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Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, Transportation and Land Use Committee, Wednesday, April 17, 2024

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- Agenda (Granicus): https://loudoun.granicus.com/AgendaViewer.php?view_id=73&clip_id=7654

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[00:09:27] meeting. This room has a hearing loop. If you need hearing assistance, switch your hearing aids to the telecall mode. If you need a headset, we have those available as well. Please see the clerk to request one. I'll start off with my piece of TLUC, worthless information, as I always do.

[00:09:46] George Washington lost his first bid for public office. Well before he agreed to serve the United States of America as its first president, Washington ran for a seat in the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1755 and lost pretty badly. He tried again two years later, this time edging out the competition after resorting to the tried and true political method of buying drinks for his supporters. Washington wound up spending seven years in the Virginia House as a representative of Frederick County and another decade representing Fairfax County before he abandoned the post in June of 1775 to lead the Continental Army. Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:10:22] I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:10:38] Thank you all very much. Let's have our first information item, if we could, local fixed route transit system, metro lift program, and peer jurisdiction fair comparison. Well, good evening, Chair Turner and members of the committee.

[00:10:57] Thank you for allowing us to come in tonight and provide these briefings. We do apologize. There's a lot of information here and a lot of really in-depth information to absorb. But the primary purpose of this is to ensure that all the board members through both the committees, both finance and T-LUC, have an opportunity to dig into this information in advance of the Transit Summit, which is on May 29th.

[00:11:21] So if you will indulge us, we'd like to kind of just dive right in, run through it. And then really our goal is to solicit your feedback and your thoughts to help us continue to form the Transit Summit items as we can present them to you on that date.

[00:11:36] That sounds great. All right. So I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Scott Gross, our Transit Operations Manager or Administrator. And I probably need to do something here. Thank you, Jacqueline. All right. Here we go. Good afternoon.

[00:11:56] And thank you for having us. And so we're going to start out with the local fixed route services. The guidelines that we put out there were to provide multimodal convenient transit options for the residents, essentially connect as many communities as possible, reduce the number of SOVs on the road, single occupancy vehicles, and obviously reduce greenhouse gases as well.

[00:12:18] Next slide, thank you. That's right. Next slide. So the question that we have now that we've got 19 new routes up and running is what is the long-term focus of the transit system coverage or ridership and that's going to be one of the key questions at the transit summit so we wanted to go over some background and some performance metrics and measures to set the stage for that next stage or next slide please so on the on the local fixed route side we have 29 routes in total we have 10 that have been operating for over 20

[00:12:57] years. We consider those our legacy routes. Those, you know, essentially serve our lowest of the income communities in the county, basically running through parts of Leesburg, Sterling, Sugarland, Ashburn, Countryside, and Potomac Falls a little bit. And then we have 19 new Silver Line routes that are really were designed to connect as much of the rest of Loudoun we could get to to the Silver Line stations and they also connect to the legacy routes to give those connections those routes connections to the Silver Line stations

[00:13:37] as well next slide please so of the of the ten legacy routes the importance of this slide is to actually discuss the data collected from onboard surveys that we did in October of 2022 the majority of the riders that chose to respond to to these onboard surveys essentially have stated they make less than \$50,000 a year with about 25%

[00:14:07] of those folks making less than \$26,500 a year. Next slide, please. So anytime that we open up and start new routes, the guidance that the board has provided on paratransit service is to provide complimentary paratransit service, which is what the FTA minimum standard is. And that standard is to provide it within three quarters of a mile around the fixed routes that exist today so when

[00:14:41] we switched thank you the new this is essentially our new paratransit footprint it expanded to the majority of the eastern part of the county and it goes as far south as south riding in stone ridge essentially the routes are also mandated by fta that if you have routes that surround a particular area but don't cover that area you're required to serve it with paratransit service in the middle essentially a bubble next slide please so when we designed these routes the uh the the plan was to

[00:15:18] optimize frequencies to keep them no longer than 30 to 45 minutes we wanted to serve as many high density areas as possible employment centers affordable dwelling units shopping centers schools where we could. And then obviously, we were trying to optimize connection to the metro rail stations and the legacy routes as well. Next slide, please. Essentially, this slide right here, all the black lines in this slide are our existing routes. The green shaded areas, as you can see, are where the jobs are. And then the purple shaded areas are where the, I'm sorry,

[00:15:57] the green shaded areas are where the households are. And the blue is where the jobs are. And this is really just to kind of give you an idea of how well covered this particular area is with the routes that exist now now we're going to get into the performance metrics so these are for the legacy routes the 10 digit or I'm sorry the two digit routes that have been in existence for quite a while they range from eight and a half riders per revenue hour and this is by the way a metric that's a pretty standard metric used across transit agencies and they dip down to as

[00:16:32] low as 3.46. So these are for the existing, again, the routes that serve the lower income areas in the county. Next slide, please. This slide just simply puts in the numbers what the previous slide showed. The top left corner of this slide is really what's important from staff's perspective.

[00:16:54] Each route averages about 110 riders per day. Next slide, please. This is comparing annual ridership for all the legacy routes from 2019 through, as you can see in 2019.

[00:17:12] Go back to the previous slide real quick. Sure. Thank you. Okay. So this is, so essentially you've got 110 riders, almost 111 riders per day. And this is all the legacy routes?

[00:17:30] These are legacy routes, correct. And you're averaging, when you average all the legacy routes together, you're a little over six riders per revenue hour, which is the second block down. Chair Turner, just to kind of qualify, these are a number of the metrics that we use to evaluate the effectiveness of those routes.

[00:17:48] So you'll see a lot of things on the top right is the average of non-revenue miles run before run. These factors matter when we're looking at optimizing the routes. Are we spending too much time getting to a location versus transporting, in particular, transit-dependent communities?

[00:18:07] So these are just those kind of factors. They're not necessarily pertinent to what we're looking at today, but we wanted to show the metrics that we are using when we go through optimization processes. Next slide, please. Okay. Thank you.

[00:18:24] So this, oops, I'm sorry, previous slide. There we go. This slide has the annual ridership dating back to FY 2019 for the legacy routes. The importance here is to show how close 2023 is to pre-pandemic numbers.

[00:18:42] And as of just a side note that FY 2024 is projecting to reach 315,000 riders. So we will exceed pre-pandemic numbers on these routes in FY 24. Next slide.

[00:18:58] Thank you. Now we're going to hit into the performance metrics for the silver lines. These are all the routes. This is a little bit of a tougher slide to read up on the screen up there. But essentially, it shows the ridership is averaging four and a half riders per revenue hour for our best route.

[00:19:20] It's down to as low as 0.7 riders per revenue hour on our lowest performing route at this point. Now, it is important to note that when you start new routes, the guidance really is that the industry

standards are the best practices, so to speak, are it takes two full years for a route to start to mature and for ridership to build up to an area of where it can be.

[00:19:48] Next slide, please. So comparing this to the local fixed routes on the legacy side, you're averaging about a little under 20 riders per day on each of these routes, and you're averaging one and a half riders per revenue hour.

[00:20:07] That's a significant difference. Again, I'd like to point out that's the difference between routes that have been in existence for 20 years and brand new routes. Right there. There you go.

[00:20:28] So this just simply, this is just a line graph route that shows the legacy routes and the silver line routes. Silver line routes are the purple routes down below. It's over the last 12 months from February of 23 to February of 24. And it essentially shows, you know, a slight upward turn.

[00:20:46] So it's reflecting that there is increased ridership in both systems. It's a slow, gradual rise, obviously. Next slide, please. Now, for when we combine all the routes together, Silverline and local, so that we have an apples-to-apples of what we were doing in pre-pandemic numbers as far as anything other than commuter.

[00:21:12] You can see in 2019, we had a little over 747,000 rides, and then in 2023, we're going to hit about 348,000. As we discussed in the previous slides, the legacy local routes are already going to basically be above average.

[00:21:33] So it's the Silver Line routes that are taking a little bit of time to build up. Next slide, please. So this is the sum of total ridership. Really, this is a by month.

[00:21:48] This is an average by month. So at 13,7,000 riders per month in 2019, you're up to 12,4,000 riders per month in FY24. And, again, this is a metric that's really just designed to give you a good look at day-to-day and month-to-month ridership numbers because they do fluctuate every single month.

[00:22:14] Next slide, please. And before you leave this slide, the projections for 2024 paratransit ridership is looking at what right now, Scott? Projection is a little over 18,000. Right. So you see that 2023 was 15,000.

[00:22:31] current as uh as of current in 2024 uh we're at 12 but it is yeah yes ma'am yeah yeah so it is projecting to go to 18 so that would uh now a lot of that has to do with the expansion of our service area uh when we introduced the uh the silver line connectors uh we also greatly expanded the uh the paratransit but it the takeaway it is a pretty well utilized uh service yeah thanks for covering If I can just interrupt for a second, without objection, I'd like to go to a committee of the whole.

[00:23:03] Is there any objections? We're going to go to a committee of the whole, so if you have questions, just ask, okay? I hope you guys are okay with that format. Sure. Perfectly fine. Thank you. So in FY25, the average cost per route for the legacy routes is projected to be about \$366,000.

[00:23:24] The silver and line routes are a little higher at \$427,000, and the paratransit routes are right around \$234,000. Now, the Silver Line routes are higher simply because they're operating more hours than the regular legacy routes. The legacy routes generally operate from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day.

[00:23:44] We do have a couple that go to 10, but there's only two of them that do that. The total projected cost for \$25, as far as the revenue is concerned, is expected to be \$13.5 million in local tax funding needed.

[00:24:00] Grants and other revenues are covering about \$5.2 million of the budget. Next slide, please. That's additive, that number, correct? Yes, sir. It's additive. Yes. Yes.

[00:24:15] Thank you. So in the Finance Committee, they had asked us to look into the Metro Lyft program as part of a low-income fare reduction program that Metro offers. Essentially, this ties into their SNAP program, and it allows those SNAP riders to ride at a discounted rate on the Metro system as a whole.

[00:24:41] The question really to us was, can we make this work with Loudoun County? And the answer to that is, yes, we can. It takes about 90 days or so to get it programmed into the fare collection system, if that's what we do. And then it's a couple of days to get it uploaded onto all of the buses so that they would operate properly.

[00:24:57] And if I could just clarify this one as well. This question came up because we originally had presented to the Finance Committee the question about whether we should go fare-free or consider the concept of fare-free. And so they were exploring some other options that are out there and exist in lieu of going fare-free, which this is a viable option for those that may not have the incomes.

[00:25:22] and the SNAP program is a strong indicator of those that may have lower income and not necessarily – it's difficult to say that it's only a dollar to ride, but that is a dollar to one person two or three times a day, seven days a week, five days a week can be a significant impact.

[00:25:41] So these type of programs are very valuable where you have a fare-based system. Mr. Chairman, can I ask a question? Sure. So I love that we're looking at other ways to do it and other options, so I appreciate that. I have a couple of questions about this.

[00:25:57] And I think I asked this question at the finance meeting, but I don't remember the answer. How would one show that they're in the SNAP program? I had asked that question, but the other question is, would that apply to the entire family? So the 17-year-old whose mother and our father and our both have applied to in the part of the SNAP program, would that apply to them as well?

[00:26:19] And then the third question, between the Finance Committee meeting and this meeting, I had a meeting with some of our residents here who may or may not be in a documented status. And what I learned is, you know, that they are not eligible for every program.

[00:26:39] And sometimes even if they are eligible, they're very hesitant to do it because of obvious reasons. And so when we started looking at how to, you know, how to allocate ARPA funds, the housing funds that had nothing to do with a documented status and what other metrics can we look at besides the SNAP program, one of the ones we looked at or was looked at that really kind of worked was the free and reduced lunch program, which you'll often find the families on the free and reduced lunch program also in the SNAP program.

[00:27:14] So is there any other metrics we can use? Although I really, no kidding, appreciate the SNAP program being a metric. For people who may be much more hesitant about doing that, could the free and reduced lunch program be an option?

[00:27:30] And even for that option, back to the original question of, is it the entire family? There's a lot I know. I'm going to wade into this, and when the water gets deep, I'm going to have to turn it back over to Scott. So the WMATA Metro lift program is through the smart trip cards.

[00:27:52] So it's automatically programmed into the smart trip card. So that is actually a function performed by Metro. So that there may be other matrices that we can use for that, but we don't have a mechanism to get to it because it's through the Metro or WMATA's program. And the WMATA program is connected to SNAP already?

[00:28:11] Yes, ma'am. Oh, okay. So this is an existing program that, because we use the smart trip cards now on our systems, all of our systems. That makes sense, yeah. So that's the nexus there for that. We would have to, as a county, would have to create a separate system, and we don't know if that would necessarily mix with the model lift program.

[00:28:32] Yeah, I understand. Now, as to the family, I can't speak to that. I don't know if we have the strength to do that either. So the way the SmartTrip program works, the card is only used for a single ride. So the family is certainly eligible for it, I assume, if it's eligible for SNAP.

[00:28:51] Or a single rider at a time. Exactly. So if there's five family members, there would have to be five SmartTrip cards that they could tap on, but they could all be tied to that same program. To the same card? Yes, they could be to the same account.

[00:29:07] To the same account. So if five family members or four or three were moving around at the same time, as long as they're all tied to the same account, they could all have individual cards tied to the same account? So let us get you that information. Okay. We're not the purveyors of that program, so we will get that specific information back from UMADA because I don't think we've got the depth to really give you the answer that you need for sure on that.

[00:29:32] Okay. I appreciate it. Thank you. But if they're in the program, they ride for 50 cents a ride? It's 50%. 50 percent so we don't I don't believe we have the program implemented we do not have the program implemented here now this is what it wouldn't take us long it get that if the board chose to stay a fair based system this could be something that the board could look at to reduce that and reduce that price for those uh participants and are you going to offer an alternative to go to a non-fair based system so uh as part of the transit summit we've agreed to bring that element back for discussion for the board because we've you know we've looked at it there are a number of is that

[00:30:08] in this presentation too uh we talk about the fair boxes on the next one yes there are a number of of um municipalities that have gone fair free and there are some pros and cons to it um and so we brought that um as a option for consideration when the board had requested a school age free fair construct and we worked with the schools and that was not a viable option so we wanted to bring back something for the board to consider in that arena um and it to the to the

[00:30:44] finance committee's point it needed more thought and it needed to be looked at um in the context of the entire operation and that's where they thought the summit was the appropriate location to look at that so uh you'll see that again on may 29th we interrupted you and your flow so continue i interrupt him all the time so he's used to it um here we go yeah here we go so the next question that came from chair or i'm sorry from supervisor brissman um at the finance committee was really she asked

[00:31:18] us to look at the fare free comparators all right other folks that had gone fare free what their what their fares were prior to going fare free so this slide really just kind of shows you where each of those jurisdictions were prior to them moving to a fair-free environment.

[00:31:36] And on this, again, just to add a little more background, the consultant that performed this work for us estimated that we could see as much as 20% to 22% increase in ridership going to fair-free, which is a pretty big number. And so the question that the finance committee had was, Where were our comparators at prior to doing that?

[00:32:06] So if they were at \$6 and went to zero, well, obviously that would increase ridership. But to our surprise, they were pretty darn close to where we are now. We're at \$1 per trip. Kansas City and Missoula, \$1, \$1.50. Olympia was \$1.25. Corvallis, Oregon was at \$75.

[00:32:23] And they all saw increases in ridership. And they had different reasons for doing it. Part of the reasons we had brought this to the board is not only to increase ridership and address the concern about students being able to ride free, but it also had a minor economic benefit as it relates to fare boxes.

[00:32:48] So we have to replace all our fare boxes. Now, there's MBTA 30 fund. Did I say that right? Yes. 30% revenue. 30% local funds, yes. So with that, a conversation is what really is the impact to the county if we don't have to put all those new fare boxes on it, right?

[00:33:13] So I'm going to turn it back over to the professional and get back into the shallow zone and let Scott finish this one up. So this slide speaks to exactly what Ernie was just talking, except this shows if we had to replace all of the fare boxes on all of the buses currently.

[00:33:30] So there would be 103 units that would be purchased. The NVTa, 30% funding cost to the county would be \$775,000, a little over \$775,000 with a trip grant from the state of Virginia, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation covering the other 80%.

[00:33:51] Next slide. So this slide shows if a fare-free decision was made and we move forward, we would only purchase fare boxes for the commuter fleet, which knocks the number of purchases bought for as far as the electronic fare boxes is down to 34.

[00:34:12] However, we would have to, on the local fixed route side, we have about 14 buses. Actually, we have exactly 14 buses that do not have automated passenger counters on them. If we were to leave the Fairbox Arena, we would have to get automated passenger counters put on them.

[00:34:28] That would be our only way to count our riders every single day. So that comes at a cost. Now, the TRIP, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation, has approved us to use this funding for that. So we would not lose anything as far as the TRIP grant is concerned.

[00:34:46] And as you can see in the slide, that would reduce the cost to the county from the \$700,000, a little over \$780,000, down to \$387,000. And that's the difference between those two programs.

[00:35:01] And it is important to note that the 20% there, and we did say TRIP funding match, which is the local match, that is the NVTa, 30%. So it's not coming out of local tax funding directly, but it is funding that we can use for other purposes that would not be allocated to that.

[00:35:21] So it's not a huge cost savings. And if we went to a fare-free construct, we'll see that the fare-free cost is about, we lose in revenue a little over \$380,000 or \$355,000 in revenue.

[00:35:40] Can you say that part again? So the current projections for 2025 were if we were to go fare-free in 2025, which we are not because the budget includes those revenues, that was \$356,000 in fair revenue loss if we went fare-free.

[00:36:03] Okay. So if we stopped charging on the local routes and the connector routes, we would lose \$356,000 in revenue, and that would have to be absorbed by LTF. But we would save \$380 and change in Fairbox. First year. So it's not a 1.1-year break even?

[00:36:22] Yes, sir. How much of a plus, then? It's a one-year, one-time savings, and then you'll be back to the loss. But these are the things that have to be in the fullness of disclosure. In each of those comparator cities across the country, I think you mentioned this, show a ridership increase.

[00:36:43] Yes. significant ridership increase significant a measurable demonstrable ridership increase when fares went to zero they they they all uh exhibited an increase in ridership it varied and uh the estimate from our consultant based on our um our system was 20 to 22 percent uh that's significant what they projected to be an increase and we would propose going fare free on the legacy lines and the legacy connector silver lines right so yes sir it was only it was everything but commuter everybody everything but commuter right and that was the that was the original proposal

[00:37:20] okay continue scott so the next one is the really big sorry and i'm sorry thank you and what is the cost for the commuter for a commuter ride you know so that's our next presentation that we get to present to you but to answer your question currently it is ten dollars per ride i won't I won't hold you in suspense per trip.

[00:37:43] Madam Weister. Chair Turner. So I have a question about paratransit. Can we go to that map that you had? Get a little closer to Michael. Oh, sorry. Go to the map, if you don't mind.

[00:37:59] Absolutely. Thank you. As soon as I get there, I promise I'll keep. Map on page nine? Yes. Okay. Yes. Page seven. Page seven? Depends on if you're looking at the presentation. Yeah, page seven, yeah. So it looks like it doesn't go much past Route 15, as far as west of Route 15.

[00:38:21] You mentioned that there was an expansion. I assume working with WMATA, right, we have an expansion of paratransit. Is it going to expand at all into Western Loudoun? Because I just see a little bit of blue going to Hamilton. So the...

[00:38:36] Want me to rumble with it? Yeah. So we do this, they like to test my knowledge. So when we expanded our coverage with the Silver Line connectors, that necessitated an expansion of our paratransit.

[00:38:52] There is no planned expansion further in the paratransit or the local route service, the future plan. But when we made that shift to then implement those Metro or Silver Line connecting routes, that necessitated that expansion.

[00:39:14] So you're seeing a much larger area now, but there is no plan to expand it further. Didn't we have it in Western Loudoun at some point? We do not provide that service. There are other providers. Virginia Regional Transit currently provides a route between Leesburg and Percival Route 40.

[00:39:34] They do provide paratransit around three-quarters of a mile around that service specific for ADA purposes. They also offer six on-demand vehicles out in the western, the unserved areas that we're not serving.

[00:39:51] However, those are on-demand. They're not specific for paratransit riders. Paratransit riders can ride them, but they're not specific for paratransit riders, so anybody can ride the on-demand buses. The bus that's dedicated to the route itself, the Route 40, is dedicated to paratransit.

[00:40:09] And that goes from Leesburg to Percival? Correct. How available are those on-demand routes? Are they 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday? Are they available on the weekends? I would have to go back in and get their exact hours, but I believe, yes, that they're operating 7 to 7 on Monday through Friday, and they are not available on the weekends.

[00:40:31] Okay, but we're doing a study, right, about potentially connecting some to the wineries and breweries on the weekends. So we have not commissioned a study for that. That is one of the questions that was asked of us. if we could do that, but that has not been commissioned.

[00:40:47] The only study that we have commissioned at the moment is the northern, western, and southern connectivity, bringing people in from those areas into Loudoun County. And that study should be, I don't know, what's the estimated delivery time on that one, December?

[00:41:05] I think sometime then, yes. So I have a question then about the Silver Line routes. It looks like you have 19 of them. And you mentioned that the ridership is low, but we need two full years for the route to mature.

[00:41:22] So how are we going to be measuring whether they're a success or not? Because I see that they're all in Ashburn Farm, Ashburn Village, Brambleton, Broadland, Sterling Park, Potomac Falls, Stone Ridge, and South Riding. I would say that that is exactly the conversation we're going to have at the Transit Summit to discuss that exact point.

[00:41:48] If I could add a bit more to that as well, at the Transit Summit, we're going to be bringing to the board a route optimization study that we have recently completed, and it does show some modifications of those routes. The industry standard is try not to tinker too much with a route until it's stable.

[00:42:09] which is that two-year window but there are a lot of other factors that come into play with those particular routes those are not transit dependent areas that it it it goes through so you have a very low ridership we believe that we have low ridership there because they are vehicle dependent and they're not necessarily using the the the Metro for their for their purposes now that could be modified and you may be able to to align some of those routes to areas that are more transit

[00:42:44] dependent and would use um the the metro um more readily if if we had more um i'm just the rapid transit stuff i'm trying to the the more um direct routes going in instead of going through all these different uh communities yeah it's a deeper conversation which is why it has to happen at the transit summit because it also speaks to all the affordable dwelling units that are being built and being able to serve those and cover those areas as well that's why it's it's a much deeper conversation and it could take a little bit of time to get through which is why we're just kind

[00:43:23] of prepping it for the transit summit thank you so i look forward to talking about that at the transit summit okay got it okay continue so the last stop you 15 more times before you finish up That was actually the end of the presentation.

[00:43:44] For the local fixed route. And if there are any other questions that we have about that. Well, you know, I don't know if I have a question as a statement. When we get to the Transit Summit, I think what we're going to have to consider, and I don't know if there's any actual numbers around this, because as you said, after the first year, those numbers change and it just becomes a loss.

[00:44:09] So I was thinking about this this weekend because, you know, I have no life or something. So I think about this stuff over the weekend. So the question is, is kind of, you know, if you have a car, you have to pay for your car. You have to pay for gas and the car and the upkeep and the get around.

[00:44:26] And you don't get to get around for free, right? It costs. So on the one hand, wouldn't it be realistic to say to people, whomever they might be, the youth transit, it's 50% of whatever right that would be and you have to pay something.

[00:44:43] That's on the one hand. On the other hand, if you're trying to create a society where you want people who otherwise could not get around to work so that they can benefit the economy and their jobs, they can give back, they can take care of their own selves, their children, their families, then you want them to be able to get around and losing, what, \$356,000 a year, somewhere in that range, to the county.

[00:45:13] It's not, it is so much more worth it to the county fiscally, not just is it a good humanitarian thing to do, fiscally to allow people to get to where they have to go and to get to work and things like that. So that's kind of like going to be the question we get.

[00:45:30] I mean, there's not a right answer. It's kind of a philosophical question, what we think is right. I don't know if there's anywhere where there is any numbers or stats around, you know, where they have gone for free, what it did to the local economy.

[00:45:46] Did it change it at all? Did it boost it? Did it not? Not just to the whatever the county may have lost, the county government may have lost on the bottom line. But did the local economy suffer or not suffer because people were able to go to work on a system that did not charge them?

[00:46:06] So at the risk of not assuming that was rhetorical? Kind of wasn't. Yeah, go on. So the consultant that did the work for us illuminated some of the benefits that were associated with going fare free.

[00:46:22] They did not provide the details of how much the benefits may have been accrued to environmental issues. um to uh the economy at large they just mentioned that they were uh there were benefits there they moved that to an increase in ridership equation so that was really the the um if you have increased ridership you gain benefits in these other areas and that's how they made that alignment i don't we could certainly look to see if there is more data out there that provides specificity in those but that is the information you know like i would first of all even that is really helpful because

[00:46:58] Because there are other benefits to allowing people to get to work without having costs be an impediment environment being one, traffic on the road, well, maybe not because we may have cars anyway, being one, if it is any benefit to the local economy.

[00:47:16] I wouldn't want you to spend a lot of time looking for those numbers because I know that that's a labor-intensive thing. But if you think that those numbers are readily available, I wouldn't mind seeing those. I'll just ask Buddy Reiser. He's got all the information. Okay, ask everybody, he knows all. Thank you. I'll make the last question, and then I think I'm going to bring us out of committee the whole.

[00:47:36] I think this is tending to drag on. The good question is a nice conversation, but it is tending to drag it out, I think, beyond what you all intended. And I would like to get out of here fairly early tonight. On a scale of one to five, five being fantastic ridership, one being a disastrous failure and we need to shut

down the system, and three being adequate ridership that we're comfortable with, how would you rate, first, the pure legacy routes, and second, the legacy connector routes?

[00:48:12] I want to hold you to the discussion. I'm trying to answer this. If I look at it purely from Loudoun County and where we are and the number of vehicles that are in and what's being used, it's really good.

[00:48:32] If you try to compare it directly to a downtown metro where you have so many parking restrictions and everything like that. That changes how much ridership is. So I think on ours, to have an average ridership of over six riders an hour is fantastic.

[00:48:53] So you'd give it a four? I would give it a four. A four. It can always do better. How about the legacy connector routes? That was the legacy connector routes. Question for the silver line? It doesn't connect to the silver line.

[00:49:09] and then there's the legacy routes that now connect to the silver line. So the first one is, do we still have pure legacy routes, or do they all now connect to the silver line? We have the original routes we talked about are the pure legacy routes. And you'd rate those a four?

[00:49:25] Those are the ones I rate a four, yes. What about the ones that now connect to the silver line? So what he's going to tell you is that it's too early to tell? Which I suspected he was going to say. Right. But I do think that there's opportunity there to explore optimization that make them more.

[00:49:41] Okay, and the reason I ask that question is clearly we've got a success with our legacy routes. I would characterize that as a success, Forza's success. The question I'm driving, the end question I'm driving to is, it's too soon to tell.

[00:49:57] I see nothing in this presentation or in the report anywhere about actively marketing potentially free rides to the silver line. Now, I got a son who just moved into my district, who lives on Liverpool, who's having to commute down to Old Ebbets Grill, where he works every day.

[00:50:15] And today was a two-hour commute one way. So I've said, you've got to get on Metro. But it never even occurred to me, I'm embarrassed to say, as a Loudoun County supervisor, you could actually get on a bus to get to the Metro and not have to pay anything if we go down to zero fare.

[00:50:31] So is there any effort or thought to an active marketing process, maybe even to the point of things that might sound silly, like changing the color of the buses, and if it's this color, it's a free bus that's riding around in Loudoun County all day long and then telling people, if you see that bus, it's a free bus.

[00:50:49] You can get on and get off any time you want to. Is there any thought to actively marketing what's going to try and drive up ridership? So we certainly would never market a free fare unless the board had to prove that. So, no, we have not considered that. If the board made a decision to move to a free fare, that would be an aggressive marketing campaign.

[00:51:08] We have actually started a marketing campaign now for our existing routes. And it's, again, too early to tell what kind of fruit that's going to bear. But we believe, based on known data, that marketing drastically improves that. Yeah, I mean, if we go to free fare, I would think that's a significant marketing bonanza in front of us that we want to use it.

[00:51:28] Yes, sir. Yeah. Okay, thank you all. Any other questions? Thank you. We are now out of the committee hall, so we're going to go back to three-minute rounds, and we'll do as many as we want, and

you can present the next information item if you would. Thank you. Now we move to the larger bus bait, which is actually a smaller discussion.

[00:51:57] So much like the local fixed route, we are looking very closely at the commuter bus service as it exists today and what changes may need to be made, if any. And so, again, we're presenting this to you as a committee, just like we did with finance, in preparation for the Transit Summit.

[00:52:17] So, Scott. Next slide, please. So the commuter routes, there's currently 17 routes in total. There's 8 a.m. routes, 9 p.m. routes. Now, having said that, there are 23 trips in the morning and 27 trips in the evening, 23 trips that go into D.C., go into Roslyn, go into the Pentagon.

[00:52:42] I'm sorry, yeah, 23, and then 27 that come out in the afternoon. Next slide, please. Again, the income level by transit mode slide, the difference and the reason that we show this one is the majority of the riders that would answer this question that ride commuter bus are over 75,000 with a significant number of them over making more than 150,000 a year, which is why this slide is up here.

[00:53:09] Next slide, please. Okay. This slide is a little more difficult to read. This is your average number of passengers per trip. Commuter bus is a little different.

[00:53:24] You don't typically measure that rider by revenue hour because most of the buses only make one trip in. And on this particular one, we're averaging our highest bus is averaging 48, a little over 48 passengers per bus. Our lowest is a little under 5, about 4.5.

[00:53:46] Now, there are about 11 routes of these that we would consider low-performing. And those are the routes that we'll discuss at the transit summit, but we're recommending that we eliminate those routes. So let me clarify.

[00:54:03] There are about 11 routes that we consider low-performing. And one of the questions that we'll be bringing to the board during the transit summit is a discussion about what to do with those, whether it's elimination, consolidation, keep them the same.

[00:54:20] That discussion is an important discussion to be held. Thank you. Okay, so here's the daily average riders per month.

[00:54:35] So this is looking at on the commuter bus. This goes back to March of 2023. The reason that this is important is every single month, the number of days that are operated in that month change. There's only a certain number of Monday through Fridays in every single month.

[00:54:54] So if you actually looked at a month to month, you're not getting a good read. So we look at the average number of riders per day as a calculus to decide how well the system is doing. So in March of 2023, the buses were averaging 12.4 riders on the system as a whole.

[00:55:12] In March of 2024, we're up to almost 23 riders per trip per day on average. Next slide, please. Essentially, this shows on your average ridership over the course of the year, the period of time, you're at about, you're averaging 19.

[00:55:32] 48 riders, and the 1.51 per revenue hour, again, is not really relevant here because it's a single trip in on every single one of them. Next slide, please.

[00:55:49] Again, a little challenging to read this slide, but essentially we're showing what the ridership was pre-pandemic and where it sits now. Pre-pandemic, we were running over 110 routes a day. We were

at 947,000 riders per year annually, obviously per year.

[00:56:08] We are now down to 164,000 in 2023, and we're going to be a little higher than that in 2024. probably somewhere around 175,000 or so on projected. Next slide, please. Again, this is just a line graph kind of showing where we're headed and where the ridership is going from March of 2023 through February, the end of February of 2024. Next slide, please. So the

[00:56:45] guidelines that were provided and we've been operating by not for the last several years because of COVID, but still the policy exists. It says implement a fair structure that brings commuter bus service to a revenue-neutral state. That will be another discussion line at the Transit Summit.

[00:57:06] Next slide, please. So we're breaking down the average cost of the routes for the transit, for the commuter bus routes. They average \$115,000. The reason, obviously, that they're so much less is they're only operating for a couple hours a day versus 15 hours a day on the Silver Line routes.

[00:57:23] Total projected cost is \$2.8 million in local tax funding and \$2.5 million in other revenues, grants, fares, et cetera. So about \$5.3 in total. So the next two slides focus on the fare box conversation, which we literally just had, and it shares the same information with you.

[00:57:46] But I want to go back to this expense factor here. Pre-COVID, the commuter bus routes were in the tune of \$46,000 shy of being revenue neutral.

[00:58:02] Right. And pre-COVID, it was about \$43,000 in local tax funding was needed to fund all 110 routes. So, and this is, you know, if you look at this slide here, it's a market difference between pre-COVID and post-COVID.

[00:58:20] Now, you know, the teleworking environment shifted drastically, and this is heavily driven by policies, you know, the telework policies. A lot of that is federal employees, but we currently are nowhere near a revenue neutral operation in this current environment.

[00:58:44] And that revenue neutrality waiver that the board provided expires June 30th. So at the end of this fiscal year, so we'll be specifically asking for the board's guidance on how to address that because once, if that waiver expires unaddressed, we will not be in compliance with the board direction because there currently is not a viable way to go revenue neutral with this current construct.

[00:59:12] And so with that, I mean, unless you would like to talk about fare boxes again, we would make ourselves available for any questions. Thank you. Questions? Chair Brown? Yeah, so this is almost the opposite conversation as to fix route buses, because if you look at the chart page three, the incomes are just the opposite.

[00:59:36] People who ride commuter buses or residents who ride commuter buses are doing much better financially. And I keep referencing this survey. I've got to go find it so I can actually have the numbers. But there was a survey done some time ago that asked commuter bus riders, if we did not have a commuter bus, this was before the Metro opened, would you get on the Metro?

[01:00:00] And the answer was, no, I get in my car. And so, you know, if I thought that these riders would come off the commuter bus and maybe get on a Metro, it would be an easier discussion to have. But because I know they're going to get in their cars, thus adding more cars to the road, more cars in the environment, all those things, it's a harder discussion to have.

[01:00:18] I also said, and this is the truth, this is the only time I've ever been like just randomly stopped, like in the grocery store, in a parade, you know, literally people say, do not take away my commuter buses. People love the commuter buses. But the other side of that is that was all pre-COVID.

[01:00:36] I don't believe we're ever going to go back to pre-COVID work numbers. And I think that for all the talking and even pushing, I think it's unrealistic when we see the fact that, you know, employers have found that they get just as much production, if not more, out of their employees.

[01:00:56] And I was talking to my spouse not long ago, and he is now going in twice a day in his first time since COVID. And he talked about how much more it cost him to go to work, right? Like you're in the car, so you're paying for gas, you're paying for parking, you're paying for tolls, you're paying for clothes, you're paying for going to the cleaners, you're paying just to go to work, and they're not getting any more productivity out of you.

[01:01:20] You're paying for lunch, and so it's hard because we want to keep the buses, and I don't think we're ever going to get pre-COVID numbers. And so I think the discussion on this one is going to have to be the discussion, especially on page four, of consolidating.

[01:01:36] Because especially at the lower end, we're not, we don't want to, I don't believe, you know, taking away these buses is going to be the goal. But maybe in advance of the summit, we can start looking at or just have some ideas of if we're going to consolidate.

[01:01:53] because it doesn't make sense to not consolidate for these ones where the ridership is very, very low. How does that look? At what times? Is it more consolidation going into the D.C. area or coming out of the D.C. area? Those types of questions. But I don't know, because it makes no sense to keep these like this.

[01:02:11] It's just, as you say, it will never again be profitable. But we also can't just take this commutative system away. So I think consolidation is the goal. Yes, ma'am. And that was, the timing was impeccable.

[01:02:29] That was a couple of the recommendations out of the finance committee for us to consider was what can be consolidated and are there achievable rate revisions, fair revisions that could be considered.

[01:02:45] So staff is working now to develop scenarios for the board's consideration during the summit of what does consolidation look like? And then could there be some rate modifications for the fares for these to for the board to consider as well?

[01:03:01] When we did some earlier fare increase numbers, there's a very delicate balance. If you increase it too much, you lose ridership. Increase it more, you lose more ridership, and it gets into a bit of a death spiral. So there is a sweet spot there that can be right, and that's what we're looking into now to bring to the board and the summit.

[01:03:28] Madam Vice Chair. Thank you, Chair Turner. So do the commuter buses make a lot of stops along the way? I'm just wondering, I know we're talking about consolidating, but I'm wondering if it might help to have an express bus that goes right into D.C.

[01:03:47] You can't get much more express than they are. They pick up in one or two park and ride lots in the county, and then they go straight into D.C. Now, there are several stops in D.C., but there are folks who are utilizing all of those stops. So pre-pandemic, we did what we had, what we called express buses, where we split the city in half, had half go to one part of the city and half go to the other part.

[01:04:12] The current state of ridership doesn't allow for that to happen. if we were to do that we run the risk of having twice as many buses in the same number of riders okay interesting yeah i had a constituent ask you know it was in dc you know just is there an opportunity he was probably thinking about the express bus that used to be there we've had that question a number of times yes yeah yeah um so i know that we have a lot of employees and workers outside of loudon county and i'm wondering if we've ever considered having our commuter buses go to other counties?

[01:04:51] Yes, ma'am. That is actually a study that the board has commissioned, and we are working that now. We should have results. We're targeting, I believe, December to look at our commuter system going out into West Virginia and Maryland and other counties in Virginia and bringing our workforce into Loudoun.

[01:05:12] So that study will provide some guidance for the board to make an informed decision on. Yes, ma'am. it will not be available for the for the summit unfortunately okay and then lastly is the county considering bringing our transit system in-house to be managed by county staff i know it's right now managed by a contractor but i'm just wondering if we're looking to bring that in-house so we are we have not uh we are not considering that at this point in time that would be something that the the board and county administration would uh would provide guidance on that but we're not

[01:05:46] actively pursuing that option okay madam chair just real quickly when you talked about hitting a sweet spot would that be to get us is there anything that gets us revenue neutral or does that just increase the decrease how much money is lost versus getting as revenue neutral again so there is a way to get revenue neutral but it's really driven by ridership if the ridership

[01:06:18] The ridership, even with the current contract rates that we're paying right now, if we consolidate down, and we'll talk about this at the Trans Summit, but it's going to take 35 to 40 riders per bus at an increased fare to get there.

[01:06:37] Whoa, that's a lot since the highest ridership is 48.5 and then it drops to 39.2 and we're only with four stations in and we're at 34.

[01:06:53] That would be really hard to get to then. The average ridership right now is 22. Yeah, that would be very hard to get to and increase the fare. When is the last time we've increased the fare? 2019. Oh, so before COVID.

[01:07:08] Okay. So much to think about. Thank you. Is that something that we're looking at, possibly increasing the bus fare?

[01:07:26] Yes, ma'am. We will be bringing some options for the board's consideration at the summit. We did some early numbers to try to get to revenue neutral, and it threw the rider off the horse.

[01:07:41] It was just \$20 to \$25 each, \$20 plus per trip, \$40 a day. If you kept the same riders, the same number of riders on there would get you there.

[01:07:59] But what that does, it forces people off the commuter bus into other options. And that was, there's a statistic that working with OMB, they worked that out. And just that's the death spiral that I refer to. You have to find that incremental number that people are still saying it's worth the investment to do that.

[01:08:19] Otherwise, they will shift to other options. Okay. Thank you. What would trip consolidation look like? So I'm looking at this chart, and the only one thing I can figure out is let's take routes 281, 282, and 284.

[01:08:35] So with that, that's three routes. You could consolidate that route so that it was Stone Ridge 2, Eastgate 2, Crystal City, and then the Pentagon, and then D.C. in one route. Is that how you would consolidate? Is that an example of how you might consolidate?

[01:08:54] Caveating that with we actually need to look at rider habits, rider times. Right. So going to Scott's pause, that is the basic premise of how you would look at those things? I used to go to the Pentagon, so if you had a route like that, I'd go to Crystal City and five minutes later get off the Pentagon.

[01:09:10] on, and if I had to go to D.C. 10 minutes later, I'd get off down in D.C. Right. The premise that you just explained is how we would go through that process, but it really has to look at rider behaviors because you still lose people because timing is important to them as well. Some riders have the flexibility to adjusting their time at work because I've got to get on the slug line or whatever the case may be. They've got to get with the ride share. So a lot of that has to be evaluated in that process. That's a fair statement, Scott? Yes, you're exactly spot on. There are cons to that. If I'm a D.C. bus rider and my bus is

[01:09:48] going straight to the State Department now and I route it through the Pentagon, I'm adding 15 extra minutes to that trip and that's going to adversely affect me and may affect my choice. So yes, all of that has to be taken into consideration. It's not a one-off answer, honestly. When did we open the metro station the ashburn metro november 15th 2022 i'm looking at this chart uh the the blue

[01:10:23] bar chart and our presumption is it dropped off for covid and never covered but really aren't we looking at it dropped off for covid and then right behind that we opened the ashburn metro station have we correlated and determined that in fact that because they may not be getting out of the commuter buses and going into their cars. They might have for COVID, but now they may have gotten out of the buses and switched to the metro. The metro ridership on our metro connecting buses is not great. It's not anywhere near pre-pandemic numbers, so it's really hard to make that

[01:11:03] correlation. Well, they can also get out of the commuter bus and get in their car and drive to the metro station and park for the day, right? Correct. They can. And there's no way for us on Transits had to make that measurement. I understand. But the point I'm bringing up is, and I don't know how we would determine that, but we kind of need to know that answer before we start consolidating.

[01:11:24] Well, it doesn't really matter what the answer is. What we know is some environmental impact has caused ridership to drop off. And it could be post-COVID. It could be metro or a combination of both. But that tends to indicate that maybe the commuter bus system has seen its day.

[01:11:42] So this question came up in finance, and the only true way to evaluate ridership transition from commuter bus to metro is to look at the smart card usage. Okay. And that's a very, very difficult, if even viable, data set to really acquire.

[01:12:03] I can tell you anecdotally, we are not seeing anywhere near apples to apples to the number of people on our connector buses. And the vehicles parking in the metro garages that would come anywhere close to those pre-COVID numbers.

[01:12:18] It is, I don't want to say logarithmically, but it's a huge gap using those anecdotal assumptions, which are just that, anecdotal assumptions. We believe that the strongest factor is the telework policies.

[01:12:34] Oh, of course. Of course. Absolutely. That makes perfect sense, which I think leads to the same conclusion, maybe. It does, sir. I would add one real quick thing for you, just for thought processes, is between the time that the rail opened, we had a strike that was on for two months, and a lot of the riders lost trust in the system.

[01:12:58] Yeah. So we had to earn that back. So just another point of data point. Good point. Good point. Madam Chair. Well, and I would say, listen, you know, in 2019, we were at 947,000, and in 2021, we We're at 51,000, all else being equal, this has to be, I mean, it's just logical that this is COVID, and I can't, and the fact that we're teleworking, there are so many people, and also the other factor we always forget about is child care options have changed, you know,

[01:13:35] and so what people could do before and can do now for child care, those options, so many more childcare slots have, we lost them during COVID. And if you don't, if people can't drop their children off anywhere, they're not going to work. They're going to figure out how to work from home, even if it means never turn their camera on because the four-year-olds run around the house. But I will say, I don't, I think we would have a huge issue if we tried to cut the commuter bus service altogether. I just can't see us trying to do that. We have to figure it out and get as low as possible and take that thing, take the, you know, the loss, try to trim that loss as

[01:14:14] much as possible. But people, people do get on these buses and they are really important, really, really important to them. So I don't, I don't want that to be where we go, to be honest. Thank you, sir. Yeah. And just one final comment. That's clearly true. That's a huge impact. So we'll study, we'll look at it and find out what the evidence is. I certainly believe the COVID triggered the 2021 drop that that makes perfect sense but there were two fairly two or three fairly major events systemic events that occurred in 2021 2022 drop in for COVID would indicate at

[01:14:50] least logic would say it would come back up after COVID the fact that it didn't means there's maybe something else in play but we'll we'll dig in and find the data very good discussion thank you and very good presentation I appreciate it um committee members I'm going to ask for some consensus here on the Banshee Reeks issue, which is the next issue up.

[01:15:13] I've read this item. It's a very controversial issue. We've received a lot of email, pro and con. The item says the action is to pass a motion that is going to baseline trail usage right now and the condition of the trails right now and then hire an independent consultant to determine the impact of potentially opening up all or part of Banshee Reeks to equestrian use.

[01:15:41] I think the motion makes perfect sense and is non-controversial. Let's study it before we make a decision. I don't think that's particularly controversial and doesn't necessarily require a whole lot, so I would like to get a pulse from the committee members. Do we need to go over this item, or can we move straight to a motion?

[01:15:59] A motion's fine. Motion, okay. We're going to have a discussion within the motion? Absolutely, absolutely. Do we need a presentation? Do we need anybody to come up and explain anything? I know this issue very well. We know this issue very well. Very well.

[01:16:15] Let me call up a motion here. Laura, if you've got it up, you want to make the motion? First one there gets it. I got it. I move that the Transportation and Lane Use Committee recommend the Board of Supervisors direct staff to hire an independent contractor to assess the trail system for equestrian use within Banshee Breaks Nature Preserve.

[01:16:40] I further move that the Transportation and Lane Use Committee recommend the Board of Supervisors direct staff to include a contract term directing the contractor to conduct a baseline inventory of any designated areas trails found to be appropriate for equestrian use. Second. I'll give that second to supervise to the vice chair to crony discussion on the item supervisor chair.

[01:17:04] So, man, oh, man. Hi, Mr. Torpy. I have been working on this for four years now. I think that the pros board has come to the best possible options for this, to hire someone to look at this. I really do.

[01:17:29] Having said that, I would be shocked to the point of unhappy if that consultant came back and said there is no trails that are appropriate at all for horses to be in Banshee Reeks. That cannot be what the answer is.

[01:17:46] Now, we can figure out which trails, we can do what he's going to do, but if they come back and say there's nothing, then I'm going to have trouble understanding that. I am having trouble understanding, and I have been having trouble understanding, the enormous outcry to having horses in Banshee Reeks.

[01:18:07] And every time I've heard a rationale, the rationale has not been a logical rationale to me. Things like the horse droppings are going to be invasive. The horses are Loudoun County horses.

[01:18:23] That's Loudoun County feed with Loudoun County, excuse my language, but poop. You can't have, it can't be invasive. Oh, no, there's no clapping. It can't be in. There's no clapping. It can't be invasive. So that's never, as far as I can see, and maybe I see something different, people who are equestrian riders are everybody's concerned about the environment as everybody else.

[01:18:50] The equestrian riders want the environment, so that has never made sense to me. You know, if anything, I want to know why we're flying drones in Banshee Reefs. If we're going to do anything, let's get that out of there. But I cannot see why around the perimeter and there are not some trails, maybe not obviously not through the whole thing, obviously not through wetlands or through floodplains, but around the perimeter and trails, I'm going to be really curious if they come back and say there's nothing there.

[01:19:19] there's no options so having said all that i think the the option that you all have come to at this moment is a very good option so thank you and thank everyone who worked on this item supervisor glass thank you chair turner um so mr torby has the what um chair randall just said has the county looked into like certain areas where we can have trails so are we kind of like doing double duty if we've already? Yeah so we have we have not and the reason why we have not

[01:19:54] is when the master plan was amended in 2001 there was specific language that was a part of the amended that the amendment that was voted on by the board that was very specific on where trails potential equestrian trails could be. So doing anything or studying or spending money or spending staff time we did not want to spend that staff time until we got the direction from the board that that would be appropriate to do because we had already gotten direction from board as to where

[01:20:27] it could be uh currently so that's why this is coming forward okay so you're we're using someone outside of the staff that's the recommendation that's correct contract all right thank you Madam

Vice Chair. Yeah, thank you, Chair Turner.

[01:20:46] So I see part of the PROS board resolution said to look at a baseline of invasives at Banshee Reeks as a first step to allowing equestrians in the park. My understanding is that there are already invasives in Banshee Reeks and that it looks like staff reviewed the research and that there's no difference between horse trails and hiking trails in terms of the spread of non-native species so i'm just wondering why we're looking

[01:21:21] at invasives well the one thing that we in the discussions with the pros board we wanted to make sure that from the get-go on every section that would be looked at that there was that baseline of all different types of things so that when we go back if you read in the motion uh or see in the motion one of the things that we are also going to be asking the contractor to do is give us recommendation on how we come back so if it is the pleasure of the board to expand equestrian use at Banshee we are recommending that there be a baseline

[01:22:00] established and then a period of time we go back and do an assessment to see whether or not that use would be discontinued or expanded or whatever based upon that assessment that secondary assessment that is done yeah and and chair randall had a meeting with a lot of the um why loud and wildlife and pc and one thing that i think we all agreed on and the equestrian community obviously was that um it's important to monitor you know and to maintain the trails so that would be more something i think we'd focus

[01:22:37] on versus invasives, because invasives get spread, you know, I just think they're already in the park. All of that is a part of what's being recommended. Yeah, yeah. So here's a question. Can we add the impact of hikers, dog walkers, model airplanes, and drones in the study for an examination of user impact?

[01:23:05] I would, we could certainly try to look at that. I'm not sure how we would monitor the actual impact of the drones, but we could certainly try to look at that.

[01:23:24] Yeah, just because I think we're all questioning up here why we have model airplanes and drones in a nature preserve. Perhaps I could have those discussions with staff and come back as a part of when we come to the board with that answer.

[01:23:40] Okay. Thank you. Yeah, let me get you off the hook here. if you'd like to make a motion to include those items in the baseline study then we'll vote on it and we'll see where we go but I don't think one committee member can task staff to come up with add these things to the study so if you'd like to make a motion let's do that and we'll discuss it there whoa uh sure you can make it friendly but I'll tell you I'm not going to accept it and I'm not going to vote for it so you'll have to make an amendment to the existing motion if

[01:24:16] you want to add those items I think I might have an alternative people want to wait is there some way we can gently ask as part of the process to be aware of these factors and if they aren't if the the baseline study determines that in fact they are some kind of a factor that might affect question use in the trail system that they could report on the extent of that impact of those things sure we could we can certainly add that to the scope of the work one of the things that I did want to mention that is not in the

[01:24:53] in the motion but was discussed at the pros board meeting that i think is is good to share on the record is that the scope of work has not been created yet and the reason why is because we had committed

at the at the pros board meeting to bring in the various groups to help us establish the scope of work and so after if this passes the board that is something that there'll be an internal staff component but then and also a component from the equestrian and a component from Friends of Banshee Reeks a component from some of the other organizations that have expressed interest so that we can garner their

[01:25:30] input for consideration as the as a scope gets developed I have maybe a too clever way to do this I have a minute 11th I would think that model airplanes and drones would really bother horses so maybe we want to look at is it appropriate to have model airplanes and drones in an area where horses are gone maybe maybe that's the best way to frame it what's the timeframe for this baseline study and for the contractor to complete the work mr. Torp so we're estimating about three months three to four months we have talked with a couple

[01:26:07] of different companies that have the ability to do this some of them are task order so if we do get direction from the board we would likely work with procurement to get this under contract very quickly okay So, thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, I'm glad that the time is just three or four months.

[01:26:23] If we expand the scope very much, then I don't want to expand the time. We have been doing this for at least five years, and I don't really want to expand the scope and expand the time. And I, let me say it again, I don't believe drones belong in Banshee Breaks. I don't believe model airplanes. That is so illogical to me.

[01:26:40] And if, you know, to say people who are coming in from who knows where to fly drones in model planes are not going to bring invasives on their shoes, on their feet. But horses that are Loudoun County horses do, makes no sense.

[01:26:57] It's just completely illogical. I think what maybe happened was the drones and the airplanes have been there for a while. We now have a very large drone industry in Loudoun County that we didn't have before. There are so many other places that people can fly drones that would be just as open, just as wide, just as fun, that do not belong in a banshee rinks.

[01:27:23] But I actually, you know, what Mr. Crony suggested, the reason I wouldn't support it, with all due respect, Supervisor, my fresh new colleague, Supervisor Crony, is because I just don't want to, there's a cost estimate. I don't want to increase the cost.

[01:27:38] And I don't want to expand the scope so much that we're going to be here double the amount of time. And really, the equestrian industry has been talking about this for a long time. And if anyone else wants to come talk to us, they can. But I think we should keep this to be a fairly, that fairly narrow conversation, to be honest.

[01:27:58] And I have had all kind of conversations with all kind of people, you know, friends of And no one, and I mean no one, has been able to show me why horses, especially on the perimeter, would be damaging to the wildlife at Banshee Reeks.

[01:28:16] And so I'll be looking for that answer when this comes back. You have been incredibly, incredibly patient, and I appreciate you and the pro sport. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Vice Chair.

[01:28:32] Thank you, Chair Turner. Yeah, thank you, Mr. Torpy. I know you've been dealing with this for four years plus. So thank you for your patience. One thing that I've heard from the equestrian community

is that, like, a trail that's two miles isn't, like, a meaningful recreational trail for them.

[01:28:54] You know, they're not going to come with their trailers. So I just want to let you know that I think they're looking for a minimum of eight miles. And I do think Banshee Reeks has 12 or has 20 miles of existing trails. Right. And some of them used to be road beds and might be appropriate.

[01:29:13] So I know Chair Randall mentioned the perimeter, but I don't know if we can get eight miles in the perimeter. So I just I just want to keep keep an open mind because I think I'd like to have them have a meaningful recreational trail.

[01:29:30] Well, and to the discussion that happened a little bit earlier, we talked about that at the PROS board meeting as well. And the reason why it was decided to come this route was because there has not been a formal assessment of the trails yet.

[01:29:48] And we felt that it was appropriate in the balancing of the two, for lack of a better term, differing sides of the issue. we did not want to set a preconceived goal of this let's evaluate the entire site see what we can do and then that would be something that that you all could take under consideration for an amendment to the if that's appropriate okay thank you and let me just close out the discussion here by thanking you Mr. Torpy you really have been patient on this this has been and hanging around for a long time, I think it's a great solution.

[01:30:29] We got a lot of email that please make sure you talk to subject matter experts. I would assume that's what an independent contractor is going to do as part of this contract. That's kind of common sense, so I appreciate that. And I had one other thing I was going to say. I can't remember what it was.

[01:30:46] I forget. I have no other comments. The motion has been made and seconded. All those in favor, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? That motion will carry 401. Thank you, Mr. Torpy. thank you next up we have the environment and energy work plan quarterly update if I could

[01:31:06] have the team please come forward thank you back mr. Brown it's great to be back again thank you very much next item is the environmental energy work a work plan update we bring this to every quarter this one in particular is the way the schedule works out we're further identifying the

[01:31:42] plan for next year for the end products within the existing budget that the board has approved. And so with that, I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Avini and he'll take the show. Thank you. Good evening. Mark Avini, assistant director, Department of General Services. With me is Kira Moore, our environmental program manager, and we'll be running the slides. I also want to acknowledge Mr. Mike Sandler, our energy program manager, as well as the chair of the environmental commission, Jim Bingle, who is also here. As Mr. Brown mentioned, we come quarterly to you to provide an update on your work plan. We do have two new items that we're going to be asking for your consideration this evening, and then we're going to be highlighting

[01:32:21] some successes and upcoming events as well. This is the schedule that Mr. Brown referred to, and obviously we're in April, and we had some very nice Environmental Commission awards earlier this month, and here we are giving you our quarterly update. As you know, the plan was initially approved by the board back in 2022. It is going very well. It also significantly established a baseline reoccurring program for natural resources and energy sustainability in Loudoun County.

[01:32:54] It involves multiple departments, non-profits. It's well vetted and fully supported by the Environmental Commission and the public. Just a reminder of the five initiatives, which we're very proud of and all the items that we look at, we try to fit into one of these five initiatives. So some of the successes that we've had just since we met in January, we have begun county emissions inventory, looking at greenhouse gas emissions in the county and how they can be decreased. We have our first CPACE clean energy finance that has occurred in Leesburg, and we'll

[01:33:30] be bringing you some more information about that probably next quarter as they finalize some documents. Power purchase agreements to put solar on the roofs of existing county facilities in Loudoun County is still under legal review. We're hopeful that by our next meeting we can have some locations for you where we will be putting some of those solar panels on county buildings.

[01:33:50] We have put in some new public-facing electric vehicle chargers in Bluemont, Middleburg, and Sterling. Those are available to the public and are identified on our GeoHub so that residents can go on there and see where they can charge their electric vehicle. That's a picture of one that was just put in in the Middleburg Library, so we're very happy with that.

[01:34:09] We're also excited about our data center partnership. We're getting closer and closer to looking at a renewable energy use template. I spoke with the data center coalition last week, and they'll let me know this week if we can, in fact, move forward looking at some renewable energy use by some of our top data centers and how those help with our greenhouse gas emissions.

[01:34:29] So we look forward to giving you more information about that. Energy equity, we have begun stakeholder interviews on what energy equity should look like in Loudoun County, and we'll report more on that as our next quarterly update. Natural resources, a lot of good stuff happening there as well. We're getting ready to initiate a tree canopy study for Loudoun County. As you may know, COG has been very active in looking at the tree canopy in all of Northern Virginia and the loss of tree canopy. Their goal, COG's, is that we have at least a 50%

[01:35:05] cover of tree canopy throughout Northern Virginia. So we're going to start a tree canopy study and look at areas in Loudoun County where we meet that goal and where we perhaps don't meet that goal, as well as some recommendations on what we can do to increase that. So we're excited about beginning that hopefully next month. Watershed management plan, we talked about a new one in the Bull Run Watershed in Supervisor Treconi's district. We just heard today that we did receive grant to actually add on to an existing study that we're going to be doing there for our TMDL program and we'll look to involve some residents in Bull Run looking at things such as flood

[01:35:43] prevention, erosion sediment control, and other items that I think will be well received in that district. We had a lot of success at our HOA event in February 6th with existing watershed management plans and our soil and water conservation district getting money to HOAs to implement such beneficial water quality practices as tree buffers. Here's a pet waste station that we paid to put in including maintenance to take care of it as well as some other items that help local water quality and eventually the Chesapeake Bay. For initiative three environmental justice as is mentioned in the

[01:36:18] bylaws we as we do our tree canopy study we are specifically calling out in the scope of work the concept of tree equity and what that does is that looks at areas in the county where there is a efficiency of tree canopy cover. Some may say, well, what does that have to do with equity? Well, in areas where there's less trees, air quality is worse. We see increases in asthma. We see higher temperatures. So we're

going to try to see if areas in the county where there are less trees, we can perhaps promote practices such as more street trees, more pocket parks, or things that would actually increase the amount of tree canopy in those areas. So we're excited to look at that as a component of our equity program.

[01:36:57] We're obviously coordinating with our equity officer and looking at what we can do with an equity lens. We have begun some equity interviews with different people in the county to look at what energy equity would look like in the county, what folks think that occurs, more than just helping people pay their electric bills, energy audits, things of that nature, improvements that could be done with funding that's available from the federal government.

[01:37:22] And we're coordinating with the Department of Housing and Community Development. Public engagement, a lot of fun stuff happening here. We have a very nice picture there at the top of our April 2nd Environmental Excellence Awards right here in the board chambers. We appreciate very much the board and the chair recognizing our winners.

[01:37:40] It was a great group at a very nice event. And we're very proud to promote the efforts of citizens and teachers and businesses to do good things for the environment and energy in Loudoun County. We also are very excited, and I think we're going to see a few of you on May 14th at our public forum on environment and energy at the Academies of Loudoun.

[01:38:00] We have a very nice program beginning at 530 where we'll have different sessions on how to put solar on your house. We'll have some electric vehicles there. We'll talk about watershed management. We'll talk about wildlife corridors. We'll talk about energy equity. We'll have some nonprofits there and some vendors displaying their environment and energy materials.

[01:38:19] And we'll also have a listening session because I know the board very much wants the commission to hear from the public on what they would like to see for the environment and energy. And we'll do that at the event as well. So we hope to see some of you all there. And then we continue with our social media outreach on different projects that we're doing in the county.

[01:38:38] Government by example, which I know is a favorite of this board, has been very busy as well. We've been going to different community events. This is one at Ashby Ponds where we were promoting our energy strategy, and that is an electric blower that does not use, doesn't have a gas engine.

[01:38:54] So the residents there were very interested in it, and we had to actually calm them down. They were ready to start it up themselves, but we've been promoting the use of non-gas equipment like that. Our public works group is actually using a lot of these and electric chainsaws in the community and trying to encourage the use of these types of equipment.

[01:39:15] We're working on power purchase agreements, new building construction. We've been collaborating very well with our Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure. As you know, the new rec center that's going in will have geothermal, which is a great source of renewable energy. And I'm going to talk to you soon about another type of renewable energy.

[01:39:33] And then our Employee Energy Conservation Committee, E2C2, is coordinating a bike-to-work day where employees can bike to work and also looking at a sustainability video that would be shown to all employees when they start work at Loudoun County. So if I may talk a little bit about one of the new initiatives that comes from the Environmental Commission and has been well vetted by staff, both in general services as well as Department of Capital Infrastructure.

[01:40:04] So district energy is not a new concept. It's been used for many years, especially with hospitals and universities where there's more than one building. It basically looks at using the waste heat that is produced in one building, putting it in a pipe or turning it into steam, and using it in another building for heating.

[01:40:25] This is used a lot in Europe, and some of you may be familiar. Where I went to school at Virginia Tech, we heated our dorms with steam heat, and it was actually very hot, too hot. But this is a very beneficial system. We opened our windows a lot in the winter, but this is a very beneficial system that we would like to look at with the board's okay for the general government office complex that the board is considering in the capital improvement plan where we'd have more than one county building.

[01:40:51] And so what we'd like to do is use some of that reoccurring funding, no need for new funding, and actually study how that might work with that new office complex that the government that we're looking to put in and be a government by example. So that's one of the items that we're over for you for your consideration today.

[01:41:09] The concept of district energy is in the general plan there and has been talked about for many years as kind of a good microgrid energy and an energy saving system. So we thought, well, you know, let's take a look at it. And actually, it was the Environmental Commission that found this and said, hey, why aren't we looking at this and asking the board if this is something we can see might be feasible for some county projects going forward.

[01:41:33] So that's before you. Not to be outdone, our natural resource folks said we had such success with the energy strategy that the board asked for and was approved. We've gotten grants because of it. We've put it in a lot of our different publications and so forth, and it helps to really frame what we do in a non-regulatory positive way for energy.

[01:41:56] And so the commission said, why don't we do the same thing with natural resources rather than just looking at one-offs? Obviously, we're looking at wildlife corridors and watershed management and trees, but why don't we put it in more of a strategy that looks at to provide a framework for us going forward?

[01:42:12] So, again, with the board's consideration, we would like to look at doing a natural resource strategy similar to our energy strategy, again, using existing funds that we have. So, in conclusion, then, we'd be happy to have any questions that you all might have and would ask for your endorsement of not only the items that we're already doing, but the addition of the two new items to begin in FY25 with existing reoccurring funds.

[01:42:41] That's my presentation. Mr. Chair, I'd be happy to answer any questions that you or the committee might have. Thank you very much, Mr. Binney. Can I ask, this is an imposition, can I ask Ms. Bingle to come to the table? Jim, could you do that? Is that all right? Thank you very much.

[01:43:01] Questions? Supervisor Glass. Thank you, Chair Turner. And thank you for this presentation. A number of things that you were talking about. I'm part of the Clean Air Partners, and so we have a meeting tomorrow, and a couple of the things that we talk about is when you're talking about equity and we talk about trees and how that affects people because of, you know, having so much concrete or asphalt.

[01:43:35] It does affect people and make the area hotter. I'm also concerned about clear cutting when the developers cut, and it seems like they've cut all the trees down in order to build. I'm trying to figure out a

way, what can we do so that's not, it happens all the time.

[01:43:58] Is there something that we could do or, you know, can we focus on that? Or I don't know if that's just a developer thing and that's what they do, or is that something that we can have a discussion about or see if we can't have clear-cutting when the developer is building something?

[01:44:20] So, Supervisor Glass, that's a great question, and that's something we need to bring building and development into the conversation with as they're the regulatory entity that addresses that. We'd also have to look very closely at the parameters by which we're actually able to operate as a Dillon rule, a state as to what parameters the board actually has with that.

[01:44:38] But that would be in the regulatory side. So we'd have to bring building and development into that conversation. Okay. When you were also talking about the air, is it the electric air blowers, we were also having the discussion of people using electric mowers as well because of all of the pollution that gas mowers emit out, especially in the summertime.

[01:45:04] And the noise, too, Supervisor, yeah. A lot of places have banned them for the noise as well. Yes. Thank you. Thank you. Yeah, I think a lot of that is the developers, it is more expensive to try to build around trees that they leave, right?

[01:45:24] So it may not be, I mean, it's a great discussion for building development, but I think it's actually not, may not be an issue that we have control over. We can try. So the tree canopy discussion that we did in COG, they actually did a lot of the numbers already.

[01:45:40] Have you looked at that tree canopy results? We just received it last week, Chair, and we're beginning to look at it. We haven't looked at it in detail. It's possible that all the study that you might do, it's been done in COG as far as just the numbers. Now the different areas of the county, that hasn't been done.

[01:45:59] You know, they haven't drilled down, but I know the top line numbers are there. The other discussion in COG, when they had the tree canopy discussion, a question was brought up, which was, when you talk about, you know, especially for residential areas where clear-cutting, unfortunately, has happened to build, did the developer then plant new trees, and where are those trees now?

[01:46:23] And so it is an issue of clear-cutting, but also an issue of, one, are they replanting? Two, what do those look like? And three, if they are replanting, make sure they're not planting invasives when they're replanting, which is really smart.

[01:46:42] I love the environmental justice discussions. I love them. I appreciate them so much. Thank you. One of the things, and I think one of you touched on a little bit, is an environmental justice discussion is also housing and bus routes, right?

[01:47:00] And so if you have bus routes in areas where people live, you're going to have a lesser of an impact on the environment. So all those things are really important, and I'm so glad you guys have rolled in Mr. Rush for this discussion because, I mean, there's just nobody better for these discussions than him.

[01:47:20] And finally, on page 11, what is waste heat? So an example of waste heat might be if you think of a data center and how when they have all those servers, they produce all that heat, and that's why they have to cool them, keep them so cool.

[01:47:39] is because all those computers, you know, when your computer produces, your laptop produces a lot of heat. Well, imagine servers in a data center producing all that heat. Typically, they're just

trying to cool it and keep it cool. But imagine if you could capture that heat, put it in a pipe and use it to heat another building. So waste heat is heat that's generated by some, by a boiler, by a computer server, by some other process. And instead of trying to cool it down, capturing it and using it to heat another building. So then you save energy because you capture the heat and you also save energy because you're not working to cool it exactly well that's

[01:48:11] very cool exactly okay thank you uh thank you chair turner so um are there any data centers in lowndon county using waste heat that we know of i i would have to ask uh mr rise i don't know for certain about that okay i'm glad that we're working with the data center coalition because i I think, you know, given the grid issues that we're having with the transmission lines and the substations, it's really nice to know that, you know, there is renewable energy being used at the data centers,

[01:48:49] and I think it will give some transparency to the public because we haven't gotten that data before, right? We have not. Okay. So that's really great. I absolutely support doing a natural resources strategy like our county energy strategy.

[01:49:08] I think that's an excellent idea, and it will bring everything together. And I also want to bring in some of what the HOAs are doing. You mentioned that you had an HOA meeting on the 6th, but they're doing some great things with natural resources, know, getting rid of invasives, looking at planting pollinators. And we talked about potentially doing pollinators around stormwater management ponds and limiting some mowing in certain open spaces. So yeah, I mean, if you could bring in like Lyra and some of what the HOAs are

[01:49:45] doing in that strategy, that would be great. I mean, I don't know if that was your plan, Jim, if you guys talked about that at the Environmental Commission. We haven't specifically talked about it, but they did come and give a presentation to us.

[01:50:01] And the things that they've been doing were on our initial list, but didn't get developed as projects. So it's great to have that kind of interest and initiative from the community. Yeah, and it could be part of the larger strategy, right?

[01:50:20] Okay, and I look forward to the forum coming up. It's at Academies of Loudoun, right, again? So, yeah, that was a great event. And I know some residents have asked about how to get solar on your roof. This will be the opportunity, right, to learn about what resources are available for that.

[01:50:39] We will actually have, to your point, Supervisor, we will actually have Solarize representatives there who will talk about how the process works and hopefully even try to sign people up. So it would be a great event for people residential who are interested in possibly getting solar on their house. Wonderful. Thank you.

[01:50:57] Thank you, Ms. Bingle, for being at the table. And as usual, everything Mr. Vaney and Ms. Bingle touched turns to gold for the county, and I really do appreciate it. This is really world-class work. And I know what world-class looks like because I have spent the last three days at the Data Center World Conference at the Washington Convention Center immersed in the most arcane, geeky, data center power stuff you've ever heard in your life.

[01:51:23] But some enduring themes have emerged, and I have tried to emphasize in the few times I have stood up to mention things to people in my group. There are some realities here, and Loudoun County is the central location for data center energy issues in the world.

[01:51:46] Everybody at the conference knows Loudoun County, they know Ashburn, and they look to us of you guys are the pace setters. Everybody in the world, every meeting I was in, I stood up and introduced myself as a Loudoun County supervisor, and everybody knew who I was.

[01:52:04] I was the only elected official in the room, and there's a point that I'm making with that. There are three things that are reality that we have to grasp, and I think that sooner Loudoun County grasps it with both arms, we're going to really become amazing leaders in the world. Number one, data demand is going through the roof.

[01:52:23] It has been going through the roof. It is exploding. they're all aware of it. The demands of AI are going to put the current data demand under the table. I mean, it is exploding and everybody's aware of it. And you know what the number one issue all of the data centers in the world are worried about right now? Power. They don't have enough power. Latency has always been the name of the game. They're looking for high latency speeds, latency speeds. That's what they're looking for. No more. If they're going to move a data center and build it in a community, the first thing they ask is, where's the power and where's it coming

[01:53:01] from? And they recognize it's not power generation that's a big issue, it's power transmission that's the issue. In the whole conference, I did not see a single utility, a single power provider. And I stood up at one point and I said, this is not your problem, this is our collective strategic challenge that we have to meet collectively. It's a three-legged stool, it's data demand, it's power providing power source, power generation and transmission, and it's local community involvement.

[01:53:30] And I said repeatedly, you have to involve your local community at the outset. And then once you do that, you need to start talking to each other on a regular basis. So I'm running out of time. We'll come back around again. If no one has anything, I'll continue very briefly. But I have emphasized, we have to start talking to each other regularly. These three legs of the stool. Energy providers, data centers, and local elected officials, so you're on the same page.

[01:53:59] Or we're going to end up with a problem like Prince William County had, which is where they vote in a 50 million square foot digital gateway and then vote their county chair out of office. That's the kind of disconnect between local elected officials and the data center and power community that's going on right now. Everybody's talking within their silo. I'm out of time. I'm going to take a break and answer any other comments or questions and then come back around so I can finish. I don't see any. Good. I'll take another three minutes. So here's my suggestion.

[01:54:31] And I've tried to figure out how we can broach a subject. And here's my suggestion. The data center participation is the perfect item. And I have total confidence that the Environmental Commission can figure out how to do this. So the suggestion is, is there a way that Loudoun County can set up a regular meeting? I'm pie in the sky, I'm hoping monthly. And I hate to call it a stakeholders meeting because we have had so many on not unpleasant challenging experiences with stakeholder committees but to have the data center community and the energy community and local elected officials or local citizens involved at

[01:55:08] the table to say where are we going because we are right around the corner from the data centers in this county not having enough power and the community the citizens in this community not having enough power and the power company is scrambling pjm has already talked about not decommissioning 11 gigawatts of power being provided by fossil fuels because they can't afford not to deliver the power. They have to deliver the power, and that's the only way they can do it. There's advanced

reconducting of lines, which turns the steel core of the overhead transmission lines into carbon and doubles the capacity of those lines. We have to get on with

[01:55:47] that. I don't know what the issues are with that, but Dominion knows. And if we could have that kind of an open discussion on a regular basis in Loudoun County. I think Loudoun County could synergistically and holistically put together a strategy, a long-term data center power local strategy that everybody can embrace. Example, we could eliminate all 4,000 diesel generators in this county within a couple of years. I have seen the technology with my own, put my hands on it this morning in the expo hall, technology that would allow data centers in Loudoun County to eliminate diesel backup generators within a year or two. It could be done, and they're clean,

[01:56:25] they're not completely sustainable, but they're way, way cleaner than diesel generators, and they would really cut back on the noise. That's possible. What is stopping our data centers from doing that? What do they need from the county board of supervisors to help incentivize them to do that?

[01:56:41] So my question is, what is the mechanism by which we could set up a regular meeting? And if you disagree with that concept or any of my colleagues do, please say so now, but what is the mechanism by which we could set up those regular meetings, and could we do it through the auspices of the Environmental Commission? I'll let you guys answer that, any of those.

[01:56:58] So thank you, Supervisor Turner, or Chair Turner. We need to go back and look at the charter that you all set forth for the Environmental Commission. Just first look at that. That may be well beyond the scope of the EC, and there may be a better venue for that.

[01:57:14] I would certainly encourage the EC to be involved in that process, but I just, again, I need to go back and look at the charter. I believe that it's a broader conversation, that's something that maybe county administration really needs to work with you and the board to really identify the best conduit for that conversation.

[01:57:33] I'm afraid that if it was, again, first blush, if it was limited to the EC as the purveyor of the process, you may undermine some of your larger efforts with the technical aspects of power delivery, which is beyond the scope of what the EC has been tasked to do.

[01:57:49] But I certainly support the idea, and I'll work with county administration to see if there's a mechanism that is an appropriate one to do that. Mr. Vinny, did you have something? Your light's on. No, sir. Okay. All right. Although I'd love to do it. Is the mechanism then to do we need a vote here to test staff to go look at how we should best do this?

[01:58:12] Should I bring it forward as a BMI, which I'm happy to do? So I would probably take that as a sidebar with Mr. Hemstreet. um on that as the best process well there you are mr hamstring i think that type of effort which is a significant one should be considered by the board uh and if the board you know wants to have the environmental commission lead that then i think that should be a board decision uh and then certainly you know the staff and i would would probably want to think about that and provide any

[01:58:47] any recommendations that we might have so that sounds like a bmi might be the right vehicle I think if TLUC wants to make a recommendation to the board, TLUC can certainly do that, or a BMI would be another way of accomplishing that. Thank you.

[01:59:09] Isn't that something that we could include in the CPAM for data centers since we're about to do that? Could that be a part of that? So I would view that, Mr. Chairman, I would view the comprehensive plan amendment to be more about land use.

[01:59:31] I mean, I think what was just discussed is a whole myriad of things about electric power and power for data centers. To place it into the conference of planned amendment without specifically talking about what exactly that means, I think, has the potential of slowing down that CPAM.

[01:59:58] And I'm not sure that's the goal of the board. Yeah, I would have said the same thing. I think, honestly, I think a BMI might be the right vehicle. I don't want to ask the TLUC committee members to vote on an issue that that only just heard 30 seconds ago.

[02:00:13] So let me think it through, and I'll frame it as a BMI, and we'll get it started that way. Thank you all very much. Any other questions for the panel? With that, I will make a motion. I move that Transportation Landings Committee recommend that the Board of Supervisors continue implementing the items defined in the fiscal year 2024 Environment and Energy Work Plan and endorse the addition of the following two tasks in fiscal year 2025.

[02:00:37] a study of the applicability of district energy technology for a county project, and a development of a natural resources strategy. Seconded by the vice chair. I have no opening discussion questions. I have all my second, all my initiatives, but she actually helped write them all for the past four years, so I guess that's why she seconded them really quickly, because she was part of the writing of all the initiatives, but okay, I'm going to leave it alone.

[02:01:08] And I don't have a close. All those in favor, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Motion will pass 4-0-1. Thank you all very much for your great work. Thank you very much. Great evening. It is 6-55. Let's break for 20 minutes for dinner. Can we do that?

[02:01:25] All right. We are taking a recess.

[02:13:29] Thank you all. We are back in session.

[02:25:33] The next item up is the Federal Aviation Administration community process to mitigate aircraft noise within the area of the Airport Impact Overlay District. The team is at the table, and you may proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And good evening, committee members.

[02:25:50] My name is Josh Peters. I'm with the Department of Planning and Zoning, joined by Planning and Zoning Director Daniel Galindo, also joined by Dusty Smith from Public Affairs and Communication. We also have two remote participants on the line. We have Jim Allardyce, who is principal with Vionair, our consultant on this topic.

[02:26:13] And then joining very shortly, we also will have Jason Schwartz. So this is a reoccurring, if I can advance the slide, this is a reoccurring item providing updates on the county's effort to address noise complaints in the vicinity of Dulles Airport.

[02:26:34] Tonight's presentation, I'll start with a refresher on where we left this discussion at the December meeting, because we were last here on December 18th. I'll provide a few informational updates, which is the primary reason that we're here back before you. And then after the informational updates, we will ask that the committee weigh in on couple of project decision points. So starting with the background, at the December 18th meeting, staff and Vionair conveyed the message from the FAA

regional administrator that our community engagement plan must follow a community roundtable format and that was news at the time because we were moving

[02:27:12] in the direction of a community work group and this committee and the board did select a handful of communities to work toward a proposal that we would eventually put forward to the FAA. So when we received the news that we needed to move toward a community roundtable format, we respectfully requested time to look into that and figure out what all that would entail. So TLUC directed staff to gather details on the cost, schedule, and staffing requirements to implement a community roundtable and to report back.

[02:27:48] So, since that December meeting, Vionair drafted a community engagement plan that would meet the FAA requirements, and they met with the regional administrator at the end of March to discuss that plan. Vionair reports that they've reached a conceptual agreement with the FAA regional administrator on the general parameters of the county's public engagement process, and this is our main reason for returning with an update.

[02:28:13] So the graphic on this slide, it depicts the community roundtable process that the FAA is requiring as a prerequisite to considering any future proposal. Now the FAA, I'm going to ask the Vionair team to weigh in in just a moment, but I want to give the highest level overview of this before I ask them to speak up.

[02:28:39] Within the community roundtable model, there are three groups. Now, starting with the steering committee, that is the staff team that you already interface with when you have questions on this item. It is myself, it is Dusty Smith, it is Joe Crowboth. And the role of the steering committee as much as it is, as it has been along the way in this process, where our primary role is to manage any consultants that are involved, manage those contracts, and then manage really the public affairs and communications piece through established county channels like website, blog, and answering inquiries.

[02:29:15] So that's what the steering committee does. The second group that I want to describe is the design group. Now, the design group is equivalent to the community work group that this committee already endorsed. The design group, the function of it is really to do that nuts and bolts work facilitated by our consultant to put forward and draft a proposal that would eventually go to the FAA.

[02:29:44] The composition of this group is the same or much the same as the committee work group that this committee, as the community work group that this committee and the board already endorsed. So that concept is still in, it's still in place, still relevant.

[02:30:00] It just becomes nested within this slightly expanded model. Now, the third group is the community roundtable group. This is the namesake of the model, and the composition of the community roundtable group would be to include jurisdictions and key community groups within 10 nautical miles of Dulles Airport.

[02:30:24] This is the interjurisdictional piece that we alluded to when we were before you back in December. Included in the community roundtable group is the airports authority. Now, the way this group fits in here is that any proposal that is developed and drafted by the design group, it must be sent to the community roundtable group to reach supportive consensus.

[02:30:51] And if they reach supportive consensus on that proposal, that could then be sent to the FAA saying, we do have a regional consensus on what we're sending to you. So that is the highest level

overview.

[02:31:07] And at this point, I'm going to ask Jim and or Jason to step in here and kind of fill in any gaps that you think might be helpful or even correct anything that I've said. So go ahead, Jim, if you're on the line.

[02:31:24] Yeah. No, I think you covered it very well from a high level. I think the nuts and bolts of it, like you said, end up being the design group. really the round table itself, and we're calling it a round table, is just meant to ensure that people around the airport have awareness of what's going on. And they're informed that at least the original intent of the scope was that they're informed that nothing that we're

[02:32:01] going to be doing on the west side of the airport should affect them. But the FAA was concerned because they had had some other recent experiences where they did a very localized working group and other citizens within proximity to the airport were not involved and were not informed, and it seemed to backfire on them.

[02:32:26] So they wanted to ensure that, you know, we made every effort to have the surrounding communities involved, at least from the standpoint of reaching a consensus.

[02:32:43] And we're hopeful that in the organizational efforts of this roundtable, and I say roundtable in quotes because it's not a perpetual roundtable in the sense of the word, but more still of a project working group that is formed kind of in the spirit of a roundtable, but it's intended to have a sunset. But once these other community groups have the opportunity

[02:33:15] to see and hear the proposals that we give, it should be fairly obvious to them that what we're proposing will not affect them positively or negatively. I think what we're trying to do is grasp the low-hanging fruit with a very limited scope initially, and should those communities at some point decide that they want greater participation, it would be up to them and their governments to request that

[02:33:52] in maybe a phase two or something like that and do the funding for it. So that's kind of the concept that we have of how this might work. So if it's okay, I'll just keep moving through the presentation. We can do questions afterward. Okay.

[02:34:09] That's fine. Okay. Thank you, Jim. So that was issue number two to discuss, and we will ask for the committee to give a vote on that. Issue number two is the project funding and competitive bid process.

[02:34:24] So with the recency of the meeting between Vineyard and the regional administrator, Vineyard has not yet developed an updated scope of services to show us the cost and time frame to carry out that community roundtable model that we just described. but we do anticipate that the total project cost is likely to exceed \$200,000.

[02:34:44] Now, the significance of that figure is that contracts of that scale would be subject to additional procurement regulations, okay? And a full request for proposals would become necessary if we exceeded that \$200,000 mark.

[02:35:03] The reason to bring this up, processing the RFP can take six months. So if the board seeks to move forward with the community roundtable process, staff would also seek direction to move forward with the RFP process so that we're integrating it into the schedule. Okay.

[02:35:20] So we will ask for the committee to weigh in on that question. So that was issue two out of three. Issue three out of three, dealing with additional consulting assistance or considering it. So staff and

board members have been approached by a firm called the Aloft Group, and that firm provides aviation consulting services.

[02:35:42] So a loft group seeks to come under contract with the county to assist with this FAA community process. So we know that some board members have expressed a desire for a loft group to join the team, and our own consultant, Vionair, has said they are amenable to taking on a subcontractor in the work.

[02:36:03] Granted that they would need to establish a work agreement that's acceptable to both parties, And we would have to work through that following any discussion here. I'll offer that we do have a meeting scheduled for next week to start kind of working through some of those details.

[02:36:21] But the reason for including this question in the staff report and presenting it here is because the principal member of a loft group lives within one of the communities affected by runway 30 departures. And that community will be a participant in the design group, which is, like we described earlier equivalent to that community work group. So this creates a situation where a technical advisor in the process also has a personal interest in the outcome. In the event that the community where this individual lives sees positive results from this process, but that same change, whatever

[02:36:56] it turns out to be, is perceived as a worse outcome for another community, this decision could be seen as a process flaw. So for this reason, we wanted to bring transparency to the question by discussing it at a regular meeting and gaining the committee's guidance on it. So staff consulted with the county attorney on this question, and we understand that from that conversation that this set of circumstances does not constitute a conflict of interest under the Code of Virginia, nor do we perceive any other conflict with the Code of Virginia. In addition, staff and Vionair believe

[02:37:32] that Aloft Group has a valuable industry experience, and bringing that experience to bear in this process could be beneficial if we were to have their participation. So with all that being said, we are asking for the committee to provide us some guidance on that question.

[02:37:51] So that is the staff recommendation, that the committee discuss these project points, and if I can just tie them together very quickly, whether or not to move forward with the community roundtable process. We do end up having to go to the board with that same question because the board's last direction to us was to move forward with the community work groups. So community roundtable process would be superseding the community work group program that we described to the board back in October. Point number two is that if we are moving forward with community roundtable, that we

[02:38:27] will also need very likely to move forward with the RFP process and get that started. And then given those points one and two, discuss and provide project direction regarding this additional consulting assistance. And so that wraps up the staff presentation. Of course, we're here for a discussion. Thank you very much. I appreciate all your hard work on this. Questions? Chair Randall? Thank you. So first a statement. You know, sometimes I hear, and I don't think it's

[02:39:02] correct or fair, people who believe that the board doesn't listen to the community. Well, I will say to this community this time, my gosh, what amazing work you all have been doing in doing it for a long time and I you know I wasn't sure we were going to even get to this point and it is because of the continued focused respectful really well researched community input that we are here right now and you know you have you have made a federal agency

[02:39:39] take notice and look up I don't that almost doesn't happen and you know as much as we tried to be supportive this was community-led and I hope things go very well from here on out but I do want us to stop right here and say the the effort has been phenomenal so thank you. My second thing I will say is if I understand what you're saying correctly this roundtable is required correct? It's not an option. So then everything else that falls, every other question that you

[02:40:19] have asked falls from the required roundtable. So the roundtable we have to do if we're going to go forward. And then the next question is the project funding, the competitive bid process. There's not really options of whether we do that or not. If we do the roundtable, we have to do that. In other words, if we're going to do it all, we're not going to do any of it.

[02:40:42] We're going to stop right here because everything that it falls from the fruit of the tree of having to have the roundtable, if I'm hearing that correctly. Is that correct? I think that would be the most advisable course. If you're doing the roundtable, that's the only way to put forward a proposal to the FAA that they would consider.

[02:41:02] Okay, yeah, yeah. And as far as the individual living in the district, that the outcome, what happens in this, whatever outcome it might be, is not specific to just that one individual. He happens to live there, but it would be of benefit not just to him or his family or close friends.

[02:41:23] It's the community that he happens to live in. So I don't see that as being an issue either. My only one question is you did say, but it would be to detriment of another community. Can you expand on that statement a little bit?

[02:41:38] Right. So it's a hypothetical. Okay. It's the idea, it's a hypothetical that in the event that this process succeeds in shifting a flight path to somewhere else, is that flight path causing- Possibly going to cause- Causing impact somewhere else, or even does that community where that flight path moved over, are they perceiving some sort of worse impact? And they see that one of the technical advisors is living in one of the communities that succeeded in reducing their noise levels.

[02:42:10] So that's really what we're trying to just bring some daylight to, that it's possible that somebody would have that experience and take issue with the process. Mr. Chair, can I ask one real quick question? Sure. So first of all, perception is not reality. People say that I've never bought that. But is it possible that they would have the same type, the same experience to the same intensity and degree that the community is having right now, that this community is having right now, the Birchwood community is having right now? Is it possible that we would

[02:42:50] have whatever the same level of noise is over Birchwood, move that same level of noise over the community? I'm not sure I'm qualified to answer that. I will invite Jim. I'm going to put you on the spot and just ask if you have anything to offer on that point or Jason if you're back yeah I'm back can you hear me you're loud loud and clear okay apologies for uh for for being tardy um yeah so the likely in all likelihood when we're working with the design team

[02:43:26] we would be trying to not do exactly that we would not want to shift noise from one community to another. So that's something that we would look at when we were exploring options. Also, as part of the design and the analysis, we will be able to quantify the reduction in noise from one area and any increased noise should the flight class be shifted. So that will all be data that's

[02:44:03] available to the county before making a decision on whether or not to pursue any of the designs that are recommended from the design team thank you chair turner so thank you for this presentation and i want to echo what um chair randall said i think the community has done an amazing job with the professionalism and the expertise and the knowledge of aviation and the faa i don't think

[02:44:36] we'd be here without the community so um i do think the aloft group brings a perspective that we need to move things forward i don't really see it as a conflict of interest i think um in fact if we don't have them i just don't see us moving um you know i don't see us moving forward as quickly or as positively um without them because i i think they brought us so far to this point and it's positive so I want to keep that momentum going you know the design group I

[02:45:15] think provides kind of that assurance that other communities will have a voice there are lots of other communities listed in the design group so I think it'll be fair and equitable regarding noise impacts during that process one question I had was about MWA do they have a vote or are they a non-voting member. Jason, can you speak up on that point? Yeah, typically we would have them as part of the design team. We usually don't have the airport operator or the FAA as a quote-unquote

[02:45:53] voting member. However, practically speaking, if either MLA, you know, if MLA is looking at the design and says they hate it, then we would probably recommend that the design group make modifications to gain the support of MLAW. And similarly, the FAA, they wouldn't have a vote, but at the end of the day, we really do have to get their acceptance and concurrence for this to move forward. And in our talk, our discussions with the FAA regional administrator, she did say that MLAW's, she didn't say MLAW had to support it, but she didn't say concurrence.

[02:46:34] So in other words, like I said, if MLAW doesn't object to whatever is proposed, then the FAA will consider it. But if AMWA tells the FAA that they don't feel comfortable or whatever, then I think that would be an obstacle for the FAA to accept it and move forward. So they won't be voting members, but they certainly will be in the loop and will be engaged during the process. Yeah. And I think this brings further confirmation that we need the ALAF group because this will be a complex process to bring MOA along, you know, and to find agreement and consensus.

[02:47:12] Who is, I see that we, for the roundtable, it says jurisdictions and key community groups. Are these elected officials or who are these, who are the members of the roundtable?

[02:47:28] And this should go to Jason or Jim. Go ahead. Thanks. I'm happy to take that. Yeah, that would be subject to the decision of a steering committee, but our recommendation would be to leverage elected officials or staff from the jurisdictions in the study area that we would be engaging.

[02:47:54] Okay, so not communities necessarily. We've got those in the design group, right, not the HOAs or the residents, right? that wasn't the proposal that we've developed it's certainly something we didn't modify there's nothing set in stone as to who makes up the uh the round table or the design group the problem with equally relying on residents is you start to get um personal um priorities as opposed to if you're talking to a city manager or a staff person hypothetically they would be

[02:48:31] representing their city or community as a whole, rather than me as a resident who's primarily going to be worried about my house or my neighbor. We kind of tend to want to keep a bigger picture a little bit less emotional and more objective. Okay, thank you. Okay, I got a kind of lightning round here.

Jim from Vineyard, what do we do if MLAW opposes the departure procedure that we design and both Delta and United think it's a perfectly good departure procedure?

[02:49:09] Well, that's always a good question. I mean, does MLA have a veto? I would say from our perspective, we've had some conversations with MLA, and I don't think that they're out to shoot anything down.

[02:49:26] I think that they will act as a conduit to whatever we come up with, and as long as we've done what we've done in the past, which is collaborate with the FAA along the way.

[02:49:43] And if the FAA is telling us, i.e. Potomac TRACON and Dallas Tower is telling us that they don't hate what we're putting forward, then I think it has a better than even chance of getting through the process and getting to implementation. So at this point, I really wouldn't put a lot of time and effort into worrying about MLAs response to this.

[02:50:06] Okay, that makes good sense. And it sounds like you're confident that we can constrain the conversation in the community roundtable to the departure procedures off runway 130, that we won't end up with a whole host of cats and dogs from all around the 10-mile radius about what they don't like about Dulles Airport?

[02:50:30] Well, the design team certainly would be focused on the westbound departures. The community roundtable, quote-unquote roundtable, could try to interject, but I think if we take a lot of good effort in the organizational documents where we restrict the scope to exactly what we're trying to study and say that anything else would be like a phase two kind of thing, then I think you limit the likelihood of something like that.

[02:51:08] What's the likelihood that we approach the jurisdictions within the roundtable and some of the jurisdictions hear the constrained argument that we're really focused on departure off runway 13, runway 30, and they say, well, shoot, that doesn't apply me.

[02:51:25] I'm at Herndon. I'm dropping out. What do we do if we start to lose members of the roundtable because of disinterest? Is that a possibility? Have you encountered that before? Yeah, that's more of a Jason question. Let me have him answer that. Yeah, I'm happy to address that. So I've been using, or we collectively have been using the roundtable terminology, which has, I think, caused some confusion for some folks because the project roundtable is not something comparable to what you might see at another airport or even the CWG.

[02:52:04] The intent of this particular roundtable, the community working group, but simply to be primarily anyway to show the people that are outside of the study area, which is really a small, Jim's just giving me some obvious advice to try to fix.

[02:52:29] The project roundtable will be representative of communities, including the study area where we're designing the procedures. But more importantly, it's going to be those folks outside of that area. And the reason that we have to create that wide, as we've talked about, the 360 degrees, it's simply to make sure that the communities outside of the study area are informed, basically, that here's what's happening.

[02:52:58] And the fact that it won't have any impact on those communities. So if there's communities on the east side, they're like, okay, we see that you're not going to have any impact negative or positive to us on the east side. We don't really want to participate. Then that would be fine. At the end of the day, the goal

of this would be that we get a basically a consensus in writing, you know, or documented that says that all of these communities were advised of the project and they don't they're not in opposition to it they understand that there's no impact to them and there's no opposition what the fa doesn't want to have happen is we do work on the west side

[02:53:38] and then people from the north start complaining that something happened and they weren't told about it or that they're now impacted by it so we want to make sure that they're really it's mostly advising them of what's happening as opposed to asking them for input about the design since it's not going to have any impact, positive or negative, like I said, to their communities.

[02:53:59] Does that answer the question? Yes, it does. That's very good. And I don't see any of the lights on. I'm going to continue on just a couple more quick questions. Define consensus. Is there a formal vote? Is it a majority vote? Is it the sense around the table that just about everybody agrees?

[02:54:15] I mean, how do you define consensus? Yeah, and typically we haven't had, we're usually not super formal. So, generally speaking, it would be like a majority. Again, the goal of or the primary goal of the roundtable beyond engaging the communities who will be impacted, which, again, is just that small section on the west side.

[02:54:42] The big thing is to make sure that they're informed. And so if my guess is, and our intent would be to get a consensus, meaning everybody is either in support of or at least not opposed to the recommendations that would be set forth, you know, set forward to the FAA.

[02:54:58] If somebody, let's say, I'm not as familiar, obviously, with your, with the region as you guys are, but let's say there's a city on the east side of the airport that just said, no, we're opposed to this new departure procedure. And we can show, we being binary, can show that there's no documentation that supports any kind of impact to that community.

[02:55:21] They're just maybe in opposition because they want something changed on their side as well, and that's not part of this particular project. We would just document that and share with the FAA that everybody was supportive of the project or didn't oppose the project except for this community, and the reason that they were opposed is because of XYZ, right?

[02:55:42] It's not because of an impact related to the procedure change. It's related to the fact that we're not resolving any issues on that side of the airport. So I think the FAA would look at that and still be willing to move forward with the recommendations that come out of the group.

[02:55:59] Okay, thank you very much. Any other questions? Very good. And I just want to finish up by thanking Tom and Carolyn personally and professionally on behalf of the TLEC and behalf of the board. You guys have done amazing work for the last two years. We really would not be here without the work that you've done.

[02:56:16] We really do appreciate it. And staff, you've hung with us for the same two years. I know this has been arduous. I knew this was going to be like punching a marshmallow two years ago when the AIOD passed, and it's been that. But we have kept our heads down and plotted forward, and I think with good progress, good, regular, steady progress, and I think it bodes well for the future of this initiative.

[02:56:38] So I really do thank all of you. It's been very great. please thank your staffs as well. With that, I'll make a motion. I move that the Transportation and Land Use Committee recommend that the Board of

Supervisors and Direct Staff to proceed with the community roundtable process as set forth in Attachments 1 and 2. I further move that the Transportation and Land Use Committee recommend that the Board of Supervisors and Direct Staff to initiate the process for a request for proposals to select a contractor that is qualified to implement a community roundtable process.

[02:57:03] I further move that the Transportation and Land Use Committee recommend that the Board of Supervisors and Direct Staff to include the Aloft Group as a subcontractor to Vionair to provide services limited to project management assistance and roundtable facilitation. If you give her one more second tonight, you and I, I mean, but Mr. Crony, okay, you know what?

[02:57:23] If she's not showing up next week, you just don't know why. I'm just kidding. The second will go to the vice chair of the TILA committee. Thank you all. I have no opening comment. Any other discussion on the other? No, thank you very much.

[02:57:39] All those, thank you all very much. All those in favor, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? That motion will pass 401. Next item and final item is the CPAM 20-24-003 project plan for the 2024 review of the Loudoun County 2019 general plan.

[02:57:58] Thank you all very much.

[02:58:50] Thank you all very much. I really appreciate it. You may proceed. Good evening. My name is Rebecca King. I'm a senior planner with DPZ and the project manager for the 2024 review of the 2019 general plan, comprehensive plan amendment, or CPAM. So staff is proposing a review focused on addressing two issues raised in the zoning ordinance rewrite.

[02:59:12] A number of issues staff have identified as we implemented the plan over the past five years and to incorporate the alternative criteria for suburban compact neighborhood based on previous TLUC direction. Going into a little more detail here, for the criteria for Suburban Compact Neighborhood, we are proposing to incorporate the recommendations and revisions that TLUC made in meetings held in 2021 and 2022.

[02:59:43] For expectations for contributions for attainable housing units in proffer statements, our plan is to simply amend the plan and incorporate the board's recently adopted interim guidance. We would like to do some general cleanup in terms of format, graphics, updates to the implementation matrix, as well as adding some clarifying language to various sections and making sure we've got all of our supporting documents like the 2023 energy strategy.

[03:00:13] For infill, we want to ensure our language is consistent throughout the plan, but also refine what we mean by infill when we're talking about the urban policy area, the suburban policy area because we're starting to see more of those applications. For the Unmet Housing Needs Strategic Plan, we would include it as a supporting document so it could be more fully utilized in the review of applications as well as incorporate relevant policy language when appropriate. The last two issues are the ones coming straight from the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite, and they are where we anticipate our stakeholder outreach. So for land in lieu of affordable dwelling units, we would plan

[03:00:53] to meet with the Affordable Dwelling Unit Advisory Board, or AGWAB, and then the Housing Advisory Board, or HAB, to discuss when this idea makes sense for the county and the developer, how we would define it, and any conditions we would set. We would also collaborate closely with the Department of Housing and Community Development. For repurposing of commercial, retail, and or office buildings

to residential use, stakeholder outreach would involve NAOP and NVBIA and potentially other groups to get input on this issue.

[03:01:25] We would look at the new zoning ordinance. We would look at what the general plan envisions, but also existing supply of these uses in the county and best practice and what's being done regionally, but also nationally. And this is one where outcomes are really arranged that we are going to discover.

[03:01:44] It could be a ZOAM. It could be recommendations for incentives or policies, or it could be simply kind of sharing information with the development community and no changes to the general plan. So we would be doing research and policy development, stakeholder outreach, agency and public comment, some interdepartmental efforts as well, like with DHCD.

[03:02:14] We would plan for a county webpage and potentially some online comment options as well. Here is our timeline. So we would be focusing on research and outreach in the summer and fall, hoping to finalize our proposed language in the winter and getting comments on that language, and then coming to the planning commission in February of 2025 and the board by the spring. So it's an 11-month process. And our recommendation is that TLUC recommend approval of the draft project plan or

[03:02:51] that the board recommend approval as provided in attachment one. And I'm glad to address questions thank you all very much questions for staff i can do the questions in a motion or i can do them now either way it's fine with me uh let's go to a motion let's go to a motion any objections seeing none i move the transportation and land use committee recommend that the board of supervisors approve the draft project plan for the 2024 review comprehensive plan amendment provided as attachment one to the april 17th 2024 transportation and land use committee meeting

[03:03:23] action item. Second. Second. Seconded by Chair Randall. Discussion on the item. Thank you, Chair Turner. You had up there on the screen, and thank you for the presentation, first of all. On the screen, you had issues or things that you're going to, that are going to be reviewed and reconsidered, and you had infill up there. So you said for infill, you're going to have the description, you're going to have the definition and the usage.

[03:04:03] So my question is, as part of the Suburban Compact Neighborhood Review, can areas that are designated as Suburban Compact Neighborhood be looked at again to make sure they're correct in the place type description for that area?

[03:04:23] Actually, I'm looking at a couple of areas that are in the Broad Run District. where there are a couple of areas that I think that were designated as suburban compact neighborhood under an infill logic, but they're kind of large, and they're not near mixed use, or they're not near more dense place types with services.

[03:04:54] So I would like to look at them because they don't seem to blend well with the surrounding area. So we'd be happy to look at them. If I could add one piece of context is that this question has come up a lot in the past few months That was actually decision made when we were working on the general plan Initially since we were looking to see where we could add additional housing that anywhere that was relatively large that could have significant density brought out of it that that was Quite often a place that suburban compact neighborhood was recommended So by all means we can look at it and if the board so choose that we can change those designations but that was the original thinking five years ago about why you're seeing some of those on the maps.

[03:05:34] Okay. Interesting. Okay. Related to the infill, I will just say, currently the general plan considers infill for urban policy area as five acres or less. For suburban policy area as a whole, the general plan says 20 acres or less. Staff are going to look at that.

[03:05:51] I'm not saying we may come back and say based on our research that's the right range or amount. We may have recommendations to change that in the general plan. So that will be part of this effort is to determine, given where we are now, five years later, what's the right size for something to be evaluated as infill just by itself.

[03:06:10] Okay, I have another question. So how can we schedule a comprehensive countywide transportation review beyond what is slated to be amended through this review? There are several items in the CTP that have come up over the last several years that I think we need to look at.

[03:06:36] So I think we're going to defer that to DTCL. I'd be happy to work with the board, the committee on that, if there are specifics. But we can certainly work that into a work program. And potentially, let me just stop for a second.

[03:07:00] Let me back up. Depending on the nature of the proposed changes, which I'm not familiar with specifically what you're referring to, but, I mean, if it's more cleanup items, it might go quicker than additional analysis changes, but would be happy to work with the committee and to do that.

[03:07:27] Thank you. May I add one thing to that? Because as questions have come about the CTP, we've tried to loop in DTCL to an increasing amount. But I do think at some point, it would be useful to hear from all members of the board to see what their specific concerns are. Because I know from briefings, not about the CTP, but other topics, some of you have, in my opinion, very large CTP changes you might like to see about removing lanes of roads, if a road should keep a certain designation, and others can be much simpler than that.

[03:07:56] But the more of those large requests there are, the larger the project, the larger the scope, the more potential DTCL might need some additional consulting help, things of that nature. Madam Chair. Yeah, you think it would be helpful to maybe, you know, we're planning a transit summit to maybe do something later with the transportation summit.

[03:08:16] Maybe we can have all those discussions at one time at that time, something like that. We can talk about how to do that in a way that is helpful to all the board members and also not the heaviest lift on the staff, too.

[03:08:36] So, Lou, how about you and I try to look at some times and see how we can work that out? Absolutely. I'd be happy to do that, yes. Okay, wonderful. Two questions. I do think that the repurposing of commercial land and retail and office to residential buildings, That's important to do because, you know, I've named that a thousand times in a thousand different ways, but the word repurpose is a great word.

[03:08:59] I didn't hear you say, and maybe I missed it. If I did, I apologize. I didn't hear you say, loop in the ED, Mr. Rice's office, to that discussion. So I did not say it in my presentation. I have already been talking with Alex Gonski about this review and keeping them in the loop and vice versa.

[03:09:15] So we're collaborating and we would continue that. I do apologize for that. No, no, no, don't apologize. I just wanted to make sure. So I do want to revisit infill property, especially in the suburban policy area. 20 seems like a bit much, actually.

[03:09:31] And we can do a lot with infill property as it relates to the strategic housing plan and attainable housing. So I'm really glad we're revisiting that. Do we need to revisit? I know we had a public lands survey, and I don't really remember after we did the public land survey what we did with it.

[03:09:55] Do we need to do anything with that or revisit that or look at that in any way? So public land is something that when housing was in family services, they kind of spearheaded that and then worked with relevant departments on that. And it is a very large part of the unmet housing needs strategic plan.

[03:10:13] I can't remember if it's strategy two or objective two or three. But it's very much in their kind of lane for implementing the plan to look at the data in the county on public land and how we could utilize that going forward. But that's yes or no part of the CPAM review?

[03:10:30] Public land would not be part of this. Okay, okay. Then I'll go take another read at that and I'll look at that again. Thanks so much. Great job. Madam Vice Chair. Yeah, thank you, Chair Turner. And thank you, staff. So I wanted to ask, it looks like that there's no fiscal impact for this item.

[03:10:52] But I was wondering, I mentioned on a call that I wonder if we should revise some of the Tischler-Bice data that, you know, looking at residential development potential and associated fiscal impacts overall, because I thought that was an excellent data set during the 2019 comp plan.

[03:11:17] And it really helped decision making, I think for the board. So I don't know if that's something that can be done using it as a baseline and just updating it. I don't know if that's part of the plan to leverage some consulting work that was done during the 2019 comp plan.

[03:11:34] - So I definitely would agree that it would be good to update that at some point. I would not recommend doing that as part of this project. And forgive me, I don't remember which board members I've said this to in different meetings. Right now, the biggest remapping that we will have will come from the data center CPAM once we look at where data centers should and shouldn't go and any other changes we make to place types then.

[03:11:55] So at that point, knowing once the board adopts what comes out of that, those new maps, I think, would be the best time to look at that data again, potentially, so that there would actually be a significant amount of it that's new, that's new enough to run and see what different outcomes we might have. Okay.

[03:12:11] Okay, but not during this process. Yes. And I saw in your write-up, and this I agree with, is that you won't be reviewing the 2019 countywide transportation plan as part of this CPAM, but there could be a potential update to the 2019 CTP, countywide transportation plan, during the review of the 2024, or during the DPZ work plan.

[03:12:39] Is that something that I could expect? because I do have a lot of systematic roads that I'd like to look at, lane changes, roads removed. And that's just in the Little River District. So I do think that we need to look at the countywide transportation plan as like a separate item on the work plan.

[03:12:58] Is that what you were thinking? Yes, and I think the conversation Mr. Moserak was having with the chair was to have that conversation and kind of query all the board members at some point sooner than later. Yeah, and it's not just a one-off, because I have a lot that I want looked at because I felt like in 2019 it really wasn't looked at um that's county-wide transportation plan as much during that process so

and then lastly um the repurposing of commercial retail and office buildings to residential use so i would support that if it was part of the continuum of affordable housing

[03:13:35] um like including missing middle so i would not support it for market value housing but i'm just wondering if that's something we could look into is kind of providing that continuum so it would absolutely be something we would look at as we look at potential policies or incentives around that issue I think what we have seen in other jurisdictions and so far in my research is that converting especially office is very strategic there are you have to have the right either age of office or the right location for it to be feasible to convert that to residential because

[03:14:13] it can be very expensive. So doing 100% affordable will be challenging. Some jurisdictions haven't even required it at all. I don't see us being like that. I think we would stick with our chapter nine requirements. So we would at minimum deliver 10 or 15% affordable in any new residential that was created. And we could look at ways to incentivize, including more affordable housing in any conversion. I do think there would be cost issues, especially around office. I think they found with hotels and certain strip malls those might be easier to convert in some ways

[03:14:47] um less expensive but cost is a real factor for this topic so we'll be looking at that okay thank you mr hemstreet uh thank you mr chair i just given the the discussion from tuck uh as well as uh what mr galindo has said i do think it would be appropriate if the tuck is so disposed to add to your motion a recommendation to the board that the comprehensive or I'm sorry the countywide transportation plan be added to the DPZ work plan as a formal item and then prioritized I guess the next quarterly

[03:15:26] update or however we want to do that because I do think it's important for the board to say that and then obviously that also provide you know Chair Randall to be able to follow up with DTCI directly in terms of how that might come together but I do think if TLUK's so inclined that you should add that to your recommendation.

[03:15:49] Thank you. Ms. Glass. Oh, wait, I can get to ask questions now. My impression is that the general consensus, this is our first shot at the 2019 plan, so there's cleanup involved, there's some streamlining and precision that we want to add in, there's some issues that have bubbled up that we can take care of fairly quickly as part of this process, so we're going to wrap that up.

[03:16:13] in the next update which presumably is well i'll ask how far out once that's i assume where we go into the rotational updates and when would that first rotation occur do you think so once once this project is completed and hopefully in 11 months then we would bring the next plan forward for another policy area probably as the basis maybe with some additional ideas on top of that between now and then at one of the quarterly meeting one of the quarterly updates we will We'll bring a proposal to the board that at least lays out the outline of what that might look like over an extended period.

[03:16:49] We'll also see at this meeting next month when we're looking at the Western Loudoun CPAM if there is a desire to look more broadly at the RPA or to keep it more narrowly focused on some topics. Okay. And if I can just suggest, it would be helpful.

[03:17:09] It's always good for the board to have, for board members to have something to react to. So if you say we're going to look at this and this and this in the first iteration of the rotating schedule, please look at these sections, almost like we do with the CIP area. Look at these sections. If you have

recommended changes, please let us know what you think those are so we can look at those things as we evaluate these sections.

[03:17:30] And that way the board and the staff are all focused on that specific work product within that time frame. I think that's just a suggestion, nothing other than that. This is great work. I'm glad we're moving forward on this. Yeah, supervised glass.

[03:17:46] Thank you, Chair Turner. And thank you, Mr. Hemstreet, because that was going to be my next question, because I wanted to see if we could make a motion to move that. Okay, okay. And what I plan to do is just add a further move onto the existing motion to do that.

[03:18:06] Okay, wonderful. Because we're already in a motion. I'm sorry. Chair recognizes, chair recognizes. I'm sorry, habit, habit, my bad, nothing, I'm good, I'm fine. Mr. Hamstreet, I was just going to say if super I was a glass one to offer friendly that would be another way of a call Very good. Very good. Thank you. Very good. You're absolutely right. That's right. I'm already in motion. Thank you. That was my bad That's why I'm the tea lecture not the chair. Yes, I am to make it friendly make the friendly It was I further move Okay, so I'm just I would like to

[03:18:45] direct staff to add to the Department of Planning and Zoning. I recommend that the Board of Supervisors direct staff to add to the Department of Planning and Zoning work plan a review of the county transportation plan, but not to adjust the timeline or priority of the projects already on the work plan.

[03:19:09] So she doesn't need a second. It's a friendly. It's a friendly. So the motion, make her the motion, which is you, have to accept the friendly. I accept the friendly. And then I have to accept the friendly because it's just a friendly. Okay, thank you. So, yes. Why do you have to accept it? Because I was the seconder of the motion. Okay, sorry. I'm out of control up here.

[03:19:27] The chair is completely right. Everything she said. Everything she said. Any discussion? We don't have any discussion on the friendly. No, we don't have any discussion, and we're in a motion. I need to get out of this as I can get out of this. Any other discussion on the motion?

[03:19:45] Madam Vice Chair, is there a line on for a reason? Okay, great. all those in favor of the motion please say aye any opposed hearing none that motion will pass 401 thank you god uh and i think we're done very good thank you all very much that was very good uh i promised before nine it's 8 14 so thank you all have a very pleasant evening great work everybody



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