

Fairfax Families for Safe Streets (“Ffx FSS”) Advisory Committee

3 May 2021: 6:30 pm to 8 pm

Location: Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Introductions – 20 people in attendance.

Guest Speakers

- Lt Jason Long, FCPD
 - YTD crash statistics
 - FCPD relies on crash statistics from the DMV which are usually released a full year’s data around March/April. However, FCPD can query the DMV database and view preliminary statistics that may change over the course of the year.
 - So far in 2021, there have been 6 crashes involving bicycles and 8 injuries. And there have been 23 crashes involving pedestrians with 31 injuries. There have been 6 total traffic fatalities in Fairfax, 4 of them were pedestrians.
 - These statistics are likely accurate through March since the April numbers may change after reports are completed.
 - The pandemic has dramatically reduced the number of crashes since there is less traffic on the roadways.
 - Two recent pedestrian fatalities
 - Two recent pedestrian fatalities: Arlington Blvd / Graham & Annandale.
 - Both crashes occurred mid-block (160-250 feet outside of a signalized crosswalk). Both crashes were at dark in poorly lit areas.
 - Meeting attendees discussed why the phrase “speed was not a factor” is included in the press releases for the crashes. This phrase is part of a standard template since it is one of the most frequently asked questions in response to crashes. It would be beneficial if the language evolved to include questions about the potential lack of pedestrian infrastructure as well as a citation of the current speed limit on that road.

Old Business

- Updates on Street Infrastructure Projects
 - Blake Lane
 - Blake Lane Corridor Safety Meeting was held on April 19. Link to the presentation is available here:
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/providence/blake-lane-corridor-safety-updates>
 - Supervisor Palchik is working to set a speed enforcement zone with higher ticketing and increased signage. They have applied for some grants for street improvements.
 - I-66 Trail (and larger Ped/Bike Trail issues)

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- There are parts of the I-66 trail that may be unsuitable for pedestrians and cyclists including not enough entry points, asphalt trails on only one side of the road, and insufficient curb cuts. If you have a connection point near you, please look into what the plan is.
- We want to advocate for good access points for people to use the trail.
- Localities do not have the authority to make corrections/improvements themselves. The design and implementation are up to VDOT and it looks like it will not be sufficient changes for access points
- Should we petition to allow local jurisdictions to have authority on local roads/trails?
- Where should lower 15 mph speed limits be located? (Chris Wells)
 - Most streets in Fairfax county are VDOT streets. VDOT is attempting to interpret the law to see if speed studies are required. From a county perspective, there will be neighborhoods asking for 15mph speed limits and the county is developing criteria for implementation.
 - The new law allows counties to update local ordinance. The Board of Supervisors will need to be advised by the transportation committee before it is brought to the agenda of their main meeting.
- Status of (Automated Speed Enforcement) ASE testing sites in selected school zones
 - It would be beneficial to gather data on the value of ASE on drivers’ behavior.
 - Should we meet with the new police chief, Ken Davis, to advocate for additional ASE testing? If we do, we should partner with other interested organizations like FABB and community associations prior to a meeting. If you have connections to interested organizations, please email Mike Doyle.
 - A common critique of ASE is that it is a money grab. A valid response is that it only targets those who are breaking the law by speeding. Additional advocacy for education could help demonstrate how ASE can improve a community.
 - Another option to reduce drivers’ speeds are radar speed signs that alert drivers to their speed. They do not collect any data, but the feedback encourages drivers to slow down. However, research shows that if they are permanently mounted, these signs lose their effectiveness.
- Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant program update
 - SRTS is at risk of losing significant funding from VDOT.
 - Ffx FSS should advocate to the Board of Supervisors and the School Board to fund the SRTS program for the 2022-2023 school year which is currently at risk.
- Update on District Supervisor discussions – good discussions with Supers. Walkinshaw, Lusk, and Alcorn regarding 15mph and ASE
 - Additional meeting set with Supervisors Gross and Foust and then others.
 - If you would like to join these meetings, please reach out to Mike Doyle. It is important to have local constituents attend meetings with their Supervisor.

New Business

- Ffx FSS / NoVA FSS partnered with streets simplified, the winner of the Fairfax County Innovation Challenge. Implementation summer 2021

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- Fairfax County launched a grant opportunity called the Fairfax County Innovation Challenge for ideas that improve safety on the streets. Although AFSS submitted an application, we were not selected. Street Simplified was selected as one of six finalists.
- Street Simplified collects near miss data from cameras placed at intersections and implements AI data analytics using the video feed. As part of their proposal submission, Street Simplified formally partnered with NoVA FSS / Fairfax FSS.
- Street Simplified won the competition so NoVA FSS’s crowd sourcing “Near Miss” data will be part of their solution for Fairfax County
- Preview of upgraded Near Miss / Dangerous Location survey
 - Graduate students have been working on an improved Near Miss survey that will be launched in the next 2 weeks.
 - Mike Doyle shared the survey to highlight its features. The platform uses Esri’s data analytics platform, and the survey has been upgraded to include more incidents, such as what a cyclist may observe.
 - Survey data points will automatically pin the incident on a map. The survey also includes data from VDOT’s crash history and can run a variety of reports based on type of incident, weather condition, etc. Users can also filter by election districts, city, and county boundaries, etc.
 - The VT team is in the final phases of completing the upgrade. The rollout will be accompanied by a press release and social media announcement.
 - The VT team has also identified about 180 PTAs from surrounding schools to promote the new survey plus they are recommending various social media ideas.
 - Meeting attendees discussed ideas for future improvements and iterations including the ability to add photos, incorporating a mobile app or mobile-friendly website, using Polka Dot Sky Software, and using Rack Spotter as a model since it uses similar crowd-sourced data in a GIS.
- Ffx FSS / NoVA FSS marketing & brand strategy committee
 - If you are interested in joining a committee to improve Ffx FSS and NoVA FSS’ branding and marketing strategy, please reach out to Mike Doyle. We are interested in elevating Ffx FSS’ public presence.
- How can Ffx FSS and other groups’ concerns resonate with VDOT?
 - Possible answer: talk to Governor / GA representatives
 - It would be beneficial to organize with other interested groups to advocate for more local control of transportation issues.
 - If the Governor is to be approached, the design of VDOT’s streets in Fairfax should be the focus.

Upcoming Events

- Active Fairfax Transportation Plan – New Deadline on May 15, 2021
- Sister AFSS Meeting – the 3rd Tuesday of the Month, May 18, 2021
- Sister Arl FSS Meeting – 4th Wed of the Month, May 26, 2021
- **Fairfax FSS Meeting – 1st Mon of the Month, June 7, 2021**