BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD COUNTY, VIRGINIA
MINUTES
WORK SESSION
MAY 8, 2024

CALL TO ORDER – A work session of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Meg Bohmke, Chairman, at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 8, 2024 in Conference Room ABC, George L. Gordon, Jr. Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Road, Stafford VA.

ROLL CALL – The following members were present: Meg Bohmke, Chairman; Tinesha O. Allen, Vice-Chair; Deuntay T. Diggs; Darrell E. English; Monica L. Gary; Crystal L. Vanuch; Dr. Pamela Yeung

Also in attendance were Craig Meadows, Interim County Administrator; Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney; Julia Holmes, Assistant Deputy Clerk; various staff members; and other interested parties.

WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM

CAPITAL PROJECTS TRANSPORTATION; TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Craig Meadows, Interim County Administrator, thanked everyone for attending tonight's work session. He said that they aimed to cover a significant amount of information on the Transportation Master Plan and other topics requiring the Board's feedback and input.

Matt Lehane, Transportation Planning and Funding Manager, said that they were present to discuss transportation and the implementation of the Transportation Master Plan. He said that this had been an extensive effort, and they would review a comprehensive packet and binder of materials. He said that the presentation would cover the implementation process of the Transportation Master Plan, focusing on funding, studies, and engineering. He said that regarding funding, they would discuss how they financed their transportation program for potential projects worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

Mr. Lehane said that this included exploring grant funding options, future funding sources, and examining their gas tax. He said that additionally, they would review current and future grant applications. He said that in terms of studies, they planned for their transportation program by conducting detailed transportation studies before submitting proposals to various grant programs.

He said that these studies helped determine the best projects for specific roadways throughout the County.

Mr. Lehane said that more information on this process was available in the online packet and binder, which they would reference during today's discussion. He said that the presentation would also cover future studies aimed at advancing the master plan and an engineering update on the VDOT dashboard. He said that basic information about the dashboard and existing projects, such as Berea Church Road, which began construction last week, was included in the packet. He said that he would also like to mention that there was a significant update to the transportation website, so information on those transportation projects was now available for viewing.

Bryon Counsell, Chief Director of Infrastructure, said that tonight, staff's primary objective was to obtain decisions on two key aspects. He said that firstly, they were presenting information regarding the unapproved master plan to help the Board and staff work together to modify it so that it could be ultimately approved or not approved at some point. He said that secondly, due to Smart Scale funding opportunities exceeding their selected approval schedule, they had already chosen projects for Smart Scale consideration.

Mr. Counsell said that now they aimed to eliminate one of the five pre-app Smart Scale projects they applied for before July, which staff would like to accomplish tonight. He said that additionally, they sought guidance on potential funding scenarios for the remaining four projects. He said that staff wanted them to complete project selections tonight if possible so they could have sufficient time and a clear decision on priorities to bring back those scenarios. He said that this information would aid in creating a more complete package plan and create the best funding scenarios for prioritized projects.

Mr. Counsell said that finally, they would present results from the impact fee study tonight; however, no decisions would be made at this time. He said that he believed everyone was not yet prepared to make such decisions due to the need for public hearings and other processes. He said that the presentation of this information was intended to allow Board members to formulate thoughts and opinions on how the process would proceed. He said that he would now turn the discussion back over to Mr. Lehane to review relevant data that may assist in decision-making tonight.

Mr. Lehane said that he would reference materials in a binder, specifically Chapter 7, which contained more specific information on Smart Scale projects within the Transportation Master Plan. He said that the Board had approved pre-applications for nine projects as per Resolution R24-32: five were Stafford applications and four were under GWRC and FAMPO. He said that these projects totaled $324 million, with final applications due by July.

Mr. Lehane said that they were considering removing one of the Stafford County projects mentioned on the right-hand side and highlighted in green. He said that cost estimates for these projects were preliminary and would be updated during the application stage. He said that moving forward, they would focus on leverage funding and local funding allocation for their projects.

Mr. Lehane said that their first project was Garrisonville Road Phase One, a bond project involving widening Garrisonville Road from Eustis to Parkway Boulevard. He said that they had submitted this in round four as a FAMPO-GWRC application for $54 million and in round five as a Stafford County application for $77 million. He said that in round six, they had split it into two separate phases, with Phase One being a Stafford County application at a current cost of just under $55 million.

Mr. Lehane said that their second project involved adding turn lanes at the intersection of Poplar and Truslow Road and had an anticipated cost of just under $2 million. He said that this project's proposed improvements were meant to address the anticipated traffic increase due to High School 6 as well as existing issues at a specific intersection. He said that at Route 1 and I-95 and Coachman Circle, access management improvements totaling around $34 million were planned, focusing on safety enhancements such as medians, potential U-turn movements, and additional turn lanes.

Mr. Lehane said that Route 1 at Potomac Hills and corridor safety project involved a left turn lane at Route 1 at Potomac Hills, along with minor safety improvements on the Route 1 corridor, including additional signage for left turn movements. He said that another project, Route 1 at Foreston Woods Drive and Coal Landing Road, was estimated to cost around $25 million. He said that this included improvements at the intersection of Foreston Woods with Austin Park Drive, featuring additional turn lane modifications and a shared use path from Coal Landing up to Foreston Woods, as well as further bicycle and pedestrian enhancements at the intersection with Foreston Woods.

Mr. Lehane said that on the FAMPO and GWRC list, there was a proposed Butler Road widening project, which originated from the Butler Road corridor study available in today's online packet. He said that additional information on the recommendations from this study could be found in the binder, specifically Chapter 8. He said that this project was estimated to cost around $91 million. He said that another project, I-95 Exit 136 and Centreport Parkway at Route 1 had an estimated cost of $42 million and involved turn lane improvements and an additional ramp from Centreport Parkway to Route 1 southbound, as well as potential removal of the signal at Route 1 and Centreport Parkway.

Mr. Lehane said that the widening of Warrenton Road from four to six lanes from Stafford Lakes Parkway to Village Parkway was estimated to cost approximately $30 million. He said that there was also a new road from Enon Road and Centreport Parkway Connector, which connected the two roads together west of I-95, along with an additional roundabout and shared use path at Enon Road and Truslow Road connecting to the future Musselman Park, and was estimated to cost around $30 million.

Mr. Lehane said that in Chapter 7 of the packet, one could find specific details about these projects, including their sketches and actual costs. He said that as they went through the packet, they would encounter some 11x17 handouts displaying potential scenarios. He said that towards the back of the packet, there were sheets with information on the project sketches, cost estimates, and any local funding already assigned to the projects.

Mr. Lehane said that also included was data analysis on the benefits of the projects. He said that for instance, the Garrisonville Road Widening project could provide a reduction in person hours of delay, which they estimated to be 115 hours of delay in intersection experiences. He said that they aimed to provide data for these projects to elucidate some of the potential benefits.

Ms. Vanuch said that she sat on FAMPO with Ms. Bohmke and Ms. Gary, discussing the changes in Smart Scale criteria. She said that staff may be aware while other Board members may not be aware of the changes. She asked if Mr. Lehane could clarify the criteria and the FAMPO members could add context. She said that she said this for Mr. Diggs' benefit, and she knew he attended those as well.

Ms. Vanuch said that in the past, they could pick almost any project and it was easy to match them to the criteria based on land use and zoning, but now it was much different. She said that even though they may like a project here, it may not score well. She requested the Board follow Mr. Lehane's guidance on what would score well for their success because they would be much more competitive against other jurisdictions because it was a more competitive process.

Mr. Morris said that he would like to add a point to the previous statement. He said that other jurisdictions had become more competitive with them, making it crucial for them to adhere to the scoring criteria.

Mr. Lehane said that last year, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) made significant changes to the Smart Scale process. He said that they held numerous public meetings and discussions to determine improvements. He said that one major change was altering the land use factor. He said that in the previous round of SmartScale, a project in Fredericksburg, for example, received a 10 under the land use factor, contributing to its high score and funding.

Mr. Lehane said that the CTB changed the land use factor to a multiplier effect instead of a direct score, reducing the land use scoring mechanism's support for projects by up to 50% to 75%. He said that consequently, it is challenging to fund bicycle or pedestrian-specific projects in this round of Smart Scale. He said that another change involved the congestion factor.

Mr. Lehane said that previously, they assessed congestion based on person throughput and reduction in delay using current traffic counts. He said that now, they analyze future benefits between 7 and 10 years by considering projected traffic conditions. He said that additionally, the CTB changed how projects and categories are weighted. He said that the congestion factor's weight increased from 15% or 20% to about 25%. He said that these are the three primary changes made to the Smart Scale process.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to make one brief statement if it was permissible. She said that the other aspect they did change is the local match, and this has been made very clear to them in FAMPO. She said that if they do not contribute any funds to the project, there is no chance of receiving funding. She said that they have emphasized this point even more so now because the process is competitive than it ever has been before. She said that in fact, they have previously secured projects without providing any local match. She said that this time they stated that having a greater local match will increase the likelihood of their project's success.

Mr. Lehane said that an example of local match calculation involved a Smart Scale project with a benefit of one and costing $10 million. He said that by providing an additional $5 million in local funding, the project's cost became $5 million. He said that the new cost-benefit ratio was 2 because they divided the benefit by the reduced cost of $5 million. He said that increasing the local funding to $7.5 million would further raise the score.

Mr. Lehane said that local funding increased a project's final score. He said two sources of funding: high priority projects (HPP) on a statewide basis, and the district grant program, which for them was within the Fredericksburg VDOT district. He said that FAMPO, the University, Northern Neck, Middle Neck, and others were part of that program.

Dr. Yeung said that her philosophy would be to bring forward the best projects for funding and completion. She said that sometimes they hindered themselves by focusing too much on specific aspects like safety. She said that she learned last year as Chair that their dashboard had many red indicators, requiring them to complete tasks or remove them.

Dr. Yeung said that to achieve sufficient local funding, she suggested consolidating various programs while leveraging her knowledge gained from working closely with this Board. She said that by doing so, they could compete effectively against other counties, such as Spotsylvania, which had specialized personnel for targeted funding applications. She asked that staff let the Board know if they required any assistance, such as contracts or additional support.

Ms. Allen asked what their current transportation budget was. She said that she was asking because they had mentioned funding to be competitive and now it was time to put up or shut up. She said that she wanted to hear the budget amount out loud since the public might not have access to their extensive thousand-page document. She asked if they had data on the funding allocated for their regional body competitors.

Mr. Lehane said that he could provide context for both questions. He said that in Chapter 5 of the binder, updates were given on existing projects, including grant funding, VDOT dashboard, spreadsheets, and a bond sheet. He said that additionally, there were 11x17 sheets with information on existing projects in Stafford County, which were part of their CIP as well as an extra project they were considering for grant funding next year. He said that the total cost of these projects was $310 million. He said that of this amount, approximately $110 million came from local funding and around $130 million from grant funding.

Mr. Lehane said that they anticipated another $20 million in grant funding. He said that local funding accounted for almost 50% of their program's funding. He said that to answer the question about existing CIP funding today, they had roughly $110 million allocated for local funding on their projects. He said that by analyzing future budgets and considering contingencies, they estimated conservatively around $15 million in available funds through FY31, which could potentially increase to $20 to $23 million.

Ms. Allen asked if that would be $20 million per year.

Mr. Lehane said that it would be $20 million total available through FY31.

Mr. Counsell said that it would be for the four projects identified.

Ms. Allen asked if there would be $20 million available after the rest was allocated to these projects.

Mr. Counsell said no. He said that they had completed pre-applications for five Smart Scale projects in Stafford County alone and an additional four through the GWRC and FAMPO. He said that as a result, they must allocate approximately $15 to $23 million across all these projects.

Ms. Allen said that she was not talking about the CIP. She said that she was discussing in general terms. She asked about the sum of funds available for allocation across the projects. She said that she wanted to know how much money they had at their disposal. She said that this did not involve a substantial amount of bond money yet. She requested an explanation of what constitutes a transportation fund.

Mr. Lehane said that the funds available through FY 31 totaled approximately $15 million and could be allocated to projects based on their analysis of future transportation fund revenues.

Ms. Allen said that she wanted to clarify if he was stating that there was $15 million available for allocation to $300 million in projects. She asked him to please ensure everyone understood this distinction.

Mr. Counsell said that the $300 million was already a significant amount of allocated local money and bond funds.

Mr. Lehane asked if Ms. Allen was referring to Smart Scale or the CIP.

Ms. Allen said that she was referring to the CIP.

Mr. Lehane said that every project within the CIP was currently fully funded, except for Garrisonville Road.

Ms. Bohmke said that in the presentation, there was a slide with listed projects. She said that if she understood correctly, they must eliminate one project for consideration.

Mr. Lehane said yes.

Ms. Bohmke asked if this was for the projects in green.

Mr. Lehane said yes.

Ms. Bohmke asked what project staff would recommend be removed from the list.

Mr. Lehane said that they had an additional slide that delved into this further and what they were considering in terms of priorities. He said that to briefly discuss priorities, they aimed to understand from the Board their preferences for their projects moving forward. He said that this was based on feedback received from the Board over the past few months to last year and the actual priorities derived from their existing CIP and discussed projects.

Mr. Lehane said that they had heard that completing bond projects and securing funding was the top priority. He said that improvements to High School 6 were also a priority, as well as focusing on cost-effective projects with high potential for funding. He said that consequently, they prioritized projects in this order: bond projects, such as Garrisonville Road for Smart Scale submission; High School 6 improvements; and finally, cost-beneficial projects.

Mr. Lehane said that as they could not accomplish everything at once, they must approach it step by step, year by year, grant program by grant program. He said that when considering priorities, they planned out these projects based on those priorities for future years. He said that regarding the staff recommendation on a potential path forward for Smart Scale projects, to answer Ms. Bohmke's question briefly, their suggestion was to remove the Poplar and Truslow Road left turn lane project from the list of five proposed projects.

Mr. Lehane said that however, they did not recommend removing it from consideration for any grant program altogether. He said that instead, they suggested allocating $1.25 million to this project, starting engineering work on it this summer since it may be a priority. He said that they would then apply for revenue sharing next year, which could provide an additional $1 million in funding as the project cost was currently around $2 million. He said that by doing so, they could proceed with engineering and complete the project within the next few years using revenue sharing funds.

Ms. Bohmke asked if that project would come off of the list for Smart Scale applications.

Mr. Lehane said yes.

Mr. English asked why they would prefer to remove the Poplar and Truslow project when it required the least amount of money and was related to High School 6. He said that he did not understand that. He said that he believed they needed to put all their focus on Truslow improvements because of the high school. He said that it was a low-hanging fruit that they could easily address.

Mr. Lehane said that the reason for recommending removal was its low cost and ease of implementation. He said it was a more affordable project, involving fewer resources. He said that they recommended allocating local funding to initiate engineering work this summer, followed by the VDOT revenue sharing application process, which was a 50/50 match. He said that generally, successful applicants received funding for specific priorities within this scheme. He said that last year, their application secured funds for projects on Garrisonville Road and Onville Road, which they looked at to use to complete the project.

Mr. Morris said that because it was a lesser expense, they had other mechanism to fund it quickly and easily without going to Smart Scale.

Mr. Counsell said that Smart Scale was not available for six years, and they believed they could finish the project within four years.

Ms. Bohmke said that she believed it was appropriate now to share information she learned today from VDOT regarding the School Board's Brooke Point project. She asked if Mr. Counsell knew about this as it related to the project over there.

Mr. Counsell said that he had not heard it yet.

Ms. Bohmke said that VDOT sent a letter to schools, including Jason Towery and to the Board, stating that permitting for road improvements is required near VDOT rights-of-way due to the additional compaction and congestion from the elementary school construction. She said that during Board meetings, they discussed this. She said that there is a gray area regarding VDOT's interpretation since no new entrance or exit is being created on the site.

Ms. Bohmke said that Mr. Towery mentioned that there is no funding available, and although a traffic impact analysis indicates additional transportation impacts, they are not required to implement them. She said that consequently, VDOT confirmed with Richmond that the school division is correct because it is not a new entrance, even though additional turn lanes may be needed.

Ms. Bohmke said that the school division informed them that there is no money available in the budget. She said that she believed that they acknowledge this as a problem, but they do not have funds to address it either. She said she was bringing this issue to their attention and was unsure of when or at what point in time VDOT would return with information about making it a County project. She said that it would be a County project due to its connection to Courthouse Road, which is a main road out in front of Brooke Point, and this is understandable.

Ms. Bohmke said that her concern was why they did not disclose the additional expenses related to this decision when making the initial proposal. She said she believed transparency with their Board of Supervisors should have been maintained in this matter. She said that she wanted to share this information with the Board. She said that it may not change anything today as they still lack further details. She said that she was more than willing to provide them with VDOT's letter on the subject.

Ms. Gary asked if Ms. Bohmke could share the letter. She asked if the letter was containing statements from the schools stating their financial constraints and expectation for their assistance. She requested to be provided with the source of this information.

Ms. Bohmke said that the comments provided by VDOT staff were editorial in nature, as they are individuals who have been directly involved in the project's development.

Ms. Gary requested the Chair to please forward all the relevant information to the entire Board for their review.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would do so. She said that she had only learned of this today.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to maintain focus on the current agenda as sharing the message was not for tonight. She said that in her opinion, the matter regarding Elementary School 19's funding options should be revisited at a future Board meeting. She said that they had anticipated this issue and discussed it previously; therefore, she thought they should present the letter without allowing it to disrupt their ongoing discussions.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was related to transportation so it seemed like an opportune time.

Ms. Vanuch said that she agreed; however, she believed that the appropriate course of action was to revisit this matter during a Board meeting, where they could explore the available options concerning Elementary School 19.

Mr. Lehane said that the staff recommendation involved removing Poplar and Truslow from Smart Scale consideration and applying for future revenue-sharing funding, contingent upon Board approval. He said that with this go-ahead, they would collaborate with a consultant and commence engineering work on the project during summertime, aiming to present a contract at a subsequent Board meeting for prompt project initiation.

Mr. Lehane said that for Smart Scale, Garrisonville Road Phase One would be their top priority. He said that currently, $21.5 million was allocated to this project in their CIP, along with an additional $10.7 million in grant funding; however, the total cost of the Garrisonville Road widening project was $31.5 million. He said that they had shifted $10 million from Phase Two to allow them to apply for future revenue-sharing funds. He said that the Board would decide if they wanted to allocate extra funding to Phase One for potential future consideration. He said that additionally, they had the Enon Road and Centreport Parkway project.

Mr. Lehane said that although not directly linked to High School 6, it did involve enhancements on Truslow Road, including an additional shared-use path and intersection improvements at the junction of Enon Road and Truslow Road. He said that this also affected Stafford High School and promoted greater connectivity within the County along north-south routes, as discussed in the Transportation Master Plan, FAMPO's feasibility study, and the County comprehensive plan for many years. He said that consequently, this project would be considered one of their main priorities moving forward.

Mr. Lehane said that its primary purpose was to establish a connection between Enon Road and Centreport Parkway while enhancing overall north-south connectivity in the County. He said that Route 1 at Foreston Woods and Coal Landing was also identified as an additional priority. He said that this project had significant benefits based on a VDOT study conducted a few years ago, as well as their analysis of similar projects. He said that they proposed allocating funds to this project. He said that additionally, they would consider funding for Route 1 at I-95 and Coachman Circle.

Mr. Lehane said that however, the Coachman Circle was not congestion-based; it was entirely safety-focused. He said that that section between I-95 on Route 1 and Port Aquia Drive had one of the highest accident densities and severity in the County. He said that they planned to improve left-turn movements, and to add potential U-turns and medians to address these issues. He said that local funding would be assigned for the project, with an estimated $491,000 available using CMAQ and STBG funds on this project.

Mr. Lehane said that regarding future revenue sharing, Poplar and Truslow Road had been discussed, along with Garrisonville Road Phase Two and Onville Road. He said that they recently applied for revenue sharing on the project and expected to receive approximately $2 to $3 million. He said that in the future, they would apply for more revenue sharing to reduce local costs on this project. He said that in addition, they planned to address bicycle pedestrian projects from the Transportation Master Plan in their discussions.

Mr. Lehane said that they considered applying for bike road projects to various programs such as VDOT's Revenue Sharing Program, TAP program, CMAQ, and STBG. He said that this would be at Mine Road and Greenspring Drive and approximately $1.1 million in STBG funding was expected. He said that they also planned to allocate another $500,000 in local funds, which could be matched by VDOT's Revenue Sharing Program for an additional $500,000. He said that Kings Highway and Chatham Heights Road projects would receive $750,000, which could be matched by VDOT's Revenue Sharing Program for a total of $1.5 million.

Mr. Lehane said that future projects included US 17 Business sidewalk with around $490,000 in CMAQ funding, and then Garrisonville Road, Stafford Borough, and Mine Road improvements.

He said that the intersection project at Garrisonville Road, Stafford Borough, and Mine Road came from the Garrisonville Road Multimodal Study, as detailed in Chapter 7 of the packet. He said that those would be future projects they could apply for. He said that more recently, the Belmont to Ferry Farm Trail had come up.

Mr. Lehane said that they were exploring a grant opportunity called the Active Transportation Investment Improvement Program with a deadline of June 17. He said that however, they could only apply for design and engineering funding, potentially up to 30% or 60% design, as the funds must be used within two years. He said that a meeting was scheduled tomorrow to discuss this further, but the Board may consider moving forward with it if they wished. He said that the project required a local match, which is why they had included funding for it.

Ms. Bohmke said that regarding the Belmont to Ferry Farm project, since they possessed the engineering plans, she asked Mr. Lehane if it was accurate to say that they would not need to start from scratch in this aspect.

Mr. Lehane said that was correct; it was a good step forward. He said that prior to the project's cancellation, they had reached approximately 30% engineering completion. He said that consequently, they still needed to accomplish 60% to 90%, and perform right-of-way acquisition; however, this marked a beginning for the project that would aid in their progression.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would like to emphasize a point for Mr. Diggs' understanding, although he may already be aware. She said that she had advocated for the improvement of Kings Highway and Chatham Heights Road. She said that when approaching the eye center, there was no direct access to the Chatham Bridge. She said that these improvements were meant to solve this issue.

Dr. Yeung asked why the U.S. 17 sidewalk project was not included in VDOT's ongoing roadwork on U.S. 17.

Mr. Lehane said that unfortunately, it was not included in past projects. He said that VDOT had two ongoing projects in that area. He said that one related to I-95 improvements and involved constructing a sidewalk and additional crosswalks beneath I-95 along U.S. 17. He said that the other project was applied for during a previous Smart Scale Round and would realign RV Parkway and build an extra park-and-ride lot, which included a sidewalk but only extended up to a certain point. He said that they would consider constructing the sidewalk from just south of Old Forest Drive, where VDOT's current project ended, down to Lendall Lane and Solomon Drive.

Dr. Yeung said that it would be helpful to have this information noted somewhere in order to give context.

Dr. Yeung said that regarding Garrisonville Phase One and Phase Two, she would like to know if the funds were already allocated from the bond money that they split.

Mr. Lehane said yes. He said that the financing consisted of both local funds and bond resources. He said that they needed to consider the allocation of bond money and local contributions they had available during the project's schedule. He said that a significant amount of local funding was involved in this project.

Dr. Yeung said that the sole purpose of dividing it into Phase 1 and Phase 2, with funds allocated in Phase 2, was to secure the necessary financial resources for grant applications.

Mr. Lehane said yes. He said that Garrisonville Road Phase 2 may cost approximately $30 million. He said that that was something they would have to look at prior to revenue sharing. He said that if they examined the current costs, they possessed $10 million in local funding. He said that in a future revenue-sharing round, they could apply for up to an additional $10 million, resulting in a total of $20 million allocated to the project. He said that they could then pursue Smart Scale funding and secure another $10 million. He said that it was a good path forward for that particular project.

Dr. Yeung asked what the estimated schedule was for phase one as well as the estimated end of construction.

Mr. Lehane said that there were a couple of potential paths for the project. He said that internally, they had not too much about that aspect. He said that with regard to beginning the project, they had used the $50 million in bond funding to leverage additional funds from state and federal sources, which included Smart Scale and revenue sharing. He said that this has enabled them to fully fund the projects before commencing work on them. He said that however, that approach has also slowed down the completion of bond projects. He said that they have started many but not all of them.

Mr. Lehane said that one option is to wait until they secure full funding through Smart Scale for that project. He said that alternatively, they could begin engineering whenever desired; however, if they failed to obtain full funding, it would be a wasted investment, as they would spend $1 million, $2 million, or $3 million on engineering without being able to finish the rest of the project.

Dr. Yeung asked if funds allocated to Phase 2 could instead be used to complete Phase 1 in the event of a shortfall, then see what they could do for Phase 2 later on.

Mr. Lehane said yes, it would be up to the Board to determine the amount of local funding allocated for that project. He said that their current cost was approximately $55 million, which may increase slightly before reaching the final application stage. Considering today's figures, with $21 million in local funds and an additional $10 million in grant funding already secured, the request would be between $20 to $25 million in Smart Scale funding. He said that if there were an extra $10 million allocated, the request would decrease to between $10 to $15 million in Smart Scale funding.

Mr. English asked how Mainline fit into the Route 17 sidewalk project.

Mr. Lehane said that Mainline was directly across the street from where the project would occur. He said that to his knowledge, Mainline did not include any sidewalk improvements along US-17 other than some minor improvements at their entrance at Lendall Lane.

Mr. English said that to he thought they had proffered money to do a sidewalk to Old Forge but it was only at RV Parkway.

Mr. Lehane said that based on the projects discussed today, they must determine if they generally agree with the priorities listed on the slide. He said that staff also asked if the Board approved of the proposed options for assigning local funding to specific projects and planning future grant programs. He said that staff would like to know if this was what the Board was comfortable with or if there were any changes they should consider making. He said that their next step would be to present a resolution of support for SmartScale pre-applications or final applications at a future Board meeting. He said that additionally, resolutions for local funding on each project would also be included in that resolution.

Ms. Vanuch asked if Mr. Lehane recommended any changes to the funding to maximize their success or if what was presented was the best proposal.

Mr. Lehane said that what was presented today was the current staff recommendation. He said that the cost estimates for the Smart Scale bullet at Enon Road and Centreport, Route 1 Foreston Woods, and Route 1-95 were still uncertain. He said that they would seek further refinement on these cost estimates before presenting a final figure to the Board. He said that they anticipated having this information by June. He said that they would look at it based off of project benefits and assigning more precise figures for the project's best potential outcome.

Mr. Counsell said that staff feels that the listed four projects were the best to move forward with for Smart Scale funding.

Mr. Lehane said that was correct. He said that it was partially based on the list of priority planning projects they had in front of them. He said that they considered bond projects as well as High School 6 projects. He said that then, they went down the list of cost-beneficial projects, starting with Foreston Woods and Coachman Circle, for instance.

Ms. Bohmke said that the consensus of the Board was to move forward with that recommendation.

Mr. Lehane said that with regard to FAMPO and GWRC, he wanted to bring up another point. He said that during an upcoming meeting, there would be discussions about removing certain projects from the GWRC list. He said that this was for future reference.

Ms. Vanuch said that she appreciated staff's helpful guidance on these important projects.

Mr. Lehane said that staff would revisit Smart Scale resolutions and engineering plans for these projects during upcoming Board meetings in advance of future revenue sharing and TAP funding opportunities.

Mr. Diggs asked if staff could provide him with an update on the Belmont and Ferry Farm Trail project after their meeting tomorrow.

Mr. Lehane said yes. He said that there were still a lot of unresolved matters regarding the Belmont and Ferry Farm Trail with its exact routing. He said that prior to its cancellation, they had not decided between two proposed routes, and this still had yet to be determined. He said that this aspect would be included in the design stage.

Ms. Bohmke asked if a lot of that had to do with the one project where Doug Janney was going to build a senior project.

Mr. Lehane said that yes, that was one factor.

Ms. Bohmke said that they could be waiting around for that for 15 years while they could just go ahead and built the project.

Mr. Counsell said that staff checked in with him every once in a while and they were not prepared to give any update on any project status.

Ms. Bohmke asked for clarification.

Mr. Counsell said that he had nothing to report.

Mr. Lehane said that he wanted to provide the Board with a brief update on past, current, and future transportation studies. He said that the Garrisonville Road Multimodal Study, funded through STBG, was now complete; however, it was not in the printed-out packet but available online tonight. He said that the Warrenton Road Multimodal Study, completed a couple of years ago, was also included in the packet. He said that the Butler Road Corridor Study, funded by the Board of Supervisors, had been completed as well.

Mr. Lehane said that the Butler Road Widening project was part of their Smart Scale projects; however, significant work remained at the Route 1-Butler Road Interchange, which was also recommended in that study. He said that the Stafford Heritage Trail Study, conducted through a grant, was nearing completion. He said that it aimed to establish a north-south trail throughout the County for bicycle-pedestrian options, such as the Belmont and Ferry Farm Trail.

Mr. Lehane said that a study in progress was a small area transportation plan for Courthouse Road, regarding the significant development that was occurring within its targeted area in downtown Stafford. He said that it would further determine what transportation improvements may be necessary in this region and identify the needs. He said that based on prior Board meetings, they had applied for both a Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan and an update to the Bicycle Pedestrian Plan. He said that they anticipated receiving feedback on these applications within the next few months.

Mr. Lehane said that in terms of future studies, the Board's priorities included potentially looking at improvements at Exit 143, Garrison Road interchange and the Warrenton Road Corridor from I-95 to GEICO. He said that these projects originated from the master plan as two major studies for future consideration. He said that they would work with VDOT on both of these studies and report back to the Board if any further action was required. He said that he wanted to present this brief update on these ongoing and upcoming transportation studies.

Ms. Gary asked if the Courthouse Transportation Small Area Plan included looking at the downtown area and potential transportation hub discussed previously with FAMPO.

Mr. Lehane said yes, they could look at that in the study as well. He said that the study would examine all aspects of transportation, including transit in that specific area and any potentials related to it.

Mr. Counsell said that before discussing the figures on this page, he would like to provide some context. He said that everyone was aware that impact fees were approved by the Board in 2013.

He said that none of the current staff at the table were involved in transportation at that time, and very few, if any of the Board members, were involved either.

Mr. Counsell said that the current ordinance states that each dwelling unit and each business will be assessed $3,000 per 1,000 square feet. He said that last fall, they presented a project list to the Board for approval based on the impact fee study and data from the master plan. He said that the purpose of these fees is to address growth-related issues. He said that after the Board approved the list, they could begin estimating costs for the projects and determining funding methods.

Mr. Counsell said that the numbers shown on the slide represented various scenarios involving different levels of funding for these projects. He said that the Board still had the option to maintain the current ordinance, with residential units covering their own fees and the Board funding commercial fees. He said that there could also be a combination of both as the Board sees fit. He said that with this context in mind, he would now pass the presentation over to Mr. Lehane to discuss the numbers further.

Ms. Bohmke asked if staff could provide the Board with the number of localities in the Commonwealth, out of the 95 counties, that have implemented impact fees.

Mr. Lehane said that to staff's knowledge, there was one.

Ms. Bohmke asked why this was.

Mr. Counsell said that it was very difficult.

Ms. Bohmke said that they went to the General Assembly.

Ms. Vanuch said that given the litigation matters on this topic previously, everyone should listen to Mr. Lehane and not make substantive comments on their microphones.

Mr. Counsell said that it was a very useful tool that the state code allows, but it was a very difficult thing to administer and implement. He said that the County saw fit they could review the minutes as he had done a couple of times now. He said that without getting any of the advocacy or opposition to it, it could be a useful tool to fund transportation.

Ms. Vanuch said that that was true if it was done the right way.

Ms. Gary asked if Stafford was the only one that had it.

Mr. Counsell said yes, they were the only one.

Mr. Lehane said that as mentioned, impact fees were highly complex. He said that the materials in their packet today, specifically Chapter 9, provided information on impact fees and their current status, including resolutions approving projects, maps, and details about prior impact fees that had been looked at. He said that their consultant had determined recommended fees based on residential per dwelling unit, office space per 1,000 square feet, commercial space per 1,000 square feet, and industrial space per 1,000 square feet.

Mr. Lehane said that currently, the fee for residential was $2,999, paid by developers on a per-unit basis. He said that Stafford County covered office, commercial, and industrial fees at $7,450 for office, $2,800 for commercial, and $900 for industrial. He said that the basic impact fee covered 100% of growth through the model year 2043, divided into northern and southern Stafford County regions. He said that the Centreport Parkway served as the dividing line.

Mr. Lehane said that for residential, the north region fee was just under $12,000, while the south region fee was just over $6,000. He said that office fees were around $16,000 for both northern and southern regions. He said that commercial fees amounted to $25,000 in the north and $14,000 in the south. He said that industrial fees totaled $8,000 for the north and $4,600 for the south. He said that they had explored the implications of 50% and 25% growth coverage for these fees.

Mr. Counsell said that in order to provide some context, he would briefly explain the 100% growth. He said that this referred to all projects on the construction estimate list being funded solely by impact fees, which consequently made these figures appear higher. He said that to offer clarity, they had presented three scenarios outlining potential outcomes if the Board decided to implement impact fees and use them to cover 25% of the overall cost. He said that the following numbers represented approximate values for each scenario.

Dr. Yeung asked if these were for new dwellings.

Ms. Bohmke said yes.

Dr. Yeung said that that should be specified.

Mr. Lehane said that additional information on impact fees was available in Chapter 9 of the packet. He said that today they would like to discuss those impact fees and their potential schedule moving forward. He said that impact fees were complex, requiring numerous steps to approve them. He said that they had been working through the impact fee study, approved a project list, and considered various potential impact fee rates for adoption. He said that currently, they were in the May to June timeframe.

Mr. Lehane said that the earliest possible Board of Supervisors' action would be to send the impact fee to the Planning Commission and establish the Impact Fee Advisory Committee, which had been resolved upon at the March 5 Board meeting. He said that they had received several applicants for the committee, and they would seek the Board's guidance on setting it up. He said that the Advisory Committee provided advice on impact fees, while the Planning Commission made a recommendation as well.

Mr. Lehane said that additionally, they needed to approve the Transportation Master Plan, which also went through the Planning Commission. He said that over the summer period in June and July, they would review and recommend any changes if necessary with both the Planning Commission and Impact Fee Committee. He said that finally, in August, September, or potentially October, they would seek a second set of Board of Supervisors' actions with public hearings for the adoption of ordinances, amendments to the Comprehensive Plan for impact fees, and the Transportation Master Plan.

Mr. Diggs said that Mr. English and he had been dealing with fee changes with the developer. He asked if applicants who began the process before approval be grandfathered in.

Mr. Counsell said that until the new ordinance was passed, they would continue to pay the fee as dictated by the existing ordinance, which was $3,000. He said that only new homes and the County would fund the commercial side of it. He said that until a new ordinance was enacted, the old one would remain in effect.

Mr. Morris asked what the trigger was for the payment.

Mr. Counsell said that the building permit determined that.

Ms. Allen said that when she began the process of asking about this and advocating for this, she told Mr. Towery and Mr. Counsell that instead of having a standardized fee, they should consider a tier-based system based on road degradation or impacts to the road. She said that for example, her subdivision was based off of Telegraph Road. She said that if Telegraph was rated a C and a new subdivision would impact it to so that it rated a D, then the impacts should be higher to reflect the amount of improvements that were necessary to get the road from a D to a B or an A. She asked if the code allowed for that type of impact fee system.

Mr. Counsell said that from an implementation perspective, if a project was part of an impact fee structure as allowed by the code, it must be identified upfront and a fee derived from the cost for those projects. He said that for instance, on Telegraph Road, if it was not included in the impact fee program or part of the impact fee project schedule, one would need to evaluate it based on priority, similar to how they did currently. He said that if Telegraph Road reached a point where it could no longer handle traffic or experienced numerous accidents, the Board would prioritize that project and consider options such as 100% County funding, SmartScale, CMAQ, or STBG for funding.

Mr. Counsell said that these were the primary methods for addressing transportation projects. He said that another option mentioned in state code was the pro rata program, which could include transportation. He said that developers would contribute a pro-rata share of the impact fee to initiate the project. He said that they had internally discussed this approach and found it too complex for implementation in Stafford. He asked if this answered Ms. Allen's question.

Ms. Allen said yes. She said that she felt that throughout their work on impact fees, she felt that the $12,000 per unit was insufficient if those developments were degrading the road so much. She said that the costs of fixing the road should be paid for by the developers whose projects were degrading the roads. She said that while any amount they received from impact fees was helpful, it should be as efficient as possible to achieve their goals.

Ms. Gary said that she agreed with Ms. Allen. She said that developers who planned a development on a road graded F would be exempt from certain transportation requirements due to the poor condition the road was already in. She said that to circle back to Mr. Diggs' comment and question, she would like to know if the Board could vote to grandfather in the applications in process with regard to impact fees.

Ms. McClendon said that ultimately, she was examining this issue as there were several aspects to consider. She said that although the fee was paid at the building permit stage, it might be assessed earlier. She said that therefore, they must identify when grandfathering occurs in the process. She said that further research was required. She said that the Board may need to set an effective date, but she was unsure at this time.

Ms. Bohmke said that she did not think they would want to grandfather in because they would want them to pay their fair share.

Ms. Gary said that she was not proposing the Board do that. She said that she wanted to know what they were working with.

Mr. Diggs said that his reason for raising this point was that if he entered a project and was informed about the costs involved, then paying those costs would be considered fair. He said that changing the costs after this disclosure seemed unfair as it would involve going back on their initial agreement. He said that this situation was similar to what they currently were dealing with.

Mr. English said that the business in question initially had fees set and then the County changed the fees and asked him to pay the new fee. He said that it appeared to be unfair to that business.

Mr. Diggs said that the initial assessment provided to applicants should be what they paid and anyone coming after that should pay what the new fees are.

Ms. Vanuch said that she understood, but their fees had not changed since the early 2000s, so people had been underpaying for many years. She said that at some point they had to make that hard transition. She said that maybe all the documents should say that these fees are subject to increase based on Board action.

Ms. Gary asked if Ms. McClendon could update the Board on the details for grandfathering in applications as well as what could be put on applications when changing these fees.

Mr. Lehane said that finally, he would recap the discussion and decision points previously mentioned in the presentation. He said they were examining the Stafford list of Smart Scale applications. He said that a Board resolution would be brought forward with four applications: Garrisonville Road Widening Phase 1, Route 1 at I-95 Coachman Circle Access Management, Route 1 at Potomac Hills Corridor Safety, and Route 1 at Foreston Woods/Coal Landing Drive. He said that Poplar Road and Truslow Road turn lanes would be dropped; local funding would be added to the project, with engineering starting this summer and the project listed as a future revenue sharing opportunity for next year.

Mr. Lehane said that their priority projects included bond projects finishing first, followed by projects related to High School 6. He said that the Safe Streets 4 All Grant application was for improvements to Truslow Road, while Poplar Road and Truslow Road turnlanes and Enon Road and Centreport Parkway project were additional priority projects. He said that the third priority was cost-beneficial projects based on the analysis done, looking at Coachman Circle, Foreston Woods, and so on. He said that these priority lists would be discussed at potential FAMPO TAC meetings, recommended to the FAMPO Policy Committee and GWRC for approval of their pre-application list as well.

Mr. Lehane said that for leveraging funding, they would refer to the staff recommendation on this slide and bring forward a future Smart Scale resolution that included local funding discussions for

Smart Scale projects. He said that funding would be assigned for the revenue sharing project involving Poplar and Truslow Roads, and they would work on advancing some bicycle pedestrian projects with local funding this summer to apply for future revenue sharing and TAP funding.

Mr. Counsell asked if Mr. Lehane could provide details on where this information was available online for the public to access.

Mr. Lehane said yes, he would. He said that one last item he wanted to mention was about impact fees and the master plan. He asked if the Board had a preferred direction for that item.

Ms. Vanuch said that if the Board was amenable, it could go on the consent agenda to be forwarded to the Planning Commission. She asked if they had to give the Planning Commission all three of the choices or only two choices.

Ms. McClendon said that the Board could send one choice to the Planning Commission. She said that she would note that the Board should consider selecting the highest option they were willing to entertain, as choosing a lower option may limit their ability to increase fees later in the process. She said that if they opted for the highest choice, the Board had the authority to adopt corresponding fees at or below that level.

Ms. Bohmke said that there was consensus from the Board to pursue the impact fee payments for 100% of growth.

Mr. Lehane said that staff would bring that forward under consent. He said that they would also look at establishing the Impact Fee Advisory Committee and appointing its members.

Ms. Bohmke said that there would be no Board members on that committee.

Mr. Lehane said that also on consent would be the Transportation Master Plan to send to the Planning Commission.

Ms. McClendon said that as a point of clarification, the Impact Fee Advisory Committee appointments would be under unfinished business unless there was consensus from the Board on who to appoint.

Dr. Yeung said that regarding traffic studies, they did not have a study for Truslow Road that was somewhere on the school side in litigation. She said that they had another they did not know about. She asked how staff was keeping up with the studies they did not have, and she asked how VDOT would know the traffic had gotten intense. She said that Planning and Zoning had approved so many of these businesses, and she had concern that when a new business came in, they were doing the impact traffic study based on current numbers and without regard to the current businesses' impacts. She said that a recorded amount of 40,000 cars may in reality be closer to 80,000.

Mr. Lehane said that when they performed traffic impact analyses, they included background developments in those analyses. He said that background developments included the prior approved developments in a certain area. He said that those traffic impacts were included along with future years.

Ms. Bohmke asked if they were national traffic statistics.

Mr. Lehane said yes, they used ITE trip codes.

Ms. Bohmke said that these numbers did not originate from the County or any state entity; they came from a national report.

Ms. McClendon said that she would like to address the grandfathering issue. She said that it provided the Board with an additional consideration during this process. She said that Mr. Counsell mentioned, fees were paid at the building permit stage, but it was essential to note that the amount was assessed at site plan and subdivision approval. She said that to consider grandfathering, the Board should focus on plans submitted rather than those approved. She said that some plans may take a considerable time for approval, with state code extensions exceeding five years for certain subdivision plans.

Ms. McClendon said that therefore, the Board must think about how to limit the impact of grandfathering in order to avoid making it indefinite or extending in to the next five to ten years. She said that this was simply a point for the Board's consideration; they were not obligated to decide on this matter before sending it to the Planning Commission. She said that the decision could be made during the Board's public hearing for adoption of the ordinance.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Ms. McClendon was referring to plans for commercial or residential developments that had been approved many years ago by a Board of Supervisors.

Ms. McClendon said no. She said that she was talking about plans submitted but had not yet been approved. She said that if they had received approval, they would be subject to the old fees. She said that for plans submitted but not approved, and if the Board changed the fees while those plans were under review, the new fees would apply to those plans upon approval.

Ms. Vanuch asked when an applicant would know their fees.

Ms. McClendon said that the fees are listed as part of the application. She said that upon approval, they would know the fees to be paid because the plan had been approved. She said that her understanding was that it was cited in the plans because as they went through the process for building permits, they paid per unit based on plan approval.

Ms. Allen asked how long the Planning Commission process would be.

Ms. McClendon said that Ms. Allen was referring to a Planning Commission comprehensive plan amendment. She said that the code provided between 90 to 100 days. She said that to shorten this period, a public hearing must be held. She said that holding a public hearing was necessary to reduce the time frame. She said that this nuance was introduced in the state code a couple of years ago. She said that also, the Impact Fee Advisory Committee would work concurrently in the background. She said that staff recommended that the Board grant both bodies the full amount of time for consideration and then the Board could address everything at once.

Mr. Lehane said that all background materials were available in today's Board packet. He said that they would attempt to utilize this binder as a reference throughout their discussions while also updating some information periodically. He said that, as previously mentioned, all project-specific details, including the master plan, could be found on the County website for future reference. He said that to clarify, all binder materials were posted online.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:13 p.m., Chairman Bohmke adjourned the May 8, 2024 Stafford County Board of Supervisor's Work Session.

F. Craig Meadows	Meg G. Bohmke
F. Craig Meadows Interim County Administrator	Meg Bohmke Chairman