



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 16, 2021

TO: John C. Ulfelder, Chairman
Planning Commission Land Use Process Review Committee

FROM: Salem Bush, Planner
Department of Planning and Development

SUBJECT: **Follow-up to Comments/Questions - April 22, 2021 PC Land Use Process Review Committee Meeting - Public Facilities Policy Plan Amendment**

PURPOSE

Staff has organized the questions and comments from the Planning Commission Land Use Process Review Committee's meeting on April 22, 2021. At this meeting staff presented the plan to update the Public Facilities element of the Policy Plan. Some of the questions/comments have been organized in a way to combine similar topics. Staff has provided responses below.

1. **Commissioner Question/Comment:** Why are federal and/or state projects left out of the process to review new facilities within the County and if specific language could be incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan for the review of federal and state proposed projects? The Planning Commission should have a role in the approval process when new state and federal facilities are proposed within the County.

Staff Response: In some cases, federal and state projects are provided to staff to gather comments for the federal or state agencies. For example, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) will provide certain projects to staff for review. Usually this comes in the form of a staff report or master plan from the NCPC. DPD reviews and coordinates comments with various agencies and Board members are copied on the response.

2. **Commissioner Question/Comment:** Can urban design standards be incorporated into transportation projects that had been approved years earlier when design standards were more relaxed.



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Excellence * Innovation * Stewardship
Integrity * Teamwork * Public Service

Department of Planning and Development
Planning Division
12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 730
Fairfax, Virginia 22035-5507
Phone 703-324-1380
Fax 703-653-9447

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development

Public Facilities Policy Plan Update

Page 2

Staff Response: This will be examined in more detail when the Transportation element of the Policy Plan is scheduled for update.

3. **Commissioner Question/Comment:** Can staff provide a clearer understanding of how public facilities work through the County's approval process and include a chart or graphic that shows the 2232 review process?

Staff Response: Staff has included an attachment to the memo that shows a graphic of the 2232 review process.

4. **Commissioner Question/Comment:** County residents should be included in the update to the Public Facilities element of the Policy Plan and the updates to any Planning District and Special Area Plans. Each area within the County should be considered with residents' input to make sure the local flavor and character of each area is considered. This may be particularly important to the revitalization areas. Outreach efforts should be more inclusive and include all residents of Fairfax County. The outreach process should be expanded on previous planning efforts in order to not miss the important voices of the people who may often be overlooked. This effort should go beyond just relying on the Land Use Committees' "Continuum of Community Engagement".

Staff Response: Staff is continuing to work on a comprehensive public outreach plan and will continue to coordinate with Neighborhood and Community Services, along with the County Executive's Office to reach populations of the County that go beyond the various Land Use Committees and associations that have been involved in outreach efforts of the past. Staff will also continue to coordinate with the individual Supervisor Districts to consider the unique trends and considerations while updating the Public Facilities element of the Policy Plan.

5. **Commissioner Question/Comment:** The Comprehensive Plan should be consistent across all sections. The various agencies and departmental goals and policies should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies.

Staff Response: A major component of this update to the Public Facilities element of the Policy Plan has been the interviews and discussions that the Department of Planning and Development has initiated with the various agencies throughout the County that plan and implement new facilities. In these conversations, staff has recognized the opportunity to discuss Countywide planning efforts like the Strategic Plan, One Fairfax and the importance of the Comprehensive Plan in the planning, approval and implementation of public facilities. Staff sees this entire process as a great opportunity to continue to build the relationships with the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Public Works Building Design Branch and other agencies to utilize the Comprehensive Plan's goals as a starting place for the planning of facilities from project conception through project construction. Beyond updating the Public Facilities element of the Policy Plan, this continued communication and coordination between all the agencies that are involved in planning for public facilities will be important in using the Comprehensive Plan as the basis for public facility projects going forward.

In addition, this update will include examining the consistency of policy recommendations throughout the Public Facilities element of the Policy Plan.

- 6. Commissioner Question/Comment:** When departments are planning for new facilities, an effort should be made so that the various departments are using consistent data and methods for planning for new facilities.

Staff Response: Staff has discussed this comment with agencies that plan and operate public facilities throughout the County. For the most part, agencies are using data provided by the County, specifically the annual Demographic Report that is issued by the Economic, Demographic and Statistical Research Department of the Department of Management and Budget. There are some exceptions, where some agencies use other statistical reports or data that may be more specific to the services they provide. However, in some cases those reports use data that are provided from Fairfax County. The Fairfax Water Authority is a good example of this. They use the Metropolitan Washington County of Government's (MWCOG) forecast for their planning of new facilities because they are providing services that go beyond Fairfax County. However, MWCOG uses data in their reports that are provided by Fairfax County. In other cases, many agencies are using national or state standards to plan for facilities, such as FCDOT who uses Transportation Demand Management standards. Another example would be the Police Department utilizing George Mason University studies to better understand growth projects and police services that may be needed. Based on these conversations with agencies, because of the unique services that are provided by each individual agency, the planning for facilities and the utilization of data in some cases is specialized.

- 7. Commissioner Question/Comment:** There should be coordination between departments in terms of goals and objectives when planning for new facilities and they should have a broader focus on what the individual needs and objectives are for the areas that they are being planned for.

Staff Response: Agencies are planning in this way when it comes to more collocated facilities. Some agencies have been very focused on collaboration of resources and services provided to residents in collocation projects. Health and Human Services, the court system, and law enforcement, along with other agencies have working together on such projects.

This project has been an opportunity to discuss the Comprehensive Plan goals and policies with individual agencies and how the Public Facilities element of the Policy Plan is critical to planning and review of public facilities. In addition, staff has been working with the agencies to update the facility lists and maps within the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff will continue to discuss this topic with the various agencies throughout the County in terms of coordinating projects and curtailing to the specific needs of certain areas.

8. **Commissioner Question/Comment:** Opportunities for public comment should continue to be an important factor in the overall process of planning and approving public facilities. Many issues need to be presented and considered from the public's point of view such as stormwater, parking, traffic, and other issues.

Staff Response: The Department of Planning and Development, along with the Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Public Works Building Design Branch have been discussing the best opportunities to include the public when planning new facilities. Staff believes there are some improvements that can be made to make projects more available for public comment throughout the process including during the Capital Improvement Program process, project design before 2232 review, and if the project justifies additional outreach during the 2232 review process.

9. **Commissioner Question/Comment:** What will the interface of the County staff and the Public School system be going forward with this update to the Public Facilities element of the Policy Plan? The school system needs to be part of this process going forward to ensure that the overall process for planning and funding for new schools is coordinated.

Staff Response: Staff has been working closely with FCPS in terms of improving the 2232 review process and providing more transparency and public input on projects. In addition, the Joint CIP Committee between the School Board and the Board of Supervisors just completed their meetings and the [Joint CIP Committee Report](#) on the Committee's findings and recommendations. Also, staff will be incorporating the specific recommendations for the Public Facilities element of the Policy Plan made by the Planning Commission's Schools Committee Joint Task Force that concluded its work in early 2020.

DPD staff will continue to conduct meetings with FCPS representatives to make sure their input is included in the update going forward.

10. **Commissioner Question/Comment:** Multimodal considerations are important when thinking about public facilities and the overall road system and should prioritize pedestrians and bikers. Urban centers, activity centers, and commercial business districts should be important when thinking about the multimodal systems.

Staff Response: Staff will continue to work with Fairfax County Department of Transportation on the Public Facilities element of the Policy Plan update to ensure the plan includes an emphasis on multimodal transportation options at locations of public facilities.

11. **Commissioner Question/Comment:** The County should be more proactive in identifying property for potential future public facilities particularly in areas where future development and growth is expected. The use of proffers should be considered in these situations and should be explicitly referenced in the Public Facilities element of the Policy Plan. The Plan should be forward thinking by thinking about the integration of land use with public facilities and investing in potential sites before facilities need to be constructed. The planning of infrastructure related to the preparation of these

Public Facilities Policy Plan Update

Page 5

facilities before development occurs would be beneficial, especially when considering the dedication of land, sidewalks, road infrastructure, stormwater, etc.

Staff Response: Staff will explore adding language in the Public Facility element of the Policy Plan that encourages proactive planning by evaluating potential sites for future public facilities and the investment of infrastructure at sites for public facilities before sites are designed and planned.

A common theme throughout the discussions with agencies is the decreasing availability of office space and land throughout the County. Many agencies have been more opportunistic in terms of planning for facilities in recent years by following development and the increased demands for services through the utilization of proffers in rezoning cases. One way a public facility can initially move through an approval process without a 2232 review requirement is by its initiation through the rezoning process. This is authorized by the Virginia State Code Section 15.2-2232. In this type of scenario, the public facility's land use is specified, and the location of the proposed public facility is identified. If the approved rezoning and proffers can show these two items, then the public facility would be justified as moving forward without a 2232 review.

The Planning Division and Zoning Evaluation Division can hold discussions with the Office of the County Attorney to consider if references to proffers in the Comprehensive Plan would be appropriate.

Attachments:

1. 2232 Review Process Graphic

Public Facility Approval via 2232 Review

If the proposed public facility has not been proffered through a rezoning and cannot be identified within the Comprehensive Plan then a 2232 application, review and approval is required. VA § 15.2-2232 requires facilities to be shown in the Comprehensive Plan by controlling the “general or approximate location, character and extent of each feature.” On new applications, “failure of the commission to act within 60 days of a submission, unless the time is extended by the governing body, shall be deemed approval.”

Typical 2232 Review Process (with Public Hearing)

