

City of Falls Church

Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation

DATE: January xx, 2016

TO: Mayor Tarter and Members of the City Council

FROM: Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation

SUBJECT: 2016 Annual Report of the Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation

Introduction

This report summarizes the calendar year 2016 activities of the Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation (CACT) and its priorities for 2017.

City Council established the CACT in 1976 to study and advise Council, the Planning Commission, and the City Manager on “matters related to the transportation of people.” In 2000, Council expanded the CACT’s responsibilities to include the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. This program authorizes the CACT to receive petitions from residents, conduct hearings, evaluate data, and recommend solutions to the City Manager to improve safety on residential streets.

Council appoints seven voting members and a non-voting youth representative to the CACT. The voting members are: Paul Baldino, Chair; Hal Morgan, Vice-Chair; Bill Ackerman; Andrea Caumont; Doug Devereaux; Addison Heard; and Stephen Knight. Bhaskar Singhvi is the youth representative. The Committee’s Council Liaison is Karen Oliver.

The CACT is supported by and works together with a City Interdisciplinary Team appointed by the City Manager. The members are Jeff Sikes, Development Services; Stephanie Rogers, Public Works; and Major Richard Campbell, Police.

Recommendations to Council

1. Neighborhood Traffic Calming

Fund a recurring Capital Improvement Program (CIP) line item of \$xxx,xxx for Neighborhood Traffic Calming (NTC) and increase staffing from xxxxx to xxxxx positions to address the backlog of citizen petitions.

- The FY2017-2021 Adopted CIP included annual funding of \$200,000 for NTC, but no funds were appropriated in the FY17 Adopted Budget. However, at its November 28, 2016 meeting, Council allocated \$200,000 of unexpended FY16 budgeted funds to traffic calming, including the NTC Program.

- Staff projects the expenditure of \$xxx,xxx on traffic calming projects in FY17. This will be a mix of xx. Spending per project is expected to be:

Parker Ave./Kent St.	<u>\$xxx,xxx</u>
Pennsylvania Ave.	<u>\$xxx,xxx</u>
North Maple Ave.	<u>\$xxx,xxx</u>
Total:	<u>\$xxx,xxx</u>
- One full time staff position is assigned to NTC. This position has other transportation-related duties as well. Because each case requires extensive public engagement and coordination of contractors for traffic counts, design, and construction, this position manages two active NTC cases at a time.
- Currently (December 2016), there are xxxxxxxx pending NTC cases, so it would take xxxx years to eliminate the backlog even if no additional traffic calming petitions are submitted. If xxx full time positions were assigned to the traffic calming program, the existing backlog could be eliminated in xxxx years.

2. Bicycle Education Campaign

Develop a bicycle education program to prepare residents for increasing bicycle use on City streets and sidewalks.

- The City has demonstrated its commitment to bicycling as a transportation mode through its investment in sharrows, bike lanes, an intersection bike box, bike racks, and soon, Capital Bike Share stations. This will add to the already noticeable increase in bicycling on Falls Church’s streets, sidewalks, and the W&OD Trail.
- To encourage cycling, assure the safety of cyclists, and minimize conflicts with drivers and pedestrians, the City should develop an education campaign to include press releases, brochures, web pages, and possibly videos. The campaign might have two parts:
 - For drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists: Clear explanations of traffic laws and the principles of sharing streets and sidewalks.
 - For cyclists: Information on helmets, equipment safety checks, bicycling in traffic, positioning in traffic lanes and intersections, signaling, hazard avoidance maneuvers, and riding at night.

2016 Highlights

1. Resource Commitment

After the decision not to fund NTC in the FY17 Adopted Budget, the CACT appreciates Council’s action in November to fund traffic calming at the full amount requested for the fiscal year. **(Any staffing or other resource changes in 2016 worth mentioning?)**

2. Application of the Revised Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program

FY16 was the first application of the revised Neighborhood Traffic Calming (NTC) Program. The new program provides for:

- Greater neighborhood engagement in identifying problems and solutions
- Consideration of traffic volume, roadway design deficiencies, and proximity to pedestrian generators in addition to traffic speed
- Prioritization of requests based on estimated risk

- Identification of solutions, such as traffic signals and signs, that can be implemented by the Department of Public Works without community engagement
- Options to implement light solutions (e.g., narrowing travel lanes with pavement marking or installing speed feedback signs) that are less expensive and can be implemented relatively quickly instead of heavy solutions (e.g., speed tables and curb extensions) that require greater community engagement and more time to design and install

North Maple Avenue and ***(Name of street if decision made at the Dec 2016 CACT meeting)*** were the first cases selected under the revised program.

3. Administration of the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program

a. Parker Avenue & Kent Street Intersection

This project was completed in October 2015 with the construction of curb extensions and painting of crosswalks.

Staff plans an after-action report to assess the effectiveness of the actions taken in 2014 (pedestrian crossing signs, striping, and painted crosswalks) and the subsequent construction of curb extensions to compare the effectiveness of light solutions versus heavy solutions. The report will review the process and identify improvement opportunities for future projects.

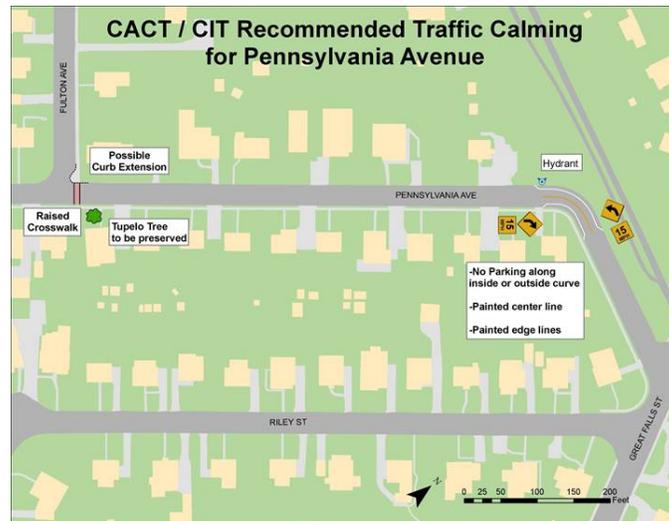


Parker Ave. & Kent St.

b. Pennsylvania Avenue

This project was completed in November 2016. It includes the painting of centerline and edge lines, advisory speed limit signs, a curb extension and raised crosswalk at the Fulton Avenue intersection, plantings, and the elimination of parking on the curve leading to Great Falls Street.

(Is a photo or better graphic available?)



Pennsylvania Ave.

c. North Maple Avenue

In September 2016, crosswalks were painted across North Maple at West Columbia Street, at the Columbia Baptist Church parking lot, and across James Thurber Court and Garden Court. Curb extensions and crosswalks were painted at the Great Falls Street intersection and parking lanes were painted along both sides of North Maple.

In Spring 2017, physical curb extensions will be constructed across North Maple at the West Columbia Street intersection and a speed table will be installed mid-block.

(Insert N. Maple photo or graphic)

d. Pending Cases

XXXXXXXXXX petitions are pending: North Cherry Street, Little Falls Street, South West Street, Great Falls Street, South Spring Street, Grove Avenue, South Spring Street, West Marshall Street, North Virginia Avenue, and Jackson Street. Data collection has been completed for North Cherry, Little Falls, South West, Great Falls, and Grove. ***(List to be updated after Dec CACT meeting.)***

4. Project Accomplishments

a. Play Streets



With enthusiastic support from the Departments of Public Works and Recreation and Parks, the Play Street program began in 2016. This is the temporary closing of a neighborhood street to traffic so kids can have a safe place to play ball, ride bikes, skate, dance, and enjoy other informal play activities.

There have already been four Play Street events:

- May 14 North Virginia Avenue and Riley Street
- June 24 Pine Street
- August 19 Fulton Avenue
- September 29 Fulton Avenue

Staff has developed a simple set of rules and a no-cost permit process for Play Street events, adding a fun, safe, and community-building recreational opportunity for the City’s children and adults.



b. Neighborhood Pace Car Program



Under this program, volunteers sign a pledge to drive within the speed limit, stop for pedestrians, drive courteously, and display a Pace Car sticker on their vehicles, thereby “setting the pace” and acting as mobile speed bumps.

Staff learned that the District of Columbia has implemented the Pace Car program in partnership with the Washington Area Bicyclists Association. The District has granted permission to modify

its program brochure and sticker for use by Falls Church, and Development Services is funding the printing of these materials. A copy of the District's program brochure is provided as Attachment 1.

A CACT member has met with the Falls Church Elementary PTA and received support for the program and agreement to assist in the distribution of stickers and brochures when they are printed.

c. Residential Zone Parking Permits



The Residential Zone Parking Permit Program was established in 2016. Residents of the designated zone with vehicles registered with the Commissioner of Revenue are eligible for a zone parking permit and visitor passes. The first zone parking area is the Winter Hill neighborhood.

Planning staff led many community meetings to develop zone boundaries, procedures, hours of restricted parking, and fines for violations. Staff procured vehicle decals, developed decal distribution procedures, and ordered and coordinated the installation of parking signs.

Residents of other neighborhoods interested in modifying or creating parking restrictions may submit a request under the new program.

d. Walkability Survey

The CACT developed a survey for use by residents to assess and score the walkability of the commercial areas of Broad and Washington Streets on factors such as room to walk, condition of sidewalks, ease of crossing streets, and comfort and appeal of the walking experience.

With considerable staff support, the survey was conducted on the City website and in paper form from October 17 through November 20, 2016. A copy of the print survey is provided as Attachment 2.

(Awaiting survey results.)

A similar survey was proposed in January 2016 to assess the bikeability of the City's sharrow-marked streets (then limited to Park Avenue, Maple Avenue, and West Street) and the W&OD

Trail. During 2016 the City significantly increased bike routes and lanes, and committed to the installation of Bike Share stations. The CACT decided to defer the bikeability survey until after the new infrastructure is in place.

e. W&OD Trail Projects

The Mason Row developer will rebuild two street crossings – Park Avenue and Grove Avenue. The Park Avenue intersection will connect to a new traffic signal. The Grove Avenue intersection will be realigned and the roadway narrowed.

The City is actively seeking grant funds to implement pilot projects, such as the Walter Mess/Oak Street Plaza, in support of the W&OD Trail Master Plan.

(Insert graphic)

f. Bike-to-Work Day

Three hundred and twenty-three cyclists registered for the May 20th Falls Church Pit Stop at the Little Falls Street crossing of the W&OD Trail. Registrations in the last few days before the event are not included in this number. Cyclists were rewarded with t-shirts, food, games, and prizes. Local merchants and others participated, including Bikekinetic, Local Market, 24-hour Fitness, and even a church offering a Blessing of the Bikes.

Arlington County's electromagnetic pedestrian/bike counter on the trail near the fire station provides a more complete count and shows the volume of bike and pedestrian traffic on the trail. On Friday, May 20th:

- Inbound & outbound: 6:00am - 9:30am
 - Bikes = 926
 - Bikes + pedestrians = 1057
- Inbound & outbound: 12:00am – 11:59pm
 - Bikes = 2571
 - Bikes + pedestrians = 3089



g. Broadened Perspective

Attempting to better understand the context of City transportation issues, CACT members have increased interaction with other boards, authorities, and commissions, and participated in Citywide taskforces and regional transportation meetings. In 2016, this included:

- Joint meeting with the Economic Development Authority
- Membership in the Streetscape Taskforce
- City Council Retreat
- Community Vision Workshops
- Public Hearings on the Budget and CIP
- VDOT's Transform I-66 Public Hearings
- Route 7 Corridor Transit Study
- Falls Church Elementary PTA
- Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority Board of Directors
- VPIS Meetings

2017 Action Items

1. Refine the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program

With the recent completion of the first project under the revised NTC program (North Maple Avenue) and the forthcoming staff report on the effectiveness of light solutions versus heavy solutions at the Parker/Kent intersection, the CACT plans a thorough review of the NTC process and examination of alternatives to improve the program administration and expedite the delivery of effective and cost-efficient solutions.

2. Parklets

The CACT plans to study and report to Council on the suitability of Parklets for Falls Church. Parklets convert one or more on-street parking spaces into public open space. They can preserve walking space while providing sidewalk cafés, seating space near businesses, recreational amenities, and public art. Parklets are privately funded and maintained by a hosting business or organization but provide public space accessible to all.

The City may find parklets to be well-suited to secondary streets adjacent to the commercial corridors.



Cities around the world, including Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Chicago, London, São Paulo, Montreal, and Vancouver have installed parklets and report that they encourage walking and biking and create more inviting commercial districts.

Conclusion

CACT members appreciate the opportunity to serve our City by improving the safety and effectiveness of the transportation network. We look forward to assisting Council, the Planning Commission, and the City Manager in creatively addressing the challenges of increasing population and travel demand.

Attachments:

1. Neighborhood Pace Car Program Brochure
2. Walkability Survey Form

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