

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

FY2020-2025 Six Year Program: Summary of Public Comments

I. Background

The public comment period for the FY2020-2025 Six Year Program (SYP) opened on March 13, 2020 and closed on May 24, 2020. The Public Hearing was held on May 14, 2020, with the option to submit testimony in person or by phone. Phone testimony required pre-registration. The Public Hearing was livestreamed on Facebook and can be viewed on the NVTA website.¹

NVTA requested comments be submitted online to NVTA's dedicated email account for the SYP, comment form on the NVTA webpage, or by USPS mail. NVTA accepted written comments submitted via other channels if they were received prior to the May 24th deadline.

II. Responses Received

Public Hearing testimony was provided by 27 speakers, 26 on the phone and one in person. However, the majority of responses were submitted through one of the channels mentioned above.

Testimony and responses submitted prior to the May 24th deadline were combined into a single database. Duplicate responses from the same individual were combined. NVTA staff reviewed and categorized responses, and converted responses into project-specific comments, including whether they expressed support, opposition, or were not project-specific.

Collectively, these responses from 907 individuals and organizations represent 1042 comments in the database. (Some responses addressed multiple projects.)

III. Overview of Comments

Table 1 and Figure 1 provide a summary of the 1042 comments for individual candidate projects, including a categorization of each.

A total of 27 people provided testimony at the Public Hearing on May 14th:

- Twelve people supported DMF-003 (Widen/Relocate Route 1: Brady's Hill Road to Dumfries Road (Route 234)) in the Town of Dumfries;
- Eight people opposed and one supported NOV-002 (Arlington W&OD Trail Enhancements), submitted by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority;

¹ <https://thenovaauthority.org/fy2024-2025-six-year-program-update/>

- Eighteen other projects received support from at least one testimony provider.

Table 2 shows the four projects that, overall, received the majority of the attention and the typical supporting and/or opposing comments received:

- 257 supported and 67 opposed NOV-002 (Arlington W&OD Trail Enhancements), submitted by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority;
- 132 supported and 125 opposed PWC-025 (Van Buren Road North Extension: Route 234 to Cardinal Drive), submitted by Prince William County;
- 240 supported and 3 opposed CFC-006 (West Falls Church Access to Transit and Multimodal Connectivity), submitted by the City of Falls Church;
- 68 supported and zero opposed CFC-005 (Downtown Falls Church Multimodal Improvements), submitted by the City of Falls Church;

These four projects accounted for more than 85 percent of the comments received.

In addition to project-related comments, one response was received that encouraged the Authority to invest in projects that support mixed-use, walkable, transit-oriented communities and reduce vehicle miles traveled, vehicle trips, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Another 23 responses were received that (with typical examples):

- Were related to the Six Year Program but not to a specific candidate project:
 - Need traffic-calming measures between Route 29 and Route 50;
 - Impacts on property values in Secret Grove;
 - Improvements to Route 1 should have tie ins to storm sewer on all side streets;
 - Sound walls needed and green space should be preserved;
 - Support improvements in Woodbridge;
 - Prioritize Route 1 corridor;
 - NVTa plan is not multimodal and does not address roadway expansion inside the Beltway especially where transit and biking is not a viable option to many who don't live near a station or a trail;
 - Destroys lifestyle and will not address congestion;
 - Bridge to improve safety across Shreve Rd and Buckelew Drive intersection.
- Did not relate to the Six Year Program:
 - Widen trails in Ashburn (Loudoun);
 - Need public transit in Great Falls and more transit options in Vienna;
 - Rt 1 and Kings Highway creates a perpetual traffic jam. There is investment bias that favors western part of the county;
 - Affordable housing, telecommuting options.

Combined, these 24 responses are shown as 'Other comments not directly related to a project' in Table 1 and 'Other' in Figure 1.

In addition, two comments related to a specific project but did not express support or opposition:

- Impact of W&OD trail in Falls Church on an existing memorial bench (CFC-006);
- Blank (NOV-002)

These comments are shown as 'Other' for the respective projects in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of comments by project

| Project ID | Jurisdiction / Agency | Project | Total | Support | Oppose | Other |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|-------------|------------|------------|----------|
| ARL-019 | Arlington Co | Ballston-MU Metrorail Station West Entrance | 18 | 18 | 0 | 0 |
| ARL-014 | Arlington Co | CC2DCA Intermodal Connector: From Crystal City to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport | 15 | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| ARL-015 | Arlington Co | Rosslyn Multimodal Network Improvements | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| ARL-017 | Arlington Co | Arlington National Cemetery Wall Trail | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| FFX-108 | Fairfax Co | Richmond Highway Widening From Route 235 North to Route 235 South | 9 | 8 | 1 | 0 |
| FFX-098 | Fairfax Co | Richmond Highway (Route 1) BRT | 6 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| FFX-112 | Fairfax Co | Rolling Road Widening from Hunter Village Drive to Old Keene Mill Road | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| FFX-106 | Fairfax Co | Soapstone Drive Extension: Sunset Hills Road to Sunrise Valley Drive | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| FFX-101 | Fairfax Co | Fairfax County Parkway Widening: Lee Highway (Route 29) to Nomes Court | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| FFX-104 | Fairfax Co | Braddock Road Corridor and Intersection Improvements: Guinea Road to Ravensworth Road | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| FFX-103 | Fairfax Co | Frontier Drive Extension and Intersection Improvements | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| FFX-114 | Fairfax Co | Seven Corners Ring Road Improvements | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| LDN-016 | Loudoun Co | Construct Crosstrail Boulevard (Route 653): Sycolin Road to Dulles Greenway (Route 267) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| LDN-017 | Loudoun Co | Belmont Ridge Road Widening: Shreveport Drive to Evergreen Mills Road (Route 621) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| LDN-018 | Loudoun Co | Braddock Road Widening from Paul VI H.S. to Bull Run Office Post Office Road | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| LDN-019 | Loudoun Co | Evergreen Mills Road Widening from Northstar Boulevard to Stone Springs Boulevard | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| PWC-015 | Prince William Co | Construct Route 28 Corridor Roadway Improvements | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| PWC-016 | Prince William Co | Summit School Road Extension and Telegraph Road Widening | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| PWC-018 | Prince William Co | Devlin Road Widening: Linton Hall Road to Relocated Balls Ford Road (Wellington Road) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| PWC-023 | Prince William Co | University Boulevard Extension: Devlin Road to Wellington Road | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| PWC-024 | Prince William Co | North Woodbridge Mobility Improvements | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| PWC-019 | Prince William Co | Route 234 and Sudley Manor Drive Interchange | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| PWC-017 | Prince William Co | Prince William Parkway at Clover Hill Road Innovative Intersection | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| PWC-020 | Prince William Co | Prince William Parkway at Old Bridge Road Intersection Improvements | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| PWC-022 | Prince William Co | Wellington Road Widening: University Boulevard to Devlin Road | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| PWC-025 | Prince William Co | Van Buren Road North Extension: Route 234 to Cardinal Drive | 257 | 132 | 125 | 0 |
| ALX-014 | City of Alexandria | Alexandria Duke Street Transitway | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| CFX-010 | City of Fairfax | Intersection Improvements at Eaton Place/Chain Bridge Road | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| CFX-011 | City of Fairfax | Old Lee Highway Multimodal Improvements | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| CFX-014 | City of Fairfax | Government Center Parkway Extension | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| CFX-013 | City of Fairfax | Roadway Network Northfax West | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| CFX-015 | City of Fairfax | Jermantown Road/Route 29 Intersection Improvements | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| CFC-006 | City of Falls Church | West Falls Church Access to Transit and Multimodal Connectivity | 244 | 240 | 3 | 1 |
| CFC-005 | City of Falls Church | Downtown Falls Church Multimodal Improvements | 68 | 68 | 0 | 0 |
| DMF-003 | Town of Dumfries | Widen/Relocate Route 1: Brady's Hill Road to Dumfries Road (Route 234) | 23 | 23 | 0 | 0 |
| LEE-008 | Town of Leesburg | Interchange Improvements at Route 15 Leesburg Bypass and Edwards Ferry Road | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| VIE-003 | Town of Vienna | Vienna Regional Bikeshearing | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| VRE-011 | VRE | VRE Crystal City Station Improvements | 9 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| VRE-013 | VRE | VRE Woodbridge Station Improvements | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| NOV-002 | NOVA Parks | Arlington W&OD Trail Enhancements | 325 | 257 | 67 | 1 |
| RPT-001 | DRPT | Franconia-Springfield Passenger Rail Bypass | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Other comments not directly related to a project | 24 | - | - | - |
| TOTAL COMMENTS | | | 1042 | 819 | 197 | 2 |

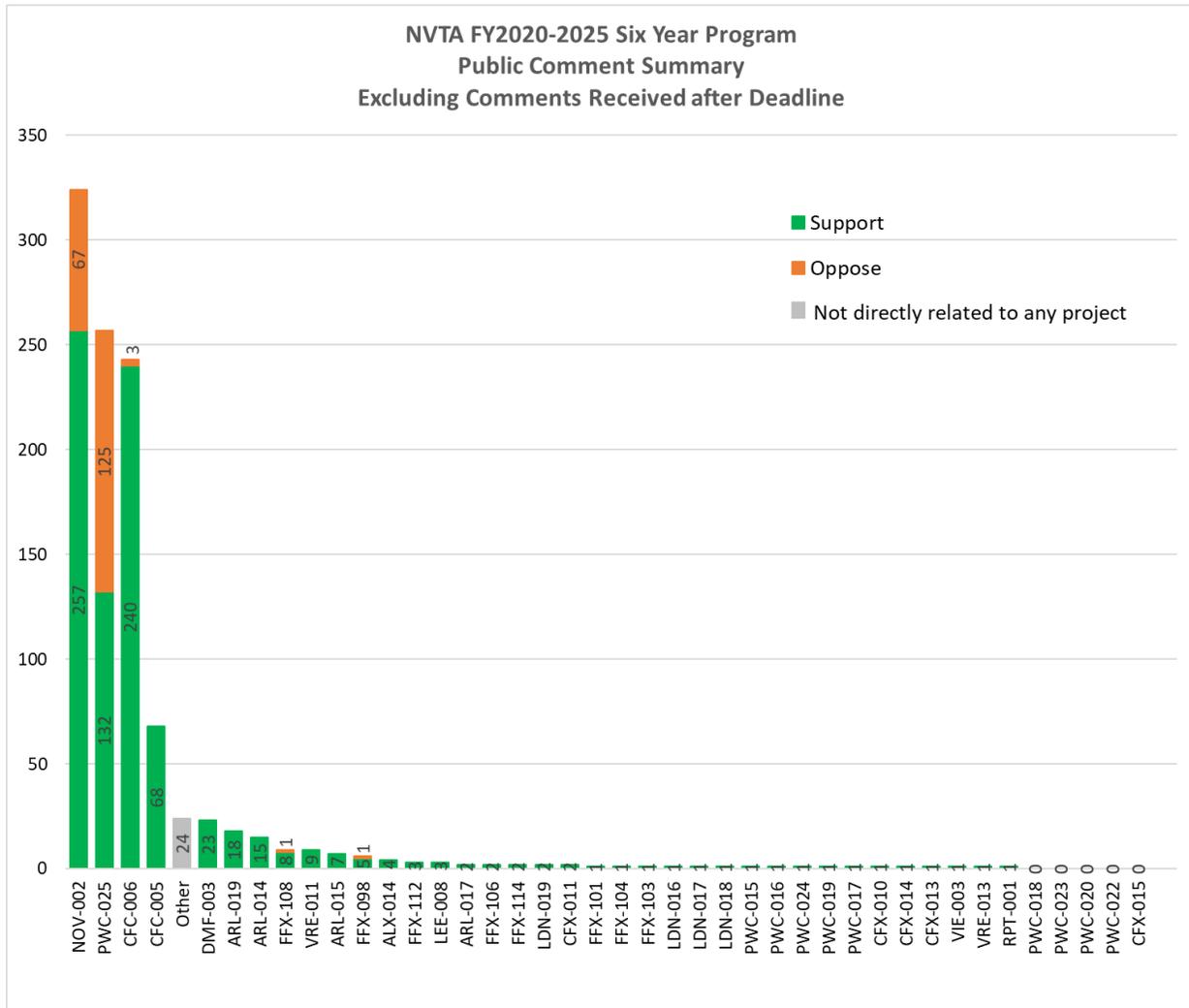
Table 2. Projects that received most of the comments

| Reference ID | Project | Number of Comments |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| NOV-002 | Arlington W&OD Trail Enhancements | 325 |
| <p><u>Typical Supporting Comment</u></p> <p>The proposal to create separate and distinct lanes for cyclists and walkers/runners on the Arlington County portion of the popular W&OD Trail is a win-win for ALL users.</p> <p>Crowding on the W&OD Trail is a testament to its popularity, and overall a good problem to have. Attempt to peddle or perambulate on the trail, and you will experience the crowding for yourself.</p> <p>Separate lanes will enable all persons jogging, walking, or cycling on this lovely trail to do so without fear of running into one another and possibly hurting on another, as is now the case. Separate lanes will enable better management of the different types of traffic on this beautiful but crowded trail. Whether you ride a bike or enjoy the trail on your feet, no users of the trail will lose access to it under this proposed upgrade. Indeed, the guarantee of safer usage made possible by adoption of this proposal could increase use for recreational, fitness and transit purposes and in the process contribute to reduced carbon emissions in our community.</p> <p>I am confident that concerns about the environmental impact of the project, such as an increase in storm water runoff, will be addressed in a responsible manner to ensure this project does not adversely impact our community’s natural resources, infrastructure, commercial and residential sectors.</p> <p>For these reasons, I wholeheartedly support dual trail expansion in Arlington County.</p> | | |
| <p><u>Typical Opposing Comment</u></p> <p>Environmental Destruction – No environmental assessment has been performed by NOVAParks, yet this project will destroy 2 acres of greenspace, including portions of unique meadow/pollinator habitat, portions of the longest wildlife corridor fully within Arlington County, and mature trees and shrubs.</p> <p>More Impermeable Surface -The project will add almost two acres of impermeable paved surface, including within Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Areas and flood plain along Four Mile Run, potentially increasing flooding risks and severity in Arlington’s BonAir and Bluemont parks, both of which suffered significant damage in the July, 2019 flood event.</p> <p>NOVAParks has failed to conduct an “alternatives assessment” of less expensive and environmentally destructive solutions, including potential management of Arlington County’s parallel paved Four Mile Run trail in conjunction with the existing W&OD trail during peak usage periods to separate pedestrian and bicycle traffic.</p> <p>NOVAParks has failed to conduct any safety assessment to determine whether a wider bicycles-only path in the dual path configuration will result in increased bicycle speeds, group/side-by-side travel, etc. only two feet from pedestrians, thereby potentially increasing conflicts, and frequency and severity of accidents. Nor has NOVAParks assessed the potential safety hazards of the widened</p> | | |

| Reference ID | Project | Number of Comments |
|--|--|--------------------|
| single-path configuration which affords pedestrians only a three foot wide walkway on either side of the widened bicycle path and immediately next to higher speed bicyclists. | | |
| PWC-025 | Van Buren Road North Extension: Route 234 to Cardinal Drive | 257 |
| <p><u>Typical Supporting Comment</u></p> <p>I live in Montclair. Drivers are constantly cutting through our community as a "shortcut". Furthermore, they are far exceeding the speed limits set within the community. The area around our Montclair has increased dramatically in the last two decades with very little infrastructure to allow for safe traffic flow. I think a serious accident in Montclair in the near future is a given. There have already been several close calls. Please build the Van Buren extension to help alleviate the crowded streets here and (hopefully) cut down on the speeders.</p> | | |
| <p><u>Typical Opposing Comment</u></p> <p>1) This proposed road will impact our Four Seasons residential community in an extremely negative manner. The high volume of traffic expected to use it will create excessive amounts of noise and auto/truck pollution, adding to the current volume of noise and pollution that is generated by I95 traffic and trucks at the I95 truck weigh station (which is located less than one mile from our community).</p> <p>2) Further development at the very edge of our community would also allow potential access to our gated, "over 55" community from other businesses or housing communities that would be situated along the road.</p> <p>3) There is a substantial amount of wildlife that transits the wooded area adjacent to our community. Removing the trees to build a road would impact the wildlife habitat and create more air pollution. Our suggestion: Consider entry and exit ramps to I-95 at Cardinal, since most of the traffic that transits Benita Fitzgerald is heading to neighborhoods that are adjacent to Cardinal. This would avoid having additional traffic directed toward the perimeter of our Four Seasons community.</p> | | |
| CFC-006 | West Falls Church Access to Transit and Multimodal Connectivity | 244 |
| <p><u>Typical Comment</u></p> <p>As a resident in the Shreve Road community, I write to share my strong support for the West Falls Church Access to Transit and Multimodal Connectivity application.</p> <p>Transportation improvements along this portion of Shreve Road are greatly needed. Our community uses the pathway daily for access to metro and retail, however the design of the road and lack of protection puts our families in danger. Earlier this year, the Virginia Department of Transportation reduced the speed limit on this portion of Shreve road in response to the number of vehicle accidents. However, without the investments from this grant application, there will not be adequate protection to advance the use of multimodal transportation.</p> <p>Expanding commercial development will increase the number of vehicles on Shreve Road. Without adequate capacity for pedestrians and bicycles, residents will be forced to add to the number of vehicle trips to reach nearby destinations, including to the metro.</p> | | |

| Reference ID | Project | Number of Comments |
|---|--|--------------------|
| CFC-005 | Downtown Falls Church Multimodal Improvements | 68 |
| <p data-bbox="196 338 402 373"><u>Typical Comment</u></p> <p data-bbox="196 373 1416 762">The Downtown Falls Church Multimodal Improvements project would increase accessibility and safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and others by removing obstructions from and widening sidewalks, installing two new mid-block crossings, and improving visibility at six intersections and mid-block crossings along Park Avenue in central Falls Church. Many of our students travel through this section of our city each day on their way to our elementary, middle, and high schools on foot, by bike, by school bus, and by car. Our students and families also use Park Avenue to access the Falls Church City Community Center, Cherry Hill Park, the Mary Riley Styles library, our farmer’s market, and many of our city’s small businesses. The proposed improvements would enable safer routes to our schools; enhance connections to the City’s civic and recreational centers; support economic development; and reduce congestion by implementing infrastructure for multiple modes of transportation.</p> | | |

Figure 1. Distribution of on-time public comments by candidate project

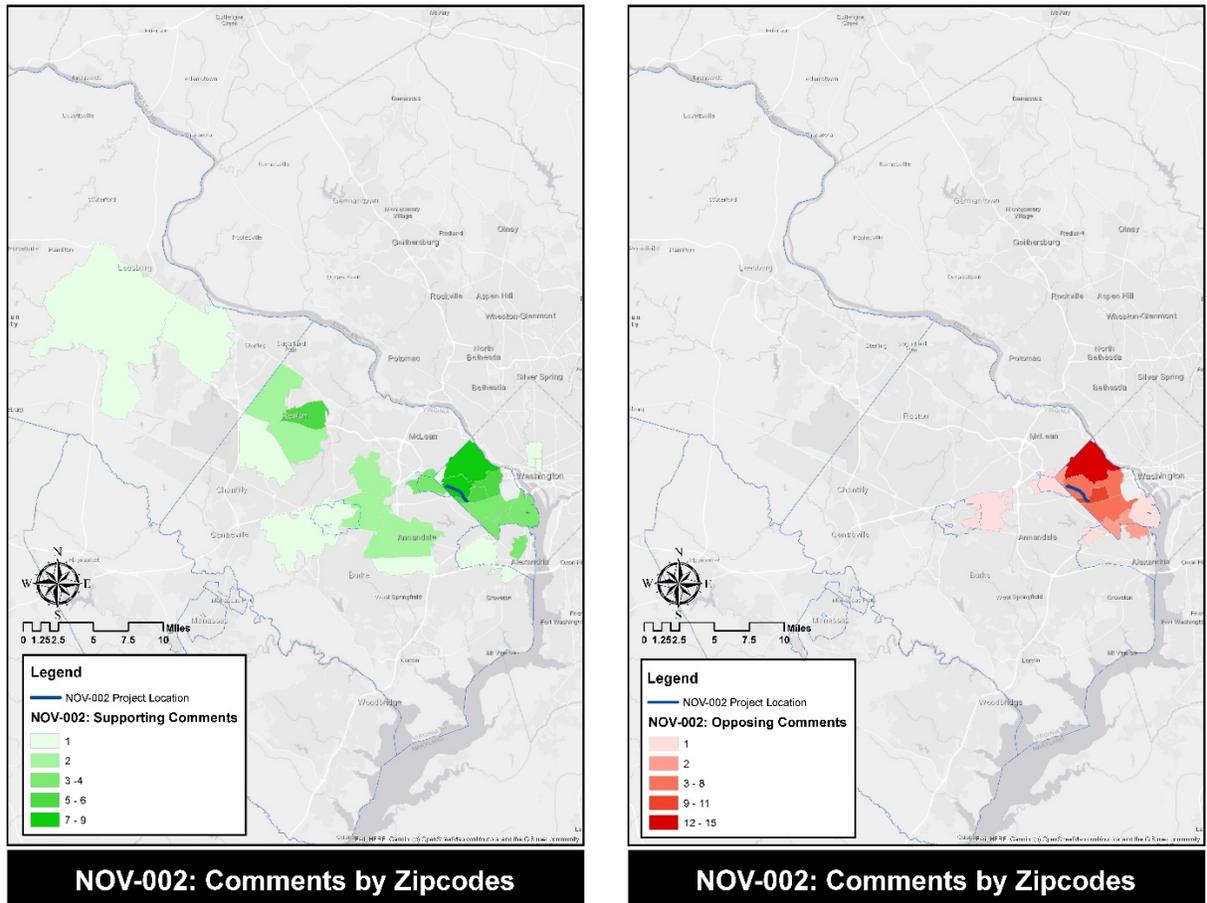


IV. Spatial Distribution of Comments for Selected Projects

Responses submitted to NVTA via the online comment form, and optionally for some other responses, included a zip code for the respondent. This has enabled an analysis of the spatial distribution for the support and opposition for selected candidate projects that have generated significant volume of responses. Please note that not everyone provided their zip codes, potentially skewing this analysis. The accuracy of zip code information has not been, and in most cases cannot be, verified.

Figure 2 shows comments in support of, and opposed to, NOV-002 (Arlington W&OD Trail Enhancements), submitted by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. Figure 3 shows comments in support of, and opposed to, PWC-025 (Van Buren Road North Extension: Route 234 to Cardinal Drive), submitted by Prince William County.

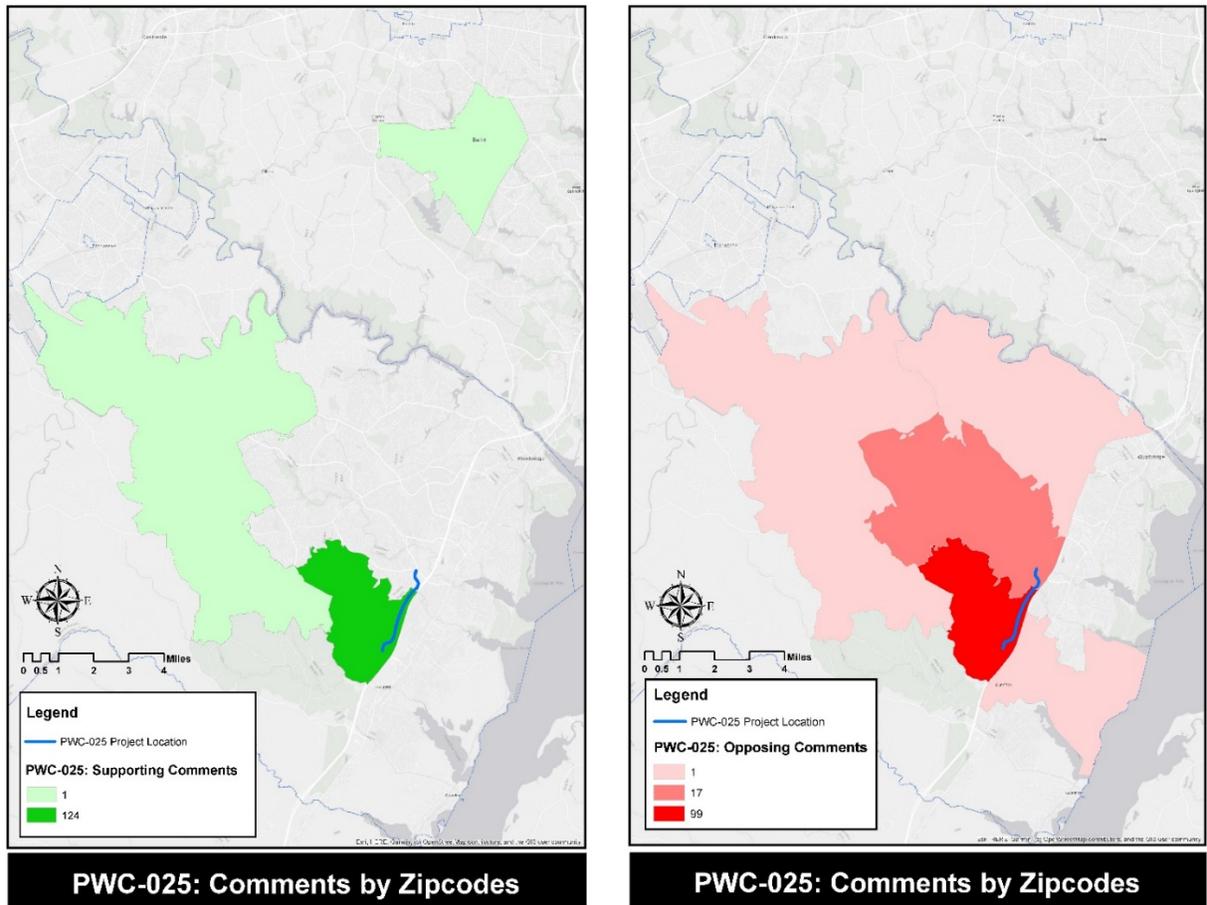
Figure 2. Comments in support of, and opposed to, NOV-002 (Arlington W&OD Trail Enhancements)



Note: 325 comments were received for this project, of which 131 have zip code information – 76 supporting and 55 opposing.

While most supporting and opposing comments were local to the project location and generated from within Arlington County, the project application generally had more support than opposition from beyond Arlington County, notably through central and northwestern Fairfax County.

Figure 3. Comments in support of, and opposed to, PWC-025 (Van Buren Road North Extension: Route 234 to Cardinal Drive)

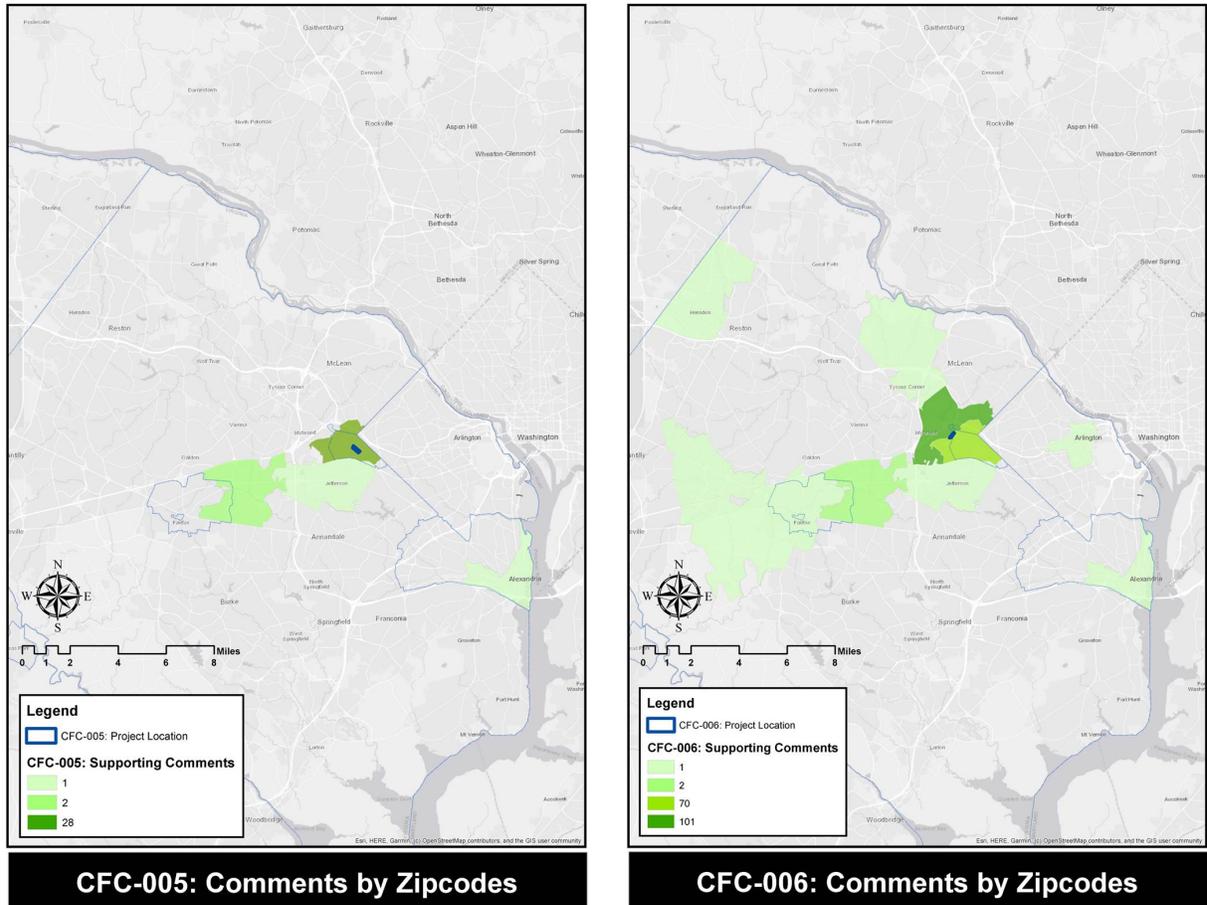


Note: 257 comments were received for this project, of which 246 have zip code information – 126 supporting and 120 opposing.

While most supporting and opposing comments were local to the project location and generated from the same zip code in Prince William County, the project application had more opposition than support from areas to the north.

Figure 4 shows comments in support of two projects submitted by the City of Falls Church – CFC-005 (Downtown Falls Church Multimodal Improvements) and CFC-006 (West Falls Church Access to Transit and Multimodal Connectivity). These two candidate projects generated the most comments after the NOV-002 and PWC-025 projects. Unlike NOV-002 and PWC-025, comments for the two Falls Church projects were overwhelmingly supportive, but with CFC-006 having nearly four times the support of CFC-005.

Figure 4. Comments in support of CFC-005 (Downtown Falls Church Multimodal Improvements) and CFC-006 (West Falls Church Access to Transit and Multimodal Connectivity)



Note: 68 comments were received for CFC-005, of which 36 have zip code information – all supporting. 244 comments were received for CFC-006, of which 186 have zip code information – 184 supporting and 2 opposed (not shown).

Not only did CFC-006 generate more comments than CFC-005 from zip codes in the City of Falls Church, CFC-006 appears to have greater support from areas outside the City in Fairfax County than in the City itself. This support is predominantly located adjacent to, and northwest of, the City of Falls Church.

V. Additional Responses Received

55 responses were received after the May 24th deadline. Most of these were in support of, or opposed to, the Arlington W&OD Trail Enhancements project. One response had a petition with 223 signatures that support installing physical protection for pedestrians along local resident roads with schools- specifically Westmoreland, Idylwood and Shreve Rd.

One response was a letter from Senator Surovell that included an analysis of survey responses from an estimated 362 constituents, related to the eight candidate projects in the Route 1 Corridor through Prince William and Fairfax Counties. NVTAs staff was not involved in the development and execution of the survey, and does not have access to the original survey responses. NVTAs staff cannot ensure the validity of the survey instrument, verify the categorization of responses, or identify possible duplicate responses. Consequently, NVTAs staff has not integrated the analysis from Senator Surovell's survey, nor any of the other late responses, into the overview outlined in section III above.

All 55 late responses are, however, included in the full listing of public comments on NVTAs website. NVTAs staff has encouraged jurisdiction and agency staff to review comments associated with their respective candidate projects.

Figure 5 shows a revised distribution of comments by candidate project that combines the 1042 on-time comments with the 55 late responses, including Senator Surovell's survey analysis taken at face value. Figure 5 is included for reference purposes only, without commentary.

Figure 5. Distribution of public comments (including 55 responses received after the deadline) by candidate project

