



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

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DATE: Jan. 12, 2022
TO: Mayor and Members of City Council
FROM: Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation
SUBJECT: CACT Annual Report for 2021 and 2022 Goals

Here are highlights of the Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation's (CACT) 2021 efforts and its priorities for 2022.

Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program

The CACT continued to help City staff administer the Neighborhood Traffic Calming (NTC) program. Recent accomplishments include:

- Fall construction of wider sidewalks, bumpouts, and new crosswalks for Great Falls/Little Falls NTC project that reflects many community suggestions after 5+ year effort
- CACT approval of South Lee/South Oak Street NTC Project
- Ongoing community engagement efforts in the Greenway Downs neighborhood and Lawton Street.

CACT is following through with its 2021 goal of evaluating and refining the NTC program with a lessons-learned discussion from the Great Falls/Little Falls project and seeking former CACT Chair Paul Baldino's perspectives on the most recent review and update to the NTC. CACT expects to share recommended NTC improvements with Council in 2022.

Protected Bike Lane Recommendations

After its February joint meeting with the Environmental Sustainability Council (ESC) that focused on key bicycle issues in Falls Church, CACT delivered [Recommended Locations to Construct Protected Bike Lanes](#) in June to help Council accomplish its [2020-2022 Work Plan](#) goal of installing one mile of protected bike lanes.

1.8 miles of protected bike lanes are readily implementable:

- Park Avenue from N. West Street to Washington Boulevard (0.9 miles)
- S. Maple Ave. from Broad St. to Fairfax St. (0.2 miles)
- Annandale Road from Washington St. to Big Chimneys Park (0.2 miles)
- Hillwood Ave. from Cherry St. to Washington St. (0.5 miles)

1.3 more miles of protected bike lanes would critical transportation links:

- S. Oak St. (or S. Lee St.) from Broad St. to Seaton Lane (0.5 miles)
- Little Falls from the W&OD Trail to Broad St. (0.5 miles)
- Great Falls from West St. to Riley St. (0.3 miles)

Falls Church is fortunate to be home to a new bicycle superhighway with the W&OD Dual Trails project and the new bike bridge over Washington Street. Now we need to construct the arterial bicycle infrastructure across Falls Church that will safely connect trail users with the rest of the City's parks, businesses, and amenities.

Bike lanes are one of the simplest, most cost-effective ways to accomplish six of the eight core values set out in [Falls Church Vision 2040](#), namely:

- Small-Town Character in an Urban Setting
- Economic Sustainability
- Environmental Sustainability
- Inclusiveness and Social Sustainability
- Mobility and Accessibility
- Public Health and Safety

Bike lanes add promote economic activity, help achieve decarbonization efforts that fight climate change, strengthen connections between neighbors and neighborhoods, ease traffic congestion, improve air quality, reduce noise, improve public health, and so much more.

Learn more about the benefits other cities have enjoyed by prioritizing bike lanes construction:

- [The Case for Funding Bike Infrastructure](#): It's about climate change, public health, and economic development (Vox, 2021)
- [The Complete Business Case for Converting Street Parking Into Bike Lanes](#) (Bloomberg, 2015)
- [Protected Bike Lanes Mean Business: How 21st Century Transportation Networks Help New Urban Economies Boom](#) (PeopleForBikes and Alliance for Biking & Walking)

Neighborhood Sidewalk and Accessibility Program Recommendations

Council's [2020-2022 Work Plan](#) calls for creating a Sidewalk Plan: "Develop a plan with funding to complete all missing links for sidewalks; and remove barriers that impair accessibility on existing sidewalks."

With Council's goal in mind, CACT continued its 2020 discussions about guiding principles for a citizen-led neighborhood sidewalk program. As the Work Plan correctly notes, the City must also prioritize making existing sidewalks accessible. In June, CACT delivered its recommended [Guiding Principles for Neighborhood Sidewalk and Accessibility Program](#), which recommended guiding principles for such a program, as well as:

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- Critical framing questions
- Prioritization matrix
- Decision-making guidance

CACT also recommends flexibility in terms of placement of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure based on ease of construction, to make best use of funds, and to protect mature trees.

Safer Routes to Schools

The joint meeting between the CACT and the ESC in February also raised questions about whether there were safe options for students to safely bicycle to the middle and high schools.

In May, CACT delivered its [Evaluations and recommendations for safer bicycle routes to middle and high schools](#) to Council.

Over the summer, Vice Mayor Connelly convened a Safe Routes to School Working Group that included City staff, school staff, school group, CACT members, and other key stakeholders. The group discussed how best it could encourage safe walking and biking to City schools and posted recommended walking and biking routes for all schools on the [transportation section of the Falls Church City Public Schools' website](#). Those resources were heavily promoted in newsletters and social media as well.

In September, Vice Mayor Connelly provided an update to the CACT on the successful map effort, as well as the new Tiger Trail signs for Oak Street Elementary.

Equity

In April, CACT submitted its [Comments on City Council Work Plan and Equity Review](#) (summary from Sept. 20 work session). Its recommendations included:

- Ensuring that City transportation programs address needs of communities that may not have the resources or time to advocate for themselves
- Enhancing safety and convenience of transit in the City
- Enhancing safety and convenience of pedestrian and cycling facilities in the City
- Reviewing City street names, buildings, streams, and other public places to identify the person being honored and rename any that do not promote equity
- Improving the pedestrian experience along South Washington

Development Project Input

CACT continues to follow the latest designs of these proposed projects and provide input focused on transportation safety and increased multimodal transit:

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- Founders Row II
- Broad and Washington
- One City Center
- West End
- Greening Lincoln Avenue
- Maple and Annandale roundabout
- Great Streets Park Avenue

Collaboration

CACT members regularly collaborated with other City groups, including members of City Council, Planning Commission, ESC, the Stormwater Task Force, the Urban Forestry Commission, schools groups, local students, and nearby jurisdictions to ensure information-sharing and provide opportunities to discuss projects that could have win-win potential for multiple stakeholder groups, such as the Greening Lincoln Avenue project having potential for traffic, stormwater, tree canopy, placemaking, and other benefits.

Michelle Stafford, AICP, Arlington's Neighborhood Complete Streets program manager, presented to CACT in the fall about the county's evolving efforts to improve transportation safety.

2022 Goals

- Collaborate with ESC and other stakeholders to host demonstration bike lane event on Park Avenue
- Work with Council and staff to identify areas for improved pedestrian and cyclist safety, including sidewalks and building protected bike lanes
- Administer and refine the Neighborhood Traffic Calming program
- Update CACT's webpage on City website to help residents understand transportation issues

More Issues CACT Will Monitor in 2022

- Reviewing pedestrian/cyclist safety at intersections
- Following injuries of pedestrians and cyclists in and around Falls Church
- Participating in Fairfax County discussions related to West Falls Area active transportation plan and proposed Seven Corners Ring Road
- Reviewing development projects for safety concerns and multimodal improvements
- Discussing speed limit zones and speed cameras in school zones
- Continuing efforts to improve safe routes to schools and communicating options
- Reviewing regional bus rapid transit planning efforts
- Following regional transit discussions on free/reduced transit fares
- Considering equity implications of public and private projects

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- Monitoring how W&OD Dual Trails is used as new issues arise
- Managing NTC projects: Greenway Downs and more
- Reviewing Park Avenue Great Street and Greening Lincoln Avenue CIP projects
- Encouraging decarbonizing efforts: electric vehicle charging stations and incentives
- Identifying places where tactical urbanism can be employed
- Analyzing pedestrian injury and vehicular crash data

Acknowledgements

We appreciate the opportunity to serve the growing, evolving City of Fall Church by collaborating with City leaders, staff, and fellow citizens to improve transportation safety.

The CACT is supported by Transportation Planner Jeff Sikes as well as Department of Public Works Senior Engineer Ana Mazidi and Urban Designer and Planner Cameron Gahres.

We would also like to thank our City Council liaison Dave Snyder, Planning Commission liaison Melissa Teates, Planning Director Paul Stoddard, and Public Works Director Zak Bradley for their guidance and support.

We look forward to another fruitful year of working to improve transportation safety in Falls Church.

Respectfully,

- Dave Gustafson, chair
- Jason Garman, vice chair
- Arthur Agin
- Shaun Dakin
- Douglas Devereaux (moved)
- Jessica Hegenbart
- Andrew Olesen