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Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Safety and Security Committee, Tuesday, July 23, 2024

Date	Tuesday, July 23, 2024
Place	Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Virginia
Length	1h 28m (video)

- Official meeting video (Fairfax County): https://video.fairfaxcounty.gov/player/clip/3455
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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-31. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:06] If you can take your seat, please. We're going to start the meeting in just a minute. There's a couple of folks still walking in. But as we do that, I'll just indicate a couple of things. We have an agenda with two specific items today. The first is a discussion that the Fairfax County Police Department will be doing on photo speed program.

[00:00:29] And this is the pilot that we've been doing with 10 different schools here in the county. Following that, we'll have an opportunity to have a discussion on the school crossing issue that is also being shepherded by the Fairfax County Police Department.

[00:00:48] So with that, I would go ahead and turn the program over, and it looks like it's going to be first Bob Blakely, who is the assistant chief of police here, and he will begin the discussion on our photo speed program.

[00:01:03] Good afternoon, Chairman Lusk, Chairman McKay and members of the board. Thank you. I'm joined by Major Scott Colwell, who's the commander of our traffic division. Both presentations both fall under his purview and my purview. So we're excited to give you a report on the photo speed enforcement pilot, our first year really of a successful operation of our photo speed program and some of our school zones. I just want to provide a quick overview. The pilot began on February 10th

[00:01:41] of 2023. As you remember, we had 10 locations selected and that pilot, we did warnings for 30 days and then moved into the citation phase and overall was a big success. We learned some good lessons, which we'll talk about early on in the program, which have allowed us to get the program to where it's at today, which I think is at a point where we would say it's ready for possible expansion. We'll talk about that expansion today, which would be the addition of 50 speed,

[00:02:18] photo speed cameras in school zones across the county, and then kind of forecast out into fiscal year 2027, where we originally projected adding an additional 30 cameras. And I did want to report out. The only change to the original 10 locations was the addition of the Oakton High School camera on Blake Lane, which we were able to get up in May. So first, to talk about some of those early challenges that I know your offices heard about and we heard about, and luckily a 10

[00:02:54] camera pilot allowed us to find some of those pain points early on without impacting many people too severely. First, we had some challenges with VDOT. It came in the form of things like flash filters and permitting for the cameras, but we have all of those issues now resolved and a good process built out with VDOT for adding additional cameras. The Wink-O-Matic lights with FCPS, when we went into summer school, the schedule, which FCPS maintains the Wink-O-Matic light

[00:03:30] schedule. Obviously those lights coming on signaling a school zone is in effect is absolutely key to enforcing the school zone speed limit and we were able to identify through our community members complaints that they came through a school zone and the lights weren't flashing but that allowed us to work with FCPS. They tightened up their procedures and were able to kind of lock down who has access to that and the timing and we had no subsequent issues after we kind of worked through that summer school timing changes and then the last and probably the largest issue that we

[00:04:06] dealt with was uh the code of virginia requirements that a summons be issued within 30 days for us to kind of proceed down the path and what we quickly realized was we were mailing out violation notices and by the time the processes occurred and they arrived um folks who went through these speed cameras would have just a day or two to pay their their tickets sometimes which of course is not reasonable was not the intention so we sat down with with the clerk of the courts and really were able to work through a process which now provides three months and sometimes longer to make those

[00:04:45] payments essentially we're sending the summons out from the very beginning and this is consistent with other jurisdictions in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and it has added a nice layer of relief to everyone to get these tickets in in a timely manner, and I think you'll see that when we talk about program metrics. So those are some of the early challenges. Of course, when it comes to staffing, we've maintained these 10 cameras without any additional personnel. We did ask for a

[00:05:17] management analyst and a kind of program supervisor, a police supervisor, as we move into the expansion because one of the challenges that we also have as it pertains to staffing is only sworn law enforcement officers can certify every violation, which in every violation has to be certified.

[00:05:36] So we've been doing that with officers who are in light duty status or officers in an overtime status, so we just don't have any police officers assigned to this duty yet. As we look at expanding and adding the school bus stop arm program, which will be coming online soon, we know that that's going to change.

[00:05:57] But we look forward to working with the county to identify the best solutions for that. And we believe that we have the staffing in place right now to move into the next phase. So effectiveness, the good part is, are we getting out of this program what we expected to get out of this program?

[00:06:17] And I'm glad to say yes. I remember when we first looked at the first column there in the middle, the pre-installation data, so we went down during school zones, we measured people's speed during that 30-minute school zone window, and in that far left column, you could see the average speed in the school zones was, you know, in many cases, eight miles an hour over the school zone speed limit.

[00:06:42] As soon as we installed cameras and allowed them the warning period to lapse, and we did that first pilot check-in you know we nearly every case got a significant reduction in speed and in fact the only one that increased that terracet elementary says it went up by three percent well it went from 24.4 miles an hour to the average speed of 25.7 miles an hour which is still an acceptable speed it is the speed limit so when we went back and did a follow-up survey of those locations and february of 24 as you can see in the far right column we continue to see

[00:07:21] continued improvements and the maintenance of that those low average speeds with the exception of course of terra set that's that's when it moved from 24.4 to 25.7 so the program is effective it's doing what we believe which is just reminding the community that there's a school zone there's There's some extra signs that talk about speed cameras, and it just reminds us all to go the speed limit, which is our number one goal.

[00:07:49] So that is what we have on effectiveness. And then a couple other data points on the program. From March 10th of 23 to April 12th, 20,312 citations were approved and sent out. So a number of those were rejected for a variety of issues where we didn't certify them.

[00:08:10] but 20,000 violations were sent out. This also includes the warning phase when they had no monetary fines attached. 71% of all those violations were for speeding 10 to 14 miles an hour over the speed limit, and you can see there only 7% of the violations represent a 20 mile an hour or faster, which is good that that's a low number for such a significant violation.

[00:08:36] Another show of program efficacy is that 78% of all citations issued have been paid. So there's an accountability component that is relatively high when we look at other kind of regional and national trends where our community is accepting of the program and paying their fines.

[00:08:56] We find that about 75% of the fines were paid through the vendors' portals. They have a pay-on-the-web portal, a pay-by-telephone, or you can mail in a money order. or check so 75 of the citations paid that way and 25 are sent to the courts for docketing and then the the court fines come back through the normal court program and we don't have a we currently don't have a way to measure how many are if you want to say found guilty and how many

[00:09:30] fines are paid it's a little bit of a challenge with the supreme court of virginia and how the fines are reported to the county but we've we remain in discussions with them and understand that our current process continues so as we look at phase one of expansion what we're proposing today is that we move forward with phase one expansion i know that you all received a list of the 50 schools that that were proposed and and i wanted to clarify how we came up with that

[00:10:08] major colwell actually reached out to office of safety and security with fcps and and asked for 50 schools based on complaints anecdotal information just based on the school's needs and every one of

the schools on that list was picked by fcps now on our end what we've done is look at um uh the roadway design um you know again anecdotal speed um you know is the school in the middle of a residential neighborhood that has a 25 mile an hour speed limit already versus

[00:10:45] a 35 or in some cases even a 45 mile an hour speed limit and those are the schools that we typically pick we also wanted to um equally distribute the the cameras across all the the magisterial districts with the goal of spreading the signage and spreading the program throughout the county, hoping to get more voluntary compliance because people see them as they travel from point A to point B. So this list that we provided to you is as draft as it

[00:11:20] could possibly be. I know that many of you receive requests and complaints from your constituents, and we would we would be happy to make adjustments to this list um we would be happy to conduct some speed surveys you know when we went into this you know how should we pick them it's a little difficult to go out and do comprehensive speed surveys for every school in the county and make decisions based on that so really we started with what do the schools need and what roadways tend to lend more to us needing to slow some folks down so any feedback you have on those we

[00:11:56] we would certainly welcome that and as if we move into the phase one expansion the final point on that is uh we believe it will take approximately um or we we can install about 10 cameras per month uh with the vendor can so if if we moved forward in august we would we believe we could get 50 cameras online by the end of the year that would be our our goal in doing that uh future expansion Of course, I know you've heard about the school bus stop arm program.

[00:12:29] We've been working a lot with the schools as they kind of finalize, and they're very close to being ready to go live with their program. They've been challenged as well with some of the reporting back and forth from the courts, and they continue to work through some of that stuff, but we've been there with them the whole way.

[00:12:47] We will have the same legal process of reporting or verifying violations. and are prepared to start that pilot with them when they get to that point of being ready.

[00:13:03] And then the last thing would be thinking about the next 30 cameras as we go into the next year for the next phase. That's a quick overview of what I believe has been a successful program up to this point, and we'd love to take questions and feedback from you if you have any.

[00:13:22] Thank you very much for that detailed presentation and appreciate the work that was done on the pilot and also acknowledge that program effectiveness slide and how it's helped reduce the speeds in those areas.

[00:13:39] I guess the only thing that's kind of glaring at me is the soapstone drive one. In terms of our determination that it be included in the pilot, you can see all the others had average speeds above the actual posted speed limit. This one did not.

[00:13:54] Just out of curiosity, how did we get to that decision to add Terraset soapstone drive? I don't recall that on the end. Do you recall Terraset? Yeah, Supervisor Leska, I do believe the same process for choosing those 10 pilot schools was, you know, direct communication, as you remember, Major Hanson and the schools when we selected that.

[00:14:28] I can't answer that for you. Don't worry. I was just curious. Let me ask, thinking about the issues of transparency and letting people know that this is coming, and I think it's going to be important for us to kind of promote and advertise that.

[00:14:46] What are your plans to kind of help people know about these locations, help them understand kind of the purpose here? And then I'll have a follow-up after that. Oh, yes, sir. So I think we would, of course, follow the same procedure. So we did a pretty robust public kind of communication cycle through social media.

[00:15:08] When we installed the 10 cameras that we have currently and began, we ran a 30-day warning cycle. We actually put out sign boards in addition to the standard signage that is with the school zone. So I think that was a pretty good roadmap.

[00:15:24] We didn't hear many complaints from the community about being surprised that we had turned these cameras on. So I hope we would follow that same procedure.

[00:15:34] Okay. And then would it be possible to have, like, information that we've gleaned from, I guess, the pilot phase zero be included, like, on a website kind of talking about what improvements in traffic safety we've obtained, and then, you know, noting this possibly on a website or actually thinking about some sort of dashboard for at least the pilot sites, and then we can migrate that as we get our next series.

[00:16:04] We've got the website, web page through OPA that's live that we stood up to Bob's point whenever we started the pilot, so our thought would be that we would update that with information contained in this presentation as well as the future locations and phase two expansion and working with schools could even include the school bus arm whenever they're prepared to do that, so we've got the dual messaging.

[00:16:23] No, no, perfectly appreciate that. And then I wanted to just clarify, too, because I know we get a lot of phone calls in my office clarify too because I know we get a lot of phone calls in my office when we had the issue with the Wink-O-Matic basically taking pictures and sending people fines even outside of the times that the restrictions were in place. I know that we've corrected that process. I know we have a way to do that. I just want to make sure and maybe hear this directly from you that you're confident with our vendor that we'll be able to expand the program

[00:17:03] to the 50 additional cameras and that we do not anticipate having an issue similar to what we had in the Phase Zero. Yeah, I think, to your point, Supervisor Leska, I do believe we have the issue resolved and largely through business processes and FCPS and the police department.

[00:17:21] We actually asked the vendor to develop a solution to install additional cameras that monitored the wincomatic lights. This was something that we couldn't find anywhere else in other jurisdictions, and it proved to be of significant cost and probably not realistic in terms of what we could get out of it.

[00:17:43] But we did test it at, I believe, West Springfield High School, if I'm not mistaken. The theory worked. So if we were to have problems, and we didn't have any problems after in the latter part of the year. I think if we started to see something like that develop again, we do have a solution, but I think our business processes have fixed it.

[00:18:07] Okay. No, I appreciate that. I'll go ahead and conclude my questions. I'll hand it over to the chairman. Yeah, thank you. Thank you for the presentation. Just a couple things. First, on the school bus

one, I mean, this has been, you know, something we've painfully worked on for over a decade, literally.

[00:18:25] let's not undersell this moment um i do think that you know coordinating with fcps is fine in terms of messaging but i think we have to do some of our own messaging too i mean the the photo zones that we have speed cameras we have in school zones uh they're in place now people know about them you know but this will be brand new no one has ever heard of this before except a small group of us that have been working on this for a long time um and we know that schools start so much earlier now. It's August 19th, and it's hard to get people paying attention in August, but we literally

[00:19:03] should, in my opinion, be messaging this out now. The school starts in a month, in essence, and, you know, obviously, they'll be on the rolling stock at that point in time, and part of our messaging out to the community about, you know, awareness with the school year starting that we normally do, in my mind, this should be right front and center at the top.

[00:19:25] Yes, sir. And we'll find out, to Bob's point there, where the vendor was working with the general district court to work through the, they're trying to retrieve data from the courts, and that takes approval from the Supreme Court. So we'll get a timeline on when they'll be ready to go, because what was the installation timeline?

[00:19:43] It's supposed to be installed in the spring. Yeah, so we'll make sure that we back that up. If it is for the start of the school year or if it's going to be December, we'll find out from schools when that's going to be, and we can begin that messaging with a realistic expectation of when it would go left. Yeah, and since we're not marking these, you know, for obvious reasons, they're 50 randomly traversing the county, messaging that even well in advance of them being deployed, if it changes people's attitudes, again, that's what we're trying to do here.

[00:20:12] If the first day of school opens and people are like, hey, those Fairfax County buses have cameras on them now, better pay more attention even if they're not coming until november or december we could actually save a life here and and you know cut the burden and frustration out of our school bus drivers because they are boiling over with this and so i just think you know we can't message that enough i'm really glad uh we're at this point i know it wouldn't happen without a lot of work on on our county end of things it was complicated um the second thing is the you asked about uh criteria for looking at other locations.

[00:20:47] And I'm glad the schools are the driver and, you know, what they're hearing there on the ground at these schools day in and day out. I guess one of the things I think we should think about outside of, you know, a speed study and outside of, you know, the physical conditions of the road or some of the other things is what is the pedestrian activity in that area, like unrelated to the schools.

[00:21:11] You know, we do have schools in areas now that have a ton of pedestrian activity. They might have fine, you know, visibility, they might not get a lot of complaints, but we should be looking at what else is going on with pedestrian activity. Also, what else is around these schools? Do we have private daycares?

[00:21:29] Do we have preschools that don't get the benefit of, you know, necessarily of school zones because they don't, they're not treated the same as a public school? Are there other facilities catering towards kids in those areas that would say, hey, you know, maybe we should, we should move this one up?

[00:21:45] community centers, other things like that. Just being aware of the land uses around the school, not just what's taking place on the road, but what's taking place in the uses around the schools. I'm

thinking of some of our schools that have parks that have a lot of pedestrian activity and kids involved in them.

[00:22:02] I mean, that hopefully is, you know, part of the criteria besides just what's happening in the right-of-way itself. And so I would just offer that to respond to your, you know, your question about additional criteria or things that we might want to look at. And then finally, when we get through to Phase 2, we'll have 90 cameras in place.

[00:22:23] We know there's roughly 200 schools, so we know we're halfway through the school list. We're never intending necessarily to go to every school. And so I'm just wondering, and I don't need to know this now, will we evaluate at the end of Phase 2 whether Phase 2 is it? Because this presentation kind of suggests that here's the next two phases, and then maybe we're completed with the project.

[00:22:45] And I'm just wondering, are we going to look at this chart that we have in here, look at that one for phase one, look at that for phase two, and then future determinations about whether or not there will be additional phases will be made in the future? Yes, sir.

[00:23:00] I think, you know, we went off of when we initially presented this to the board, which concluded with the second phase. But I think, you know, one of the discussion points we had was that if these are effective in a lower speed, could you move cameras? Correct. And I think that's the point that we're really looking at the data. You really can't discern that from what's provided thus far because we think that if you move them, the speeds would likely go back up because in many cases, they initially dropped and they haven't dropped farther from them.

[00:23:23] So they would likely need to stay. And so when we initially presented, our thoughts were that maybe we would have 80 cameras that we could move throughout the county. But in the end, if you're going through the infrastructure of doting out the electricity, running the lights and the wiring and all that, you'll likely have them and they stay there and then we just add. So we would certainly come back to the board once the police are able to evaluate the staffing needs to ensure that we are covering the costs as well as looking at the overall safety aspect of what the end goal is and be ready to expand beyond phase two if you all deem that that's appropriate. I really appreciate that because that's exactly why I was asking it you

[00:23:58] know at what point do you do that do you look at that 90 is a lot and so that's half the county schools already included and so do you then start moving and I think that's an important the conversation for us to have later. Finally, the last thing is the General Assembly legislation, as I remember it, allowed us to also set up cameras in work zones. I thought we did that in one of them. Do we have any data from that work zone? And is there any usefulness in considering that further for work zones we know are going to be in place for a long time? I mean, I'm kind of thinking ahead of one like Richmond Highway, which is going to be a work zone for a decade with huge

[00:24:36] pedestrian activity i don't know if it would be an appropriate place but i'm just wondering if we looked at that data and if we're thinking anything about that in the future i skipped right over that bullet but we we have given it some thought i i think honestly our initial take was this same camera type of setup more of a permanent setup we were looking for the long-term work zone our we first targeted a route 28 work zone and and the time was getting away from us but we've since discovered that most jurisdictions that are with successful work zone programs are doing it on a

[00:25:11] trailer. And Harrisonburg, a senior JMU cup, I was down there and saw one and of course went through at the speed limit. But it was conveniently mounted on a trailer. So that is definitely one of our next, which is why we put it here. We'd like to build one of those trailers with the vendor. And then you don't have to look for the long-term ones. You can look for work zones that are portable. But with a portable trailer, you can move them in and out. Of course, making sure signage is posted and everyone's forewarned. So we definitely look forward to trying that in the

[00:25:49] next year or two. Okay. I think that would be helpful for a long-term work zone like that. And we know we have a couple of them on the horizon, you know, that we can plan for and where we do that I think would be helpful. So thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me now open up to my colleagues and I'll start on the opposite end. So first is Supervisor Behrman. This is really great stuff. I love slide four on the program effectiveness showing the percent change. I'm actually probably more extreme than the chairman on this one because I wouldn't mind seeing these

[00:26:27] at every single school in my district. Maybe I shouldn't comment on everybody else's, but in mine. And I was very happy seeing the list of schools that you would come up with for my district, because at least two of them people had already asked about. I need them at other schools too, though. So just keep going, keep going. It's really great. And thank you for all you've done on this program. I know that it's always hard to stand up a new program, but nobody should be speeding in a school zone i do not care don't do it you know click it or get a ticket but we need a better rhyme for you know speeding in a school zone that i haven't come up yet with that so um

[00:27:06] great great work and thank you okay thank you very much supervisor beerman we'll now go to supervisor palchick uh thank you so much uh first of all i want to share my enthusiasm on this uh i know it took us uh quite a bit of time to get that first round and especially now the reason it took so long at oakton high school um was because it didn't have that school zone area which has to be done by the schools with our support and coordination before we even get to the cameras right so um thinking back to the day when we did the uh walkability action institute we had the

[00:27:43] police we had fcdot we had the schools we had our office in the health department so um i guess i have a couple of questions. My first one being for the school, and I have some feedback too, but for the schools that are being, that are on the initial draft list of 50, has FCDOT and the active Fairfax team had a chance to look at it with all the research they've done? And do we know which ones already have the school zones implemented there with the Wink-O-Medics?

[00:28:13] I don't know the answer to your first question. I do know that all of those schools have school zones from my understanding so they're currently an active school zone okay good I mean that's a huge if they didn't the September time frame seemed a little out of reach but I think if those are already there and we continue to work with them I know FCDOT was also very helpful in that aspect that was our criteria so I think I'm hoping that's that's true okay perfect and then I very much just one other thing second the chairman's recommendations to make sure that We are looking at pedestrian activity, which is why I wanted to know if we had looked at

[00:28:52] that with the Act of Fairfax and FCDOT. I know they're a little short-staffed right now, but they've done a lot of that analysis, and especially I know I have a lot of very, very urban areas, and surprised that some of these aren't on this initial list. And then the other one, I don't know if we want to go that far, but I believe in the legislation it did not limit it to public schools.

[00:29:15] So, I guess I'm wondering if we find key areas where we know there's a lot of pedestrian activity, where we know it could be very helpful, and we know that maybe there's not a public school there, but there's another kind of school facility.

[00:29:32] Is that something we'll consider, really looking at highest impact? We haven't looked at private schools to this point, just because we were looking at the county schools. I would agree with you that if there's a need and it fits the code, we should certainly look at it. The program is about the safety, not about the particular property.

[00:29:50] So we can take a look at some of those locations as well. Okay. I appreciate that. And, again, with FCDOT, I think they know most of the areas better than we do at this point. Agreed. Thank you. Excellent work. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Palachak, Supervisor Walkinshaw.

[00:30:05] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Obviously, a big success. So congratulations to everybody. One thing I want to make sure we do, because I have been promising this to our General Assembly delegation, is give them just a one-page, they're not going to read eight slides, but a one-pager outlining the program and the effectiveness.

[00:30:26] This slide number four should be in there, but we need a little bit of context on the program for them, because this is an ongoing, you know, photo enforcement is an ongoing conversation in Richmond. And there was a very modest expansion of local authority that was passed.

[00:30:45] I think it's high-risk intersections, which I'm not sure we have any or many that would qualify for that. But that conversation is going to continue in the next General Assembly session. And, you know, just one thought I have in terms of potential expansion of the authority.

[00:31:05] I'm not advocating for this, but just a thought that we should consider. You know, Irving Middle School is one on this list, on Old Keen Mill. Speeding is a problem on Old Keen Mill when the Wink-O-Matics are on and when they aren't on, right?

[00:31:22] So a question, in theory, if the General Assembly expanded the authority to allow photo speed enforcement outside, in school zones, outside of school hours, is the, does the, do the cameras we have, could they be set so they adjust? In other words, the speed limit is 25 when the Wink-O-Matic's on, the speed limit, I think, on that stretch of Old Key Mill, for example, is, I think, 45 when it's not. Could you set up the cameras so that they could enforce different speeds at different times

[00:31:59] of the day and times of the year we could certainly confirm that with the our vendor but i'm i'm relatively confident that is true because the the camera reports the speed the the program is what the software running behind the scenes is what identifies well when should we look and when shouldn't we look and um what is our violation thresholds and so it's pretty customizable from the vendor's point of view we tell the vendor what we want so i'm relatively confident that we could change the speed limits based on the exact times.

[00:32:31] Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Walkinshaw, Supervisor Stewart. Obviously, we are all very, very pleased with the safety benefits that this has brought about. I know on another point, which is what are the economic balances to this?

[00:32:49] I know the program costs something to set up a pilot. I know we weren't looking to make money on this because the safety values of it are huge, but what do we see going forward with the existing

pilot, and then what do we see with any additional sites?

[00:33:05] Sure. What do we see of the costs? Yeah, and we had kicked around the idea of putting the money in there, but we know from your perspective this was about safety, and so we had those numbers to be able to speak to it, but that certainly wasn't the driving force behind us. So all said, we're looking at around $400,000 net revenue for this year, and so if we expand that times five, then we'd be looking at around $2 million.

[00:33:27] Now, of course, to Bob's point, they accomplished most of the administrative responsibilities through late-duty staff with a little bit of overtime. So as we expand and we add in the programmatic expanses of the full-time employees, that would reduce that. But we are still confident that we should be significantly further in the black than the red, which at the previous meeting we all discussed about adding this money into the pedestrian roadway safety.

[00:33:54] So whatever you felt appropriate, we worked with DMV on that. So our hopes would be that we are looking at around 40% of every million dollars brought in. Great. Thank you. Supervisor Sturck, Supervisor Alcorn. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[00:34:09] Slide four. By the way, great. I think very successful. Everything's looking great. I do have a question about the Hunter Mill example. It's the one of these where the average speed went up.

[00:34:27] Do we know why? I mean, other than Reston being contrarian from time to time. They were following a lot to start with. That's right. On average. On average. You know. You don't need to answer this. Well done. Supervisor Alcorn.

[00:34:45] None of that, sir. I know. I know. I didn't see that. I saw the soapstone drive is the only one that went up, and it went up from 23.75 miles an hour before we ever put a camera in to 25.7 miles an hour after the camera. That's the one. Yeah. So we would call that a success because no one exceeds the 25-mile-an-hour threshold.

[00:35:07] The good news is even our pre-enforcement data, I mean, you see London Town at 36-mile-an-hour and Irving was at 33-miles-an-hour. I believe 95% of the communities responded well before cameras. And once we install the cameras, we certainly see some of those violations in that 10 to 14 miles an hour and and we're really paying attention to them but an average speed at 25.7 uh we we get pretty excited about because we're doing it all right so so so it looks like most of the residents are law abiding in terms of that speed limit but the occasional the average the

[00:35:46] average driver is doing the right thing all the time and we we love that all right that's a good answer all right thank you thank you supervisor alcorn supervisor harry yeah two things great job as everybody said um we all curse ways because all the cut through traffic but you actually get benefits from these cameras because way shows them just as speed cameras so any those ways users we probably get a reduction of speed even outside of wincomatic because it happens true um on the list of 50 um you know i was just looking at at one of my schools and one in another district but

[00:36:22] you know centerville i know we get a lot of complaints about centerville but i don't think any of it speeding, because the traffic is, I think, during arrival and dismissal, they can't move. I mean, I don't know how anybody speeds on union. I would just want to do a little bit of research to make sure that we're, and I don't know how to best do that without, because I can't, I don't think we should waste the time to go look.

[00:36:48] But I know Centerville, for one, I'm just having a hard time seeing how that's. I think that after school activities is still in that time frame. What, in the Wink event? Yeah, I'm just looking. And then the same thing with Cardinal Forest Estate. Sorry, James, to jump over into Braddock.

[00:37:04] But Forrester's just, you can't move on Forrester's. I don't know how anybody's speeding within that speed zone. So I would spend some time digging into them a little bit and what specific kind of complaints we're getting because we only have so many cameras and we want to put them where they need to be.

[00:37:21] And I would echo the comment on private schools. I know St. Bernadette's, for one, I'm familiar with, would be a good location, for one, because they have a lot of issues there so that's great if i had to move them around i would i'm glad you mentioned that because uh supervisor harry in particular terra center on burke center parkway when i looked at this list i'm like why isn't that school on the list you would think a four lane divided road and i understand terra center is slightly different in terms of how many people are crossing the road there and things but but the point is is you know we still have our family members driving in and out we have buses coming in and out so i definitely believe you know part Part of this is also taking the speed survey.

[00:37:59] So before we actually put a camera in, we're going to do the surveys to make sure that, you know, and if we went and surveyed a location and found the average speed to be 19 miles an hour, we probably should go back to the drawing board and have a good discussion and make sure we're doing the best. You just answered my question doing the speed survey before you put it in.

[00:38:15] So thank you. We'll make sure we reach out to all of your offices to seek feedback and then loop back to FCDOT so we ensure that this first round, before we do the speed surveys, is consistent with what you would expect to. Thank you, Supervisor Herity. We'll go back to Supervisor Beerman. Just one quick comment on what Supervisor Herity was talking about. At least with some of the schools in my district, like Churchill Road Elementary, which is very near a lot of our cut-through traffic problems, one of the things that residents observe is that when people get stuck in that type of traffic, then they get more aggressive about trying to get out of that type of

[00:38:55] traffic and sometimes also more aggressive in how they drive the area when it's not stuck. So that might be something to consider and wonder. I mean, I know the Churchill Road can get very backed up, but then people live along Churchill Road say, but when Churchill Road isn't backed up, it becomes a speedway. So that's kind of something to look at with respect to where you put the cameras. And if you haven't noticed, we need one on Churchill Road eventually. Thank you.

[00:39:25] Thank you very much, Roger Bierman. We'll now move to our second presentation for the day. Again, this will be focused on the school crossings. And I will just make a point here that I recognize the difficulty for the police department as they are currently doing their best to fill in when there are no crossing guards available at some of these school locations.

[00:39:49] and that does mean that those officers are not able to do any other things while they're on that crossing guard duty. So we acknowledge that this is an issue for the department and with that I will turn it back over to Deputy Chief Blakely. Thank you very much Chairman Lusk and the good news is you know our current school crossing guard program is the Cadillac of school crossing guard programs. There's no other way to describe it. When we look at some of the regional and national

[00:40:23] best practices, you'll notice that we're doing far more than most people are. And I think that's great. I think that says a lot about what we do across a lot of things in the county. When I came to this department over 20 years ago, it was the same exact program. And as a patrol officer assigned to West Springfield on the day work squad I handled three crossings in the morning and three crossings in the afternoon so of my day shift three hours of my day well plus travel time

[00:40:56] in between so about three and a half hours of my day I stood in a crossing and cross folks I remember being slightly floored because one of my crossings was at Waterline and Bestwick and I crossed one kid every day. When I crossed him, he ran to his doorstep and threw his backpack and would take off running right across the same street because it's his neighborhood. I get that. As a young officer, I didn't quite understand it. As we talk about some of these things, this program is

[00:41:32] decades old and has not changed at all. We've tried a few times over the years to talk about the program to suggest changes. I think in the mid-20 teens, we actually added a criteria. Before then, it was literally a request from schools, and it kind of made sense, and we would add a crossing or take one away. We added some criteria in the mid-20 teens, and so now what we have is a whole lot of crossings, and that's where we fall a little bit short. So we'll talk to you a little bit about the challenges and how it's grown with the county's urbanization and how I think

[00:42:11] some of the infrastructure for the program hasn't grown with it. So it's just straining some of our resources, but I have no doubt that there's some solutions out there that are pretty easy to come to. So that's what we will do. So just a quick overview of our current program.

[00:42:31] Currently, we're responsible for 164 crossing locations, and every crossing location in the county has an a.m. and a p.m. time, so what we end up with is 328 30-minute school crossings, so that's about 164 hours a day of work that needs to be done to cover 328 30-minute crossings.

[00:42:57] We currently have 52 crossing guards. We have 62 authorized positions. That number is pretty consistent over the years. As you can imagine, we've had some challenges with keeping those positions filled, but we'll talk about that in just a moment.

[00:43:13] Of the 52 crossing guards, they handle about 240 of the 328 crossings every day, which is about 4.6 crossing per day average for our current crossing guards. And then our patrol officers cover the rest.

[00:43:30] And so as that ebbs and flows, when sick leave or leave or vacancies ebb and flow, it increases for officers. So at the West Springfield District, I remember many days where I was just one of maybe 10 officers working, and I had three a day, and most of us would have two or three to handle.

[00:43:51] So there are definitely times where we have more and times when we have less. So we'll talk a little bit more. I did want to point out on this slide that the current minimum staffing for first from 6 a.m.

[00:44:06] to 6 p.m. is 90 police officers in the entire county. So when we start talking about how many we're covering, you know, about half of the police officers are during those morning times and afternoon times out of service and unavailable. And another another thing about this program is officers are not allowed to leave for any reason. I have been two blocks away from violent crimes in progress and i cannot leave a school crossing once we take it and that's policy based i mean that's the that's the program we designed and what we've maintained up to this point so if we

[00:44:42] set the expectation someone will be there we have to be there um so that's that's where we're at so when we look at some of these challenges uh hiring and retention of our crossing guards has always been a challenge we've always looked at this as a local uh program um so whereas uh the county often can go out and hire a centralized hiring for positions. Most of our crossing guard hiring has occurred at the district level. We have tried like a central FCPD one crossing guard announcement and a guard from the Mount Vernon district, you know, is probably not going to want to drive to Chantilly for a 30-minute school crossing. So we've always hired at the station level and

[00:45:22] obviously stations are busy machines and recruiting and those small centers of population have had challenges. So that's why I think some of those challenges have existed. The flip side of that is that, you know, we believe that there's probably not enough positions when you look at the total workload and how many crossing guards we have. So even if we were at full capacity, we would still probably be unable to cover all of the crossings. So that's certainly something to look

[00:45:54] at obviously one of the challenges i'm very um focused on is the impact to patrol uh in our coverage and i kind of mentioned that with third minimum staffing being 90 um it's not it's not a whole lot different from when we had an evening shift except for when we were at three shifts our evening shift would typically pick up the afternoon crossings and the day shift would pick up the morning crossings so the workload is just split and so the one officer doesn't have to do both in most cases. As we annually, since we have the criteria that we set, and I'll present that to

[00:46:31] you next, you know, we have worked with schools. The schools will ask us to add a crossing occasionally, and Major Colwell's team will go out and do a survey. So they analyze how many vehicles are crossing, how many kids are crossing, and then we'll add crossings, and we'll also take crossings away. That's been pretty much an ebb and flow. The total number of crossings has not changed significantly in the last 10-20 years. We did find in this last audit that we had crossings in other jurisdictions. The town of Herndon, Fort Belvoir, and the town of Vienna had crossings that

[00:47:08] our police officers went into their jurisdictions to handle the school crossings. When we presented these two, we only had one in the town of Herndon. We had one on Fort Belvoir. They took them over. Obviously, we have nine, or some of them are border, so if you say seven or so crossings that fall square in the town of Vienna, that amounts to about 18 crossings a day.

[00:47:36] Two of them are kind of on either side of the Vienna police station, so it's always a little awkward for the FCPD officers to stand on either side of the police station crossing kids. But that's what we've always done if a crossing guard is unavailable. So if crossing guards are available, they handle those.

[00:47:53] It's just when a crossing guard is unavailable. Overall program costs, it's certainly something to look about when we talk about options. So for the 62 crossing guard positions, our personnel costs are about $2 million a year.

[00:48:09] That includes fringe benefit costs. And then we have allocated about a million and a half in overtime to try to relieve some of the burden on patrol. So we've at times, especially when there's been an increased number of vacancies in a particular area, we will pay police officers or crossing guards.

[00:48:31] But it's always police officers to to work overtime to cover the crossing so it doesn't take away from the on duty patrol officers. And that's what we've allocated there. So the criteria that's set currently,

and certainly the subject of a discussion is on the screen there in front of you, it's 13 students crossing any street where 25 vehicles drive within a five-minute period for elementaries.

[00:49:03] Or if it's a road where 30 vehicles drive over a five-minute period for a middle school and high school, then we would consider adding a crossing. Those other considerations there are all things that we would consider up, including talking to the schools about potentially adding a new bus route or a bus stop or changing walking routes or something.

[00:49:25] So it's always a dialogue back and forth with the school system to determine what the best course of action is. So when you look across the United States, we surveyed the major city chiefs association, police departments, which we do a lot of times for these issues.

[00:49:47] And we kind of figured out what you're seeing here, which is that we have far more school crossings than most jurisdictions, which could indicate that our criteria might be slightly out of balance. We also found that our program has much more of a reliance on the police department and police officers than any other jurisdiction, many of which don't use police department assistance at all.

[00:50:13] And, you know, if you look across the list here, just the sampling and the number of crossing locations, you see Milwaukee is really the only thing that compares. Milwaukee has 140 crossing guards. We have 52. So they have, and those crossing guards are not associated with the police department at all.

[00:50:33] So the scale or the ratio of guard per total number of crossings kind of explains that situation. So then, of course, we looked across our own region here, and you can see that there's similarities there as well.

[00:50:53] So most departments have fewer overall crossings with more crossing guards available to handle them by a percentage. And interestingly, something that we discovered in this research is that the city of Alexandria began working with a private vendor in the fall of 2023 to cover crossings, which we've seen in other states.

[00:51:17] But this is the first one locally, certainly, that we can look to. Additionally, we found that most counties and cities don't provide school crossings for high schools and many, if not most, middle schools, which again points us back to our criteria to take a look and see if we're out of alignment. So when you take a look at these jurisdictions, what we found is with, if we were fully staffed with 62 crossings to handle all of the crossings that we have currently, they would average 5.2 crossings per day.

[00:51:55] Currently, they handle about 4.6 per day with the 240 crossings that they handle. When you look at Loudoun, their crossing guards average about two a day, Arlington's about 4.3 a day, Alexandria is about 3.5 a day, and Prince William's about 2.5 a day.

[00:52:13] So that's certainly, again, when we're doing the math, looking at the criteria is something that tells us that we're slightly out of balance. So it comes down to, well, what should we do about it? And there are definitely a handful of things that collectively we can do about it. I think from our main point of view, based on local and national trends, we believe that we should consider privatizing the crossing guard program entirely so that someone's paying full-time and attention to it and is 100% focused on this issue and not trying to balance mission demands.

[00:52:53] We don't have a whole lot of data right now to lean on to say what would that cost and how would that compare to the program cost that I mentioned earlier, which is about $3.5 million? What I can

find suggests that it would actually be a considerable savings to privatize the program, but we need to do further research on that. And certainly there are other options, and we mentioned those up here just in the interest of trying to find some true solutions. And we see in many ways, we were talking about kind of in the last several months, we've been on a hold to do

[00:53:29] anything and in that hold there's been a couple schools that have asked for us to evaluate a particular crossing or adding a new crossing and they say you know every day we have someone go out there and help the kids cross the street and you know we're saying well that's you know that's kind of part of our point is that there are some other options there and I think of the safety patrols back when I used to ride my bike to school as a young person and I certainly don't think they should be in major intersections in the county but I think there are some certainly some room for discussion about the alternatives to crossing guards when crossing guards are no

[00:54:02] longer available um and then finally if if uh if the fcpd um you know kept the program in the in its current state certainly uh trying to add more positions more crossing guard positions and and boosting that program up um looking across the region and certainly looking at our criteria critically, we could probably strike a little bit more of a balance, but I think that would continue some of the challenges we face, but it would solve some others.

[00:54:33] So that's our recommendation with some other considerations, and I know you all have a lot of thoughts on this matter, and we very much would like to hear them. Okay. Thank you for that presentation, and again, acknowledge the difficult position this responsibility has as it relates to the police department being able to meet its minimum staffing and do its work.

[00:54:57] So obviously, there is a need for us to look at some different options and come up with some different opportunities for you. Let me ask a couple of questions, and I appreciate this neighboring jurisdiction slide, and I think it does kind of blare out that we do need to look at our compensation for this crossing guard position, but it also might require us to think about some of the things that we've done more effectively with recruiting more police officers and recruiting others that have been hard to backfill in Fairfax County,

[00:55:34] thinking creatively about what types of maybe incentives, inducements we offer to get people to consider these positions. So I think with your options as you've described them, The latter option, the bottom option, we would look at the compensation, but we might have to look at maybe some other kind of incentives also to try to get people to think about this.

[00:55:57] I want to go back to this point about the privatization. Did we get any kind of best practice information around the privatization? Is there data that we were able to glean from the localities and jurisdictions that have that?

[00:56:16] And then what's been their kind of success and how they've been able to keep the kids safe in that private sector provisioning. Yeah, and nationally, you know, we see this and I'm familiar with it in the state of Florida a little bit.

[00:56:31] And it was, you know, it's just been the norm. It's certainly been that. Our, you know, one conversation with the city of Alexandria suggested that they saw positives in the program. But it's certainly a different look.

[00:56:49] It's something new to us, but not new to the industry of crossing guards, but certainly new to us. Okay. And Supervisor, Lusk, I would add, too, I think in the discussions with Bob, one of the challenges associated with the compensation is when you're looking at benefits eligible for the crossing guards with the hours, that the likelihood is our costs far exceed what they're able to achieve through privatization.

[00:57:13] I think that's one of the largest benefits we would look at finding is Bob's earlier point of having the contractor handle the staffing of it, but then it also takes the police out of it as the backup, and we have the potential to have the significant salary savings to be able to hire more people, but be able to come in at even a lower cost just simply by the fact of when we look at how it's structured within the pay system.

[00:57:35] That makes perfect sense, and I'll say I see how you've laid out the recommendations, and I think you're being kind of specific and saying you have a preference, so I get that. The one thing I'll say is that your option one and option two both require a little more interaction with Fairfax County Public Schools.

[00:57:54] So I don't know what we've done to date, at least in teeing up this issue and having a conversation with the public schools, but would just be curious to kind of hear where you are with those conversations and the initial kind of phases. We've certainly approached the schools with the idea, and, you know, I think all of us are challenged in a variety of ways.

[00:58:20] And, you know, I think the problem is we've probably had this conversation a few times over a decade, and we get to, you know, thank you. So, you know, not to say anything bad, you know, it's a challenge to take on any new program.

[00:58:40] So I'm wondering, I'm just thinking out loud here, but clearly, you know, we do have a committee, skipped committee, that is the engagement arm between the schools and Fairbanks County. So maybe, maybe this is an opportunity for us to have you come and present to the skipped so we can maybe have a conversation about this issue as it relates.

[00:59:03] Shaking your head. Supervisor Lusk, if I could, if I can have an opportunity to talk to the superintendent first. Sure. about these types of issues because we are working on a couple things that we're trying to collaborate on, and maybe this is just one more we add to the list just so we have some time to bring you back some information.

[00:59:25] Okay, I'll accept that. I mean, I guess the point is I'm just trying to figure out, like, how we get the engagement with the schools and being clear that it's going to be a partnership in terms of how we move forward. I think it makes sense. I mean, to me, it seems like the schools would want to know that they've got dedicated crossing guards.

[00:59:45] They're not having to default back to the police and having this issue of who's going to man that crossing. So I think ultimately there's got to be a way for us to reconcile and work through this. Okay, let me turn it over to the chairman for any comments or questions.

[01:00:02] Yeah, let me just start back to where we started. This is one of the reasons I was shaking my head is we have a Cadillac system. So the schools are not incentivized necessarily to do something less than that. So I think we have to make the case.

[01:00:18] I think we need to look at this not from a cost-saving standpoint, but from an operational standpoint. There are things that our police can't respond to that directly affect schools that are happening

during the time they're tied up at crossings. And so I think just in terms of a force multiplier, if we can go down a path where we don't have to have sworn officers at all of these crossings at all times, operationally makes the police department better, which makes the schools better.

[01:00:47] So we really need to come up with kind of a proposal that demonstrates, I mean, if we went the privatization route, I think all of us could come up with 100 questions here. everything from liability to uniforms to training to you know all the things we could think of here we need to hash those out in what would look more like a proposal not saying that hey schools this is what we're doing but let's go to the schools with a well thought out principled solution to this problem that benefits the community and and I think you know we have a challenge right now

[01:01:24] that's not sustainable. It's a community problem, as was referenced earlier. We need to solve this as a community, and so I do think that that makes sense. I mean, the only jurisdiction on this chart that happens to be on here that has a private crossing scenario is Miami, but obviously there's a lot of others, and so I think to the point made earlier, you know, what have we learned from those?

[01:01:48] The other thing is these have grown over time, and at the same time, so have our investments in pedestrian safety in facilities, and so I'm also curious to know, you know, how many of these schools have crossing guards because kids can't walk through the school because we're missing infrastructure, and can we make investments in infrastructure long term that can wean us into a place where we have less crossings, and I can think of a handful of schools off the top of my head that are missing a sidewalk segment that prevents kids from walking to school.

[01:02:25] So I think we have to look at this holistically. There's an immediate problem for police, but there's also some holistic things here. I mean, I've talked to some of the crossing guards and they tell me a lot of times they're protecting the kids walking from school from the parents driving their kids to school.

[01:02:43] So you know, we have this phenomenon where a ton of people go into kiss-and-ride lines that are causing confusion and problems at these intersections too. There's a lot going on at these schools at one time, and I think we need to have a principled conversation about what our capacity is and what we can come up with, you know, what could be a better solution.

[01:03:04] But think about as many questions that could be asked ahead of time about, you know, we may have our officers assigned to these crossings. They may not be able to do anything else, but a person driving around the road that sees someone in something that looks like an FCPD uniform responds differently than someone they think doesn't have that.

[01:03:24] And so I think those are kind of things we're going to have to think through with schools as we move forward. But I would still be interested. I know it's a tiny portion of the schools affected here, but we had talked before about having DOT do an analysis with schools about where do we have infrastructure challenges that can be addressed and maybe promote health and other benefits in and around those schools.

[01:03:48] It's not a substitute in any way, shape, or form for this, but it's something that we need to be doing, and this may be the breaking point where we need to look at that a lot more deliberatively. And, you know, I think the last thing I will say is schools are looking at boundaries and other issues right now.

[01:04:08] We all know this. But the school system today is different than the school system of yesterday. And we do, for whatever reason, have a whole lot more vehicle traffic driving through these school areas

than we used to. Part of that is kids not going to their boundary school.

[01:04:25] Part of it is parents feeling like their kids can't safely walk, so they're dropping them off. Part of it is just regular traffic volume, and so I don't see a situation where we're going to take the number of crossings and reduce it. I do see a situation where we're going to need to come up with a uniform standard and get some forced help for the police to deal with it, and privatization might be the way that we have to do that.

[01:04:47] Last thing I want to make sure of, because I just mentioned earlier school starts on August 19th. We're looking for some confidence from you that, one, this is a problem we're talking about now, not for this school year, but for a future school year. And two, that we have a manageable situation with confidence in terms of personnel going into this school year, which is starting in roughly a month.

[01:05:14] Chairman McKay, absolutely. Our program remains unchanged. The couple little changes that we recommended during last school year was really just maintenance of our current program, but we held off on that.

[01:05:30] And our 52 guards are there. Our police officers are in place. We're ready for the school year to start, and we'll be at every crossing we were at last year. Okay. I think that's just an important takeaway so that people don't go crazy when they hear that we're looking at this and think that their kids are going to be unsafe this school year.

[01:05:49] That's not what this is about at all, and I do think this is going to take time to work through, and we need to be thinking about having something maybe in place not at all for this school year, but for future school years. Agree. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I will now start with my colleagues.

[01:06:09] The first is Delia Palchuk, Supervisor Palchuk. Thank you so much to both of our chairmen. Thank you all for the work on this. I think following a lot of what was said before, And first of all, I want to note that we have two, I believe, of our FCPS security personnel here.

[01:06:25] And I know as you've worked with them and what comes up to mind is safe routes to school, right? So I know that I'm glad the chairman brought up DOT. I was going to bring it up again, right? The way, the more we collaborate, because I think you've brought some important proposals.

[01:06:42] Clearly, the current system needs some fixing, whether it's having ability to have more security for our crossings, whether it's enforcement, engineering, education, I think only will go so far in these.

[01:06:59] We need to do it. The one thing I haven't heard that I do think should be considered that I saw in some of the other jurisdictions is the use of cadets. I know we have a cadet program. I know I've heard some interest in trying to expand it for recruitment purposes.

[01:07:16] So I don't know if we have considered them, but I don't know that I'm ready to say let's go one way or the other. Clearly continuing to have our leadership communicate with schools, leadership, and FCDOT because I think there are some, even if it's contracted out, there are some benefits, right, to having it still be part of or coordinated with our police department and our SROs. So it seems like we haven't gone that far, but I wanted to see if you all are open to considering some additional models to figure out the right fit.

[01:07:52] We have 10 cadets. I think we've changed their name most recently, but I don't believe we've used them yet. We do use our parking enforcement officials out in the various districts. I think all of them

probably handle crossings every day so not a bad idea to to think about the cadets that's something i don't think we've we've done yet i mean clearly there are staffing issues and i think we need to look at all of these um but it seems like having that top level conversation of the different agencies and coming back with some suggestions i think would be very beneficial

[01:08:29] so thank you thank you supervisor palchak uh supervisor walkinshaw um thank you mr chairman First, I agree, and I was thinking the exact same thing, what Chairman McKay said, you know, to the extent that at some of these crossings, there's an engineering solution, and we need to make sure we're considering that.

[01:08:49] And, you know, the challenge is we're talking about different buckets of money, but it's the same taxpayers paying for it regardless. And, you know, FCDOT has their hands very full in the prioritization that they've been doing an incredible job on for the $100 million active transportation funds.

[01:09:08] But certainly I would be very willing, you know, if they were to go back and do another review of crossings where we have crossing guards in the Braddock District. And if one of those makes sense, moving money from one project to another. Because if we can spend $250,000, maybe that's optimistic, but just to install a Hawk signal at a crossing, meaning in perpetuity we no longer have to fund a crossing guard there, that's going to be a very significant savings.

[01:09:36] That might be more appropriate for the middle school and high school crossings, you know, whether that would whether a signalized crossing is appropriate for an elementary school. I'm not sure, but I think we need to we need to partner with FCDOT to take a look at that.

[01:09:52] Second, and, you know, this is something that's been on my mind recently, and I have talked to Chief Davis about it a little bit. But, you know, communities, police departments around the country increasingly are establishing kind of a new, maybe it's not new, but new for them, role.

[01:10:11] Some have called it community safety officer, kind of for us would be somewhere between a sworn officer and an auxiliary police officer. But the District of Columbia recently announced, I think, they're hiring 40 community safety officers to focus on traffic enforcement, parking enforcement, responding to some low-level offenses or calls that come in that don't involve danger or the potential for physical violence.

[01:10:45] The thought being that, you know, given the cost that goes into training and equipping a fully sworn police officer to have them doing things that somebody maybe with a lower level of training could safely do is a waste of resources.

[01:11:04] I mean, I think we all agree that having sworn police officers, given the amount of money we have, I mean, just the equipment that's in their patrol car sitting there hours and hours every day performing crossing guard duty doesn't make sense. It's also kind of a, I think, a challenging, even if we were to privatize it, it's kind of an inefficient role to recruit for saying this is the only thing you're going to do.

[01:11:28] So, you know, I would like us to use this as an opportunity to at least start an exploration. Do we have the authority under the Code of Virginia to establish another job category of folks in the police department who could do a host of things, kind of a Swiss Army knife role to take some of the burden off of our sworn police officers so they can do the important work we want them to be doing?

[01:11:54] I suspect there might be some limitations in the Code of Virginia to that, but I think we should explore that. And crossing guard duty could be among the things that they do. Thank you, Supervisor Walkinshaw, Supervisor Stewart.

[01:12:11] Thank you. I think there's been some excellent points made. I will start with how do we reduce the number of locations. Again, being a school board member, I remember looking at these things, and the answer then was, well, there's a problem with the sidewalks all going through, et cetera.

[01:12:28] Well, we'll just put a bus there and make it work. And that's literally what we did. And you look at the costs associated with that, and to go to your point, I think it's huge and an opportunity. And I know we've been working on this for a decade or more, and I'm sure we made some progress, but I've got to believe there's a lot more opportunity there than we've probably looked at recently.

[01:12:47] So absolutely on to take another look at that. I also think that as a proud former safety patrol leader, I love that job. I mean, I was in fifth and sixth grade, and I didn't see that when I came here. I don't know. That responsibility, it's kind of like for me, I was a paperboy.

[01:13:04] That responsibility builds character, builds further responsibility. I think I am all in, and yes, on certain streets we should be doing it. I still see it, but I see it very infrequently. I think we can do far more with that. So I want to do the big fixes.

[01:13:19] I also want to get more of our kids to be responsible and give them more responsibilities. I'm all in and very supportive of that. And the last thing is I know I've asked this, and I was asked this by a member of the community. they said they wanted to be a crossing guard person.

[01:13:35] And this particular individual said, I've applied, and they've never been accepted, and I don't know why I'm not accepted, and there was a whole bunch of issues. And what I didn't really understand was that that system really was a kind of a local district office decision. And what I don't know is what's the delta between what the need is and what is consistently there.

[01:13:57] I really have no idea. I mean, I go by, and at times I see a police officer there. I can think of an elementary school where I almost consistently see a police officer, which is crazy because this street could, in my mind, be handled by either by the auxiliary kind of person or even a more mature student could, I think, handle this.

[01:14:16] But I don't know what that is. Give me the information. Give us the information. Let us be part of the solution at least to identify how do we fix that. But I think overall we can have a better program that costs less. I know the county executive is going to have some conversations with the superintendent, and he should.

[01:14:31] I'll try and have some conversations with local school board members and see if we can at least move this conversation further and get a better solution. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Stork. Supervisor Oakland. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I want to thank the board for bringing this up. This started as a Vienna issue, and I appreciate very much the conversation that we're having here today and the direction.

[01:14:56] So I guess I have one question and then a couple of thoughts. Could non-FCPD crossing guards legally stop traffic or would that require a code change or is it just the training that they're required to get?

[01:15:12] The Code of Virginia allows a uniform school crossing guard to direct traffic. Now, the Manual for Uniform Traffic Code and other guidance suggests that crossing guards should not direct traffic so i believe that uh and it mentions you know i've seen a vdot publication it more mentions like you know we shouldn't stop traffic to let buses out and things like that so i think there's there's a blend there that they're talking about the authority in a uniform crossing guard does exist to take command of traffic with our own

[01:15:50] school crossing guards we we don't typically ask them to direct traffic and we actually came up with a two-tiered system so some of them like if you work down on string fellow uh they're going to have to do a little bit more traffic control than a neighborhood guard so um but they they can in most cases okay all right thank you very much for that clarification because i've heard both things on that now i understand why um so i i do conceptually like the idea of um fcps doing this um conceptually and i realize we're at the beginning of the conversation and i'll tell you

[01:16:26] the reason the main reason i like it is operationally i mean it's been my experience that there are really two people at each school that really understand where the danger exists with getting to and from school by foot it's usually the principal it's almost always the principal, actually. And then it's the PTA president. And, you know, those are the folks that live this every day. And I'd like the idea of having the school system, if not be responsible, at least be really integrated into the operations of the program. You know,

[01:17:03] so let's make sure I appreciate Chairman McKay's comments about the need to really pull this together and appreciate County Executive Hill and talking with the superintendent about it because that's, to me, that's a really critical piece. And then just a couple of other thoughts.

[01:17:21] First of all, it is, I guess, maybe a little ironic that we're talking about a Cadillac program, but the pay is the lowest in the region for this, at least for the school crossing guards. I realize some of the Cadillac elements may be beyond the school crossing guards, but But I do want to just make sure as we go into this and if we're going to make a change, and conceptually I think it makes sense to make changes here, let's make sure also we take care of our existing crossing guards because some of them are getting benefits, county benefits.

[01:17:55] some of them are getting retirement benefits and so let's make sure that they're you know from the get-go in this conversation we're keeping them in mind it so that we don't you know have any problems later on and that we're taking care of them so anyway thank you mr. chairman thank you supervisor Alcorn supervisor yeah this is a tough one and the the Cadillac when it comes to public safety I don't mind that reference being attached to public safety and I consider this public safety I think we've got to fix the police officer coverage thing that just yes that to me worries me more than anything in this

[01:18:34] whole conversation a lot of that I think comes down to recruiting and talking have we talked to our current Carson crossing guards I mean what did what are they kind of saying now I know one of the proposals that I don't think works If you do talk to crossing guards, because I have a former neighbor and some other crossing guards I do talk to, if you take away middle school and high school, a lot of them will go away because they do the multiple crossings.

[01:19:04] For it to be worth their while, they need a certain amount of time, so it's kind of got to be multiple. There's just a lot to think about. Intersections vary. I mean, Stringfellow Road you referenced versus, you know, some of the neighborhood.

[01:19:22] Waterland and Best Week. Yeah, versus a – anyway, the one Union Mill is on. They're a completely different level of sophistication. I'd like to see us keep it in the police department because I think it's a public safety issue.

[01:19:41] It's not a school issue. It's a public safety issue. I'd like the idea of looking to see what we can do to help use this, and maybe it's Supervisor Walkinshaw's idea of something north of auxiliary, south of a police officer different than a crossing guard that can also handle another big problem that we have with church crossings on Sunday mornings.

[01:20:06] You know, there are a lot of special events that need crossing guards, and we do a lot of police. We used to do a lot of police overtime, but we're doing mandatory overtime for our police now to the point that a lot of those are going unfilled, and I know we're all hearing about it in our offices where we can't get people to cross for to do the uh the church traffic control so those are a couple of uh kind of thoughts i think we got a long way to go on this um i think we need to talk to the crossing guards to see what's missing there uh i think we've got some

[01:20:39] work doing looking at pay and benefits um clearly looking at the thing uh supervisor alcorn's point on transitioning the existing crossing guards. I don't know if this goes to FCPS, how do you handle the pension and benefits differences?

[01:20:57] I've asked this before. We're not training to crossing guard level two anymore, as I understand. Is there a reason that we're not training the two? I know certain schools still require a two, so I can check further on that unless you know.

[01:21:15] I know we shifted our training from the traffic division to our police academy, but I'll verify that. I was only understanding that in the few instances we still were doing that. So I think I'm just looking through my notes here to make sure.

[01:21:31] I think that covers it, but I really think we've got to work at getting our police officers out of that position, and that's hiring and pay if we go in that direction. If we do go down the privatization road, I'd want to see a whole bunch more about how that's worked or not worked in other jurisdictions, I think that's kind of limited.

[01:21:54] Thank you, Supervisor Herity, Supervisor Smith. Thank you. Those of us on the school board think back to those days, and there's an elementary school in Sully that was across Braddock Road, and there was a shortage of crossing guards, so that became a bus community.

[01:22:13] When I step back and I look at big picture of our challenges, our revenue challenges, I am very supportive of you looking at privatizing. I think that that could be the answer to putting this issue where it needs to be away from the police department because we're still working through that.

[01:22:34] We're getting more graduating classes, but I think after all of these years, it's time to look at it with new eyes. I think part of that partnership is talking to the schools and saying, evaluate where you really need, but we are at a time with all the things we want to do that we have to look at things differently.

[01:22:52] So I'm open to this. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Smith. Good. Okay. Supervisor Beerman. Have they done away with the orange sashes? Because I was a bus patrol back in the day, so I think we still have some of them. We still have them. Okay. Okay.

[01:23:12] Got it. Just wanted to be clear on that. I have a question about the city of Milwaukee, which has 140 crossing guards working for the city, but with no association with the police. Right now we have 52 crossing guards, 64 positions, but we've had struggled to fill those last 12 positions.

[01:23:33] How has the city of Milwaukee been able to hire and retain those 140 crossing guards? You know, what do we think, how'd they pull that one off? Any idea? Good question. No, I don't have any idea.

[01:23:48] I believe that was a, it's a government, but non, I don't know what agency they work for, but it's just not part of the police department. and milwaukee of course you know when i think of milwaukee i think of you know a city center type environment a little bit more than uh different than what we have said the number of crossings didn't necessarily surprise me um i i grew up in florida and i you know i seem to remember a crossing guard on every block but you know i remember who those school crossing guards were and um it just seems like a different a different group you know compared to what we see so i'm not sure and i also should have mentioned that this city of alexandria does still have some school

[01:24:28] crossing guards and so they the vendor based guards and the regular guards are what is working well now which is an interesting dynamic too so we have to some more checking to do there yeah i mean it seems to me like there's a general consensus on on the board maybe i'm wrong that you know from a police force utilization standpoint this is not how we want to be utilizing our police force and there's a lot there are a lot of opportunities um to make you know to put our police to better use and frankly uh assistant chief blakely talking about your

[01:25:04] uh earlier experience it seems like a lot of our police officers would be a lot happier if they didn't have to do this uh for several hours ask one of them uh yeah exactly exactly so um so i i think we need to we need to move in that direction now to to what Supervisor Walkinshaw was talking about earlier today you'll remember I actually emailed you about traffic control officers which is what they have in DC it was because of it wasn't actually around school crossings it was around Georgetown Pike and Balls Hill and the traffic there but in DC like if you go to a Nats

[01:25:42] game, the people who are working in that game are a special type of employee, a traffic control officer, which we don't actually have in Virginia because we have school crossing guards, we have sworn police officers, and we have people who hold signs at work zones. So we don't necessarily have the traffic control officer option. But I think it is kind of instructive, though, that there is a non-sworn police officer option out there that is being filled just in a jurisdiction just across across the river from us. And the reason why I ask about Milwaukee is that it, you know,

[01:26:22] it may solve, Supervisor Alcorn walked out of the room, you know, may provide for a better transition for the current crossing guards that we have if we are, if they, we haven't totally privatized it. They're still county employees, but they're doing something in a civilianized position. So I think that just is something that we can continue to keep on the table. But I don't have the answer. We obviously don't, none of us have the answer today, but we do need to get to a position where we're not looking at 45 of our 90 police officers on duty

[01:26:59] during the day stuck at crossings. And I think every option should be on the table. And yeah, It will save us money, but I think the much more important thing is just utilizing the police officers we have to do the jobs that we've trained them to do, which are significantly, frankly, more challenging than being crossing guards, though being crossing guards is pretty darn challenging, too.

[01:27:26] But thank you. Thank you for this presentation. Thank you, Supervisor Bierman. Last is Supervisor Stewart. I'm just going to suggest you use RTAP as a guideline. R-TAP, I think, has been a very prescriptive, very clear-cut, and most of the offices use it and understand those rules that you follow and the community understands.

[01:27:43] I think it's the kind of thing that could be a model for when and how crossing guards could be utilized, so thank you. Okay, with that, I'll say thank you very much to Deputy Chief Blakely and the team for their presentations today, very informative, and we will look forward to hearing back from The county executive as he follows up with his conversations with the superintendent. So with that our median public safety committee is now adjourned

