

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION (CACT)

Wednesday, April 14, 2021, Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams, 7:00 – 10:00 p.m.

DRAFT MINUTES

1. **Call to Order:** Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm
2. **Reading of Virtual Meeting Notice:** This meeting was held via electronic communications using ‘Microsoft Teams.’ This meeting was held pursuant to and in compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Section 2.2-3708.2 and state and local legislation adopted to allow for continued government operation during the COVID-19 declared emergency.
3. **Roll Call:**
 - **CACT Members:** Dave Gustafson (Chair), Jason Garman (Vice Chair), Arthur Agin, Shaun Dakin, Doug Devereaux, Jessica Hegenbart, Andrew Olesen
 - **City Staff:** Jeff Sikes (CACT Staff Liaison), Cameron Gahres, Kerri Oddenino, Behailu Kifle
 - **City Council Liaison:** Councilman David Snyder
 - **Planning Commission Liaison:** Melissa Teates
 - **Student Representative:** Annie Moore
 - **Public:** Vince Yi (Toole Design)

Councilman Snyder provided updates on the following items:

- **MWCOG:** The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments has set environmental goals for industry sectors; the transportation sector, while improving, is not currently meeting those goals. Electrification of vehicle fleets would be a big step towards doing so.
- **NTC:** Councilman is looking for ways to obtain larger blocks of funding for neighborhood traffic calming to more comprehensively complete projects off the list. He mentioned limited staff time in overseeing design/construction as a factor limiting speed of completion of listed projects.
- Jess asked about bottlenecks in the NTC process and Councilman Snyder is working to identify and improve.
- Art asked about ways for the City to break the “chicken or the egg” cycle on electric vehicle charging infrastructure by being more aggressive in negotiating with developers for larger commitments on infrastructure to be included in major proposed mixed-use development projects.
- Dave mentioned the discussion at the most recent City Council meeting about submitting projects as community requests to Congressman Beyer for earmark consideration. The four priorities the City has identified for these requests are utility/stormwater infrastructure, affordable housing, electric vehicle chargers and buses for the schools, and smart city technology for traffic signals.
- Councilman Snyder commented that bus rapid transit on Route 7 is also a broader regional priority.
- Councilman Snyder asked the committee to think about the identification of a priority hierarchy for proposed transportation projects should reasonable funding be available.

Melissa provided brief updates on the West End, Founders Row II, and One City Center projects in various stages of applications. Melissa also discussed mid-block pedestrian signals projects on Broad St, as well as various ongoing/upcoming improvements on S Washington St, W Annandale Rd, S Maple Ave areas.

4. **Public Comment:** Jeff reported that no public comments were received in writing, and no members of the public offered comment during the meeting.
5. **Staff Presentation: Berman Park Trail Crossings Project:** Kerri presented an update on the Berman Park project, which is currently at the conceptual planning, pre-30% design level. The trail crossings to be addressed by the project are at three locations:

- **Kent St & Ellison St:** Staff prefers Option 2, with less pavement, shorter crossing distances, and a realignment of Kent for a perpendicular intersection with Ellison. CACT members asked about the viability of including a sidewalk on the west side of Ellison given the number of obstructions, and about coordination/integration with Founders Row II proposed improvements in the area of the Ellison St & S West St intersection.
- **Irving St:** Staff prefers Option 1, favoring the simplicity of the curb extensions to reduce crossing distance over a center median. Doug asked about the parking prohibition signs in the area, and Vince explained that the locations of the signs and corresponding roadway striping is to provide for adequate sight distance for drivers approaching the crosswalk.
- **S Spring St:** Option 2, with perpendicular crossings and a single curb bump-out, is preferred by staff over Option 1 due to center median / snowplow conflicts, and over Option 3 due to property line / vegetation constraints at the southeast corner of the intersection. Additionally, CACT members questioned whether users would follow the new crosswalk given that the path does not align. Dave asked about streetlight improvements in the area given nighttime events at the Boy Scout building, and Andrew asked about whether committing to an option with a large curb bump-out would preclude the City from future on-street bike lanes as prescribed for S Sprint St in the City's Bicycle Master Plan.

6. **Action Item: Recommendations on Racial and Socioeconomic Equity in Transportation:** Dave presented the draft memo in response to Council's request for a review and response to the City Council Work Plan and Equity Review from all boards and commissions.

- Jess asked for further information about the Residential Street Access Policy. Jeff responded that the City Manager's current position is that while there are some streets that are grandfathered into this arrangement, it is the City's current preference to manage the traffic in place with traffic calming rather than attempt to redirect it for a variety of reasons, including equitable access and enforcement.
- There was additional discussion about the recently signed HB 1903 and potential mention/inclusion under Traffic Safety even though it is not specifically called out in the City Council Work Plan and Equity Review. Jeff explained that the requirements for the level of engineering study prior to reducing a speed limit may vary from as little as before/after traffic counts to something much more robust. Jeff also mentioned that the potential process for stakeholder engagement is undetermined.
- Jason motions to include HB 1903 statement in the memo to Council, Doug seconds, motion passes 7-0. The proposed text was: *The CACT supports efforts for Council to investigate the authority bestowed upon the City in HB 1903 to reduce speed limits on City streets and looks forward to participating in City efforts to develop a program or mechanism for the City to determine which streets to evaluate for potential speed limit reductions.*
- Jess motions to approve the memo for submittal to Council, Andrew seconds, motion passes 7-0.

7. **Action Item: Sidewalk Program Recommendations:** Dave presented a first draft memo for potential Council submittal on the sidewalk program recommendations. Substantial member discussion occurred on similarities/differences of how this program should be handled compared to NTC.

- Doug notes one big difference is that there aren't really "soft" or temporary solutions to sidewalks in the way that NTC offers a range of possible options. A sidewalk is either constructed or it's not.
- Jess expressed concern about the sidewalk program being street resident-driven since sidewalks are a public good that serve many users beyond just those who live on the street. While residents' concerns should be heard and addressed, a small minority of residents should not have outsized influence on the process. Jess also suggested that non-residents of the street should have equal ability to propose and advocate for sidewalk projects.
- Art discussed usability concerns for new sidewalks and that segment continuity, utility conflicts, and trip hazards should all be reviewed in addition to ADA compliance. Art concurred with Jess on neighborhood support considerations and suggested that a specific percentage range of support needed should be established.
- Andrew agreed and said that a no-response should not be counted as a no vote.

- The members agreed to postpone a vote on submittal to Council until further refinements to the memo could be made.
8. **Discussion Item: CACT representatives for Founders Row II, West Falls, and 1 City Center projects:** Jason and Art gave brief updates on the Founders Row II and West Falls meetings respectively (the One City Center meeting is upcoming on April 21). Jason expressed interest in being the CACT liaison for One City Center, while Art would continue with West Falls and Andrew would keep tabs on Founders Row II.
 9. **Neighborhood Traffic Calming Updates: Greenway Downs and Great Falls/Little Falls:** Jeff gave brief updates on two NTC projects:
 - **Greenway Downs:** Letters went out to residents this week, and staff is working to identify resident representatives by street.
 - **Great Falls/Little Falls:** The project is being broken up into two pieces and re-voted on by residents to hopefully increase chances of approval.
 10. **CACT Tracking Sheet:** Doug added some updates to the sheet and asked that any comments be sent his way via Dave to be further updated for the May meeting.
 11. **Staff Report:** Jeff updated the committee on an upcoming meeting with Grove Avenue residents regarding the proposed locations for 3 speed humps that are included as part of the Founders Row development.
 12. **Member Reports:**
 - Jess discussed interest in taking holistic approach to review of transportation issues surrounding Thomas Jefferson elementary school and potential ways in which that could be approached.
 - Dave mentioned that May 5 is Walk/Bike to School Day
 13. **Adjourn:** Doug motions to adjourn, Art seconds, motion passes 7-0 at 10:45pm.