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[00:00:07] Good morning, everyone. Welcome to today's Transportation Committee meeting. It's February 24th, 2026. We will start, as we always do, by asking if anybody has any changes to the meeting minutes from December 2nd, 2025. Shocker, no one does. With that, we are going to get right to it with the first item on the agenda, which is a discussion of recommendations relating to the

[00:00:41] SmartScale program. And with that, the floor is yours, Director Greg Steverson. All right. Good morning. I'm Greg Steverson. I'm the Director of Fairfax County Department of Transportation. Here with me today is Noelle Dominguez. She's Chief of the Coordination and Funding Division within FCDOT. Let's see if we can bring up the presentation here.

[00:01:05] on the screen. Ah, there we go. All right. So we're here today to talk a little bit more about the smart scale process. And this presentation is an extension of the presentation we did back in June of 2025. For those of you who got your packets, the presentation from 2025 is in there for context purposes, in case there needs to be some revisiting or background the information to remind yourselves of. So SmartScale is the Commonwealth's process for

[00:01:43] allocating transportation revenues. It's based on a number of different factors. You can see them here. We'll talk about them a little bit more in later slides. But the reason we're bringing SmartScale back is that, quite frankly, in the last cycle, Northern Virginia got very minimal funding and Fairfax

County got no funding. So we did a, staff did a cursory review of the smart scale factors and some of the projects that were funded and denoted some concerns with how, first and foremost, cost was prioritized, given, of course, the cost of things such as right-of-way and other factors in Northern Virginia.

[00:02:23] We had some concerns with how smart scale tackled project readiness. We'll talk about that in a little bit. And then we also had some cursory ideas and concepts that, at the meeting, you all at the board asked us to go back and further review to better position ourselves for this upcoming smart scale process. And as you can see here on the timeline, we're getting close to that right now. The process to start pre-screening is coming up very soon. Applications due the beginning of August. So we're in that season right now. So our strategy was we tasked one of our consultants to

[00:02:59] evaluate the smart scale process. RK&K basically took all of the previous rounds. We've had six rounds one through six of smart scale looked at our requests compared them to similarly awarded requests we looked at the project statewide what were similarities why were those projects funded and we're looking for patterns looking for things that can help us better strategize for this upcoming round seven submittals so i'm going to turn it over to Noel to talk about what we found out during the analysis and to give us some recommendations Mr Chairman members of the committee, Noel Dominguez with the Department of Transportation. So continuing on on the,

[00:03:40] sorry, I misplaced a second. We looked, our consultant looked at what we'd submitted over the past several rounds. And we have submitted a total of 40 applications over the rounds one through six of the process, and eight projects have been successfully funded. I do want to note that in the first couple of years, the process was annual, and then they went to a biennial process a couple of years ago. So that's why you'll see on this chart, it goes 2017-2018 and then jumps to 2020. But you can see these are the projects that we were successful in receiving

[00:04:17] funding for. In round one, there were the Route 7 widening projects, as well as a Route 28 project. In round two, we had Route 29, as well as the Pope's Head Road Interchange, Richmond Highway BRT in round three, Braddock Road, phase one in round four, round five had our route seven widening from 123 to 495. And then this past round, as was mentioned, we did not receive any funding. So continuing on, we do want to kind of go back to what the

[00:04:54] process was in the past, funding across the Commonwealth for the smart scale rounds. The funding availability did vary from a low of about \$860 million to a high of \$1.7, \$1.8 billion. The request increased in recent rounds and that causing a decrease in total funded projects.

[00:05:15] Funds are awarded through the district grant program as well as the high priority projects program. As a reminder for the board, essentially HPP, all of the projects across the Commonwealth can receive funding for those projects. While as in the DGP, those are only within the transportation district.

[00:05:33] There's also some eligibility items. Localities, depending on what type of project it is, are generally eligible for both DGP and HPP, whereas regional agencies, such as, in our case, NVTA, NVTC, or PDCs across the Commonwealth, they are only eligible for the HPP funding, and that does somewhat play a role in things.

[00:05:54] Also, they score things differently across the Commonwealth. We are in Area A. You can see us in the red along with Hampton Roads. And per state law, we have to have congestion graded the highest. It's at 45%.

[00:06:10] The other criteria, safety, accessibility, economic development, and environmental quality are all lesser. I do want to note that awards for Area A, while low, are approximately three to four times higher when applying for the district grant programs only. And in round six, our minimum request for the county was \$70 million. However, the maximum awarded funding to any project was \$57 million. So cost really does play a part. Wrong button. So our consultants did look at scores across the Commonwealth when what they found was, and I think we've shared with this in

[00:06:49] the past, overall the county's average scores when it looks at benefit are higher than all projects for the most part until round six. Round six, we did have a bit of a blip there. The county scores are competitively in all areas. Primarily, we are not as competitive in safety and economic development.

[00:07:06] We did look a bit at that. Essentially, as far as safety, most of our projects are not, while they all improve safety, they are not specifically built for safety, the ones that we've submitted. Whereas others from other parts of the Commonwealth can be built specifically tailored to safety issues.

[00:07:23] And then economic development, We haven't focused a lot on this. It is a very small portion of our smart scale score compared to other parts of the Commonwealth, and some of the criteria are related more to freight. Economic development was geared more towards some of the rural areas of the Commonwealth, so we have not done as well in those criteria.

[00:07:48] I do want to note that in all rounds, our county's benefit scores were very competitive. However, once you add in the cost factor, All of our scores have reduced, our SmartScale score gets a lot lower. And I think we've mentioned that to you all before in the past. We looked at, or the consultant looked at project type.

[00:08:09] SmartScale essentially funds in categories, or this is how they organize them, bike ped, bus transit, rail transit, highway, and TDM. So these numbers, there's a lot of numbers here, and I apologize. but approximately 70% of all projects were highway projects.

[00:08:27] So when you look at the whole neighborhood of every single thing funded, 70% were highway projects. 35% of total requests were funded. So of all of the highway projects submitted, 35% of them were funded across the Commonwealth.

[00:08:43] When we get to bike ped, 45% of those total requests were funded, and they accounted for about 20% of all funded projects through SmartScale. Bus and rail transit and TDM, they don't have a lot of submissions, but when they are submitted, they do get pretty, they are more likely to get funded.

[00:09:03] And then lastly, what we found was approximately 57% success rate if a project came from a STARS or a pipeline study. For some, I think most of the board knows STARS, and we had to look up the acronym. So strategically targeted affordable roadway solutions is what STARS stands for.

[00:09:23] Those are VDOT studies that they come into our community, come up with some proposed solutions, and then often look to us to try to find the funding for. But they do come up with various options. And then the project pipeline, this is performance-based planning to identify cost-effective solutions.

[00:09:41] So sometimes they'll look at previous projects, make some recommendations, and then those can be submitted. I believe, actually, Braddock Road, our first time we submitted it, we were not successful. It went through pipeline. they made some edits, we made some changes to our project, and

later in the process it was recommended. So it does seem that there is a higher success rate if STARS or pipeline projects are submitted. Other considerations we do want to note, again, and we've talked about this before, cost factors do play a huge part. We have high land acquisition, we have utility

[00:10:18] relocations, contingencies, those all add up and they are extremely high in our area compared to other parts of the Commonwealth. Most of these are beyond our control. There are project readiness and documentation requirements. It seems like every round there are different types of documentation required. For instance, and the reason we have seven corners here, in a couple of rounds we submitted it, it was scored. And then in the last round we submitted it, it was thrown out because we didn't have one of the documentation, one of the documents that they required finalized. We had it, but it wasn't fully finalized. So even though they scored it in previous years, they decided it wasn't ready in like the third round, which was an interesting thing, but that's why that's noted

[00:10:58] here. And then regional entities in other parts of Virginia, as I mentioned, they do submit several applications. We have not used our, our regional agencies in Northern Virginia have not submitted to the extent of other regions throughout the Commonwealth. And our, those are also based on population. In, I think, generally speaking, smaller jurisdictions can submit four projects, whereas we're allowed to submit 10. In that same general way of going about it, smaller

[00:11:33] PDCs can submit four, whereas their bigger PDCs and regional agencies can submit 10. And some eight regions have a lot of project submissions out there, not so much us in our area. So, coming to our recommendations, the recommendations that we are bringing forth are to cap our funding requests at \$30 million and focus on smaller projects. This is completely different than what we've done in the past, but we want to see how this works out. Two, see which of our submissions and priorities align with STARS and pipeline projects. We have,

[00:12:10] you know, as mentioned, they seem to have a fairly high success rate, and let's see what's in there, what they've submitted for us, see if that helps out. Submit a larger number of different types of projects. As I mentioned, we're allowed 10 applications. We're actually allowed 12 pre-applications and it has to be reduced down to 10 for final submissions. In the first round or two, we used to submit a lot more. We have reduced that closer to four or five and more recently, so we want to kind of go back to the max and see what works for us. Coordinate with our regional partners on joint

[00:12:45] applications. Ensure projects meet readiness requirements, but do advocate for flexibility because going back to those readiness requirements, if funding isn't available for five or six years out, then to have some of this documentation that may or may not be, you know, necessary for another couple years is somewhat complex, and we brought that up with the Commonwealth before. Continue to encourage project cost normalization. This is something we've talked about in the past that the board has written letters on in the past. So we recommend continuing to advocate on a way to address that situation. And then coordinate with our regional partners on advocacy efforts to

[00:13:21] advance our projects in the region. As Mr. Stevenson mentioned, the region as a whole did not do well this session. And I think all of us are looking at what can be done. So if we could work towards some regional consensus on a way to advocate for changes of some sort, that might be helpful. So lastly, just our questions for the board is, do you all have any questions about the analysis, its outcomes, or any of the staff recommendations? And then we do plan on coming back to you all later this year with project recommendations before we submit applications.

[00:14:01] Thank you, Noel. Let's open it up to questions. We'll start with Chairman McKay. Yeah. First, I want to thank staff for doing the analysis because there was a lot of hypotheses as to why the region didn't do well before and and now we have some you know formal analysis that's been done including some recommendations and and from my standpoint I think we have to be doing kind of all of the above I think you know that the one piece that I do have questions about besides these strategic things we can do now that are within our power I guess the question

[00:14:36] The million-dollar-plus question here is whether we go back and look at any legislative fixes or not and what those would be. I guess what strikes me, and I know that the devil is in the details, but when I look at economic development being 5%, that's very low, as you mentioned, compared to the rest of the state, like a quarter below anywhere else in the rest of the state.

[00:15:02] the next lowest being 20 percent. And I don't know if raising the economic development percent would potentially help our projects score better. But, you know, to me, acting as if transportation improvements in northern Virginia somehow are not economic development when we're driving the entire state's economy is offensive at best, technically bad at worst. And so I don't know if that's something that we should be looking at. And if we've modeled, if we raise the economic development number, that has to come out of something else. So if you reduce some other

[00:15:38] figure that's within category A, what figure would you reduce? And obviously we need to know if that helps our outcome or not before proposing something like that that would require a legislative fix. And so the things that are in here that we can do ourselves, we should be doing for the next round because we need to test these and see if we can do better and act as if there's not going to be a legislative change. On the other hand, we have a good period of time now before the next legislative session to look at, you know, strategically, if we did do a legislative change, what would that be? And then last, you know, the county executive and I had an opportunity

[00:16:15] to talk to the transportation secretary recently, and I know that he is very well aware of this problem and is looking at some potential solutions as well. And so I think coordination there is going to be really helpful. There's a desire to help us score better, to be candid with everyone.

[00:16:33] I think everyone in the state was a little bit uncomfortable at how poorly Northern Virginia did because even people in other parts of the state are like, hmm, this doesn't look great. What happened here? And so there's a statewide reason to want to fix this, and we should be strategically partnering, I think, with the Secretary on what is in his mind and what things are in his mind that are doable that we should be pushing behind so that we can be on the same page.

[00:17:00] And Mr. Chairman, if I may, so our current going to your question about where would the percentages come from if we got more for economic development? Yes, it is at 5%, but again, the question is we have safety at 15, we have accessibility at 25, congestion at 45, and environmental quality at 10.

[00:17:20] And they've generally done things in 5% tranches. So to move economic development up, one of these would have to go down. Understanding congestion is required by law to be our highest. So that kind of gives limited flexibility here. Also, because the criteria within economic development, some of them are based on land use and what kind of site plans are involved.

[00:17:43] Some of them are based on intermodal. And by that, I mean freight and rail. We don't have as big a component of freight and rail because people probably don't want to sit in our traffic, and they go

through 81 instead. So even if the percentage were higher, I don't know if that would help us out because this criteria was geared more towards some of those rural areas.

[00:18:01] Right, and what I'm asking, though, is different, which is if we would have to change economic development criteria before you would advocate for that. And so what my question is, is should we be looking at economic development and being, you know, a little bit more aggressive about job growth, job generation, some of the other components that also drive the state's economy besides infrastructure availability and freight and some of the other things that you mentioned?

[00:18:29] Mr. Chairman, if you don't mind, I think we had a good opportunity to speak with the Secretary of Transportation, but also with the Secretary of Commerce. And as the Secretary of Commerce stated, she's looking to do a strategic plan for commerce, which dovetails very nicely into the things that we were discussing with Mr. Donahue.

[00:18:50] If you give me another couple months to get those two pieces together to them, I think we'll be in a better place when we go forward legislatively into the next session. Now, the things you stated that we can do internally, obviously, we need to do.

[00:19:06] But this is a bigger lift than just looking at economic development going from, what is it, 15 to 20 or 5 to 10. But crosswalking the Commerce Secretary and the Secretary of Transportation is going to be key. Yeah, no, I totally agree.

[00:19:22] And I bring it up because I think we have a moment here where we have folks who are thinking economic development goes beyond the very flat things that are used to promote economic development in some parts of the state. And an acknowledgment of how important economic development is in northern Virginia to the state.

[00:19:40] And so we want to make sure we take advantage of this moment in time between now and the next session to be working with them on exactly what was stated. Because I do think this is a two-way street. I think you work on the stuff we can and you work on these legislative pieces as well. And I wouldn't give either of those two away.

[00:19:57] Thank you. I saw – I've seen four hands go – now five. Okay. Andres, Walter, Rodney, Dahlia, and Pat. make it easy by just laying it all out there to begin with. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Noel, thank you so much for your presentation, and thank you to staff. One quick question is, can the board expect additional cost in implementing any of these recommendations moving forward? Do you see the cost of the projects moving up? If you're talking about whether or not, so a project that, let's say we submitted

[00:20:36] this past round and didn't get funded the next time around, It absolutely can. Whether it's inflation, whether it's just more detail, it can absolutely go up in costs. And so do you see that as a hurdle moving forward? It's definitely been a hurdle in the past, and I think it definitely will be one in the future.

[00:20:54] I think one of the things we talked about in terms of things that we can advocate for, we talked about the normalization of cost, I think is a huge one. Because if we're doing so well in benefit score and then it goes completely the opposite way when cost is factored in, that obviously tells us something is up with the cost.

[00:21:14] And so I think that's something we have to probably advocate for. Yeah, with some of these projects, specifically to Mason, when you look at the projects with different phases, that to me is worrisome, is you may know how to get through Phase 1, but what happens 2, 3, and 4?

[00:21:31] And where does that funding, you know, end up? So, thank you. Walter? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So my question is on the recommendations. So if we cap funding requests at \$30 million, focus on smaller projects, that makes sense to me based on the analysis of basically how these awards have been coming.

[00:21:54] I guess what does that mean for the larger projects that we need in particularly in the, I don't know, five to 15-year timeframe? And I guess setting aside, if we are able to get legislative changes like the chairman was talking about, and I'm specifically thinking about one of the fastest growing areas in the DMV is the Reston-Herndon area.

[00:22:20] And with the Fairfax County Parkway backing up pretty badly now, and I know that widening as well as the interchange at Sunrise Valley, it's a pretty big ticket item. What does this mean for larger projects like that?

[00:22:39] Yeah, a couple different things. One, theoretically, you could also fund a piece of the larger project through SmartScale if that's one strategy you want to take. Obviously, there are also other funding sources. I won't call any by name, but they know who they are that are out there that we can also go after.

[00:22:57] As we talked about in – I don't remember which meeting it was, but we talked about our funding 101. There's also the possibility of federal money, but you've got to be careful because then you federalize a project. So there are other funding sources out there. We just have to continue to do what we do, which is our balancing act of understanding the rules around the funding vis-a-vis what we're looking at funding.

[00:23:18] So basically what you're saying is it wouldn't necessarily delay those larger projects by focusing our smart scale applications on the smaller projects. Correct. Okay. But hopefully we can open up the pipeline through some of the legislative and other changes the chairman was talking about as well.

[00:23:37] Thank you. Thank you. Rodney. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to agree in minor more comments as opposed to questions. So I appreciate the approach of going after STARS-related projects because there are significant needs in our community for these projects.

[00:23:54] And I'll give an example. We currently have a STARS project underway in my district, which is involving the intersection at Southland Dorn and Franconia. And I've heard from a number of residents about, so, you know, what are we going to do to get these improvements done and when?

[00:24:18] So, clearly, there's some questions already starting around that. And certainly, this is a mechanism for us to try to figure that out. And then I want to kind of agree with the comments of the Chairman and Supervisor Elkhorn. When I worked in economic development, when we recruited some of the larger employers, infrastructure and projects were of vital concern.

[00:24:42] So if you look at, like, the projects with Capital One, MITRE, and even PenFed, we talked about making improvements to the extension of Greensboro Drive. and that was a part of the kind of the package that went before those entities in making their decisions.

[00:25:02] So I think this point about the economic development score is one that I think is important for us to look at and try to figure out how we might be able to kind of raise that. And it's important to the companies that would be considering coming to this county, which, again, affects our tax base, but affects the Commonwealth's tax base as well.

[00:25:27] So thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. Dolly? Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you so much to Noel and the team. So I agree, number one. I think what the chairman was saying, absolutely. Number one, we have to try to be more competitive in this round, right?

[00:25:42] Do all routes, pun intended. On one side, we can try to focus on legislative, which we obviously don't control ourselves. But on the other round, try to be more nimble. I would also go back to where I think some of my colleagues have mentioned is, and I think Greg, you spoke to it, is we have so many different sources, right?

[00:26:02] I know for one that, you know, even looking at the smaller pieces, commuter choice, we didn't get one of the awards, right? So I do think it would be helpful as we try to become more nimble and look at the different types of awards that are out there for different things that we realize things might probably aren't going back to the way they were. So trying to understand number one with the STARS study. So we have a great one that was done along Route 50 between Providence and Mason District. So does that mean we start to try to look for more funding there? We know that there are a lot of safety

[00:26:36] issues and concerns along that corridor. But then on the flip side for Blake Lane, we don't have to use a different process and not a STARS study. And so does that mean that's less likely to get funded i mean i think there are those are the kind of questions when it comes just to vdot funding um and different types that we're probably at the point we have so many different projects different sizes different scopes um that i don't know how you and your team are tracking or sharing with us where we're kind of looking at the different pieces um and where they fit in um and then the last one that wasn't mentioned would be you know i've had some questions about would we

[00:27:14] consider things around TIF and proffers and different, when we talk about economic development, I think we have to think more strategically at where are portions where we can use non-state funding, if that's going to be so tough, to be able to fund in Tyson's and elsewhere some of those projects that maybe are not going to get the funding that we would have expected them to get in years past, as we heard from our colleagues. So I do think because Joe Lahit's not here and I can't give them a heart attack right now, that we need to absolutely look a little bit more holistically or inform us as to how to better address when we know a community absolutely,

[00:27:54] you know, has been waiting for a project, for safety, for other reasons, and we want to try to address that. So helping us understand the whole scale. You know, it might be in our best interest at some juncture to look at all the proffers and see if we can renegotiate to move us forward. So let's look outside the box because, you know, that's what we have to do nowadays. We can't keep doing it the same way and expecting a different result. Couldn't have said it better myself. Thank you, Mr. Executive. Well said. Pat? Yeah, so I love case studies. So Braddock Road,

[00:28:30] what changes did we make before we, I mean, we submitted, it got denied, we made some changes? I'm just curious. Mr. Chairman, Supervisor Harity, I think in the first round was when we were still considering the larger widening of the full road and we went and part of the pipeline we went more towards interchange and um access management improvements across the corridor and that's where we

ended up getting funding i i'm not going to remember the round without looking at my charts but that's why i think we got funding in a subsequent round so it reduced the land acquisition costs basically that might have been part of it as well as i would think that was construction costs As I remember, that was a big piece of it.

[00:29:10] And that kind of drives to my question is, in part of this, I think we've got to be looking to drive down the costs that we can control in our projects. Because I know far too often the first thing I see on my projects have got 10-foot bike lanes on both sides and maybe a cycle track and that sort of thing, plus the right-of-way in between all those.

[00:29:33] But, you know, we got to build what's reasonable, and at least with the parkway and with Rolling Road, what we started with and what we ended up getting funded and funding were slightly smaller projects. Sounds like the same thing with Braddock Road.

[00:29:50] So I think that's something we can do as far as the other recommendations. May I add to Jack? I'm just curious. Those changes were predicated by VDOT? Mr. Chairman, Mr. Hill, I think we worked with the community and with VDOT.

[00:30:06] Community I believe the community was part of the Vita. Yes, sir. Okay. Yeah I thought on the changes I'm talking about I worked with the community and VDOT as well It's those are partners in funding and partners in getting it done I didn't end up with all the changes I wanted, but I didn't want the roundabout I wanted a skinny interchange which would have reduced it a lot more, but That's another I went with what the community and VDOT wanted the And we were talking earlier about other funding sources.

[00:30:40] We haven't done a road transportation bond in a long time. Have we got any plans to look at that as another funding source to go back to what I had heard earlier? Mr. Chairman, Supervisor Harity, I don't remember the timing of that.

[00:30:59] I would have to go back and talk with DMB. I know it's part of their, you know, they're definitely involved in that process. Something we might want to consider, because I know other jurisdictions are doing transportation bonds as well to fund important projects.

[00:31:16] Rasha? Yeah, I appreciate this. And again, considering it's my first meeting, it's very interesting to think about. And we've talked a little bit about some of the challenges around getting smart scale funding for Northern Virginia. So just a couple of questions.

[00:31:32] When we're talking about regional cooperation, have we worked through NVTC or NVRC on specific, you know, ways to cooperate regionally around some of these funds? Or is that an opportunity? Supervisor, yes.

[00:31:48] So I think that's something we're going to be talking with them about. NVTC, I'm not sure if they've submitted many applications in the past, but if there is a good transit project, I think we can work with them on that. NVTAs as well, they've submitted two or three throughout the years. I know NVTAs also look very interested in this.

[00:32:06] They're very aware how our region did compare to other parts of the Commonwealth. So that is something I think they're talking about and we're talking about with them. And that might be one of those

projects near a border or where there are multiple. I think the last project they submitted was with Alexandria and Arlington.

[00:32:23] So they submitted a project that went through two jurisdictions. We might see if there's any in that area, you know, where we neighbor or close to a neighboring jurisdiction for one of those types of things. And then the second question I had is around the Braddock Road improvements because kind of the phase two is not funded yet. And I don't know if SmartScale is still giving me a possibility for funding for any parts of Phase II, especially if we're looking at smaller projects.

[00:32:44] So, you know, that may be outside the scope of this conversation in terms of the funding for the Phase II of Braddock Road. But out of curiosity, is the plan to still apply for SmartScale for that Phase II, or what's the thought on that? Yeah, and I think that's probably something to discuss further.

[00:33:01] Obviously, I think it's something, depending on, you know, what comes out of that, that could be done for SmartScale. It's just we're probably not at the stage yet where we would make that specific decision. But I definitely think it's something to consider and continue to talk about. Happy follow-up offline.

[00:33:17] Thank you. Thank you. So I made the mistake of using everybody's first names when I first noted everybody. And then I had to use everybody's first names. So I'll go with supervisor from now on.

[00:33:33] But anyway, I just wanted to note that. Because I got to – when Roshna put up her hand, I was like, well, the first five people, I used their first name. So anyway, Supervisor Sizemore Heiser. Hey, I had one quick question, which was it makes sense to me, I mean, that you would want to not put all your eggs in one basket, of course, in the number of applications that we file.

[00:33:56] But the one question I had is what is the time and cost and energy that gets put into each one of these filings? And is there any consideration there with respect to expanding the number of applications that we do? Supervisor, or sorry, Mr. Chairman Beerman.

[00:34:16] You can just call me Jimmy, but that's okay. So the applications are a bit detailed. They do take some staff time. They're not to the extent of a federal discretionary grant application. But it's something I think we would figure out how to manage internally, if necessary, get some help from, I think we, part of our contract does, you know, have our contractor helping a bit with some of the aspects of it. So, yeah, it will take more staff time, but it's something we would figure out. Okay, great. It's budget season, so we ask those questions always. I guess this has been a

[00:34:53] great discussion. I'll only close by saying, you know, we did send a letter about SmartScale in May. And it sounds like we have had some internal conversations with the Secretary of Transportation that have been productive and the Secretary of Commerce. So we may not need to send a follow-up letter yet, but it may be something worth considering if we want to put our position on some of these potential changes out there. And County Executive Hill, did you have

[00:35:25] You know, I'm not sure when another letter needs to go, but I think the letter that they currently have, coupled with the conversation that we had last week, needs to be addressed. And I have reached out to the Deputy Secretary, who sent, I think, a letter to somebody that got back to me, and I redirected her thought process.

[00:35:49] I'm going to be speaking with the Secretary again in a week or two down in Richmond, off hours, guys. to really go in and figure out what's best, not only for Fairfax County, but what's best for the Commonwealth of Virginia. That sounds good. Yeah, that's what I was basically saying was I didn't necessarily think we needed a letter, but we do have some stuff out there that we want to continue moving forward. And with that, why don't we thank you very much, and why don't we close the Smart

[00:36:21] Scale discussion and move into an update on Capital Bike Share. Thank you. We'll give you a second to switch over the seats okay let's uh we've got an update on our capital bike share

[00:37:00] program i have to say i was really excited when you put them out at the innovation station metro so uh let's uh jump into it uh good morning board members um my name is zach de jordan i'm the capital bike share program manager at the fairfax county department of transportation um so if you don't know uh so just a little bit about capital bike share um it's a publicly owned and operated bicycle transit service. You can unlock a bike and ride to more than 800 stations across eight jurisdictions, including 94 stations here in Fairfax County. Our operations are managed by

[00:37:35] a company called Lyft, which you may have heard of. They also manage ride hail. They provide the bikes and maintain them. The map on the right shows the existing stations in red. The purple icons are planned stations in Fairfax County, and the orange stations show planned stations in our neighboring jurisdictions. I'm sure you'll find the colors of the map quite familiar since those are your districts. In terms of timeline, Capital Bikeshare began in Arlington in 2010 and as well as Washington, D.C. It came to Fairfax County in 2016, kind of a little bit on the heels of the

[00:38:13] Silver Line. At the time, we used our metro stations as kind of an anchor for the system. We came to Merrifield in 2019. We did some expansion in 2021 and 2023 to Reston, as well as the Vienna Metro in Merrifield and in Tysons.

[00:38:31] We came to the Franconia-Springfield Metro and surrounding neighborhoods in 2024. And then, of course, as you mentioned, in 2025, we went out to – we expanded out to the Huntington Metro, as well as the Innovation Metro. And we're excited, in 2026, we're going to have some additional expansion out to some new neighborhoods, which we have not been to before.

[00:38:50] Annandale, Bailey's Crossroads, Bellevue, Mount Vernon Trail, North Kings Highway, as well as along I-66 and Merrifield and all the way out here to Fairfax Center. Just wanted to share some goals and ridership. And so one of the documents that has kind of guided our expansion over the years has been a Fairfax County, George Mason University, City of Fairfax, and Town of Vienna, a bike share study that was completed several years ago.

[00:39:18] And the outcomes of that have mostly been achieved. And so we've expanded out to George Mason University. Our neighbors here in the city of Fairfax have added stations. And, of course, we've added our own stations as a result of that study. The town of Vienna is hoping to join.

[00:39:35] We're hoping to expand to the town of Vienna as well in 2026. We also, one of the goals that we had is kind of an informal goal, was we want to expand all 13 metro rail stations, which we achieved in 2025. And I also have some notes here about the ridership.

[00:39:52] so our ridership growth slowed a bit in 2025 we did a August fair change which and the good news is resulted in a much higher revenue but that the ridership is as flatlined a little bit and this is this does mirror kind of our regional trends as well this is trends in our neighboring jurisdictions our August

ridership also hit an all-time high of almost 5,000 trips so additional facts and figures. One of the things we've found is that our electric bikes are very popular among

[00:40:27] our riders. And so they make up about half of our trips, but they're only 17% of our fleet in 2025. Since 2022, we've acquired 215 electric bikes, 39 classics. I also have a chart here that shows how our membership has been rising. And so while our annual membership has declined as a percentage of overall membership, our equity members, and our corporate members.

[00:40:53] So companies who've signed up for the system and given their employees discounts for membership have increased quite a bit and whatnot. So then about half of our trips, 51%, are casual riders or single trips, and we like those because they typically pay more for their trips.

[00:41:15] Our average trip time was about 19 minutes for our classic bikes, 15 minutes for electric bikes, and then I've also got a little chart here to show our top 10 busiest stations in the last year, our last calendar year. So our metro stations are doing quite well, as well as some of our locations in Merrifield and Reston Town Center.

[00:41:40] And then I just want to share how the system is funded. So our operating and maintenance costs are covered by our CNI, our commercial and industrial fund. We spent approximately \$1.27 million on operating maintenance costs in 2025.

[00:41:55] And we also had about just under about a quarter million dollars in fare revenue. It's a roughly 70% fare box recovery ratio. We do expect that the fare change from August is going to drive that ratio up a little bit. And then if you're curious about our electric bikes and how that impacts the equation in terms of our cost, almost all of those charges are covered by riders.

[00:42:19] So each rider has to pay at least 15 cents a minute, if you're a member, and 35 cents a minute if you're an annual member or excuse me if you're a casual rider to use the electric bikes and then kind of the opposite of sense of what our operating costs are covered by our capital costs have mostly been covered by grants and so about two-thirds of it has been covered by our federal grants another third has been covered by our friends over at northern virginia transportation commission the then tyson's partnership now the tyson's community alliance and there's a very little bit that we've used for local funds to to cover capital costs

[00:42:55] And then if you're curious how we install stations and how we find locations, we use kind of two sets of criteria. One is technical criteria. So this is, for example, the stations are solar-powered.

[00:43:11] They need four hours of south-facing sun. And then there's also some programmatic criteria. And what we've tried to categorize our stations in using a topology. And so we have mixed-use apartments are usually very popular. Our office locations are not quite as popular anymore.

[00:43:27] We have transit locations, a handful of recreational ones, and a lot of residential ones. In terms of equity, our Capital Bikes Share for All program provides a \$5 annual membership for qualifying low-income riders. So instead of paying \$120 a year, they pay just \$5. They also get a \$40 a month credit towards electric bikes, as well as other charges of the program.

[00:43:49] And they get unlimited 60-minute rides on our classic bikes. In terms of equity in finding station locations, we actually have a dedicated earmark for adding Capital Bikeshare stations to

underserved areas. So that's one of the reasons why we're going out to Annandale and Bayless Crossroads and Colmore and those neighborhoods, Seven Corners.

[00:44:08] We also have another grant that's going to add stations along with 66, I-66 from NVTC. And we included a low-income apartment building as one of the locations where we want to put a station. And then one of the kind of interesting things about Capital Bikeshare compared to most other transportation projects is you can move them around, much like you have a bus line.

[00:44:32] So it's certainly not the easiest process, but, you know, when we find locations that aren't performing to expectations, we'll work to move them to new locations, and, of course, we'll take equity into account for that. And so one of the reasons we're here is we want to talk to you about the future of Capital Bikeshare in Fairfax County.

[00:44:56] So one of the things we've begun doing is we've begun drafting the capital bike share development plan our first It's model after some some neighboring neighboring jurisdictions who have them And what kind of guide expansion investment for the next five to ten years So we'll look at things like where we're planning neighborhoods where we plan to add higher density We'll look at places equity locations. We'll look at transit locations. For example one is I'm sure sure One of our biggest is, of course, is the Richmond Highway Bus River Transit.

[00:45:27] We have identified locations within the design to put bike share stations and whatnot. And then we also want to incorporate some lessons learned from our 2026 expansion. We want to incorporate some newer technology. So I've got a picture here on the right of a pillar-style dock.

[00:45:45] It's a smaller station. It's a little bit cheaper than the technology we used in the past. And then we've also got a picture of our electric bikes, as well as a new model of a classic bike. The plan also will likely identify funding for new equipment, as well as replacing old equipment.

[00:46:05] Some of our old equipment is about 10 years old, and typically you want to replace it at the 10-, 12-year-old range. And again, as I mentioned before, almost all of our equipment was previously funded by Federal Grants and VTC and the Tyson's Partnership, now known as Tyson's Community Alliance. And of course, we'll do public outreach to support this plan development later this year.

[00:46:24] And so last, but certainly not least, we'd like to ask two questions of the board. What factors should we consider for our next five to ten years of expansion? And what funding sources should we consider to fund future operations and capital requirements?

[00:46:46] Great. Thank you. I saw Supervisor Palachuk's hand go. So she gets to go first, and then Supervisor Jimenez and Supervisor Lusk. Go ahead. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I get to spend a lot of time with Zach talking about capital bike share. It's one of my passions, so I appreciate it.

[00:47:02] I realized I was in D.C. when it just started and got to use it there, though now e-bikes, I think, have absolutely changed the game for a lot of us, especially here where we have longer distances. So I have a couple of questions and then a couple of thoughts on the feedback you are requesting.

[00:47:19] And this might be for later, but, you know, I think it's important to understand, and I think you shared it, the average trip length that riders are using to get around. because I think that makes a big difference in understanding where we put them. What are our rates for the capital bike share or cabbie for all?

[00:47:38] I don't know if you have that or if you can get back to us with that. Yeah, I'm going to start with average trip length. So the average trip length for electric bikes is approximately 2.2 miles. For classic bikes, it's a little more difficult to calculate that because they don't have GPS, and so we can kind of guess based on time, but there's not really an accurate way to define that.

[00:48:00] Okay. No, that makes sense. I think it's about my average trip length as well. And I appreciate, I think some of the older bikes, I've had a lot of broken ones. And so I think it's important to make sure that the equipment continues to be updated and that we shift to electric as much as possible. My other thing, as you're talking about specific factors, I don't know if this is what you mean. I know we had a conversation around what is the policy, right? What is our plan for rolling out because I know every time I'm looking at a land use application and I'm like let's get some bike share but let's understand right where it makes sense how we expand the

[00:48:36] network knowing that 2.2 miles is the average for the e-bikes I think that's important and for me it would be let's try to make sure we can continue to invest in that and to look at partnerships either through because it's not a very very high cost right so getting the stations in, moving them. I know we've done a few of those. It's not easy, but it does give that flexibility to be able to respond to ridership, to trends, and to the data. So that's the other thing I love about the e-bikes is they do give you all of that data. And I think you can see it in Dunloring.

[00:49:11] I assume people use it like I do to kind of last mile, last two miles, and get to their final destination when they're using transit. And then finally, I would just say, yeah, I mean, it is pretty low. So as we talk about different funding opportunities, you know, I think if you look at us compared to some of the other, to Arlington and D.C., we're not quite at the place where we need to be. So I think every single time we can add more stations, it just will make it more of a convenience, right, rather than a nice-to-have inconvenience for our riders, especially those

[00:49:46] who don't have or are trying to reduce the time they spend in a car. And so finally with that, as you look at where to put them. I guess I'm just curious, because we have for the e-bikes more data as to where they are parked, which often is not in a dock, are you able to look at where bikes are starting and ending to understand where riders are looking for more access to those e-bikes?

[00:50:16] We have the data. Not a huge portion of our trips end outside of a dock. I think it's like 5% or 10%. So if you want to leave your bike outside of the dock, If you're not aware, it's a \$2 charge if you're a member, a \$3 charge if you're not a member. And so it allows you to leave the bike outside of a station and whatnot.

[00:50:35] So it's a good way to kind of expand the network without having, you know, an actual station there and whatnot. But I can get back to you. Okay, yeah, because I think whether it's looking not just at Metro but at bus stops and at places where I've seen, especially along big quarters like 29, a lot of bikes being left.

[00:50:52] And I know that there are some large apartment buildings. probably means we should try to be, you know, strategic around that rather than, hey, where do we want to, where does it sound nice, right? But let's try to be strategic around where we think we can do that. So very exciting. I think this is really a low-cost barrier, and as we build more protected lanes as well.

[00:51:13] In my 20s, I would have gone on some of these routes that I will not go on today and will not allow my daughter to go on. And so I think the more we can tie together safe routes, lanes, protected lanes especially, and capital bike share based on the data is what I think we should really focus on.

[00:51:31] But thank you for your work. Thank you, Laura, for coming in and leading this. Very excited. And hope we continue to expand in the five to ten years to come. Thank you. Thank you. Supervisor Lusk? Okay. Sorry. Supervisor Jimenez, then-supervisor Lusk.

[00:51:47] My bad. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for the presentation. We're excited at Mason district where you've got 14 bike shares coming in 2026. So it's we're really looking forward to that one question on the Annandale Sites they seem to be not they seem to be more isolated than other sites When it comes to where they're at Historically, how did those kind of isolated sites do and is there any plans on kind of?

[00:52:15] Trying to bring them closer to the rest of the network so that you know, there's more usage of those Mike shares. Thank you for the question The at the moment there aren't any plans to kind of fill the gaps between those stations and that kind of the rest of the network when we were doing our public Public input one of the the feedback I got was why aren't you putting them in Annandale and Dale's this very important dense very diverse neighborhood of course and You know and they the grant is for you know equity For underserved area, excuse me. And so we changed the

[00:52:53] The feedback changed my assumption of what where where where would work? And so we're that's why we're that's why it's in the the expansion plan now And yeah, the initially having looked at the isolation was a little bit concerning But we're gonna see if it works and I think it will things a lot of density there We've got some other other projects planned there as well and We'll see how how it performs and I will say one one location that was also a little bit more isolated was was around Supervisor lost district around the Franconia Springfield Metro I was actually pleasantly surprised about how much ridership I saw yeah compared to what I

[00:53:29] Compared my expectations. So yeah, I guess we'll we'll wait for the numbers to come out So we're looking forward to obviously having those 14 new sites in Mason. So thank you. Thank you supervisor lost Yes, first a comment and I'll say I'm really Delighted to see the effort around the bus rapid transit project I know that's in the future, but making sure that we have ways to help people access that Improvement because we're making a pretty significant investment there also thinking about the safety concern so I know Just from a pedestrian standpoint how difficult it is

[00:54:08] along Richmond highway and then also thinking about those who might be Traveling to get to the transit station so making sure that we are building in those safety elements so that those bicyclists don't encounter significant issues and then one of the questions that I've heard about the abandoned bikes and kind of Understanding what's the process in terms of and procedure when someone doesn't dock in the docking station the bike is left somewhere else what's the procedure to get that back to the

[00:54:46] the docking station in the timeline for that yes so we have a red bikes that if that are always supposed to be at a station and so if they're ever not inside a station night we our contract will go out collect them we get feedback from various locations of hey there's a red bike here it's not super common out here and then in terms of electric bikes when someone leaves them outside a station It's usually there for a week or two depending on how quickly our contractor can go out and get and retrieve it Sometimes

residents will end up going in and grabbing it and riding it away So that's that's the ideal solution, but if not though they'll go out and retrieve it

[00:55:24] What not and we do have a new operating contract that we're going to be getting negotiating and trying to fine-tune a more Manageable mechanism that is something I'd like to like to consider and just thinking about the maintenance of the bicycles What's kind of the process for that in terms of ensuring the bikes are in good working condition?

[00:55:47] Yep. So our operating contractor, Lyft, has a warehouse in D.C., and I think there's also one in Maryland where they take the bikes back. If there's issues with them, they'll fix them. They'll inspect them from time to time as well. They also have staff that actually rove around on bikes with pumps, and they can do small maintenance at our stations as well and whatnot.

[00:56:11] And then, of course, if you're riding the bike and you notice there's an issue with it, you can either, when you dock it or when you end your trip on an electric bike outside a station, you can report issues, and that's one of the key ways that we hear from folks. So the stations themselves have a little wrench button. You press that, and they'll know to come out and check, and it will prevent people from using that bike until they've done that.

[00:56:32] Thank you. Supervisor Sizemore Heiser. Just really quickly, I really appreciate the presentation, And I'm just wondering if you've thought about bike share near NOVA, the campus, in terms of the equity factor, getting some of the students connected to either major bus lines or to the metro.

[00:56:50] But I don't think – I know GMU has bike share, but I don't think NOVA does. So I just wanted to bring that to your attention. Thank you. Yes. You're talking about the NOVA, Annandale campus. Annandale campus, yeah. I have both GMU and NOVA in my district. So it seems to be the higher ed district.

[00:57:06] Yeah. Smart district. I think they're all smart districts, but, you know, but I do think, you know, especially potentially the demographics of the students who go to Mason, you know, they may have some lower income. They probably are more likely to be residents of our county, and helping them connect to major bus lines to go to work or to metro may be helpful, so I just wanted to bring that to your attention.

[00:57:29] Okay. Yeah, thank you. We did not consider Nova Campus Annandale because there wasn't a lot of, like, housing nearby, but, you know, as time goes by, We can certainly consider that. And then I'll just note that the reason George Mason has stations is because they actually pay, they sponsor them.

[00:57:45] Absolutely. And so they, yeah, so that's why they have them on their campus. That makes sense. Thank you. Thank you. Supervisor Stork. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I'm sorry if I didn't hear some of this.

[00:58:01] You have a soft voice. You talk quickly. And so anyways, my question is maybe the broader question. We had a conversation many, many years ago about whether or not Capital Bike Share was maybe the approach to go.

[00:58:18] And I know transportation was deeply committed to that. Tom Shodney, that was his thing. But I've always been more cautious about that because it is a fixed-place model versus one that you can kind of drop the bike and get picked up.

[00:58:37] And we all know that some of that doesn't work very well because we see the bikes scattered and the scooters scattered, et cetera. So I understand kind of both sides of that argument. But around the country, have we looked at how this model in particular has rolled out? I assume that others are ahead of maybe where we are, D.C. in particular.

[00:58:56] So is there any kind of utilization experiences that we've seen elsewhere with particular models and beyond capital bike shares? Or is there – I mean, that's the broader question. And then ultimately, the issue for me is utilization, and that utilization then ties ultimately to the cost of the Fairbox recovery percentages and so forth.

[00:59:25] Yes, so other parts of the U.S., like City Bike in New York, for example. And if you could slow down just a little bit for me and talk a little bit more directly into the mic, that would be very, very helpful to me. Thank you. Yeah, thank you for bringing that to my attention.

[00:59:43] So other bike share models in other cities will rely on, for example, exclusively private funding. So, for example, New York City's Citibike is a sponsor of Citibank that helps defray that cost. But a lot of that cost is borne by the riders.

[01:00:00] And so it's one of the most expensive, although most popular systems in the U.S. to ride. And so that's one model. We've always, in our region, though, we have always been a publicly owned and mostly publicly funded model. and whatnot. And so we are always looking for ways to offset the cost. So for example, getting a sponsor like Citibank to sponsor our system and help us reduce the cost is something we have a contract in the field or a contractor in the field going and having those conversations,

[01:00:36] but it's a long process to get a sponsor on board. So I heard New York City, any sense of the Fairbox Recovery portion of that, and then are there any others that we've looked at, you've looked at around the country, and anything else that we could use to maybe either improve our model or to maybe do some kind of a hybrid that wouldn't be so dependent upon a specific location being set up? And obviously, the capital costs of that are much higher than something that's more flexible and, if you will, more entrepreneurial.

[01:01:12] Yeah, I mean, when we first started the system and we only had red bikes that could go to stations, and that was the only place you could go, we do have this. The electric bikes now allow you to leave a bike outside a station and have that same kind of hybrid model that a lot of places have had.

[01:01:29] I think Paris has that model too, although it's not similar to us. It's not extremely well utilized. And then one of the newer classic bikes actually is going to offer that option as well. So classic bikes wouldn't have to be tied to a station. So that kind of adjusts the model a little bit compared to what we have now.

[01:01:47] Having a station-based model, you can have more of a hybrid model of folks being able to leave them in more places with more flexibility. Do we have any worker studies, anything that you all have used to do to come up with what we do? And if so, you could take it offline, but I would appreciate having a chance to look at that.

[01:02:06] And you all know Jim Klein and his deep advocacy on bicycling and pedestrians. If you saw anything along those lines, it would be helpful for me to understand, if you will, my ongoing support for this. Thank you.

[01:02:25] Supervisor Alcourt. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Jimmy. So I want to try to answer the first question, the specific factors. And building on a question or comment made by Supervisor Paulczyk as well, you know, a few years ago, we were talking about alternatives to level of service.

[01:02:46] We were talking about the additional measures of effectiveness that would capture multimodal, would be able to measure things like this. Can we use that? Where is that? So that's being used for our analyses.

[01:03:03] the question then becomes so a lot of the analysis is around bike safety comfort and that sort of thing that can give us an understanding of maybe some of the facilities where we should be expanding sidewalks or trails or bike lanes in some way shape or form you might be able to cross-reference it a little bit with capital bike share i'm not sure if it'll be a real good one-to-one but it might give you a little bit of data to help you out yeah i'd encourage that because i know i know The idea was and particularly as we have land-use applications that are coming through the process and you know

[01:03:41] I think that could be a source of expansion Particularly when it scores. Well, frankly as one of those a moe's so okay. Thank you Thank you Mr. Chairman. Yes. Yeah, thank you. I just want to thank you for the presentation and the work that you've done I do, on the equity piece, I appreciate that we're looking at that now.

[01:04:09] I'm just wondering when that started, because obviously when you look at where these was rolled out, you know, where these originally were rolled out, that was not, it's clear that that was not a factor, and it is now. So moving forward, you know, I'm grateful that that's a criteria. I don't know how long we've been applying that.

[01:04:26] And related to that, you know, in some of those equity areas, we do have some pretty significant good redevelopment happening, and it might be useful, and I know this was mentioned earlier, to be working with the district supervisor in those areas in concert with your DPZ folks to look at those new developments coming in that can dedicate the space for this, because that, you know, a lot of times is a hurdle in accomplishing this.

[01:04:53] And so I would just say on that equity piece to be really focused on that. And then, you know, the new e-bikes, I think, are going to be a difference maker in access and who can use these. I'll never forget, and I thought Supervisor Alcorn was going to share this.

[01:05:10] I'll never forget, I think it was the first Tour to Hunter Mill when Supervisor Alcorn attempted to ride the Tour to Hunter Mill with the heaviest capital bike share bike known to mankind. And he accomplished it at the end, a much stronger person at the end of that.

[01:05:30] But it's clear these bikes are intended for certain things and not ideal for other things. But I do think the e-bike piece of this opens this up to people for longer trips, better data, but also that's a part of the equity piece, too.

[01:05:46] Because right now you have a mode of transportation before the e-bike introduction. You have a mode of transportation where a subset of the population is just not able to use it, period. And, you know, I think this is equity both in location and in access to equipment that can be used by more and more people regardless of their ability.

[01:06:07] And so I would just, you know, look at those things and really focus on those equity pieces moving forward because I think they're going to be important. Thank you. Just as a closing comment, in trying to answer the two questions as directly as possible, One thing I think about, and admittedly, the other day, Vice Chair Smith and I rode down to Richmond together, and I picked her up at her house in the Sully District, my second

[01:06:40] favorite district, and she lives in a suburban neighborhood that, you know, looks like your classic, very, very classic suburban neighborhood. They're cul-de-sacs, they're houses, it's highly residential.

[01:06:58] Obviously, this program started in cities, and the question is, what can we do to make this program, or how would we right-size it that it might ultimately be used by some suburban neighborhoods like Kathy's?

[01:07:14] I also think about that in the context of looking forward, thinking about HOAs, thinking about specific apartment buildings, thinking about areas. If we're talking to either a specific apartment building or an HOA that's saying, hey, we'd really love to get access to the metro, but it's really difficult, we all get in our cars, what if we had a capital bike share at the end of our neighborhood that we could then get to the metro on?

[01:07:41] As for the second question, are there sources of funding or partnerships we should consider? All I can say is that when you think of the word capital bike share and then you think of city bike in New York, we would only have to add one word for a certain partnership. Yes, the pun was intended.

[01:08:00] With that, if there are no more questions, we don't have anything else on the agenda, And nobody, I hope, is bringing up new business. So with that, we are finally going to end one of my Transportation Committee meetings early.

[01:08:17] Thank you. The meeting is adjourned.



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