from all the different other jurisdictions along the way and different partners to make sure it's actually meeting the needs of our customers the needs of riders the needs of your constituents and also adapting over time to make sure that we're pivoting when we need to. So really, really important connections across this entire 14-mile corridor. Today, step back, we zoom a

little bit closer now. Along that same corridor, we have a really successful metro bus line. It's a 28-day. It runs every 12 minutes during the day. Very

[00:05:26] successful. It was successful before the pandemic. It's even more successful after. Basically, 67% above pre-pandemic levels. That's all across weekends, weekdays, peak hours. Everything has come back really, really strong. I think the rate that has sat there from April latest date is 7,700 riders a day. You think about that as hitting along this corridor, taking cars off the road, getting people the things they need, helping with congestion. It's a strong, strong ridership route there, and there's opportunities to make it even stronger, I think, down the road. That's where this conversation is going to lead. Today, the way the 28A runs, it connects to five different

[00:06:03] metro stations. You have them up there. So again, that whole intra-Northern Virginia connections to all the really interesting places along the corridor and the job centers and where people need to go. So pretty comprehensive route along there. So what we're going to talk a little bit going forward is how do we look at the 28A and that BRT, both of which are on the map, and how do we slowly pull them together?

[00:06:28] How do we make the 28A even better than it is? There's a lot of low-hanging fruit out there to make it even better. And then how does that slowly morph into the really big projects, the BRT, where we go from buses that are running right now in traffic and dealing with traffic to getting them the facilities they need to be able to move faster, whether it's signal priority, dedicated lanes, and things like that.

[00:06:50] So the vision is over time to convert the 28A into that higher capacity. And the way we're going to do that is kind of a two-pronged approach. So I'll start at the top, the 28A. Talk a little bit about there. It's up and running today. It's great. It's part of Metro's 12 and 20 network that run really frequently during the day.

[00:07:10] We saw the success of it with the ridership. So keeping that going strong, how can we make it better in the short term? Longer term, BRT. How do we convert that over to a project that has the capital and the more expensive facilities that make it even better?

[00:07:27] Now, you've talked a lot about, I know probably in this room, talking about the one. It's a big capital investment. I think the BRT along with seven is a little bit different. Kind of like Metro Way. If you think about Metro Way, if you've gone down to Alexandria and Arlington, it starts out in mixed traffic.

[00:07:43] Then it jumps into dedicated lanes, and then it moves into mixed traffic, and then it goes back to dedicated lanes again. But it's all hitting all those things, and they've built it up over time. This is the same vision for here. And even right now, there's work going on between Alexandria and Arlington to extend those dedicated lanes. You didn't have to do it all up front in one big project.

[00:08:01] You just do it over time, keep building, keep building. So that's the approach we're taking with this corridor, is make the bus service great this year today because our riders need it, and then build up to those really, really bigger and honestly more expensive enhancements that will take a little bit longer time to make sure we get them in place.

[00:08:20] So again, the implementation plan is layering them on top of each other, identifying those low-hanging fruit. We've been having great conversations with the staff here. Thank you for all their engagement. I really appreciate it. I had another meeting yesterday to keep this work moving forward.

[00:08:35] We're working with all the other jurisdictions along the corridor, trying to figure out what are those low-hanging fruit. We'll get into just a second about what some of those things look like, but there's a lot of work that's going on behind the scenes to move this forward and to document all the work that's happening into the Strategic Implementation Plan, which we intend is a living document that we're going to constantly review and revise over time, because just like the experience that we learned from our colleagues in Alexandria and Arlington, you have to take this phase, you make tweaks you make adjustments we're going to do the same thing so honestly this fall folks that are on mvtc will be coming back for seeking approval later this year to make sure that this

[00:09:15] gets approved kind of gives staff a guide path of what we're going to do over the next couple years to make sure this comes to fruition so this is a couple examples of the way that the uh that it'll if i need to hit start there we go um make some of the improvements over time so if you look at the top left, that's a picture of Metro Way, the facility down in Alexandria. That's like kind of your ultimate. You've got the dedicated lanes and the general purpose lanes on the right. You've got really great signals up there. The bottom left is actually shows where it transitions back into mixed traffic because sometimes you can't always build that cross section all the way

[00:09:53] through the entire corridor and that's okay. You can still put treatments in place, lanes that are dedicated just by paint or by pavement, possible signals. You can actually incorporate some of the bike facilities into that. So you're trying to squeeze a little bit more into the cross-section in a multimodal way. The nifty little example you're seeing on the right was created in-house at METC by our staff. It basically shows how cue jumping works. That's one of the tools we have out there. Basically, you reallocate some of the space that's out there. When those cars all get there and stuck at the red light, the buses don't have to be. The buses have a way to hold the

[00:10:32] traffic of the cars, let the buses go around and get ahead. Because guess what? There's probably a lot more people in that bus that need to be moving along instead of those couple people in the car. So basically it is one of those really important policy decisions. We're putting transit first and we're putting moving people, not cars first. So as I mentioned, a lot of work is going on in this quarter. This is a really quick snapshot of all the different investments that are going to support route 7 brt now not every single dollar and cent is tied strictly to this because there's elements of it of each one of these projects that will support what's happening over time there's a lot

[00:11:12] of work going on right now in the northern part which is the tyson's down in 66 a significant amount of money that's in various plans some of those plans are actually waiting to hear when the next month or so i think some of the plans that are in here are reflected are some outstanding applications that the county has with NVTA, and I believe on July 11th, we'll be hearing about what their decision is for the next six-year plan, so it helps move this forward.

[00:11:37] City of Falls Church, they have their Smart City project. They've been doing a lot of work with that. Not all that's in there, but a big part of that is signal optimization. How do you, even though sometimes you may not quite be at the point of having those dedicated signals for transit, if you optimize the actual network, things move through faster, and the buses benefit from that.

[00:11:56] So a lot of different work going on along the corridor as we work on the plan this summer and actually write it, we're going to have a lot more detail on this and timelines of when that money hits.

Because the money doesn't hit it once, it hits over time, and then there's lead time to get it done. So we'll be tracking all the work that's going on sequentially over time.

[00:12:16] To dive a little bit deeper into the northern segment that has to do with Fairfax County, those are three of the projects in the bottom right. I think they're all outstanding right now. Like I said, we'll find out what happens at MBTA in a couple weeks about where the funding stands. But those are really, really important projects that basically will really make sure that bus priority happens in that northern segment.

[00:12:38] One project is widening Route 7 in order to accommodate the bus lanes in the middle. And the one is the construction of the bus lanes. And then part of it is the Seven Corners Ring Road. It's a very congested, a little bit messy area to try to get through. We've talked a lot about it. And building that infrastructure, I think the way the county is approaching it, is you're building the infrastructure for all users, and a big part of that is transit.

[00:13:01] And I think as we go forward, the conversation will be how does transit fit into that ring road, how do we make sure things are moving through there, and the best way possible. In the meantime, like I said, that 28A, it's up and running. It goes through there. It's a little messy, but folks are riding it anyway, because it's a great route, even though it's challenging to get through that one segment.

[00:13:23] Some of the planning work that's going on, a little bit longer term planning work, we've talked a little bit about, we'll start at the top of the corridor, phase 4-0, that's the work that Sean's going to talk about in a couple of minutes, really honing in on what that means and that funding, if you get it from NVTA, ties into that first segment.

[00:13:41] Phase 4-1, for the folks that run NVTC, we've talked a lot about this. This is the work we're doing really closely with the City of Falls Church. What did they want to do within their segment of the corridor to make sure buses are getting the priority it needs, but also respecting the context of their town and making sure that we understand what that looks like and getting the best we can out of that.

[00:14:01] The bottom part on the map is actually the purple part. That's what we'll be doing this fall. We actually started talking yesterday with your staff and team about what that scope looks like. Make sure that we're working together. Make sure we're taking into consideration all of the comp plans that you all have been approved and make sure the analysis that we're doing is complementary and not duplicating anything or stepping on anybody's toes uh it is really focused on the technical side of things looking at the operations along there but there will be very importantly a really big conversation with the public along that corridor it's been a while since mvtc went out and talked to folks along

[00:14:38] that corridor about this project so it's been i'll say seven or eight years but go back out there really talk to folks work with uh supervisor hermenez office and other folks along the corridor supervisor pelichek i know you mentioned thank thank you for the reference to your office of languages here that we can help get the word out there along those multiple languages along the corridor but that will be a big part of the conversation out there to make sure there's good quality engagement with stakeholders along there so mvtc's role is kind of i kind of see us as putting the puzzle pieces together and helping guide the puzzle pieces to the right place

[00:15:18] There's a lot of moving parts, a lot of stakeholders along there. Kind of our top thing, again, I mentioned the living document, the strategic implementation plan that's going to guide kind of the day-to-day for the next couple of years. We do have, thankfully, to our congressional delegation, we got a federal

community project funding and a DRPT grant to move this along, and thank you all for the matching funds as well.

[00:15:42] Working with FTA, the Federal Transit Administration, figuring out the environmental work that needs to be done. We are gonna do a little bit more work in this next phase with Falls Church. They asked us to do a little bit more analysis on some of the roadway operations, and also we're working with our colleagues in Alexandria talking about the southern terminus.

[00:16:01] Right now it terminates at the Mark Center. There's a conversation about, well, do we consider maybe having terminus at southern towers instead? So we're gonna do a little bit of analysis with them. Policy coordination, I can go into all the details, but reconciling those differences you saw on that map earlier, you got a green solid line, a red line that kind of jumps all over the place right now.

[00:16:22] We'll see how we resolve those. A little bit of that may get resolved when Metro does their better bus network redesign, which is out for public comment right now. Once that comes along, we'll see what the changes are they actually implement, and then again, we'll adapt our map and we'll adapt our approach to make sure we're maximizing what they're doing.

[00:16:41] As always, we'll keep updating the commission, and then also we're always happy to come back out to the different commissions and committees and boards anytime you'd like us to bring up to date on everything. I mentioned a little bit of this already, working very, very closely with your staff here. Great team has been really supportive of us working with the Office on Public Affairs for Language Access. Virginia DOT has been coming up the last couple of days in different conversations about transit. It came up at our Innovation Summit last Friday. It came up yesterday

[00:17:15] at DMV moves. Here in Virginia, VDOT is fundamental to getting transit stuff done in Northern Virginia. They own the right-of-way in so many places. So having them at the table is really important. Working with them to get their buy-in early, making sure that they understand what we're trying to do and trying to bring them along to support those goals and then working that.

[00:17:35] I'm not going to read all the slides on here, but it's fun to basically step back and like, there's a lot of partners. I talked about the puzzle. There's four jurisdictions along the corridor. You're the biggest, the largest jurisdiction. I think you're about 50% of the actual corridor. We have Alexandria, Arlington, Falls Church. But we also have our regional partners and state partners. We have COG, which is responsible for different types of funding. The list is access to federal funding, DRPT, our state partner, FTA, our federal partner, the authority, our regional funding partner, Metro, obviously, the operator right

[00:18:13] now. VDOT's not on there, but there's another list, so it keeps going on and on and on, and we're always making sure we have the right folks at the table so we can actually do something meaningful moving forward. Next steps for NVTC are today, briefing you today, talking about this really great project. List all those jurisdictions and partners there again. That's an ongoing thing that'll never stop until we get this thing built and up and running. This fall, we plan to put out the RFP for the next part of the analysis that we're working on with some of the subtasks,

[00:18:47] award that early next year. And then in the process, we're heavily engaged with the work that NVTA is doing. They have a bus rapid transit preliminary deployment plan. We're working very closely with that. Obviously, Metro's bus network redesign. The Commonwealth does a lot of work in this area as well when it comes to different bus priority treatments and funding. So all those partners constantly

talking with them and being very much engaged with them to make sure that this project keeps moving forward and it keeps being successful. So with that, I'm actually not Vikram, but that's his contact information if you need it. So happy to answer any questions.

[00:19:26] Oh, very nice job pinch hitting. Thank you. I realize I should have said this up front before we started, but one of the reasons why I wanted to bring this to the full transportation committee is, yes, this specific route only goes through, I think, two, maybe touches another district within the county. However, the things that we learn from this route are really important, and the economic development that you could have attached to this route has, you know,

[00:20:01] county-wide significance. I mean, with all due respect to, you know, Mayor Wilson in Alexandria, But with this route, we're going to get Alexandria folks coming to work in Tysons, riding the bus the whole way. So that's why, and we're learning things for other areas in the county.

[00:20:19] So that's why I think it's great to have this presentation. I'm going to turn it over to Chairman McKay and others for questions. Yeah, I don't really have a question. I appreciate what Supervisor Beerman just said. I would add that with the one that we're already working on, I appreciate you mentioning that we're learning from that.

[00:20:42] I think it's really important because this corridor is very much like Route 7 from the standpoint of complication, from the standpoint of even implementation and how you implement it in a safe way. This corridor has a lot of pedestrian activity, a lot of different property owners in frontage, certainly a lot of economic development opportunities.

[00:21:04] But we've learned a lot going through Embark and with the one not only on how you plan these, but then also all the stipulations for FTA and how you can get federal funding and making sure that we take advantage of those opportunities.

[00:21:19] The only point I was going to make is, you know, slide 13 is not all the agencies as you mentioned, but I think it's important for us to focus on this for a minute because we don't do that many regional projects, and this is a regional project.

[00:21:35] If you just think about the number of counties that are involved, and people who travel along Route 7 really don't care what county they're in. They care that the network works. And this is a big moment because being able to pull together all these different jurisdictions and making sure that we have a system that works for all of them requires groups like NVTC to be able to plan for and do that because we tried that with Embark Richmond Highway.

[00:22:05] There was a point in time where we tried to look at extending into Alexandria more deliberately, extending into Prince William County more deliberately. And unfortunately, Prince William County made the decision to go ahead and widen the road without a transit component.

[00:22:21] And I remember those early meetings where we said to VDOT, no, we don't want to just widen Route 1. We want a dedicated transit component in our future planning for Route 1. And as a result of the jurisdictions not working together, we're going to end up with a great system in Fairfax County for the Richmond Highway Corridor.

[00:22:40] But sadly, it's not going to go deliberately into the core of the city of Alexandria or into Prince William County, which it should. And unfortunately, planning activities in those two jurisdictions, in some

cases, have almost prohibited what should be a very good network that could be developed.

[00:22:59] And so this is a big moment. I hope we learn from, you know, what we've done from the one. And I hope we also understand and appreciate the role that all these different agencies play. and in particular the coordination work that NVTC is doing.

[00:23:14] It's really valuable. And then lastly, I think the timeline is important, and I appreciate the acknowledgement that we're doing everything we can to compress that because obviously the sooner we can get to a point where we go for FTA funding and other things, the better, because we never know from administration to administration what that's going to look like.

[00:23:35] And so timing here of the planning efforts is really important, And compressing that as much as we can, I think, is important as well. But well done. Thank you. Supervisor Powell. Thank you so much, Chair Bierman. It's so good to see you here, Alan.

[00:23:51] I know Vikram has been working on this within your team and to our team. I mean, this is, again, a very exciting project. Couldn't agree more with the chairman that the timing. I know BRT1 is still happening. It's still not finalized, and so there's a lot of work being put in there.

[00:24:08] But I have two questions. I guess one's more for you and the other is more for our staff and Sean and Greg and your team. So the first one is around the timing. What do you see right now as the biggest constraints across the whole project to doing some of those early jumps and wins before we even get to the construction piece?

[00:24:35] Probably the biggest one is the funding up front and then the staffing. It takes, honestly, it does take a lot of staff time in order to get those things built, designed. I've worked the implementation part of things in my career as well, but it's getting that money early and sticking it in there.

[00:24:54] Now, unfortunately, the way a lot of our funding programs in Virginia work, they're on six-year timeframes. You're looking at many years out. Are there opportunities to move money forward? Are there opportunities to fund things locally versus regionally, things like that, some of the smaller, lower-hanging fruit.

[00:25:12] And I think that's what a big part of that 28A effort is. What are those low-hanging fruit? What can we do really quickly? Is there anything where Metro can leverage some resources they have? DRPT, they do their technical assistance, some of their merit work that they do.

[00:25:28] It's a much shorter time frame. You're looking at the next year, you're not looking at six years out. So I think that's what we're trying to figure out. What are those smaller things we can do with looking at, could we get DRPT money next year, next fiscal year? We haven't started FY25 yet, but we're already thinking about FY26.

[00:25:44] What is the timeline for all of that? So how can you move things forward strategically that gets you this quick turnaround, implementable on a shorter time frame, but that actually provides a lot of benefit? A question following up on that, and Fairbanks, if you have more things on this too. I don't think you mentioned it.

[00:26:02] Are any of the commuter choice funds eligible for this project? Yes. So I know we had less applications this round than necessary, and partly there's just a lot more funding coming in there. So it is eligible? It is eligible.

[00:26:18] With commuter choice funding, there is a little bit tighter timeline of how the money must be expended. So we typically try to look for projects that are a little more shovel-ready, that you've done a lot of homework that we can – because we can't do just a design study. There has to be implementation because we have to tie it back to the benefit of the toll payer.

[00:26:35] So we get a little bit of a tighter scope of what we can fund, but there are opportunities within that program. We're actually absolutely happy to talk about how community choice fits into this. We've had the same conversation with Falls Church about some of the improvements they would like to do and how community choice fits in there.

[00:26:53] And I get, yeah, and my, I'm glad you brought up Falls Church because that ties, and the funding and staffing piece, that ties back a little bit to, interesting to hear from the chairman and learning from Route 1, you know, It's excellent that we have all the jurisdictions in. I live very close to this and very close to the Falls Church one, and I'm concerned that they're going to be creating a bottleneck in the city because they don't have that flexibility right now that we have.

[00:27:21] And so whether it's through this, I guess, are there suggestions for things we're working on or we can do more to help try to mitigate having a potential long-term full bottleneck in the city? So I think there's a couple things that we probably want to think about, and part of the reason why we wanted to come today to start having these conversations is because I think there's a lot of work going on from multiple sides, and we want to make sure that we don't set ourselves up where we're doing something that does something really good, and then something next to it doesn't necessarily coincide with it.

[00:27:58] And so I think a lot of the conversation with Falls Church, I think, will need to be about what their specific plans are and how that makes the connections and tie-ins to what we're proposing to do between Spring Hill and West Falls Church, how those things tie together.

[00:28:13] At the end of the day, I think one of the big fundamental things we're going to have to think about when we start thinking about how we want to do this project, and the chairman, McKay, talked about it, is the FTA funding aspect, looking at, you know, ridership, looking at, you know, the time savings.

[00:28:30] If those things aren't there, sometimes you don't get what you're looking for from FTA. And so we're going to have to really kind of look at, all right, what's Falls Church doing? How does that relate to what we're doing? Can we show the time savings? Can we show the ridership? Can we show all those things to really get a full system in, or do we need to do things in pieces because this piece shows something a little bit better versus that piece?

[00:28:53] So I think that's going to be a huge piece of what we're going to need to talk about with Falls Church, for sure. Do we currently have enough dedicated staffing to this? I know we have so many projects, including the right one. I know MVCC is also doing a lot to support the city, and this is a regional project, but we have, I believe, about 50% of it.

[00:29:11] So that's, I guess, what I want to know from the timing piece is do we currently have enough staffing dedicated to this? I think it's going to be a little bit of a challenge because you're going to see a lot of the same people that you see on Richmond Highway. I think a lot of it will depend on the when.

[00:29:26] If we're talking right right now, we're heavy duty in a lot of the Richmond Highway stuff. If we're talking three, four, five, six years from now, we start, you know, as we start to space some things out, some of the people who were involved in the early stages of putting together Richmond Highway are now

sort of in the background and we're more heavy into the heavy design and construction piece of it, then we start having more, you know, time to free up.

[00:29:52] But I know right now we're definitely heavy duty in a lot of the Richmond Highway stuff. I mean, I would say for us, that should be a concern. As we talk about three, five, seven years, it's not going to help us speed up the timeline. So I think we just need to figure out how to ensure on the Fairfax side that we do have the staff to help move along this work.

[00:30:12] Yeah, I think that's a good point. I would also make the point, though, that it's also a huge asset because the people who work on Richmond Highway, we want them working on this project because they understand these nuances. And actually, it's a good kind of, yeah, I mean, it's a good high-profile project to come off of.

[00:30:30] And I think it will save some time on this project, having the people that have learned the things that have taken longer on Richmond Highway to get to this point than I think any of us wanted or anticipated. But a lot of that is because these nuances have come up that now we have experience in working in.

[00:30:47] I agree. Do you have any more questions? No, yeah, don't disagree with that, but if there's additional support, so we're not waiting those five years, I think that would be helpful for us to know that's a roadblock. Thank you. Very excited. An excellent summit on Friday to Alan and the MVTC team.

[00:31:06] I learned a lot, and I know those who were there. Learned a lot from the experts who were there. Thank you very much. Supervisor Herity, you had a question? Yeah. So the 28A riders, do most of them go the whole route or are a lot of little breakups?

[00:31:22] Most of them don't go the whole route. I actually have a very rough, not ready for a public map that breaks down actually where they go. Most people don't ride the whole ones, but I think if I'm just going by my memory, a lot of them are like the chunks, like let's say Alexandria up to Tyson.

[00:31:38] They're much more kind of typical segments that you would think kind of logically make sense Because right now, the 28A, not during rush hour, it takes about, I think, 80 or 90 minutes to make the whole route. During rush hour, it takes about 120 minutes.

[00:31:55] It's a significantly longer route once rush hour hits. A lot of people aren't going to make that trip. If you're transit dependent, there's a different story for folks that are commuting on it. A lot of folks are going to jump in their car and drive, which we don't want folks to do. So I'll see if I can track down that map and share it with your staff so we can feed that back to you.

[00:32:13] And you just made, without realizing, you made some of the points that I'm going to make because I'm a broken record on this. And that is if we want to get those people from Alexandria to go to Tyson's to work, they're not going to sit on a bus for even in a modified BRT and stop at every stop along the way.

[00:32:33] So I would encourage as a part of this, I mean, the number one reason people take mass transit that aren't transit dependent or is it gets them there quicker. And we've seen that with our express routes. I would try to do what you can to allow express routes during portions of this because that's how you get people onto transit that are in cars that have a choice.

[00:32:56] And I know this is kind of a difficult one to do because it's not really even a true BRT. So to do pull-offs in an environment like this might be even a little harder. You might think about an express route, if you do it, that goes around Falls Church, for instance.

[00:33:14] i mean because you got 66 there i think that you could get on and get around false church and false church may not like that but if they're the bottleneck and you do want to run an express you could run an express on pieces of it without having a whole thing but that's that's how you'd get your people from alexandria to tyson's thank you there i know there have been staff level conversations people have ideas about how what's the best way to run because you don't always have to go a to b that's the thing about bus you can do exactly a to the middle b to the middle depending on what that demand looks like and then time it there where's the true demand the flexibility the

[00:33:52] bus really comes in but you're right there are there are options to really make it useful for people be creative be flexible i mean don't you know when you look at our rail versus rail and other parts of the country we don't have the ability to express so when i get on my bike at Dulles Airport, I can beat the train to the river.

[00:34:13] In a lot of jurisdictions, that's not the case because you'll run an express. So we need to be creative. That's my encouragement to you. Thank you. Are there any other questions from members of the board?

[00:34:29] Well, I will actually ask in some ways the exact same question I asked at NVTC, which sort of piggybacks on what Supervisor Herity was just saying, which is I loved your cue jumping animation. I love the idea of more traffic signal controls. I love the idea of finding ways to make sure that our buses essentially have some level of priority that allows them to move faster than if you were in a car. Where's VDOT on all of that? I don't want us to come up with great ideas and then have VDOT turn around and say, nope, you can't do it, because believe it or not, that's happened before.

[00:35:07] They are a part of they they have been and will be a part of the conversation that the Falls Church They were even part of that conversation and we're looking at the Falls Church because that transition but yes, they will be there So Sue raspberry and I'm sorry to introduce myself first time Greg steerson acting director of SCDOT I actually in anticipation of this question. I actually sort of Cold-called yeah, we won't say cold-called I actually reached out to VDOT and had about a 30-minute discussion with them about this just to sort of get their initial conversation, you know, their conversation piece on it.

[00:35:41] Bottom line is they're not averse to it. However, as you know, they're going to want to see the analysis, how things work, et cetera, et cetera. But I did very specifically kind of let them know that this was coming and that more than likely we would be bringing stuff like that to them.

[00:35:58] So they are definitely aware that this is coming. Well done. Good work. With that, I'll only close by saying that one of the interesting things that's often talked about by Randy Clark, the head of Metro, is how in post-pandemic times, buses have actually rebounded a lot faster than Metro Rail.

[00:36:29] And so the idea of improving these bus routes, improving these opportunities, I think is very important. Now, all that being said, that may not be the best segue to our next topic, which is the Virginia Railway Express.

[00:36:46] Well, before we do that, I didn't want to leave Sean out. Sean had a couple of slides just about Fairfax County's piece, the Spring Hill to West Falls Church piece and some of the work we're doing. it

should only take a couple of minutes a very very quick update just to let you know what we're that's my fault sorry at the county side so uh my name is sean schweitzer project manager for the route 7 brt project for fc dot so a quick little rundown of what we're currently working on we're working on the geometric alignment concept it's 10 design pretty much we're looking at advancing the

[00:37:25] Design of the route seven corridor or BRT corridor to kind of look at right-of-way needs Along especially in Tyson's so you know as you know redevelopment Applications come in we can start kind of giving them an idea of how much right-of-way We're going to need to preserve in the future in order to implement BRT We're also looking at the alignment intersection configurations making sure that we can minimize right-of-way impacts also look at minimizing the time for pedestrians to cross, which leads me into

[00:38:03] my next bullet point, which is we also looked at a supplemental scope of work to consider right-of-way reductions, which we're looking at the feasibility of removing dual lefts where feasible along the route. We're looking at removing designated right-turn lanes and then also slip rights, and that's again to kind of minimize the crossing distance for pedestrians as well as just you know make it more of a of a city atmosphere so we're looking at that and we're also working coordinating with B dot right now on those mitigations so

[00:38:40] we're working through them and hopefully we can continue to finalize our concept designs also through this phase we are having our consultant develop a brief report for a future FTA funding application so they'll be putting that together for us as well slide we're expected to finish this phase by the end of this year again the end product will be more details approximately of what kind of right-of-way will be needed for the BRT and Tyson's and all the way up

[00:39:17] to west falls church area we'll also get a cost refinement on how much the brt would cost to implement and the picture in the right hand corner is just kind of an example of what layouts will be be created through this phase so next steps real quick northern segment uh after this phase we are looking to progress to 30 design and cost estimates again this is an example on the right of richmond highway BRT 30% design plans so again it'll look a little bit more detail of

[00:39:56] how it would be configured and also a little bit on environmental more drainage impacts and then also southern segment seven corners area is kind of being worked on right now or analyzed via the ring road project I know that we have an application for NVTA hopefully we get that money and then progress will be dependent on for the southern segment available funding sources as we move and then also department resources right now like we said there's a lot of staff resources tied up in the Richmond highway BRT so once we start you know

[00:40:34] getting that online a little bit more hopefully we can start to switch gears look a little bit more at the southern segment but we're continuing with this northern segment right now since majority of it is in Fairfax so it's easier for us to implement a little bit more but we also are going to be looking at southern segment as well in the future and that is all I have is there any questions any questions yeah as you know we do have applications that keep coming in and so having the work and being able to share that with any

[00:41:12] developments that come through absolutely necessary so thanks for your work on this job thanks I'll only note that your discussion about making that area more walkable will fit very well with our economic development committee meeting in which we're talking to the tyson's alliance later today so nice synergy synergy between committee meetings so thank you very much um really appreciate uh your

time thank you and with that we'll turn to the next uh item on the agenda uh which is virginia railway express so we went from buses to trains

[00:41:49] the point of uh all these things again uh when it comes to county-wide significance is trying to find ways to reduce congestion reduce traffic uh maybe it's not necessarily uh you know maybe you don't necessarily have a station in your district but if the people who are riding that expressway aren't driving through your district sorry riding vre aren't driving through your district it's certainly helping you out so um now it's time for an update on uh on vre thank you i'll turn it over to mr ruiz how do i work okay there we go can you guys hear me all right um good

[00:42:29] morning everyone uh nick ruiz i'm the planning program manager with virginia railway express and um as i was introduced uh going to give you a brief update on um our system plan 2050 update efforts um and so let's go ahead and jump right in so um i don't think i need to convince anyone in this room that the world looks very different and Fairfax County looks very different than it did in 2014. And that is the last time we did a comprehensive update to our system plan. Every transit agency needs to have a future looking multi-decade out in the future visioning document.

[00:43:02] And so for Virginia Railway Express, that's our system plan. You know, this document allows us to plant a flag 20 to 30 years out and develop an implementation strategy to improve and enhance service for our riders and the communities that we serve. Some of the things that we are responding to in this system plan update, you know, communities are growing and changing. Northern Virginia between now and 2050 is projected to grow by 35 percent in population, but the Fredericksburg region to our south is projected to grow by over 65 percent. Unfortunately there's

[00:43:39] going to be a widening jobs housing imbalance in the region between now and 2050 with most of the jobs the new jobs and job growth still projected to occur in the DC core and along the high capacity transit corridors like the Orange Line and the Silver Line corridor in this area. So you're going to see an ever-increasing number of people commuting into the region for work. There's a lot of economic opportunity in this region, and that's going to put a strain on the region's highway and the transportation system. Telework, also a major factor. It's here to stay. Back in 2019, you know,

[00:44:14] we do an annual survey of our ridership. 2019, only 59 percent of our riders said that they did not telework at all. You know, so they were going into the office five days a week. Well, now that's down to around 37 percent. So we're seeing this kind of emergence and stabilization of a hybrid scheme, which has really changed our ridership patterns. We're seeing softening ridership on Fridays and Mondays and much more demand in the middle of the week. And then finally, transforming rail in Virginia, if you all are familiar, you know, that's the state initiative

[00:44:49] to improve and expand the rail capacity between Richmond and Washington, D.C., as well as in other parts of the state, but VRE is a signatory and a funding partner to that agreement, and that is going to do wonders for us in the next decade. That will allow us to add over 60 percent more daily round trips system-wide because of the additional rail capacity. Now, the keystone of that program is the long bridge, the second long bridge across the Potomac River, and without that key piece of infrastructure, nothing else is possible. So I think maybe 30 years ago,

[00:45:24] you could say that Northern Virginia ended at the Occoquan River, but I don't think we can say that anymore. So transit improvements that we make south of here are going to have a tremendous benefit to alleviating congestion on the roadways here in Fairfax County and in the jurisdictions inside the

Beltway. So we started out the planning process with a vision statement. This is something we workshopped with our operations board in the fall of 2022, and that's that VRE is going to grow to serve the region as a transportation service of choice. I think the operative word in this

[00:46:01] vision statement is that VRE is going to grow. We found that with the projected growth in population and employment, we really didn't feel that the current system with our 16 daily round trips was going to be sufficient to meet the needs of changing commuting and travel patterns by 2050, and so our flag planted in the future is that VRE is going to grow and expand.

[00:46:27] We also established four key system plan goals, and we used these goals to screen a myriad of service scenarios for 2050 down to one recommended service scenario, as well as to determine what the optimal near-term service alternative is, and I'll explain those on the following slides. But I just want to point out that foremost in this list of five, or excuse me, list of four, is safety and reliability. You know, VRE is a safe service. We want to continue to provide a safe transit service for our customers, but we also want to provide a reliable service.

[00:47:03] It does no good for us to throw more service out on the rails that don't have the capacity to support that results in a less than optimal on-time performance, and people ride on time and they ride on reliability, not on distance. So if somebody can reliably get to their destination in an hour, 95 percent of the time, that's a reliable service.

[00:47:24] And so there are things that theoretically we could do sooner than 2030 and sooner than 2050, but we don't feel that the infrastructure is going to be sufficient for us to guarantee that service, because if you scare people away, you know, it's very hard to get them back and train them to be, you know, a rider of the service, especially given the fact that the majority of our riders, the overwhelming majority of our riders are choice riders and they're federal government employees that have fairly high salaries. So just a little bit of a background on the planning process. It was a three-phase update, and I just want to say, you know,

[00:48:03] I appreciate our operations board for providing the support through each of the phases, providing feedback along the way. We had multiple touch points with the VRE operations board and with the jurisdictions and with the transportation planning staff in each of our jurisdictions. We wrapped up our analysis in April of this year, and so now we're kind of on a roadshow presenting the results, but this was generally how we progressed through the planning process here.

[00:48:28] And so in the short term, as I mentioned, you know, we're not going to wait until 2050 to start adding service. Transforming Rail in Virginia is going to allow us to increase capacity on our system by up to 63%.

[00:48:44] That's an additional 10-round trip system-wide. And so that's really going to be huge on the weekdays. But in addition to the weekdays, we will also be able to run up to 26 trains on the weekends. I think you might be familiar with our foray into Saturday service, hopefully by the end of this calendar year.

[00:49:05] We'll be starting a limited service on both of our lines, Manassas and Fredericksburg, of three round trips. And so we hope to view that as a proof of concept, understand, you know, what the demand is on the weekends, and hopefully expand to a full weekend service, seven trains, seven round trips on the Fredericksburg line, up to six trains on the Fredericksburg, or excuse me, on the Manassas line.

[00:49:26] We're also going to be able to run a limited amount of trains as express trains, and that's going to help us bring folks from the outer jurisdictions into the region's core faster and more time competitive with private automobile. That's one of the significant challenges for us today is that in many cases we're not competitive from a time perspective when there's not as much congestion on the roadways.

[00:49:50] And then we're also going to be, through some of the work that's already planned and funded, through our regional and local sources, lengthening platform edges to allow eight-car trains, back-lick, we're receiving funding through Northern Virginia Transportation, or excuse me, MBTA, as well as CMAQ funding to expand the back-lick station to eight-car lengths, as well as in some other areas. And then moving on to 2050, and this again is our future-looking scenario our vision kind of for the the service and that's on both lines a peak direction peak

[00:50:27] period train every 20 minutes so that's three trains an hour on each line into dc in the reverse peak direction that would be a train every half hour running out to the ends of each of our lines and then in the off-peak times so in the midday and in the evenings and on weekends running a train every hour in both directions. And I think that really forms a baseline of service, kind of that lifeline service. We did some analysis on our market and our expected future market. And, you know, VRE is still going to cater to a large number of peak period,

[00:51:05] peak direction demand. There's a lot of federal workforce. There's a lot of office jobs in the region's core that, you know, is still going to have a nine to five, you know, schedule. But we don't want to just do that, right? We want to spread the service out across the day and attract markets that we don't serve today.

[00:51:22] We're also going to be looking to expand our span of service to offer service in the evenings as well as on the weekends. So that amounts to up to three times more service than what we see today. And so really what we conceive of VRE in the future, in the next 26 years, as being that core spine of a regional transportation system that really doesn't exist today.

[00:51:48] It is very difficult, if not impossible, for a customer to make a three-seat transit ride from the Manassas area or from the Fredericksburg area to the region's core using VRE. There's just not that density of service. The connections are not timed.

[00:52:04] You know, you really have to have nerves of steel to be able to make your bus, make your train, you know, sprint to the station. And so in the future, you know, we hope to pick up a significant amount of two- to three-seat ride transit trips that will use VRE because it becomes a more reliable service and a more frequent service as that.

[00:52:24] We also look to partner with some of the regional bus agencies to explore connecting bus service that's demonstrated by the orange lines on the map here to some of our communities even farther south than our current termini that just don't have the density of population and employment.

[00:52:41] And really, it's not cost effective for us to expand VRE out into those areas. But for a pilot bus service, there's definitely an opportunity for us to explore that. So VRE is the region's spine in 2050 will have, you know, fairly significant benefits, we feel, to the region's transportation system.

[00:53:01] Now, quantifying those benefits in a more specific way, we took a look at some of the top potential benefits by 2050, and I'll direct your eyes to the right-hand most column on this table, which is if VRE were to implement that three times more service by 2050, along with the regional growth in

population and ridership, we could realize over 51 million annual miles of VMT avoided just by people being on commuter rail and not on the regional highways.

[00:53:33] Annual vehicle operating cost savings, $16.7 million of annual vehicle operating cost savings in 2050. That's dollars back in people's pockets that they wouldn't otherwise be spending on the wear and tear, the upkeep, the loans, the insurance on a private vehicle.

[00:53:54] So that's a direct economic impact back to our region because that money then goes to places like restaurants, colleges, attractions, things like that. And then, of course, a fairly significant amount of annual travel delay avoided, 64,000, estimated 64,000 hours of travel delay avoided.

[00:54:14] One other thing I just want to point out as it relates to the RF&P corridor, which is our Fredericksburg Line corridor, we did kind of a theoretical thought experiment here, and we said, well, what happens if the freight corridor didn't exist? You know, if the investments weren't made and we allowed that corridor to degrade so bad that CSX couldn't run their freight trains anymore.

[00:54:35] Well, the freight still needs to get from point A to point B. And so, you know, if you didn't have that freight network, 4,100 additional truck trips would need to happen in 2030 on I-95. And so if you can visualize that, it's end-to-end a full lane of trucks from the Pentagon to south of Spotsylvania.

[00:54:56] So there's a tremendous amount of benefit that's not just the passenger benefit but the freight benefit to our region. It's a quality of life. It's a livability. It's a safety benefit. And, you know, when you quantify that, and these numbers come from our friends at DRPT, over $150 million in economic benefit to the Commonwealth because of the RFMP Freight Corps.

[00:55:21] And so moving on to exploration of some of the capital costs and some of the capital needs, I will say that these are needs that are above and beyond the things that are already planned and funded in transforming rail in Virginia and are already planned and funded through 2030.

[00:55:38] So this is everything from 2030 to 2050, and it's about $359 million in capital need if we were to implement this full service expansion. And primarily that need is tied up in additional track capacity that's required above and beyond transforming rail.

[00:56:00] Track capacity is very expensive to build, so you want to build as little as possible and make sure that you're running the service where you're utilizing as much of that capacity as possible. It's no different than building a highway, right? Also, parking. So what you're seeing on this part of the slide is if the current mode of access to VRE stations didn't change and we attracted those additional riders to our system, and right now between 90% and 95% of our riders drive alone to the station and park.

[00:56:32] So we wanted to be as conservative in our cost estimates and say, well, what happens if nobody walked or biked or, you know, took transit to the stations? You know, over $157 million of additional capital expenditure, including at some Fairfax County stations. So we really hope that between now and 2050, we can work with our jurisdictions to realize some smart TDM strategies to lessen the burden, the potential burden on our parking facilities.

[00:56:59] Um, if you can recall before the pandemic, many of our parking facilities were busting at the seams. People, if you were catching those last two or three trains of the day, you know, you were out of parking. So, um, we don't want that to happen, you know, in the future. We want things to be just full enough, but not too full, um, that, that we're turning people away at the door.

[00:57:15] So the other side of the capital coin I'll point out is rolling stock. Rolling stock is also very expensive. Um, and we have a lot of it, um, but to fully run the proposed service by 2050, we're going to need to run even more of it. And so today we have 100 rail cars in our fleet. We have a planned and funded order for an additional 21 rail cars. So we should have a fleet of 121 by the 2030 decade. That's great. That's a good first start. But we're going to need to expand significantly through the 2030s and 2040s. Also, what's causing a potential pinch in our capital needs in the 2030

[00:57:55] decade is our rolling stock is going to start to age out. The FTA says they've got a useful life of 30 years. You can stretch things a little further with some overhaul programs and stuff, but generally speaking, you've got to replace those rail cars at some point. And so right at the time we're going to be expanding, we're also going to need to be considering what we do to set ourselves up so we can actually buy just the base level of fleet to replace what we already have. The same is true for locomotive fleet. We currently run a fleet of 21, or excuse me, 20 rail locomotives, and we're going to need to expand that fleet, you know, into the 30, 31 locomotive

[00:58:34] range to be able to run that service that we envision in 2030, or excuse me, 2050. So, and our locomotives, and this is something that's even more of a pressing need for VRE, are going to start to age out even sooner. So by the beginning of the 2030 decade, we just completed a life cycle overhaul and upgrade facility down at our crossroads yard at the end of the Fredericksburg line. That should provide some of the needed overhaul capacity to, you know, provide as long of a useful life as the FTA will allow for our rolling stock for our equipment, but still there is going to be a need here in the next couple of years. So that was capital. Moving on to the

[00:59:14] operating needs. I'll point your eyes to the second pair of bars here in the first chart on the left, and that's what the projected annual operating deficit would be in 2050 if you consider our current streams of funding for operating and you estimate what it would cost to operate our system in 2050. So you can see there's a rather significant projected gap, you know, due in part because the current sources of operating funding for BRE are going to be

[00:59:49] insufficient to fund that level of service and that growth. The bars on the left-hand side of that chart tell a similar story, but that's with a 2030 level of service. So we wanted to understand If we got to 2030 and were tapped out and did not have additional resources to fully expand to 2050, we would still see not as big, but a rather considerable annual operating gap in 2050.

[01:00:18] However, you know, on the flip side of the operating gap, you know, this three times increase in service could allow us to carry over 8.1 million riders a year. Pre-pandemic, in our best year, we were doing somewhere around 4 million riders a year.

[01:00:36] So this is going to be a tremendous increase in the amount of people that will carry. The relevancy to the region will increase because we'll be able to serve more markets and more people doing, you know, more types of trips. And that's across weekday and weekend trips.

[01:00:51] You can see the breakdown, weekend being the yellow and weekday being the blue trips. And so finally, you know, just want to baseline everyone to what we're doing today and what we could expect to see in the future with this expansion.

[01:01:08] We're around 77,000 to 8,000 average daily riders, depending on what day you ride, and that's across 16 round trips. By 2050, with the implementation of this service, we could see a 262% increase in

average daily ridership on the weekday.

[01:01:27] So, you know, just putting it in another way, I mean, that's a significant growth. We've already seen a very considerable growth from the depths of the pandemic, April, May of 2020 through today. And I think we're going to see a slow but steady increase even without service enhancements.

[01:01:45] So we really feel that these service enhancements are going to increase the elasticity of demand and allow us to attract more people to VRE. So in closing, I just wanted to provide some information, you know, what we're going to be doing here. Continued member jurisdiction outreach, as I said, we've been on a roadshow for the past month or two, providing information on the plan, answering jurisdiction staff's questions.

[01:02:11] We look to go to our operations board in the fall for action on the plan and hopefully return to the commissions, our parent commissions, after that. And then item number four, there are some key areas where I think we're going to want to do some, you know, areas of future study in-house looking at some of those key points.

[01:02:32] But we're happy to take, you know, comments or recommendations for the things that VRE might need to look at maybe in a local context that we're not aware of that we can study here through the end of the decade. Because, you know, the system plan is great, but it's not a shelf warmer.

[01:02:48] It's going to have legs, and it's going to spawn a lot of additional analyses. So that is the entirety of my presentation. Thank you for listening, and I'm happy to take any questions that there might be. Thank you.

[01:03:06] Of all the numbers, the 4,180 daily truck trips on I-95 end-to-end for 57 miles, that's a very, very powerful statistic. I'll turn it over to James because he raised his hand first.

[01:03:25] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want to thank Nick, who has done a really incredible job throughout this process. Those of us on the operations board, Supervisor Stork and I, Supervisor Alcorn for a while, have seen this come together, and it's been really impressive, impressive work.

[01:03:42] You know, I think kind of for me, and VRE folks have heard me say this ad nauseum, the opportunity and the imperative to attract new riders and different type of rider is what we're dealing with. Although Nick's point is well taken that 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. office workers are going to continue to exist and to some extent grow. I think it's likely that most of them are going to be working in their office three days a week as opposed to the five days that they were, or maybe four days pre-pandemic. So that gives us the opportunity for VRE to be not just a commuter

[01:04:20] rail service for those office workers, but also a rail service that can take folks from Fredericksburg or Burke or Manassas downtown to see the cherry blossoms on a Saturday afternoon, or for the service worker who works, you know, outside of the 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule to get to and from their place of employment and we have to be much more flexible in our service delivery than we have in the past and I think we're in a moment now where we have to be open to experimentation

[01:04:57] in terms of what works so when I was chair last year of the operations board I was really pressing us to accelerate the adoption of the Saturday service which hopefully fingers crossed we'll have in place by the end of this calendar year, because I think it's really important to see how much real demand there is for that. I think we believe, based on what we've heard from our riders and the community, that

there is real interest in that. But we need those trains to be running so we can see and then we can make adjustments as we move along. And I think VRE

[01:05:33] is doing a really good job of that. You know, one thing I'll just note for board members, we're getting a great deal from VRE right now. The jurisdictional subsidy that localities pay is a relatively small percentage of VRE's overall operating budget, and it is less today in inflation-adjusted dollars than it was pre-pandemic because we cut the local subsidy during the pandemic, and we haven't even restored it to the pre-pandemic level. So we have been

[01:06:06] getting a very good deal from VRE. And I also say, you know, we've had a great partnership with successive administrations in Richmond. You know, Governor McAuliffe really kicking off transforming rail in Virginia, Governor Northam, and I have to give even Governor Youngkin and his administration credit for their commitment and their partnership with VRE. And we have a really good thing going, and the 2030 improvements are happening, and Nick mentioned that, and that's

[01:06:43] going to be dramatic. You know, this is about 2050, but those 2030 improvements are happening. The projects are being funded, and that service is going to be delivered. The question for us is thinking about, you know, what can we do post 2030 to go even further? So thank you, Nick, for your work and, Mr. Chairman, for adding this to the agenda.

[01:07:06] Thank you. Supervisor Alcorn? Thank you. Could you go to slide 13? Oh, sorry. It's the operating financial forecast for 2050. Yeah, that's it.

[01:07:23] So I just want to make sure I understand the slide. So the yellow bars are, that's not the deficit. That's the operating revenue, correct? That's the operating revenue. That's correct. So the deficit is the difference between the blue bar on the left and the yellow bar on the right.

[01:07:41] Okay, and this is making some assumptions about, so you have a 2030 level, $291 million in revenue. Most of that is Fairbox, correct? No, actually most of it is a combination of sources that we receive.

[01:08:02] For example, from the Commonwealth, we receive track access fee payments and operating support, the 3% off the top of the mass transit fund. And then the fare box is a percentage of that. Okay, that's very helpful. So that includes the jurisdictional subsidy, is that correct?

[01:08:19] It does, yes. Okay, all right. That helps a lot. Yeah, because currently the system's operating expenses, I believe, for FY25 are $118 million. Is that correct? Yeah. And the fare box recovery is about 20 percent right now, right?

[01:08:40] Slightly lower than that, between 12 and 16. OK. Pre-pandemic, the fare box recovery rate for VRE, I believe, was how high was it? About between 50 and 52 percent. OK. So we got up about 50, 52 percent. I guess one of the things, you know, that strikes me is, Well, first of all, I do have some questions on the assumptions about ridership, given the land use around the stations all the way up and down the line.

[01:09:12] And, you know, some of us have been involved in transit planning and land use for decades. And we know how hard it is, frankly, to set this up so that people actually use transit and it all comes together. It takes a long time.

[01:09:29] But I guess my bigger question is, where's the money going to come from to pay on the operating side? Because this is basically three to seven times higher operating costs annually than what VRE does now.

[01:09:49] Yeah, and when we started the system plan, you know, we wanted to create a funding unconstrained plan that was more of a vision document that identified what was going to be the future need that the jurisdictions, that the region, that the Commonwealth would need to assess, you know, whether or not the benefits of providing that additional service were worth the increasing cost. And so we're simply through the system plan identifying what we think those needs would be in 2030 and 2050 and then, you know, putting that out to the folks that will need to further those discussions both at the regional and at the statewide level.

[01:10:27] Okay. I appreciate that. And I love VRE. You know, I want to see it be healthy and grow. But I also want to make sure that at some point, you know, a long-term plan, frankly, it's got to be credible.

[01:10:44] It's got to be credible. And I don't want to see something put out there that's not able to stand on its own, you know, with some plans that are achievable and good assumptions on that.

[01:11:01] I guess the other question that I would have would be on the land use side. I mean, looking at the five stations in Fairfax County, Burke Center, Rolling Road, Backlick, Manassas Line, on the Manassas Line, and then Lorden and Franconia-Springfield, Are you making assumptions about change in land use for any of those Fairfax County stations to meet these ridership projections?

[01:11:32] So the way we developed the ridership projections was using the COG regional model, and that model relies on the inputs that each of the jurisdictions provide by way of projected future growth in land use. And so we just assumed whatever, for example, Fairfax County provided to COG to build that model was going to be what it was.

[01:11:53] And I think in the Burke and Rowling and Backlick area, there is projected to be a very, very modest growth rate because of the existing land use that's there. And so we did recognize that, and that is baked into the assumptions.

[01:12:10] the predominant growth in ridership is going to occur farther south than us where there's more developable land where there's a lot more activity um and and that's just a matter of you know what each jurisdiction thinks is going to be on the ground in 25 years yeah and i appreciate that and this is something that came up at uh at nbtc as well and i i'd ask about this i would caution everybody to be very careful about assuming, let's say, Spotsylvania County, you know, when it grows a certain amount, how it's growing is not around a VRE station. You know, by and large, there's

[01:12:49] going to be a very small fraction of growth, overall growth there. So I think putting the parking assumptions in there is very smart because I think for the vast majority of the stations along the line, this will continue to be primarily a park and ride system.

[01:13:10] So I think how many people that are going to be in, say, Spotsylvania and be using or want to use VRE because that's where they need to go is something that might need a little more um need a little more review but i love the idea of being you know ambitious and and you know putting the vision out there but i do want to make sure that both on the operating side and and also on the land use and the assumptions that go in on ridership uh get a good scrub by the operating board and nvtc so thank you mr chairman thank you uh supervisor

[01:13:48] stork and this will be the last topic on vre because we're getting close i'm just chairman's prerogative after supervisors i want to just i really want to say i'm agreeing with both my colleagues on either side of me because this is the challenge that we have you have to have a vision and creating that vision has a lot of let's say cautions to it i mean you're you're creating something that may or may not really happen and to be honest the most critical time we have is the next three to five years because that will dramatically change I think the vision 2030 or 2050 is what happens the next three to five years because we're

[01:14:28] not getting the ridership back yet that we truly have to have to have any in my mind any hope of realizing this vision but that's part of what we're looking to experiment with our our Saturday schedules and others to try to see if there's other models that can can work with this but when you're only getting around 10% of your dollars in the fare box, then you've got a serious issue.

[01:14:51] The other part is we recognize that the subsidy that Fairfax County is paying is going to likely, maybe not decline, but at least as a percentage of the overall subsidy is going to continue to decline because of really the projections that are in here are to really to add service to further out that will bring people in that way.

[01:15:12] But I'm glad we're doing this. I have a lot of concerns about it, and I really appreciate the input that we're getting from everybody in this, and the fact that you're taking this around and getting that input I think is invaluable. And I've been hearing comments from others as part of this process and look forward as a member of the operating board and looking and addressing and probably, if you will, shaping this a little bit differently as a result of all the input that we're getting.

[01:15:37] But again, thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is simple. Do you do any coordination with MARC, and is there any market to better tie in with the MARC system? Several people have asked me that, and especially as the system is changing, there may be some real opportunities there. Yeah, we have been coordinating with MARC.

[01:15:55] Pre-pandemic, we offered a cross-honor program where each other's tickets could be used on each other's systems. I think we're looking to restart that here in the next year or two. We did some analysis on the market from the VRE catchment areas into Maryland.

[01:16:12] And what we found, even in 2030, 2050, it's a very, very small market relative to some of our home markets. And so while the plan doesn't preclude Mark exploring running through into northern Virginia in the future, we didn't feel that there was enough of a demand for us to explore running into Maryland.

[01:16:34] The thing, I think we need to be looking more at the Maryland coming into Virginia. I mean, they're really good at creating roadblocks to prevent their residents from getting to their jobs in Virginia. And so this could be a real alternative for a lot of folks.

[01:16:51] I mean, if you look at the growth areas that we have on the outer areas of VRE, a lot of that same stuff is happening on the MARC system, and they're coming into the core, And we should be looking at whether or not there are opportunities for them to be coming into Virginia more easily. And so I just want to put that marker out there that we continue, you know, that coordination and talking with them.

[01:17:14] That's a good point, Mr. Chairman. Yes. On that point, the board, operating board, has absolutely been looking at that. And I think Nick did a good job of explaining that it's really more, in your

point, more Maryland coming in versus Virginia going out. So, yes.

[01:17:29] Wow. Yep. It's funny. i was thinking it was uh woodbridge orioles fans going up to camp that's just me um thank you very much uh and uh with that well we will move on to the last item on the agenda uh which we will hopefully breeze through very quickly uh which is an update to the fairfax county uh resident cut through permit program um so uh miss sign mccartney the the floor is yours and yeah you can sit wherever you want. The sign moves with you. So thank you.

[01:18:13] Okay. Good morning, Chairman Behrman and board members. In the interest of the very short time that we have, I am not going to go through every slide fully, but you've seen a lot of this information previously. I'm Henry Stein-McCartney, Department of Transportation, Transportation planner and the project manager for this program.

[01:18:36] I'm joined today by Office of County Attorney and Fairfax County Police and also Eric Tittleman, the division director for active transportation and capital projects. Background, we received authorization from the state in 2019 to create this program.

[01:18:59] We've previously been here several times. recently in February 2024 to discuss proposed program implementation, and today we'll give an update on that. A prerequisite to participating in the permit program is implementation by VDOT of a cut-through traffic restriction on a residential street.

[01:19:27] I believe that you're familiar with cut-through restrictions that are implemented to mitigate traffic onto residential streets that is often led there by wayfinding apps like Waze. But to participate in this program, the community will have to have that cut-through restriction implemented first.

[01:19:50] We have identified a number of steps to implement this program. One is the county ordinance, which we will plan to bring to public hearing for approval by the board in the fall. Also, program policies and procedures, and we will plan to make permits available to residents to the 355 eligible addresses in early 2025.

[01:20:17] We have a few other things, minor tasks, that we'll have to wrap up in that time, but we believe that we'll be able to accomplish all of those tasks and be on track to initiate the program early next year.

[01:20:33] The proposed ordinance, you've been provided a copy of the proposed ordinance for your review, and it establishes, you know, several things, sets forth the manner of establishment of permit zones, specifies permit administration, and sets the permit fee of $24 plus processing fees.

[01:20:55] I know that when we were here previously, we had proposed a permit fee of $25, and I'll explain the change. We have learned that the software, the permit administration software that we will be using provides for a monthly proration.

[01:21:14] So we would like to prorate the monthly, the permit fee at $2 monthly to ensure that at any point in the permit year when a resident applies for a permit, that they're only paying $2 per month of permit validity.

[01:21:30] And so dropping it down to $24 is just a function of that math. And the ordinance also provides for enforcement and penalties for violations. So the draft ordinance provides that the board may establish permit zones that encompass the designated area that's identified by FCDOT during the establishment of cut-through restrictions.

[01:22:00] And we will also be asking that the board establish cut-through or establish permit zones for the existing cut-through restrictions when we bring the ordinance forward for public hearing because it's necessary to have an official establishment of those permit zones so that when permits become available, we will be able to issue permits to residents of those zones.

[01:22:27] And permits will be available to verified residents of those zones. And, of course, the limitation that we've known about for a long time is that only resident vehicles will be qualified to obtain a permit.

[01:22:45] So at our last appearance before this committee, we introduced the potential of using an existing software that's procured by the Department of Tax Administration. for permit administration and payment processing.

[01:23:04] And since that meeting, we've explored this option more thoroughly and we found that the vendor software fully meets our needs to administer the new program. The vendor will provide an online permit application page, permit software for FCDOT to administer the program, and payment processing.

[01:23:23] There is no cost to the county to set up a permit program in the existing software, And the vendor will charge a $3 processing fee to collect online debit and credit card payments. And those payments will be charged to the permit applicant as a convenience fee.

[01:23:42] So the vendor will remit the full permit fee of $24 per permit for each permit issued to the county. And FCDOT has determined that we can fulfill permits at a lower price point than the vendor.

[01:23:57] So, FCDOT staff will fulfill the program by mailing those permits to residents. Here, we have our estimated program cost and potential revenue. DTA is really the star here.

[01:24:16] They have offered this software that they procure to us, which has brought our cost for this program. It's extremely low. We will, our cost will be limited to signage, decals, and postage and materials, and in the first year, we will potentially spend, you know, only about $3,000.

[01:24:43] And then you can see the potential revenue for 355 homes, determining that revenue based on the $24 permit fee and the number of permits that are issued.

[01:24:58] That's an unknown at this point because this is a new program. So, but those are the potentials and that program revenue will be deposited into the general fund. This slide here is just a follow-up to a question that was presented by supervisors at the February meeting.

[01:25:21] Supervisors had asked that we learn why neighboring jurisdictions that have implemented turn restrictions do not offer permits. So here you can see the response from each jurisdiction. The City of Alexandria, they actually hired a consultant to study a potential permit program and determined that there were concerns about favoring resident access to public streets.

[01:25:45] Fairfax City, there is no resident impact, so permits are not a consideration. The town of Herndon allows access by signage, so permits are not needed. And in the town of Vienna, they've stated that residents have not expressed an interest in permits.

[01:26:02] But if they had, that they would likely not offer them, because they also believe that there are concerns about favoring resident access to public streets. In our next slide, this is also responsive to board questions from the February meeting.

[01:26:19] Supervisors had asked how enforcement is performed in the county and in neighboring jurisdictions. We contacted the listed jurisdictions and learned that FCPD, Fairfax City Police, and the town of Vienna police indicated that they stop all motorists that access restricted streets and issue tickets for disregarding a highway sign.

[01:26:45] The city of Falls Church will stop vehicles that don't display a permit. If they are a resident, they will give them a warning. If they're non-resident, they generally get a ticket. In the town of Herndon, they will stop and ticket vehicles that travel the length of the one block street that without stopping at one of the four homes so um if you uh now we would like to receive your feedback and guidance um do you have any questions about the information that we provided today or on the implementation of this program thank you um i have a question for the police

[01:27:22] officers in the room the first question is did you see this major colwell with the traffic division and this is major alua he's the station commander for reston but i can't even tell you what that is from here but after you've learned what it is which is this is the permit decal could you spot that on a car if it's going by potentially depending on where it was placed on the windshield so that's the question that's my second question is it better to have it placed on the windshield

[01:28:00] or better to have it placed on the bumper or somewhere else i would say it's the windshield windshield because that's mostly where officers look for inspection stickers and when we used to have the, uh, the county decals as well is where it's placed. So motorists know that officers know that I think if we place it at a different part of the vehicle, then it's like a learning curve for the officers again. Perfect. Yeah. Good to hear. Um, uh, with that, I'll turn it over to chairman McKay. Yeah. I just have a one question. Uh, what happens in these residential areas where you have home-based businesses, particularly like a home-based daycare where, you know,

[01:28:40] We're seeing growth, thankfully, in those post-pandemic. What happens to the people who might be daily coming to a home-based business? Doesn't have a decal. They probably would be ticketed. So I did check with the other station commander for the Mason Station, which is also where our other current cut-through restriction is.

[01:29:03] And they issued no tickets during the calendar year of 2023 at all in that area because there was no complaints from any residents. Major Alua could speak to the permit in his jurisdiction as well for rest them. But if we were to go out there, those people potentially would be ticketed.

[01:29:21] Essentially, yeah, it's correct. For the neighborhood that we have is Algonquin by Thomas Avenue. Fairfax County has a very small portion of that roadway once you turn onto Thomas Avenue. And literally probably three houses fall in the Fairfax County jurisdiction and the rest is Loudoun County.

[01:29:42] We've written one citation there over the past year and a half, and essentially when I have my set officer just keep an eye on the location just to see if anybody makes that turn, there were no site violations that were actually observed on the day that we sat there.

[01:30:03] Officers do visit it sometimes, but during school hours, it mostly falls on when officers are getting ready for either calls for service or school crossings, which is our priority for most of that time. And by the time they're done with the school crossings, the enforcement time is already over by 10 a.m., and it's a pretty lengthy commute for resting officers to travel all the way to that location.

[01:30:30] and it will be hard for them to make a 10 a.m. cutoff anyway for enforcement. I mean, I think this is something we need to look at in the language that was given to us, though, about what we put in place. I mean, for me, I think there needs to be some carve-out for people who may be going to a home-based business or have other reason to be on that residential street but wouldn't have a reason to get a permit and some discretion given to you, given if it's a home-based daycare, The same people without a permit might be coming in there two times a day to that location.

[01:31:06] And I assume things like delivery trucks, things like that, you're not paying attention to because they may have very good reason to have to be in that residential area to make a delivery. But I am concerned. I was thinking about home-based daycares in particular where you have the same people coming every day, potentially twice a day, that don't have a sticker on their car but have a legitimate reason to be in that residential area.

[01:31:30] So I think it's just something we need to think about in the language and whether there needs to be some type of specific carve-out when that can be demonstrated by a motorist. Yeah, I'll just make one comment on that. That, to me, is a problem that exists when you've implemented a cut-through restriction period, regardless of this permitting program.

[01:31:52] If you've decided that there are certain hours in which somebody can't make a right turn into a local area or something like that, that already has an impact on, you know, if you had a home-based business. I think what is, in a way, this program is actually an opportunity to have people break cut-through restrictions if they live in a certain location.

[01:32:20] So maybe there should be a carve-out when you have a home-based business in that certain location but the challenges that you mentioned are in some ways the challenges of any area which under our RTAP program has already prepared for a cut-through restriction. No doubt about that, but I think putting a permit sticker on a car automatically tells you they're allowed to be here. Without a sticker, it automatically tells you they're not allowed to be here. And what I'm saying is there's Some that are going to fall in between that are allowed to be there, but for obvious reasons

[01:32:59] aren't going to go get a permit because they don't have an address on that street, but it might be the address of their kid's daycare. And I don't want to prohibit them from being able to use that street to access that home based business. And the presumption is once you go decal route, and I'm not opposed to it, I'm supporting it, but once you go decal route, you all are enforcing whether you have a decal or not.

[01:33:21] Not the next paragraph, which is what I'm saying. There should be some type of specific carve-out in here that gives you the latitude to not issue a ticket to somebody who can demonstrate they have a reason to be going to that address during that period of time. And something like picking up a kid at daycare would be something that I would think we would want to encourage.

[01:33:40] And so I just want to have us look at that. When it comes back to us, tell us if you have the latitude or not in an instance like that to do enforcement that's reasonable. Cosign. Sounds good. Yes, Supervisor Palcic.

[01:33:58] Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you all so much for this. I think my concern is more related around the system. Appreciate that we're going to use different technology for this, but I believe in my experience with the residential parking permit is that you also have to go through two different systems for residency and registration in addition to this.

[01:34:25] Is that still the case? Is there a way to streamline it, especially since we are charging a fee? This program will also require that permit applicants demonstrate that they have a Virginia driver's license at the address, at the permit eligible address, and have the permitted vehicles registered at the permitted address.

[01:34:48] These are state motor vehicle laws, so there's not really, you know, an allowance for residents to violate state motor vehicle laws for the program? That's not my question. It's more around our different IT systems and the cumbersome way right now.

[01:35:07] I don't know where we are in updating the communication between our DTA system, our FCDOT system, and there's a third one I'm forgetting that all acts independently right now. Eric Teitelman, Division Chief, you're asking about the Residential Parking Permit Program.

[01:35:26] Yeah, I want to understand how that compares to this and understanding the barriers. Right, so currently we're not using the tax administration software for issuing those parking permits. So that's one separate system, and this is a separate, different system. So yes, currently they're different systems.

[01:35:44] So if you had a parking district and a cut-through restriction in the same neighborhood, they would actually have to get two different permits. Let me try to clarify. My question is right now, we don't have the system. the one we have is the parking permit system.

[01:36:00] Correct. Correct. And I believe you have to go to all three different software, even within the county, in order to verify, approve for, update all of your records and make sure that they are all filled out correctly and then they go through, I believe, the FCDOT system in the end.

[01:36:21] Will this new, would the process for the residential cut-through permit using this new software, alleviate any of those steps of having to go through three different systems, including two different county systems, or will they be able to communicate a little bit more? This program will not check for registration with Department of Tax Administration, and I believe that that may be the concern that you have. This will require residents to make an application on one application page and then staff will confirm the resident's

[01:37:00] information with DMV so provided they are current with DMV then there will only be a one-stop one stop one stop yes and it will take a staff member individually checking every single application that is correct okay that is still concerned because at that point, I mean, if we create this, I do think those efficiencies you've mentioned would help our residents with the parking permits, and I hope we are looking at those as well, but is there really no way to do this without having a staff member having

[01:37:38] to individually check and having to pay a staff member to individually check every single application that comes in? To confirm a resident's driver's license and vehicle registration at a permit-eligible address, we have not identified any way to obtain that information from DMV without having a staff member access the DMV system to check the information.

[01:38:08] Is that cost included here in the program cost? It is not. Staff time was not calculated for this exercise. but this is the same process that we use for the residential permit parking program as well.

[01:38:24] We believe that the volume of this program will be much lower than the current 8,000 permits that we issue for residential permit parking that we check with DMV each year. So we believe that the staff time for this program will be much lower, at least in the early years, yes.

[01:38:48] Yeah, I appreciate it. I would find it helpful to be able to have an estimate on staff time. I mean, we know staff time is a huge issue and important. So I think for this and for potential additions in the future, I have a feeling that once we create this, we're going to be receiving a lot of requests for this program.

[01:39:08] We can provide that. Okay. Thank you. Well, thank you. I'll only note in the end that not every neighborhood even qualifies for a cut-through restriction program. There are pretty vigorous, rigorous opportunities to qualify. And then you have to go through a balloting process. So your neighbors actually have to buy in to this opportunity. So this is not, I don't think this opens up the floodgates, but I do think it helps neighborhoods that are getting absolutely crushed by this problem. So with that, I will close the

[01:39:46] meeting almost 15 minutes late. I apologize, and thank you all for your patience. Appreciate it.