

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**MEMORANDUM**

FOR: Chair Phyllis J. Randall and Members
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

FROM: Monica Backmon, Executive Director

DATE: June 4, 2020

SUBJECT: FY2020-2025 Six Year Program Update

- 1. Purpose.** To update the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) on the status of the FY2020-2025 Six Year Program, including public comments and testimony received during the public comment period.
- 2. Background.** At its March 12, 2020 meeting, the Authority authorized the release of the list of 41 candidate projects for the FY2020-2025 Six Year Program, thereby initiating the public comment period. The public comment period started on Friday, March 13, 2020 and ended at midnight on Sunday, May 24, 2020. During the public comment period, the Authority hosted a Public Hearing on May 14, 2020.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic, modifications were made to the Authority's traditional approach to public hearings, introducing the option for pre-registered citizens to provide testimony by phone as well as in person. NVTA staff live-streamed the Public Hearing via Facebook. This was the Authority's first-ever Public Hearing conducted in this manner.

For health and safety reasons, it was necessary to cancel the Open House that is normally held immediately prior to the Public Hearing. However, all materials that would have been shared at the Open House were available on the Authority's website prior to the Public Hearing at: <https://thenovaauthority.org/fy2024-2025-six-year-program-update/>.

In keeping with normal practice, citizens were able to provide comments online, by email, and through the United States Postal Service.

At the request of the City of Falls Church and the Town of Dumfries, NVTA staff briefed their respective Governing Bodies during the public comment period.

- 3. Summary of Public Comment.** A draft summary of the approximately 1,000 public comments is provided as an attachment to this memo. Approximately 90 percent of the comments received by the deadline are associated with just four of the 41 candidate projects:

- a. Arlington W&OD Trail Enhancements (NOV-002) – mostly supportive of the application but with concerns expressed related to environmental considerations, alternatives analysis, insufficient community engagement, and need;
- b. Van Buren Road North Extension: Route 234 to Cardinal Drive (PWC-025) – opposition and support were broadly equal in number;
- c. West Falls Church Access to Transit and Multimodal Connectivity (CFC-006) – comments expressed were overwhelming in support of the application; and
- d. Downtown Falls Church Multimodal Improvements (CFC-005) – comments expressed were overwhelming in support of the application but the total was approximately one third of the other City of Falls Church application (CFC-006).

All comments are treated with equal weight, regardless of the method by which they are made. Identical comments made in duplicate, e.g. via testimony and by email, are considered as a single comment. When the summary of public comments is finalized, it will be posted on the Authority’s website, together with the actual comments received.

4. **Other Comments.** A number of comments were received after the May 24th deadline. Due to time constraints, these are not included in the summary report. However, NVTA staff will post these comments as part of the public record, and will also confirm that these comments are consistent with the results in the summary report.
5. **Recent Activities.** At its regular business meeting following the Public Hearing on May 14, 2020, the Authority approved \$522,151,962 as the amount of funding that is available for the FY2020-2025 Six Year Program.

NVTA staff has briefed the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Planning Coordination Advisory Committee (PCAC), and Planning and Programming Committee (PPC) on the status of the Six Year Program update during the May meeting cycle. These meetings were essential as the Committees had not met for several cycles due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Briefings at these meetings prepared the Committees for required actions at their respective June cycle meetings. Additionally, NVTA staff provided an initial (oral) summary of the public comments to the PCAC and PPC – the TAC met before the conclusion of the public comment period.

6. **Next steps.** NVTA staff will release its recommendations for the Six Year Program, and associated project funding levels, by June 9th, for review, comment, and action by the TAC, PCAC, and PPC during the June meeting cycle. These three Committee meetings, which will all be conducted electronically and live-streamed, are scheduled as follows:
 - a. PCAC, 6:00pm (to be confirmed), Wednesday June 17, live-streamed on Facebook;
 - b. TAC, 7:00pm, Wednesday June 17, live-streamed on YouTube; and
 - c. PPC, 5:00pm, Friday June 19, live-streamed on YouTube.

The PPC will develop a final set of recommendations for anticipated adoption by the Authority at its meeting on July 9, 2020. The PPC recommendations will be posted on the Authority's website by June 24, 2020.

Attachment:

Attachment 1: FY2020-2025 Six Year Program Summary of Public Comments

Attachment.

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY FY2020-2025 Six Year Program: Draft Overview 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. Testimony was provided by 27 speakers, 26 on the phone and one in person. The Public Hearing was livestreamed on Facebook and can be viewed on the NVTa website.¹

II. Comments Received

Comments were combined into a single database, incorporating testimony submitted at the Public Hearing and comments submitted online to NVTa's dedicated email account for the SYP, comment form on NVTa webpage, and by USPS mail.

Collectively, these comments represent 1042 items in the database (see Table 1). Some comments were received after the May 24th deadline. These include a letter from Senator Surovell with nearly 1100 comments he collected from his constituents, related to candidate projects in the Route 1 Corridor through Prince William and Fairfax Counties. However, these late submissions are not included in the analysis. NVTa staff has not had the opportunity to verify the summary with the full set of comments nor check for any duplicate comments that NVTa's official channels might have already received.

All comments (including late comments) and email attachments will be posted on the NVTa website referenced above by 5PM, June 5, 2020.

III. Overview of Comments

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 and eight people opposed and one supported NOV-002 (Arlington W&OD Trail Enhancements), submitted by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. Eighteen other projects received support from at least one testimony provider.

Including the above-mentioned testimonies, a total of 1042 comments were received.

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

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 Bikesharing	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 shows the four projects that received majority of the attention and the typical supporting and/or opposing comments received.

Table 2. Projects that received most of the comments

Reference ID	Project	Number of Comments
NOV-002	Arlington W&OD Trail Enhancements	325
<u>Typical Supporting Comment</u>		
<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>		
<u>Typical Opposing Comment</u>		
<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,</p>		

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 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 257
Cardinal Drive

Typical Supporting Comment

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.

Typical Opposing Comment

- 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).
- 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.
- 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.

CFC-006 West Falls Church Access to Transit and 244
Multimodal Connectivity

Typical Comment

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.

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.

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.

CFC-005	Downtown Falls Church Multimodal Improvements	68
<p><u>Typical Comment</u></p> <p>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>		

IV. General comments

In addition to project-related comments, one comment was received that encouraged the Authority to invest in projects which support mixed-use, walkable, transit-oriented communities and reduce vehicle miles traveled, vehicle trips, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Another 23 comments were received that were either not directly related to the Six Year Program or not specifying any specific project in the comment. Combined, these 24 comments are shown as ‘Other’ in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Distribution of public comments received by project application

