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[00:00:04] I think we've got a quorum. Hi, everyone. I'm Jimmy Bierman, chair of the Transportation Committee. We've got a great meeting today with a bunch of good stuff on the agenda. I don't think we vote, but did anybody have any changes to the summary of the June 18th meeting?

[00:00:27] Didn't think so. With that, we're actually going to turn it over to our first presentation, which is Dr. Harmony from Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. I wish that Supervisor Palczyk was in the room because it was her idea to bring this presentation on the climate benefits of transit in Northern Virginia.

[00:00:51] It should be a really good presentation, and with that, Dr. Harmony, tell us about how we're going to fight climate change and make it easier to get around. Thanks. Thank you, Chair Bindman, and thank you all supervisors for having me here today.

[00:01:08] Excited to talk to you about this topic. It's something that is very important to me and to my organization. So my name is Xavier Harmony. I am a Senior Program Manager at the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. I know that a few of you know about this organization, but essentially MBTC is a regional body for transit policy, governance, funding, really important for supporting the transit agencies, the local transit agencies in Northern Virginia.

[00:01:41] Okay. So I'm going to start by giving an overview of what the work we did contains, but instead of going over the details of this work, I'm going to focus on the highlights after this. So essentially, as an overview, we looked at how transit benefits the climate, looked at different types of emissions, defined some of the trends that are happening in the country in general about transportation, as well as within the transit industry.

[00:02:09] After that, we actually looked at Northern Virginia policies that intersect transit and the environment, especially anything that might focus on climate. And then we quantified the climate benefits of transit. And I'll go through a lot of the findings I'm sharing today, focusing on those benefits, the quantified benefits.

[00:02:29] And then finally, I'll summarize some conclusions and recommendations we had for the region. So it may look a lot of words on this for some people, but essentially, this is why this issue is important to Northern Virginia. So transportation is the greatest source of emissions in the United States, and it's also one of the greatest sources of emissions in this region.

[00:02:52] about a third of all emissions in this region comes from transportation, and about 60% of those emissions come from cars, trucks, personal vehicles. However, good news is transit can help mitigate these transportation emissions, and that's why we did this report to try and look at how much transit can help and how much transit is already helping. This is also particularly important because post-pandemic transit ridership has recovered slower than driving, and this has potentially significant climate impacts, and I'll talk about that more in a little bit.

[00:03:26] So again, like I said, I'm just going to focus on key findings. I'm not going to bore you all with the analysis we did, but if you really want to dig into it, we have our report on our website, and we have all that methodology explained in the appendix with all the data sources, so anyone can repeat this analysis if they so wish.

[00:03:44] But I'm going to start with the number one key finding, and it's how many emissions are reduced by using transit. We estimated that's about 120,000 to 160,000 metric tons of CO2 annually. Now, it's a range because we actually use two different data sources to calculate these numbers.

[00:04:04] We want to be really sure in what we were sharing. And so we use different sources of data from different actual levels of government to try and figure this out. And the fact that these numbers are so close give us more confidence in our results because they're in the ballpark of each other.

[00:04:21] But what's really interesting, I think, about these results is that the commuter bus and commuter rail disproportionately benefit emissions. And this is because there's a direct relationship between the length of the trip someone's on transit and how much they can potentially reduce emissions. So commuter bus, commuter rail, generally people sit on those transit trips for longer.

[00:04:39] That's why you see these kind of results. And as you see on the right of the screen, the really dark green is heavy rail, a very large part of the region. But commuter bus is that purple and commuter rail is that light blue. And while these are proportionally small in the region, they have a really large impact.

[00:05:01] So, for example, about half a percent of regional transit ridership in FY22 was commuter rail, yet it makes up 9% of CO2 emissions avoided. So it's a really significant impact that we see from commuter

rail, as an example. However, we also may also know that commuter rail, commuter bus has been some of the most impacted in post-pandemic ridership recovery.

[00:05:25] So this has had an impact to the emissions, reduced with transit, and it's something that we talk about a little bit in this report. So continuing that finding, 120,000 to 160,000 metric tons of CO2, that probably doesn't mean a lot to many people.

[00:05:42] It doesn't mean a lot to me. I mean, what is that? What is a metric ton of CO2? So we actually translated this into a few different measures to help us better understand what this impact means. And very fortunately, the EPA has a website that makes it really easy to just plug these numbers in and spit these things out.

[00:05:59] So it's really fun to play with, but there's like 20 or 30 different measures that you could potentially use, and we're just showing a handful here. So 120,000 to 160,000 metric tons of CO2, we're using the low end of that range of these numbers, and that's 13.5 million gallons of gasoline every year.

[00:06:17] 27,000 cars driven for one year. If you place those cars end-to-end, they'll go from Washington, D.C. to Richmond. 33 wind turbines running for a year. Over 15,000 homes energy for one year. Almost 2 million tree ceilings run for 10 years.

[00:06:33] So this is the impact of what transit does every year in this region. And by this region, I'm just talking about the three season counties of MBTC, which are Fairfax, Arlington, and Loudoun counties, and Fairfax Falls Church in Alexandria cities. So even that relatively small area, it's still a significant impact.

[00:06:54] So now for the second finding. All bus fuel types, even diesel buses, are a much greater environmental option than using cars. So this graphic might take a moment to understand it first. But essentially, this is showing how many people, how full a bus or a train needs to be for it to be a better option climate-wise than cars.

[00:07:14] And so I show you where a bus or train would be 50% full and where it'd be 100% full to give you an indication. And this compares to both electric cars and gasoline cars to give you an indication for both. That dark green smaller bar that you see in that graph is gasoline cars.

[00:07:32] And you see that in every single case, looking at every single fuel type and mode of transit, it doesn't come close to cars being a better option than transit. Um, you can have a bus running 50% full on, you know, often hear about people complaining, this bus is always half empty.

[00:07:49] Why is it always half empty? Why is it on the road? But even less than half full, it's still a better climate option than if everyone on that bus is driving a car instead. And that's one of the really important things that I really wanted to highlight with this presentation today, that even with diesel buses, it's still a better option than all these cars that we've seen on the road, even when the bus is less than half full.

[00:08:08] Um, so the more of us is used though, the lower the number of bus passengers is required to replace a gasoline car. the more that bus is used, the longer it's using its useful life, the more benefit you're getting there. Now, you also notice that electric cars can be more competitive in some cases when it comes to reducing emissions, but this just gets folded into your longer term strategy about when you might transition from diesel buses, for example, to electric buses. And I will talk about more about that in the next slide. So this one is a little more complex, but essentially what we're focusing on here is more of that question about the electric car phenomenon.

[00:08:46] So right now, about 1% of all cars on the roads are electric or electric hybrid. We estimated, using some calculations, that for cars to have as good a benefit as diesel buses today, you need to have about 85% of all cars be electric or electric hybrid.

[00:09:07] Now, it's a bit hard to see the color, I guess, at least for me, for some people, but that top line is the blue color. That shows how many passengers need to be on a diesel bus for a bus to be a better alternative than people driving. That's what shows average passengers on the y-axis, the axis that goes up and down.

[00:09:29] As the number of electric cars increase, which is what we're seeing down the bottom there, that's electric cars as a percentage of all cars, as that number increases, you need to have more people on a diesel bus for a diesel bus to be a better option. That's essentially what that's showing. And you can see over time, as electric cars as a percentage of all cars increases, eventually you have to have basically a full diesel bus all the time to be as good as electric cars. But you'll see also then that there's more of a need for CNG buses and electric buses, which is that green line down the bottom there. So we see that this red line that cuts across here shows

[00:10:05] the equivalency between the electric bus and the diesel bus. This just means that when you have about 85% of all cars being electric, these electric buses are as good as diesel buses already are today. Diesel buses do a great job because they are a more efficient way of moving people and they, as a result, reduce a lot of emissions on the road. Now, there's a lot of estimates out there about when we might hit 85% electric cars. There's a lot of variability around that, but they are all kind of considerably a decent distance away. So it's enough to say that we have

[00:10:42] time to kind of figure this out and make sure that we're doing the right strategy when transitioning to electric buses. We don't need to rush things. It's just diesel buses already do a good job. We need to plan for electric buses in the future, but there's some flexibility about how to do that. While electric buses are more important for the future, diesel buses are already a better option than cars today, and that is the key point. And then the main non-quantitative finding is based on the policies that we looked at. We looked at a variety of transit and environmental policies from around the region, not just Fairfax County. We looked at 27 documents that included policies explicitly. Our breadth was actually much larger than that, but not everything touched on transit

[00:11:21] and environmental policies. We categorized the content in a few different ways. The overall finding is that there wasn't a lot of overlap between policies in the region. This just means there's a lot to learn from each other. So there's some really cool things that Loudoun does, for example, some really cool things that Fairfax County does, really cool things City of Alexandria does. And so there's a lot of opportunities to learn from each other in the region. That's why regional bodies like NVTC have a role. We help share this information amongst each other and help carry on that message. And then finally, this is my last content slide. We had a summary of recommendations based on this report. Short term, increased ridership. As I mentioned before,

[00:12:00] diesel buses already do a much better job than cars. And so it's important that we get more people on buses. Diesel buses, electric buses, gas buses, just people on buses. The more people on the bus, the better it does for the environment. We also recommend reducing miles and hours when a vehicle is not taking passengers, what we initially call deadheading. The less deadheading there is, the less loss for

the transit emissions, so to speak. So essentially, the more revenue, miles and hours compared to deadheading, the better. But the ridership is the most important

[00:12:38] point there. Medium term, increasing amount of transit in the region, and speed up buses using things like bus priority or BRT. I know Fairfax County is already working on some of those great projects like the one. And then longer term transition to zero emission buses. And that is it for me. The full report is available on our website. This QR code will take you right there as well. I'm happy to take any questions anyone may have. Thank you. I'm going to open it up to questions from the board. Go ahead. Sorry, Chairman's prerogative. First thing, Mr. Chairman.

[00:13:14] No, no problem. Great, great report. I know, you know, for those of us on NVTC, we've seen versions of this. I guess my question is on page slide 9 in your recommendations. Shorter term is increased ridership, but medium term is increasing the amount of transit in the region. And we've often thought that the only way to increase ridership is to increase the amount of transit in the region. So I must be missing somewhere in there where maximizing existing vehicle use must be something in the back of your mind or perhaps route changes with existing infrastructure

[00:13:52] that's already on the ground. So maybe you can help us understand, you know, what the best strategies are that you've seen to increase ridership, especially if that's seen as a shorter term goal, knowing that a longer term goal would be probably the single biggest driver to do that, which is an increased transit opportunities in the region. Yeah, so it's a good question. And you're right they are very closely tied um one of the reasons we put that as more of a median term is recognizing that um the whole reason the medium term category is created because these are important strategies but we also recognize it takes a lot of money to increase uh service and

[00:14:29] a lot of money to increase the the capital infrastructure you need for bus priority and recognizing those constraints it's uh something we put as more of a median term as you build the funding towards that it is very important for increasing ridership to add more service out there but it's not the only thing out there which is why we put that as an immediate priority. There are a variety of different things you could do around like marketing strategies for example or by thinking more holistically about when you design a transportation project where are you putting things together like you're building bike lanes that access bus stops and train stations for example. These are things that might not require increasing services but it's

[00:15:06] more thinking about where can you include transit in the picture when you think about other transportation decisions. There's a whole variety of things. Some of this will happen naturally as people start coming back into the office. So some large employees in this region are still slowly trickling in. And as they have more back to the work strategies or offices, personal strategies in that way, you might see more people actually start using transit again. And that will be particularly affecting commuter services, for example. But overall, there's a whole menu of items that can be leveraged here. And we want to recognize that while increasing service is definitely an important one. It is not the only one. And that's why we kind of separated them.

[00:15:44] It's a good question. Yeah, thank you. I appreciate that. I saw Vice Chair Smith's hand up first. Thank you. Excuse me. I don't know if it's so much of a question as a thank you. I think it is really important that we get a perspective of where we can make a difference. And getting more ridership is

important. So I think my best takeaway is that we don't need to rush to electric buses, we have the time to come up with the right strategy. And I think no matter what your budget

[00:16:18] is as a locality, you still have limited resources. And so to see in this presentation that there are things we can focus on right now as we figure out the right strategy, because the infrastructure is going to be really difficult. Technologies are changing. And I feel like I should ask you some question, but anything in that area of how you come up with that right strategy?

[00:16:46] First of all, Supervisor Smith, you're absolutely right. And it's actually what you're mentioning is part of the reason why we did this project in the first place. The funding piece around transitioning to electric buses and electric transit is challenging. There's a lot of change going on, a lot of unknowns. And that financial pressure can sometimes lead to questions like, are we doing the right thing right now? And I know that a lot of transit agencies are wondering this.

[00:17:13] And so this is why we look at this. Like, what is the impact of looking at that transition overall big picture? And essentially, the big takeaway message is that right now we have time to figure this out. We don't have to rush. Again, this is just MBTC and our project's findings. I'm not speaking for the whole industry or necessarily even transit in Fairfax County alone. But the overall message that we found in this report is that we can make sure we're doing this right and take our time and be measured because we are already helping the environment with the buses we have on the road today. And that's great because it's not like, you know, we're not doing anything right now. We're actually doing a great job right now. Eventually, we need electric buses.

[00:17:50] But we have time to do it right. Thank you. I saw Supervisor Lusk and then Supervisor Palachuk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, appreciate the presentation and your slide four, your number one resonates with me. So I just want to reiterate when I was looking at the presentation, the first thought I had was, what does that mean exactly? 120,000 to 160,000 metric tons. And then your next slide gives those examples. So that's very well done.

[00:18:21] The question I have, though, is when I looked at the footnote here, it says 2017 numbers for that calculation. Can you help me understanding, are we going to get some revised updated numbers? Or is this maybe going to help me understand how this number is still being used? Absolutely. So we use the 2017 numbers because that's the year where we had both sources of data at the same time.

[00:18:45] We do have it calculated all the way out to, I think, 2021, 2022. And that's why I know there is an impact from the pandemic because fewer people rode transit. And that means there was less of an emissions reduction. We used that year because we could compare both data sources. And that was an important thing because that was the validity, the reinsurance of our numbers being in right ballpark. The 2017 numbers come from a big regional travel survey that the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, COG, does every several years. And I know they're in the works of somewhere in the works of creating a new one, but I'm not quite sure where it is yet. I will tell

[00:19:24] you that we are pretty excited when that comes out because 2017 is kind of old. So we're very excited for that when that comes out. But we have done more recent numbers for that using the other data that we use that for that those numbers okay no that's very helpful and then the last maybe point I'll make is I'd be very excited to maybe get some sort of image that we could use to share with our communities so like in my newsletter so I don't know if there's something that you might already have that's already

prepackaged it kind of talks about this and that could be orchestrated for that purpose I'd love to get that if that's possible absolutely

[00:20:03] we've already cut some of this down into social media stuff that we shared on our social media okay but we can also work with you if there's anything more specific that you are that you're looking for yeah that'd be helpful I appreciate that thank you no worries supervisor Patrick thank you mr. chairman and I want to thank you for bringing this forward because the first time we heard dr. Harmony present this so well at MVTC I think we were all just very impressed and surprised maybe not I wasn't less surprised but excited to see that yes there are some long-term goals and as we know most batteries aren't there yet for the longer trips for buses, and as we look at, and I know you're doing a lot of work,

[00:20:42] or we are on regional zero-emission buses, that those shorter-term goals are so critical. I think you mentioned ridership. I have a couple of questions I still haven't asked, because you have had a lot of information that was even shared today. Number one, when you mentioned that, is there, I assume, are there any specific studies on things like last mile, Or is that just part of the larger, let's increase ridership without having to add, you know, to transit, which is more medium term?

[00:21:15] It's almost like you're setting me up, Supervisor Project, because we are literally working on that right now. Our current study right now is looking at first mile, last mile connections, specifically looking at using cycling and what's called micro-memorability as a first, last mile connection, connecting sustainable transportation to sustainable transportation.

[00:21:32] is literally our current project and if you're at the december commission meeting we're expecting to share the results of that but it's a natural follow-on from this kind of work and we are working on it right now that's very exciting because i just see every day as we put up more of our cabbie stations and all along route 29 and larger fairfax area i know we're expanding to braddock and another district the more i start to see people use it and i think e-bikes have been a game changer for those bikes because you can really get up those hills if you're not as fit as you wish you were so um appreciate that and then um one silly question um looking at the graph

[00:22:11] on page four and obviously a lot of the big jump in 21-22 was the pandemic um but i'm trying to understand is there what is the biggest reason that commuter rail and heavy rail have such a a difference. It's a different impact, which is also on chart six on emissions per passenger mile.

[00:22:36] It's really most directly because of the length of the trip. So when someone's taking a VRE train, for example, and they're going from Fredericksburg all the way into DC, that's a really long trip. And that's a trip they're not driving. That train would be going anyway. So them not driving takes all those driving emissions off the road right there. That's essentially the whole story there. The longer the transit trip, the fewer emissions that that person is emitting in that day. And so commuter services just typically have longer trips. I mean, that doesn't mean like dash, for example, is not important, but the average trip length on a dash bus is something like two

[00:23:12] miles, whereas it could be 10 times that for a VRE trip. And so that's the main reason why commuter services really have a significant impact when it comes to emissions reduction. And so even more reason that our commuter choice program is funding so many of these trips, huge on our environmental goals as well.

[00:23:30] So thank you. I learn something new every time. So thank you, Xavier. Happy. Any other questions on the group? I will only point out that Randy Clark at WMATA has been very, very much talking about how buses have led a huge portion of WMATA's comeback.

[00:23:55] So I think this is just reinforcement yet again that buses are cool, guys. Taking the bus is a good thing. And it's also really nice when you do happen to be in a car and there's a bus full of people next to you and you realize they're not all in a car driving next to you.

[00:24:13] So thank you. This was a really good conversation and we appreciate it. Thank you. Thank you for having me. Great. Well, moving on to the next topic on the agenda. This was proposed by our director, Steverson. And I don't know about you guys. I've only been in this job, admittedly, for nine months. But this next topic is, I think, one of the most important things for us to be talking about in how we develop and move forward as a county for the next 20 years. And I say this

[00:24:51] because over and over again, we talk about placemaking. In fact, just like two weeks ago, I think it was, the Planning Commission came out with their placemaking report. And one of the things that comes up over and over and over again is trying to create locations that are a little bit more walkable, that are a little bit more multimodal, that have more opportunities for cyclists or other means of transportation. And a lot of the way our county has been designed

[00:25:24] over time has been almost exclusively focused on moving cars. And a lot of the methods of effectiveness when it comes to traffic and how we're going to get people around is extremely car-based. So this discussion where we try to quantify and figure out how we're going to balance those pedestrian options and those car options is really important. I think it's also really important to recognize that there are lots of portions of the county which are very different.

[00:25:57] What might work in the development of McLean might be different than in the development of Centerville or another town or another location. And so I will also just finally end by saying that I get people coming to my office all the time. Oftentimes they are kids. I had two meetings last week, a 13-year-old at Cooper Middle School, a nine-year-old who lived near me, and they want to find out how they can live in their neighborhoods and walk around or ride their bikes or get places

[00:26:31] a little bit more. And their parents come too, and they say, we want to be able to let our kids cross the street to go to Chesterbrook Elementary. And I was standing outside of Chesterbrook Elementary with Greg on last Monday, and we were looking at this crosswalk, and we were saying to ourselves, we could take away these right turn lanes and make it a little easier to cross. And then I'm going to get a thousand calls about how you slowed down my traffic. So trying to figure out how we balance and weight these things as we develop as a county is just really, really important. And with that, I will turn it over for a comprehensive transportation

[00:27:09] analysis and implementation of additional measures of effectiveness. Thank you, Supervisor Bierman. That's a really good overview of what the CTA is. Oh, sorry. My name is Tim Kutz. I'm with the Department of Transportation. I'm a transportation planner. It's a really good introduction you gave and a good overview of CTA. We came to you all with this a couple years ago in the form of AMOE, Additional Measures of Effectiveness, and it's now being billed as CTA. But to really encapsulate the purpose of this in kind of a statement,

[00:27:48] it's to collect data to make more meaningful decisions and, again, to identify those trade offs, as you mentioned. So traditionally, going back five years and beyond, the data we were collecting was very auto-centric. So we were collecting data on vehicle delay. How long am I going to have to wait in my car at a traffic light? Naturally, when you look at mitigating vehicle delay and you provide solutions, those solutions are, generally speaking, widening roadways, increasing the amount of time you have to cross through the intersection, so optimizing the signal timing, what that ignores is the impacts to other modes.

[00:28:28] So if you're walking across the street, now you have to walk across an extra lane. Now you have to wait at a signal for a longer period of time. And so what we're trying to do with the CTA, again, is to collect that data, not prescribe the fix, not prescribe the solution, but give us a sense of what we're losing or what we might be trading off if we make those auto-centric decisions.

[00:28:52] And this ties in directly with what the board and the Fairfax County Strategic Plan has recommended since 2021, as to look at the methodologies and the ways in which we do traffic impact studies and make them more multimodal.

[00:29:09] What we don't want to do, again, is to sort of pigeonhole ourselves into providing solutions and making sure that we're intentional in the work that we're doing and the data that we're collecting in a way that's not just creating more work. We don't want to just collect data just to have it. We want it to be useful. And so a big part of looking at the schedule, what we did in the first phase, phase one of this AMOE effort from spring 2020 until summer of 2022, is working with a stakeholder group, FCDOT, along with VDOT, members of the Department of Planning and

[00:29:49] development, the health department, to look at all these different measures that we researched throughout the country and see which of those could be best applied in Fairfax County, number one. And then number two, what is that going to do to the land development process? What is that going to do to county resources? Is it going to create this ballooned scope of work and these projects in these studies, or are we actually able to collect this data relatively easily and explain these concepts relatively easily to the public?

[00:30:23] So that was a long process, which led to phase two, which is really the codification of everything that we worked on. So looking at the methodologies for each metric, defining them, looking at targets. So in terms of vehicle delay, obviously we know the targets that we're trying to hit there, but what about pedestrian comfort? What about bicycle level traffic stress? What do we see as acceptable? And then again, codifying the process. So looking at the county, not as some homogenous landmass, but looking at different areas throughout the county and applying different

[00:31:02] modal emphases based on the context. So if we're looking at, for example, Tyson's Urban Center, We're looking at TSAs. We're going to have different modal emphases. We're going to be prioritizing different modes than we would in a suburban area or a rural area of the county.

[00:31:20] We're going to have different targets that we're aiming for depending on where we're looking in the county, different thresholds. And so when we look at the process outline here, you can see a little bit about what that looks like. And again, if you notice, vehicles are still within the priority of, you know, three out of five of these areas that we're looking at. Because most of the county, you do rely on your vehicle to get around. That's going to continue to be the case. But in areas one and two, where we have these densifying places where people do need to walk to get around,

[00:31:56] they do want to take transit. We want to encourage transit ridership. We want to focus on pedestrian and bicycle measures of effectiveness. We want to focus on transit ridership and make sure that we're hitting the targets that we're setting ourselves up to hit in our strategic plan, our goals, and objectives. That's not to say that we're not going to look at the vehicle measures.

[00:32:17] Again, this was originally additional measures of effectiveness. This is a supplement to what we're doing, what VDOT requires us to do. So we're still going to study those things. It's just how we look at them and how we, again, look at the trade-offs between those different modes. We're going to have different frameworks for the measures and the thresholds based on the project type. So we'll have zoning actions, we'll have comprehensive plan studies, we'll have quarter studies. Those are going to require different measures of effectiveness and may require different thresholds based on, again, where we are in the county and what we're studying. And traditionally

[00:32:53] when you go through the study process, if everything looks great, study approved, but as often is the case, you may miss a target here or there. You need to go back and again propose a mitigation package And then what this does is, again, look at the mitigations that you're proposing and see how you trade off between those different modes and how you're impacting different modes with the mitigations you're proposing.

[00:33:18] This is a quick rundown of the existing measures. As you can see, vehicle level of service and delay, volume to capacity ratio, vehicle queuing. Those are what, again, we've traditionally used in our studies. The additional measures, while this might look like a lot, and I've spoken about the workload and not adding too much to what we're already doing in these studies, we have been using these for the last few years.

[00:33:42] A lot of this data is already collected in the studies that we've been doing, even beyond the five years that we've been doing sort of these pedestrian level of comfort and bicycle level traffic stress analyses. So it's really not a lot of additional workload for the benefit that we gain from kind of identifying these tradeoffs and identifying these measures.

[00:34:05] And as you'll see, we're not applying every single measure to every study type, as you can see from the different highlights and the icons on the right. Now, I'm just going to cover the additional measures of effectiveness that we added.

[00:34:22] So the first grouping here is pedestrian delay and pedestrian level of comfort. Pedestrian delay, if you're familiar with what vehicular delay and vehicular level of service looks like, this table should look very familiar. But again, this is really an effort to look at, okay, if we're optimizing signal timing or we're changing vehicular delay in some way, how is that affecting delay for the person who's waiting to cross that street?

[00:34:51] And so we're going to have different thresholds based on where you are in the county. Obviously, if you're in Area 1 or 2, those more urbanized areas, we want to encourage shorter delays for people trying to cross the street. We're going to naturally have more people in those areas walking and encouraging more people to walk in those areas, access, transit, and the like.

[00:35:11] Versus Areas 3, 4, 5, where you're going to obviously have a lot more vehicular traffic, a lot less competition with people trying to cross the street. Pedestrian level of comfort. This goes beyond what we would traditionally do with what's termed a gap analysis. So is a facility there or not? This goes beyond that

to say, okay, well, the facility that is there, is it adequate? Is it meeting the needs? Is it serving the people that live in that community or trying to get to work by walking? Is it comfortable? Are we providing a facility that's wide enough?

[00:35:48] Is there a buffer between the person walking along this sidewalk and the roadway? How long are they having to cross the roadway? How many lanes are they having to get across? Producing a comfort score from those variables and then assessing the project area based on that.

[00:36:08] Bicycle level of traffic stress, similar to pedestrian level of comfort in that we're looking at the facility or the roadway and assessing how stressful that roadway or facility might be based on, one, the average daily traffic, the speed of the roadway, whether or not there's a dedicated bicycle facility for someone to use.

[00:36:30] The transit measures that we arrived on, our first one really is good to pair with pedestrian level of comfort and bicycle level traffic stress in that you're looking at how easy it is to access transit sort of geographically.

[00:36:46] So in the very simple diagram kind of to the right of the map, you see what a perfect grid would look like if everything was really well connected versus what we traditionally see in the county is you have some dead ends and some cul-de-sacs here and there. Not everything is perfectly connected. How can we better allow for pedestrians? How can we better allow for cyclists to access more of that area within that circle and kind of broaden the area for transit users?

[00:37:18] And then transit ridership, simply with this example from Gallows Road, we're looking at the amount of transit ridership compared to the amenities that are provided at each station. So if we have high ridership in an area, are we providing the amenities that folks would expect to see, a bench, a shelter, for example?

[00:37:39] Are we, again, encouraging transit by providing the things that would increase someone's comfort in waiting for the bus? Crashes, we've used crash history in our studies for many years now. This would go beyond that as applied in a corridor study here.

[00:37:56] again an example from Gallows Road in which not only are we looking at the crash history so you can see on the sort of elevated bars there the number and frequency of crashes but also the severity of crashes and identifying hotspot locations so not just looking back but looking forward if if we see that there's a hotspot what are the attributes or characteristics at that location for example if there's an intersection that is missing crosswalks are there other intersections throughout the corridor that have those same characteristics where we could see the

[00:38:30] potential for crashes in the future? How can we be proactive about addressing those? And then lastly, vehicle miles traveled. These will be used in sort of larger area planning studies, corridor studies, simply to look at the difference between alternatives. So if we have a land use alternative or a transportation improvement, how is that going to affect one overall vehicle miles traveled for the area or per capita vehicle miles traveled? So how much the average person is driving in one option versus another? And are we sort of, again, this would lead into our

[00:39:08] environmental goals, are we reducing VMT overall? So before I get to the feedback, a little bit more about what outreach we're doing. So of course, we've gone out and spoken with VDOT. They've been

part of the stakeholder group. We've gone out to industry. Our site analysis section has a website and has gone out and put out a letter to industry, again, to indicate the process and the requirements of the CTA.

[00:39:37] And we've been doing these sort of studies using these metrics for a number of years now. So sort of as these projects come up, we go out to the community, we explain the methodologies, and it's sort of in a way that relates what we're doing, the overall study, to the neighborhoods and the places where these people work in a way that's sort of more relatable than this big abstract idea of the CTA.

[00:40:07] But would definitely appreciate your feedback on that. Any other outreach ideas that you have or any other general questions or comments about the process? Thank you. I'll open it up. And, Mr. Chairman, any questions?

[00:40:24] Yeah, no, it's fascinating. Great work by staff to get us to this point. You know, I will note, you know, our project schedule, we're at about the four and a half year mark. And I know, you know, we still say, where are we?

[00:40:41] You know, we are here ongoing. I guess the question is in terms of this being a tool for us to measure bicycle, ped, roadway improvement projects that are in the pipeline to be funded versus there's a tragic incident that occurs at an intersection.

[00:41:00] We want to go pull the data to determine the frequency of that and to recommend to our constituents maybe some changes to that intersection to make it more safe. Are we at that point now where, you know, we have enough data by intersection throughout the county where we can begin to draw conclusions from that data about frequency when an incident occurs?

[00:41:27] And I ask this because one of the things I think all of us are familiar with but a lot of folks aren't familiar is that when there is a pedestrian-involved accident, I know you're in communication with our public safety agencies and there's a back and forth that happens about the causes and reasons for that.

[00:41:44] That's filed away somewhere in someone's mind. I'm wondering if when an incident like that happens, is that a trigger to go back, look at all this data in the place where that accident happened, and we believe we're at a point where that data can help prescribe potentially a menu of options that we might want to consider from a capital construction standpoint?

[00:42:08] Sure. This is Greg Steverson, Acting Director of SCDOT. Part of that really is set up in, and I don't know if you remember the conversation we had around the spot improvement program. But that program is going to do a huge aspect of that when it comes to looking at locations from an equity crash history perspective and developing sort of the menu of things that we look for in order to do that.

[00:42:31] We're focusing on intersections and crashes. So that's probably the better location for that than this. So if we want to talk further about that, we can absolutely do that. So I guess what I'm trying to figure out, maybe let me ask my question simpler. We now have all this great data.

[00:42:47] How is this data going to be used to reprioritize, potentially reconsider some of our long-range and short-range capital transportation improvement projects that we're looking at? So when we get to the TPP process, we're preparing to start to talk to you all about sort of the next tranche of the TPP.

[00:43:08] One of the things that I would like to talk to you all about is what do we think makes sense in regards to funding for smaller projects vis-a-vis some of the larger projects that we have funding for. Right now, we have a lot of funding on larger projects. The question then becomes, for a lot of the locations that

have these smaller intersections, how do we want to prioritize those from a funding standpoint? And so that's going to be a large conversation point when we start getting into the TPP and our next sort of years of the TPP. I really want to do that because I

[00:43:44] think, to your point, we've probably got the ability to maybe do that, but we're going to have to shift monetary priorities from somewhere else if we want to do it. So this data will help us sort of make that determination or help you all make those determinations. Okay. And then last question on slide seven. I'm guessing I could be wrong on this, but I believe that's the intersection of Sacramento Drive and Route 1. It's not labeled. Is that the intersection we're talking about? God, it's like a mirror image of it. No, that's in West Falls Church. This is Shreve Road in Route 7. So I guess my question is on that slide, regardless of where it is,

[00:44:22] when we look at pedestrian delay and level of comfort, that is for your average pedestrian. Obviously, depending on the pedestrian type, there's going to be a different level of confidence. And the reason why I'm bringing this up is I know we have talked a lot here, and I know some of the spot improvements are based on data and conversations that we're also having with our partners at FCPS. But as I go around the county, I'm seeing a very good trend, which is a lot more bikes at schools and a lot more kids walking, and more importantly, a lot more kids getting on our

[00:44:59] connector buses that are sometimes walking to those bus stops near the schools. But I'm also seeing around schools a remarkable lack of infrastructure that just makes your head scratch. I mean, I was just at one the other day where, you know, there should never be a circumstance where we're at an elementary school in Fairfax County that has no sidewalk along its frontage.

[00:45:21] Literally, we have those still. And so I guess my question is, if we're trying to think about the future, our young people, their health, their access, many of them are making the right decisions when they're old enough to do it, but many of their parents are not letting them do it because there's a lack of infrastructure. So how will the pedestrian level of comfort help us translate into where specific improvements need to be made around FCPS facilities to potentially facilitate more kids walking, biking to school, and being able to have access to transit? Yeah, that's a good question.

[00:45:58] I think up to this point, we've been kind of making some of those decisions just by looking. We know, oh, there's a gap there, there's something there, there's an issue there. What this does is it actually kind of codifies it. Instead of, you know, and we talked about this initially, we talked about kind of showing your work.

[00:46:15] Oftentimes, we see something and we say, oh, that's probably a great place for a bike lane or that's, you know, a situation we really need to fill in the sidewalk. What this does is when we're doing analyses, whether it's comp planning, whether it's entitlement, it sort of puts a number to the face or, you know, a number to the issue instead of just kind of saying, we need a sidewalk here, you know, because we can look at it and see there's a sidewalk needed here. This is more of a showing of our work in that instance. To me, the most important part about this is it addresses the equity issue because that seeing piece before was somebody seeing it who had the efficacy to figure out who in the county to reach

[00:46:53] and to lobby that individual to do something. And to me, this quantitative data hopefully helps us address the equity piece as well, which is someone discovering this shouldn't have to figure out how to navigate through our system to raise awareness and concern about it. It actually should be something that we identify and say, we've got a gap here that needs to be fixed. And it takes that equity barrier, in my

mind, out of the equation at least a little bit, which to me is a huge plus of this. So thank you. Yeah, not only the gap in and of itself, but the things surrounding it, in terms of should this be, for this facility, a wider sidewalk?

[00:47:33] Or what's going on with that traffic? Why is it going so fast next to it? Or what are some of the amenities that could be provided here to make this more comfortable for the person that's walking versus, you know, it's just a sidewalk. So it's those sorts of things that we're able to put a little bit more of a label and codification on.

[00:47:54] Thank you. I saw Vice Chair Smith and then Supervisor Walkinshaw, and then I'm seeing Supervisor Alcorn, Supervisor Palachuk, and then we'll start again. Thank you for this presentation. So I want to understand what the process would be.

[00:48:11] Greg mentioned entitlement. So somebody's coming in, they have a project, they're going to put a couple of condo buildings and some townhouses, and they're going through the process. Are they going to do something different? Is it just going to be the regular DOT traffic analysis that is part of the land use information that comes out?

[00:48:31] I'd just like to understand the process, please. Sure. So Site Analysis actually has a website up, and I can get the link out after this, but they have different thresholds based on average daily trips. So depending on how many trips you have, so whether it's between 1,000 and 3,000, you're going to require certain metrics from the suite.

[00:48:54] And then if you're over that 3,000 mark below the 5,000 threshold that we get into the VDOT TIAs, there's going to be a little bit more required of you. And those are all laid out on their website. Very clear for developers and industry to kind of look at that and know what they need to do, you know, how much effort they need to put into these studies.

[00:49:16] And I guess the other part of my question, so those studies will add these other features with the pedestrians, or is that already there? That's correct. They would add those in. Those would be added in. And that's part of the reason why we're having some of the conversations with the development community.

[00:49:34] And, you know, the team has had conversations with the traffic consultant community because they're the ones for entitlement that are going to be doing the specific work to get a gauge on, all right, how much additional effort is this? And I think, you know, and the team will tell you this, you know, I think a lot of the traffic consultants and the development community are excited about the potential for understanding the tradeoff instead of sort of getting caught in these weird situations where the thought is you got to fix every single thing when you can't fix every single thing.

[00:50:04] And so understanding the tradeoffs and knowing that the county is looking for this in this situation is a lot easier than sort of everyone arguing about their very specific mode, knowing that you can't fix all of those modes. So would you say those conversations have been going pretty well?

[00:50:22] I work in planning, so I can't speak for site analysis, but I feel like they are. Maybe Jeff can. Yeah, Jeff Herman, Fairfax County DOT. Yeah, conversations have been going really well. I'd actually characterize them as they're excited about this because it gives them more options for how to mitigate their development instead of just looking at the vehicular metrics to be able to say we have to mitigate that.

[00:50:41] So, yeah, it's palatable excitement is what I would say. Supervisor Walkinshaw, better be an exciting question. Uh-oh. Yeah, I mean, I was going to just share an example, I think, of these metrics working, and that's on the Route 29 corridor study.

[00:51:01] that's ongoing, and it's Route 29, just outside of the complex here from the Fairfax City line out to the Springfield District. And we've had two, is it Sully? Sully and Springfield then? We've had two community meetings, and it's been really valuable to have these metrics to, you know, kind of acknowledge the trade-offs and decisions that are inherent in these processes. And what really struck me is that, you know, the metrics that our staff developed for that section of Route

[00:51:36] 29 in terms of the pedestrian level of comfort were very consistent with what we heard, you know, what I have heard for years from the communities there and folks that live there and what we heard in the surveys. And it kind of puts some meat on the bones of what we hear from constituents saying, you know, it doesn't feel safe to walk there, it doesn't feel comfortable to walk there or bike there, so it's really useful. I do have a question on the presentation on slide five,

[00:52:10] the area types, Area 1, urban centers and transit station areas, and Area 2, suburban centers and community business centers. And this is, I suspect, you know, we're trying to simplify it as much as possible. Presumably, though, in those suburban centers, there's relatively more emphasis on vehicles than there would be in the urban centers and transit station areas, which isn't kind of

[00:52:42] captured here, right? I mean, our suburban centers, and we're in one right now, don't have the same level of transit accessibility as our urban centers and transit station areas. So necessarily, the automobile is still going to be a more common means of transportation, which isn't quite reflected here. I mean, to me, it would seem like under Area 2 suburban centers and community business centers, maybe like half of the vehicle should be filled in. I just don't want people to think that a suburban center like Fairfax Center here is going to be treated the same as Tyson's

[00:53:21] or Reston that are walkable to metro stations. And even on the map on slide, we have a map or is it you have a map showing the or on slide four the orange line future metro stations which which all of us will live to see but but are not on the ground today so those areas like Fairfax Fairfax Center Suburban Center for the foreseeable future until that metro station is built are going

[00:53:56] to be a little bit different. I presume your metrics, once you dig under the hood, treat them differently. Yeah, and that's an excellent point. And we had a lot of back and forth on these. And when we came to you all, I guess it was a year ago, to sort of talk about this process and the context-sensitive approach, we had adjusted a few of these as well, because I know there was, well, are we really not going to focus on the car as much in this area? And I agree with that point, And I get the sentiment.

[00:54:28] I think what we're looking at in terms of Area 2, for example, in Fairfax Center area where we're at right now, the roadway is pretty well built up. And we're looking in terms of these planning studies sort of to the future. What needs to be prioritized going forward?

[00:54:46] How do we get more people to walk and bike? And I think what this aims at doing is not ignoring the fact that people are going to continue to drive. And that will be the primary mode of transportation. But when we are looking at development, what should we sort of focus on?

[00:55:02] Not that we're not going to collect the data and look at the tradeoffs for the vehicle. I suspect that when it comes down to proposing a solution, in Area 2, for example, there's going to be a lot more of

the sort of give and take in the conversation about what solution is most appropriate.

[00:55:22] Supervisor Alcorn. Thank you. Great discussion, great questions. I want to thank staff for moving forward. implementation i know this took a while uh to get to this point and a lot of back and forths you know i i do have just a couple of questions first of all um acceptance by vdot um how are they responding uh to this are they are they are they pretty much working with us uh on these to implement and new projects yeah so they've been a part of the process the whole time um and

[00:55:58] And they've been really responsive, both kind of showing up to the meetings and engaging in the conversation and reviewing the work that we're putting out towards them. But we've made it clear to them that this is sort of the way forward, that Fairfax is taking the step. And we're not looking to replace what is required by VDOT.

[00:56:19] This is really an effort to supplement, especially when you get to those higher TRIP thresholds, you get to that 5,000 ADT threshold that requires a VDOT study, we're still going to have to meet those requirements. This is just going to add to that and so that we have a clear picture of, you know, every mode that's being affected with those studies.

[00:56:40] And I think this is also consistent with the new federal standards, right, that have been updated, because I know that's something VDOT is slowly implementing over the next couple of years. You're referring to ProAg? Yes. Yes. Yeah, because good, because I know some of those changes are hopefully coming from the federal level as well.

[00:57:00] I've heard plenty of times that those standards are basically a problem for site-specific situations. Yeah, those are evolving at MUTCD from the federal level. Those documents are changing, so this is moving us in that same direction, moving them in the same direction.

[00:57:18] As Tim said, this is kind of telling the rest of the story, you know, that old adage, and now the rest of the story. So that's what this is. is get the full picture. Yeah, and just for context, at least in some places in Hunter Mill that I'm familiar with, we basically have relatively new developments that under the old system were required to put in, say, extra turn lanes that are now literally striped and not being used.

[00:57:45] You know, we're doing the wheelie study around the wheelie metro where we're looking to undo some of the lanes that were put in because of the old system. So I think this is going to be super helpful, particularly in our TOD areas.

[00:58:03] And that's the last point I wanted to make, which I think, James, thank you for looking at the map and the areas question, because, you know, the map on, I mean, I love the map on slide four. I really love it. I mean, it's legacy. I mean, it is sort of, you know, in many ways how we got to where we are in Fairfax County.

[00:58:23] But, you know, the difference between, you know, the Mosaic District, you know, and the Route 28 District, I mean, that's a pretty big difference when you're talking about, you know, an emphasis on how much pedestrian versus vehicular. So I guess my suggestion or question, let me just ask it as a question.

[00:58:45] Is there any interest or thought yet about maybe doing something that's more transportation-specific and drawing lines? Because these lines, these categories are so broad, or at least there's so much variation within the categories.

[00:59:05] Is there any discussion about maybe drawing lines a different way, particularly around our more developing areas or where we're really projecting change? Yeah, that's an interesting question. I don't know necessarily if that is something we specifically thought about.

[00:59:23] But we did talk about quite a bit that concept of some of – especially area two, like the differences between certain areas. And I think, you know, what we want to be able to do is allow ourselves the flexibility to do the analyses, have the information, and then based on the context of where we are, sort of have that modal emphasis discussion, especially for comprehensive planning, you can absolutely do that.

[00:59:49] Before you even start the study, you have the conversation about modal emphasis. And if the decision from those involved is that vehicles are first for whatever reason, then you can have your analysis show that and see how you did. Or if you decide pedestrians should be first, you can do that as well.

[01:00:06] And so I think a lot of it really is about the flexibility to try and give us the ability to look at the results and make those determinations based on the context. This is just sort of our initial framework to say, here's what we are going to start with. But if we go into an area, let's just say, for example, that is a heavy transit area that just so happens to be an Area 3 for whatever reason, then we have the ability to adjust because we know, yes, it's Area 3, but this is a heavy transit area.

[01:00:34] So we might have to rebalance how we look at the improvements. I'm glad you're doing it that way because I'm not sure how else to be honest. But what I would recommend, there are two things, just very quickly, I would suggest. First of all, I think there are going to be some areas that, you know, whether it's transit-oriented development areas, that are just such a change, you know, and they're, you know, the area ones, I guess, for the most part, that, you know, we might think about moving forward with drawing those lines and maybe having it come to the board, and maybe it's part

[01:01:12] of a pilot, or at least have the board review that, you know, wherever you're thinking about those areas would be. And then the second thing is, I love it when we draw lines, and we have maps like this, but we really need to think about how this is visible to the public in the real world.

[01:01:31] So, you know, when I'm walking, let's say, or biking or driving, you know, into an area that is, say, in an Area 1 area, as much as we can, I think we should be thinking and looking for ways to make this as visible as possible because – and some of it will be intuitive, but sometimes it won't be completely intuitive that this is a place where cars are not the top priority in this particular area. Watch out for pedestrians. You're going to see people on bikes, that kind of thing.

[01:02:04] So I know there's a lot of variation and, you know, transition areas, but where we can start drawing those lines, particularly for our areas of major change and really more urbanization, I would encourage us to do so.

[01:02:25] Yeah, I think one of the areas you're going to hear us come back and talk about this is in the transportation element of the policy plan. So that's probably one of the areas you'll hear that same conversation over again. Thank you. Appreciate it. supervisor pal check and then supervisor herity um no i'll just add briefly uh representing the area that really has no green in it um i'm open to all the suggestions i do think that cars have been the priority right um and so as we shift i understand some parts of the county will look at the priorities a little bit differently but there's almost no neighborhood that in providence that

[01:03:02] used to be all about prioritizing cars that hasn't been knocking on our doors to prioritize pedestrians, right? And ones we didn't hear about 10, 20, or 30 years ago. So I think this is very helpful. And speaking of the Route 29 study, you're talking about outside the Beltway. And I'm waiting for the inside. The one is probably going to look very different, right? 29 and these highways are really big. So I love, to me, this is like a first global look. And as we start to refine, because it's a huge county, some of these areas.

[01:03:35] I think that's what I'm hearing from Supervisor Alcorn and my colleagues as this is a great first step. Now, as we do these studies and get more feedback from the community organically, which I think is what you said, I think that's the right approach, but feedback being pretty clear from everyone as we go through these.

[01:03:55] So thank you for this work. It's never going to be perfect, but I think we're moving in the right direction. Supervisor Herity? Yeah, and I think I'm not going to rehash the whole flexibility in Area 2 because I think it's absolutely key.

[01:04:11] In fact, it's a good bit of Area 2 that probably should have the car in there is green, too, but I'm not going to argue that point. The other area, Area 5, our industrial areas are very, very different. So there could be green in the other boxes for some of those industrial areas, not an Ensel Road industrial area, but some of the other ones.

[01:04:33] This is – I don't know whether you have it because they're so spread out. Do we have mode share by area currently projected and maybe where we want to end up? I mean, do we – they're so different. So it's – but I'm just curious if we know what mode share by each of these different areas is.

[01:04:58] I don't think we do, but we'll get back to you. It may not be possible because they are so – Yeah. What I will say is that, you know, the comp plan does have some sort of future information about, may not be specific mode share, but it's about reduction in vehicular trips that we always sort of tackle and look at.

[01:05:17] But in terms of mode share, we'll look just to see. Thank you. Any other questions from board members? Comments? Well, anything? No.

[01:05:34] I'll try and synthesize, I think, some of what we just talked about and also offer at least one example of how I see this information being really, really useful. I mean, I think Chairman McKay started with using this information to help us identify problem areas and go fix them, which is very important.

[01:05:56] I think the other thing, it goes back to something I said up front, you know, what's good for McLean might not be what's good for Centerville, of course. And I think the most important word on slide five is context, context-sensitive approach.

[01:06:13] That being said, the Area 2 graphic didn't entirely bother me because – and I do think whoever – I think it was Supervisor Smith suggested that the – Area two should be, you know, halfway colored in for, or is James, sorry, Supervisor Walkinshaw halfway colored in.

[01:06:33] But one thing I do think, and here's one context-specific example, which is downtown McLean, I know something about. There are not wonderful, you know, mass transit options in downtown McLean. There is not a metro stop in downtown McLean.

[01:06:51] It's never going to look like, say, Tyson's. But I hear over and over and over again people say, I'd like to see more in downtown McLean. I'd like to see something that's more walkable. I'd like to drive to

downtown McLean because that's how you usually get there.

[01:07:08] But then I'd like to be out of my car walking around downtown McLean. And I think we have made this commitment that happened before I got here, but it was my predecessor who initially brought it, of $100 million over six years towards pedestrian.

[01:07:24] and I think it was supported by every member of the board, this idea that we want to be a little bit more walkable all across the county. And so in the context of downtown McLean, which I bring up, this is why I think this information is so important. Because about two months ago, we had an fc.open house at the McLean Community Center with five potential pilot programs to make downtown McLean more walkable. We have not decided on a single one of those pilot programs.

[01:07:53] not a single one of those pilot programs is yet funded we are not sure whether or not we are going to put in place any of those pilot programs i need to i need to uh to add that context but one of the people who showed up just said every single one of these things is going to screw up everybody's traffic nobody's going to go for it nobody cares people in mclean are old they don't need to walk around he i'm i'm not even kidding we've actually said people in mclean are old and they don't need to walk around. And the point of all of this is what I said to him at the time was essentially,

[01:08:29] we have not made a single decision on a single one of these pilot programs. I don't know which one we're going to implement, but I'm hearing from the community, we want to get a little bit better. We want to move in that direction. And that doesn't mean, by the way, that I want to screw up your traffic in downtown McLean. It means I want to make McLean a little bit better for what we were talking about. And so that's why having these, this information in our toolkits as we decide how we are going to develop various parts of the county is just so important. And it's so important also to have these metrics so that it doesn't come down to, oh, you know, Supervisor

[01:09:08] Alcorn had some opinion on, you know, what the best crosswalk in Reston was, or, you know, I had a, you know, great idea about which one of those five pilots. We need to know the numbers, like, okay, this may slow down your traffic a little bit, but it's going to make your pedestrian safety that much better, and we can weight those things. So that's why I think this is a really important and useful conversation. I want to thank everyone up here for bringing it, and I want to thank members of the board for talking about it as well. So thank you, and with that, we will move on to

[01:09:43] the last thing on the agenda and um i i can't believe it but knock on wood we are running just a little bit ahead of schedule uh because the last thing on the agenda is actually should be fairly short it is a setup uh for next month's uh uh transportation committee meeting as you know we were granted um new local authority for setting speed limits um and the question is how are we going to systematize our our future approach um what are our ideas and so this meeting

[01:10:21] is really just a a very brief update before the next meeting where we're going to have the more lengthy uh discussion that i know so many members of the board of supervisors uh want to have especially Supervisor Walkinshaw. But anyway, thank you. Thank you. Hi, I'm Vanessa Holt. I'm an engineer in the traffic engineering section at Fairfax County Department of Transportation.

[01:10:44] And as Supervisor Bierman said, I'm just going to give a brief overview today on the speed limit setting authority for localities, which became law on July 1st of this year. Quickly, you know, we plan to have a more in-depth discussion at the October Board Transportation Committee meeting.

[01:11:02] And so I'm going to give everyone an introduction and some of the background in history today. And the feedback that I'll be looking for you, from you, is, you know, what would you like to discuss in October? We've thought of some of the things that we think you may want to hear about, but, you know, we want to hear you tell us, what do you want me to present?

[01:11:22] What do you want to hear about? What information would you like us to dig in a little bit deeper and report back to you? I'm going to go over a little bit of the history, and then, like I said, we'll talk about, you know, preparation for that October meeting. So the history in 2021, the General Assembly, I think most of you remember, did pass legislation authorizing local governments to reduce speed limits.

[01:11:49] But afterwards, VDOT made the ruling that that legislation didn't apply to the state highway system, which includes most roads within Fairfax County. There were board initiatives included in the 2023 and 2024 legislative programs where the board initiative was to request the authority again to reduce speed limits on state roadways within Fairfax County.

[01:12:17] HB 793 was introduced and then incorporated into HB 1071, which is the final law that allows us to have that speed limit setting authority that passed on July 1st of 2024. for. So an overview of HB 1071, it states that the governing body of Fairfax County can, by ordinance, reduce speed limits on roads that are currently posted at 25 miles per hour. And those limits can be reduced to less than 25, but not less than 15 miles per hour. And those candidate

[01:12:56] roads also have to be located within a business or residence district. And both of those terms are defined in the Code of Virginia as well as in Fairfax County Code. So in October, we're going to highlight some examples of reduced speed limits from other jurisdictions. We've been looking for effectiveness studies and things like that. There's a very common campaign called 20 is Plenty that a lot of other localities are using. And so we'll bring you, you know, just a brief overview, a

[01:13:31] summary of some of that data. And then we're looking from you, we would like some guidance on how the board would like to implement this program. Would you like us to start with a pilot program? A pilot would allow us to evaluate some of the implementation issues and then come back to the board with results and develop a plan, things like that. But that's one of the things we need to consider. How would we roll this out? How would roads be selected? And then how would we prioritize requests if we did do this by request? Touching on something that was discussed

[01:14:08] in the last presentation, I do think that we should consider equity in how we're going to prioritize some of these candidate roadways. And then obviously, however the board decides that they want to implement this program would have differing effects on what resources might be needed, including staff time, maintenance of signs, materials, things like that. There are also potential impacts to programs that already exist, like our RTAP program. You know, this could potentially make a lot more roads eligible for traffic calming specifically, as well as the

[01:14:45] existing speed camera program in school zones. If the speed limits were reduced, you know, what would those thresholds for ticketing be set at? Just things that we need to think about, I think. VDOT has also provided us with a preliminary guidance document dictating how we should, the process that will be required if the county wants to implement reduced speed limits on roadways.

[01:15:08] And so we can discuss some of the details of that in October as well. And then we've already had some preliminary discussions with Fairfax County Police Department as well as the county attorney's

office about the language and how it's written and, you know, some of the pros and cons of different ways that this might be implemented.

[01:15:31] So like I stated before, we're looking for feedback on items you'd like to discuss in October. Are you looking to implement this on a case-by-case basis or more of like an area or countywide, things like that? We'd like your thoughts on what you think the target reduced speed limit should be.

[01:15:50] You know, the law allows us to go down to not less than 15. What I've been seeing from other jurisdictions, most are going with 20, like I said, and then your feedback on resource considerations, depending on how we decide to implement this.

[01:16:06] Thank you. Mr. Chairman. First, thank you for the presentation. I do think, you know, this is a case where we have asked the General Assembly for this right. We need to do, we need to follow up on that.

[01:16:25] And so I say that because obviously we've been granted this authority, but I also will say that I think this has a very limited application in the county. And so I do support looking at potentially a pilot to see what happens because for me, I'm as focused on the enforcement element of this as I am the enactment, so to speak.

[01:16:49] This obviously puts, you know, our officers in a different position, potentially more difficult position. And, you know, this would be the first time we've seen a reduction below 25, I believe, probably in the history of the county. And so I think we do need to do a pilot.

[01:17:07] I think we need to look at an area that's uncomplicated by some of the other things that you mentioned as part of the pilot. But I think we have to give thought to how this interacts with our speed cameras and other areas, RTAP, all the things you mentioned. One of the places that might be interesting to look is at any community that petitioned for traffic calming but didn't qualify for some reason.

[01:17:32] Maybe one of those areas is one of the potential candidates for a pilot. And so I know there's been challenges with line of sight, other reasons why one might not qualify for RTAP, where speed limit might be a more appropriate measure to put on the table.

[01:17:48] And I can tell you, sitting in a lot of those meetings with some of those communities that didn't qualify, they were frustrated there wasn't something else out there they could do. This might be the something else out there that they could do. The only other thing I would mention is I think we really need to be cognizant of the topography as well.

[01:18:08] I mean, some of our roads that are 25 now, just because of their topography, it's very difficult to go 25. I mean, literally, you'll get run off the road. And so I think where we do this has to be a place where we can safely implement it that isn't influenced necessarily by topographical or other challenges.

[01:18:26] And so, in summary, we have to take advantage of this authority. We have to be very careful about how we use it. It's a big change. I do think we should do a pilot program and identify a specific area that we think has the best chance of being successful in that pilot as well.

[01:18:45] And I think that's something that staff can do and come back to the board on. And once we see the results of that pilot, I think we can think beyond that as to, okay, how do we want to allow implementation of this in other parts of the county based on what we learned in the pilot? Supervisor Jimenez and then Supervisor Walkinshaw.

[01:19:07] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be brief, but I just wanted to second what Chairman McKay said. I think that the pilot program is absolutely the way to go. I do think having an equity lens, though, of where we choose that program to be will be very important for the success of the program as well as to make sure that the residents are feeling like we're doing this in a just and fair way. Thank you.

[01:19:34] Supervisor Walkinshaw, then Supervisor Herity, then Supervisor Alcorn. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've spent more time thinking about this one than I would like over the last four or five years. And I agree with everything that's been said. I mean, I think because it is a change and distinct from, would be distinct from most of Northern Virginia, it either needs to be very, very limited and targeted, or there needs to be some uniformity about it. Because you don't want people in the position of, you know, half the time they're in a residential neighborhood and it's 25 miles per hour, and the other half the time they're in a residential neighborhood and it's 20 miles per hour, right?

[01:20:15] Some uniformity has value. The question that I have, though, that I'd like to know for October if it's possible, and Chairman McKay mentioned, you know, kind of an alternative to RTAP for those streets that are not RTAP eligible, and I think that's great.

[01:20:32] I'd also like to know whether this could be part of the RTAP toolkit, and that's obviously a VDOT conversation that they would need to facilitate because I think there are communities who, when they're looking at, you know, speed humps or the signage that's available in RTAP would want to consider this either in addition to or in lieu of those other options.

[01:20:55] Thank you. Supervisor Herity, Supervisor Alcorn, Supervisor Poucher. Yeah, I would just say proceed cautiously. A pilot is certainly the way to go. I'm going to be very interested to hear about enforcement because I think, you know, most Most of the serious incidents in my district that have happened didn't matter what the speed limit on the road was because they were going twice that.

[01:21:18] So if they were going twice 25 or twice 20, it's not going to make much difference. And I think we need to look at that as we analyze where we put them. Supervisor Alcorn? Thank you.

[01:21:34] Yeah, I'm good with the pilot. I might suggest and we might consider piloting multiple locations and not just one. I mean, we were just talking in the last presentation about the variety around the county and all the different situations. And I don't know, maybe we pilot in one place 15, somebody else, you know, some other place 20 miles per hour is the limit.

[01:21:58] So, yeah, I'm also thinking on the implementation, particularly if we pilot a couple places or more, you know, that it's not just the speed limit. If we could also, and I think that you may have mentioned this already, the signage, the striping, you know, the making it feel like the speed limit's lower, not just changing the number on the sign, I think is really important for the public.

[01:22:26] Um, and then I, I just had a quick question. Um, the VDOT guidance, fascinating, uh, is, is VDOT, are they updating their RTAP guidance right now as well, or is that not changing? Are we aware of that? I, I'm not aware that they're updating their RTAP guidance. This guidance document that they gave us was a standalone document outside of their RTAP guidelines already. Um, we've been having some internal discussions and i agree depending on how we implement this it does seem logical that it would fall under the umbrella of rtap somehow because given that it's limited to residential and

[01:23:06] business districts you know just doing a quick glance of the 25 mile per hour posted roads in the county many of them are in residential areas already so and and and if we if we do pilot more than one

um you know the other thing that i'm frankly really interested in this gets back to the VDOT guidance, is how the public outreach is done, public consent or consensus is acquired, you know, and different ways that might happen.

[01:23:35] I mean, RTAP, it's a pretty straightforward, I mean, it's a pretty rigid system. Yeah, VDOT's guidance, oh, this is guidance, but you must do this, you know, you must do that um so um i'm i'm not sure what the answer is here on on how you know what what kind of uh outreach and and uh public engagement there should be obviously there's got to be a lot uh but that might be also something we explore depending of course on what vdot says so thank you supervisor palchik thank you um again just want to thank all of you i 100 agree with the

[01:24:13] pilot i'm open to more than one uh i assume you've looked at the city falls church and what they've done both in their outreach i've seen the campaign 20 is plenty all over the place so i was curious what it would look like to do it close to um a community that has already implemented um if that's you know i think that'd be a good comparator to um one that's maybe farther away from those areas because most people don't realize they're even crossing the boundary so thank you any other discussion well great I think we'll have

[01:24:51] a more fulsome discussion after you've offered us a panoply of ideas and and you know lots of different ways of doing it one thing I'm particular in particular interested in I share supervisor Walkinshaw's belief that doing this through RTAP might be a good way to do it with community buy-in, but I also am really interested in the ways in which these changes would actually affect RTAP beyond those choices being made. So with that and four minutes early, we are adjourned. Thanks.

