



**McLean Citizens Association Resolution
West Falls Church Metrorail Area Active Transportation Study**

January 4, 2023

Whereas, the City of Falls Church has relocated its high school (now known as Meridian High School) several hundred yards westward, and has granted permits for redevelopment of the former high school property at Haycock Road and Leesburg Pike with higher density mixed-use development, now under construction, and known as the West Falls Development Project; and

Whereas, on July 13, 2021, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved an amendment of the Comprehensive Plan (CPA) for the West Falls Church (WFC) Transit Station Area (TSA), which allows a higher density, mixed-use development on a 24-acre property owned by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and a seven-acre property occupied by Virginia Tech that abuts Haycock Road; and

Whereas, the CPA, among other things, highlighted the need to enhance connectivity between the WFC Metro Station and the surrounding neighborhoods through development of better accommodations for active transportation, which Fairfax County defines as self-propelled, mostly human-powered travel, including walking, biking and similar activities; and

Whereas, the BOS, immediately following its approval of the CPA, adopted a follow-on motion directing County staff to assess existing active transportation conditions in the TSA and neighboring communities, and to solicit community input to develop recommendations and set priorities for the study area with respect to active transportation; and

Whereas, in December 2021, the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) commenced the West Falls Church Metrorail Area Active Transportation Study (the Study), which included assessments of the pedestrian network within a one-mile radius of the WFC Metro Station and the bicycle network within a two-mile radius of the Station; and

Whereas, the follow-on motion and the Scope of Work for the Study have recognized that, in addition to the need to respond to higher density along Haycock Road, there are also existing deficiencies in the area's Active Transportation infrastructure that should be addressed; and

Whereas, the District Supervisors of the Dranesville and Providence Districts appointed an Advisory Group (AG), consisting of residents representing neighborhoods in the TSA and the surrounding area, and representatives of several local and Countywide organizations and the AG met seven times from December 2021 through October 2022; and

Whereas, FCDOT obtained input from community meetings and an online survey to which 441 persons responded, with the result that recommendations were developed and prioritized based on their expected benefits, such as better access to schools and the WFC Metro Station, and improvements to safety; and

Whereas, on November-30, 2022, FCDOT published, online, the Final Report on the Study (the Report), which may be found at the following Internet address:
https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/sites/transportation/files/assets/documents/pdf/transportation%20projects,%20studies%20and%20plans/wfc%20at%20study/wfc_atl-finalreport.pdf; and

Whereas, Figure 22 on page 33 of the Report shows projected increases in vehicular traffic, with average daily traffic (ADT) volumes on Haycock Road between Leesburg Pike and Great Falls Street, for example, projected to increase by 32% (12,000 to 15,800 ADT) from 2019 to 2045; and

Whereas, 44 pedestrian project concepts and 14 bicycle network improvements were nominated by at least one person for consideration in the Study (Chapter 9 of the Report); and

Whereas, the AG has recommended 16 pedestrian projects among four geographic Quadrants in relation to the location of the WFC Metro station (the SE, SW, NE and NW Quadrants), as indicated in Table 1 attached (which also includes project cost ranges); and

Whereas, the AG has ranked the pedestrian projects within each of the four Quadrants, but did not attempt to rank the projects from first through sixteenth across all four Quadrants; and

Whereas, among the pedestrian projects recommended by the AG, there are two (SE-1 and NW-4) that had been previously endorsed by the MCA, in a resolution dated January 5, 2022, and entitled “Support for Funding of Identified Sidewalk and Trail Projects”; and

Whereas, SE-1 provides for improving the pathway along Haycock Road from Great Falls Street to the Metro Access Road to provide safe active transportation access to the WFC Metro Station and, in addition to having been previously endorsed by the MCA, components of this project are recognized as a significant public need in the County’s “List of Projects Recommended in Public Studies;” and

Whereas, NW-4 provides for the construction of a sidewalk along Redd Road to Idylwood Road and associated improvements, including a crosswalk, to provide safe active transportation access to Lemon Road Elementary School and, as discussed further below, has potential for funding related to safe routes to schools; and

Whereas, five of the other 14 pedestrian projects recommended by the AG are relatively low cost (under \$1 million), specifically NW-1 (addition of a pedestrian refuge on Idylwood Road near Lemon Road Elementary School), NW-5 (provision of high-visibility crosswalks at the Pimmit Drive/Leesburg Pike intersection), NE-1 (addition of a mid-block crossing on Haycock Road near Casemont Drive with flashing beacons), NE-2 (installation of pedestrian improvements at the Westmoreland Street/Haycock Road intersection), and SE-4 (addition of a crosswalk on Great Falls Street at Moly Drive); and

Whereas, the AG has recommended four bicycle network projects, as indicated in Table 2 attached;

Whereas, three of the four bicycle network projects, if implemented, would improve active transportation access to and from the WFC Metro Station, as follows:

- a northeastern shared use path would extend northeast from the Station area along the north side of Haycock Road, initially to Great Falls Street under the SE-1 project (which actually would provide a shared use path), and eventually to Westmoreland Street (the first-ranked project in Table 2);
- a western shared use path would extend initially southwest from the Station area, and then west along the north side of Leesburg Pike to Pimmit Drive (the third-ranked project in Table 2);
- a southern shared use path, along Shreve Road, would extend from the Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail to reach Leesburg Pike at the Leesburg Pike/Shreve Road/Haycock Road intersection (the second-ranked project in Table 2); and

Whereas, the fourth bicycle network project would improve the W&OD Trail crossing at Virginia Lane; and

Whereas, in regard to pedestrian project NW-3 (construction of a secure pedestrian pathway to the WFC Metro Station from Idylwood Road through or along the WMATA railyard), the WMATA railyard has a guarded entrance for employees on the east side of Idylwood Road at its intersection with Redd Road and is a secure government facility that currently prohibits any property access to persons who are not WMATA employees or contractors; and

Whereas, as to NW-3, as shown in Appendix F of the Report, in 2011, the Toole Design consultant firm identified the possibility of constructing a looping walkway route from Idylwood Road to the Metro station that would skirt the railyard facilities (due to the need to keep Metrorail customers separate from the facilities) while running along the southern perimeter of the WMATA property, with security fencing around the walkway, and with much of the walkway lying along the northern slope of westbound Interstate 66, where retaining walls (up to 8 feet tall) would be required to fit the walkway onto the slope; and

Whereas, as to NW-3, according to the Report, a pedestrian project on the railyard property “would likely be the costliest of all the recommendations in this study” (page 52); and

Whereas, as to NW-3, the need for this project is questionable given the planned development of a relatively nearby shared use path by the third-ranked bicycle network project indicated in Table 2 (Shared Use Path, 12 feet wide, along the north side of Leesburg Pike); and

Whereas, the Report (pages 68-69) states that transportation projects in the County are funded through a number of sources or combination of sources, including bond funds, general funds, commercial and industrial property tax funds, developer contributions/proffers, and Safe Routes to Schools funds, among others; and

Whereas, the BOS authorized \$100 million for pedestrian and bicycle safety projects over six years, and that the list of initial projects will be presented to the Board at a forthcoming meeting (Report, page 68); and

Whereas, an additional \$25.21 million was allocated as part of FY 2022 Carryover funds from the General Fund (Report, page 68); and

Whereas, the Report (page 69) states that strategies for funding improvements to active transportation should consider the relative cost and ease of implementation for each project along with the expected benefits and further notes that the Study recommends several improvements that are relatively low-cost, such as high-visibility cross walks at intersections and mid-block crosswalks; and

Whereas, the Report (page 69) notes that funding for active transportation projects related to safe access to schools may be obtainable for project NW-4 (the Redd Road/Idylwood Road project) and notes that the nexus and proportionality of proposed projects to the pending rezoning cases for the WMATA and Virginia Tech parcels near the WFC Metro Station will be considered in proffer negotiations with developers, and refers to pedestrian infrastructure that links the parcels to surrounding neighborhoods; and

Whereas, according to the Report (page 45), “Public outreach to consult local community members will occur during the design process”; and

Whereas, the FCDOT Transportation Update provided at a public information meeting on November 30, 2022, indicates that the BOS will select active transportation projects for funding in the Spring of 2023; and

Whereas, on December 6, 2022, the BOS approved a motion directing County staff to include the Report’s project recommendations in the County’s Active Transportation Plan, to identify potential short-term and long-term funding options for allocation to these pedestrian and bicycle projects, and to provide periodic reports on progress made toward project implementation; and

Whereas, transportation projects that are selected for funding from public and private sources are included in Fairfax County’s Transportation Priorities Plan (TPP), which is a prerequisite to implementation of the transportation project; and

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the McLean Citizens Association (MCA) commends the BOS for having commissioned the Study; and

Be it further resolved, that the MCA endorses 15 out of the 16 pedestrian projects (all except NW-3, as discussed below), and all four bicycle network projects, for inclusion in the TPP, because these projects will improve access to both WFC Metro Station and area schools, and will likely be cost-effective; and

Be it further resolved, that, among these 19 active transportation projects, the MCA identifies seven projects as deserving of rapid identification and allocation of funding for placement on the TPP based on the following grounds: (a) SE-1 is strategically important to the WFC active transportation network, and urgent due to existing poor conditions for those seeking to walk or bike to the WFC Metro Station and Haycock Elementary School; (b) SE-1 and NW-4 due to demonstrated need, as reflected in the above-referenced January 2022 MCA resolution; and (c) NW-1, NW-5, NE-1, NE-2, and SE-4 because these projects could provide substantial early benefits at relatively low cost; and urges that the BOS select at least these seven projects for funding and placement on the TPP in the spring of 2023; and

Be it further resolved, that the MCA does not currently endorse the NW-3 project (secure pedestrian pathway to the Metro station from Idylwood Road through or alongside the WMATA railyard) for inclusion in the TPP due to doubts about the cost effectiveness of this project, and because the need for this project is questionable, as discussed above; and

Be it further resolved, the MCA expresses its appreciation for the Report's recognition of the need for public outreach to consult local community members during the project design process; and

Be it further resolved, the MCA also expresses its appreciation for the County's important commitment in the BOS's December 6 motion to provide periodic reports on progress toward project implementation.

*Approved by the MCA Board of Directors
January 4, 2023*

McLean Citizens Association, P.O. Box 273, McLean, Virginia 22101

cc: John Foust, Dranesville District Supervisor
Dalia Palchik, Providence District Supervisor
Tom Biesiadny, Director, Fairfax County Department of Transportation

Table 1: WFC Active Transportation Study - Recommended Pedestrian Projects

Quadrant and Rank within Quadrant	Project Description	Estimated Cost Range	Previously Endorsed by MCA
<i>Southwest Quadrant</i>			
SW-1	Improve safety and comfort crossing Leesburg Pike at Shreve Rd/Haycock Rd	\$\$	
SW-2	Construct new pathway along the north side of Shreve Rd between Chestnut St and Leesburg Pike	\$\$\$	
SW-3	Improve sidewalk along north side of Leesburg Pike from Idylwood Rd to Falls Church Dr. Install flashing beacons at I-66 interchange crossings.	\$\$\$\$	
SW-4	Construct sidewalks along Gordons Rd and Chestnut St	\$\$	
<i>Northwest Quadrant</i>			
NW-1	Add pedestrian refuge on Idylwood Rd near Lemon Road Elementary School	\$	
NW-2	Make pathway from Pimmit Dr to Lemon Road Elementary School ADA accessible	\$\$	
NW-3	Create a secure pedestrian pathway to the Metrorail Station from Idylwood Rd through or along the WMATA railyard	\$\$\$\$	
NW-4	Construct sidewalk along Redd Rd to Idylwood Rd and provide crosswalk across Redd Rd at Idylwood Rd. Improve visibility by re-grading the embankment on the corner of Idylwood Rd and Redd Rd.	\$\$	Yes
NW-5	Provide high-visibility crosswalks at the intersection of Pimmit Dr and Leesburg Pike	\$	
<i>Northeast Quadrant</i>			
NE-1	Add mid-block crossing on Haycock Rd near Casemont Dr with flashing beacons	\$	
NE-2	Install no right-turn on red or yield to pedestrian signage at Westmoreland St/Haycock Rd intersection. Provide leading pedestrian interval and construct corner expansion/bulb-outs.	\$	
NE-3	Add crossing on Great Falls St at Hutchison St and add sidewalk on Hutchison St from Great Falls St to Reynolds St	\$\$	
<i>Southeast Quadrant</i>			
SE-1	Improve pathway along Haycock Rd from Great Falls St to Metro Access Rd. Add high-visibility crosswalks on all legs at the intersection of Great Falls St and Haycock Rd and on Turner Ave at Haycock Rd. <i>(Note: The improved pathway would be a Shared-Use Path at least 8 feet wide.)</i>	\$\$\$\$	Yes
SE-2	Construct sidewalk along one side of Turner Ave from Grayson Pl to Haycock Rd	\$\$	
SE-3	Improve pathway along Grove Ave approaching Haycock Rd	\$\$	
SE-4	Add crosswalk on Great Falls St at Moly Dr	\$	

Cost Estimates:

\$	<\$1M
\$\$	\$1M to <\$2M
\$\$\$	\$2M to <\$5M
\$\$\$\$	>\$5M

Source: ATS report, Table 4 (page 45), Table 5 (page 46), Table 6 (page 50), Table 7 (page 53), Table 8 (page 56)

Table 2: WFC Active Transportation Study - Recommended Bicycle Network Projects

Rank	Project Description
1	Shared Use Path, at least 8 feet wide, along the north side of Haycock Road from Westmoreland Street to the boundary with the City of Falls Church. Note: This project essentially represents extension, in two directions, of the top-ranked Southeast Quadrant project in Table 1 (SE-1), which would provide a Shared Use Path along the north side of Haycock Road from Great Falls Street to the Metro Access Road.
2	Shared Use Path, 10 feet wide, along Shreve Road from the W&OD Trail to Leesburg Pike
3	Shared Use Path, 12 feet wide, along Leesburg Pike from Pimmit Drive to Falls Church Drive
4	Improve the W&OD Trail crossing at Virginia Lane; install flashing beacons for better visibility

Source: ATS report, pages 59-60