



Alternatives for Improving Roadway Services in Fairfax County

Board Transportation Committee Meeting

March 1, 2011



Response to Questions Raised about Primary and Secondary Roads

- VDOT classifies roads in two ways:
 - Administrative classifications: interstate, primary, secondary, and urban.
 - Functional classifications: freeway, major arterial, minor arterial, collector, and local.
- Administrative classifications generally are used to define funding allocations and responsibilities.
- Functional classifications identify a roadway's use.
- VDOT has specific criteria for transferring a road from the secondary system to the primary system.



Implications of Transferring a Secondary Road to the Primary System

- Unclear if there are any benefits to the County.
- Transferring a road to the Primary System does not necessarily mean more funding will be available to the road.
- VDOT places special emphasis on maintaining the statewide system of primary roads.
 - VDOT is ultimately responsible for setting construction priorities for the primary system.
- Construction priorities for the secondary road system are set by the local county Boards of Supervisors.
- No explicit provisions within Virginia Code for a county to assume responsibility of the primary roads within its jurisdiction.



Recap

- Staff presented draft report to Board members at the November 30, 2010, Board Transportation Committee.
- Staff met with Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) to hear comments.
 - TAC members will provide a summary of their comments to Board members.
- Study reviewed several options:
 - Enhance select maintenance activities.
 - Assume various responsibilities for the secondary system only.
 - Assume responsibilities in select geographic areas under provisions for *Urban Transportation Service Districts*.
 - Assume responsibility for entire primary and secondary system within the County.
- Staff visited several jurisdictions in Virginia who currently maintain their roadway system.



Study Conclusions

- Significantly improving levels of service (more mowing cycles, more frequent repaving) requires more funding.
 - Assuming responsibility in itself may or may not improve levels of service.
- No clear financial benefit for assuming more responsibilities.
- Assuming responsibility provides benefits in:
 - Transportation decision-making.
 - Local responsiveness and accountability.
 - Flexibility in establishing priorities and standards.
- Changing form of government unlikely to provide more funding for road maintenance by itself.
- State funding levels are likely to continue downward trend without new funding sources.



Considerations

How does the County want to improve roadway services?

Areas for improvement	Possible actions that would address improvement		
	More funding (federal, state, and/or local)	Improve coordination with VDOT	Assume responsibilities from VDOT
Improve levels of service <i>More frequent mowing, more frequent repaving</i>	●	○	◐
More responsiveness to local requests <i>Modifying signal timings, changing speed limits</i>	○	◐	◐
Flexibility in establishing standards <i>Ability to set more urban design standards for certain areas of the County</i>	○	◐	●
More control in setting priorities <i>Ability to reallocate resources to changing needs of County</i>	○	○	●

○ Minimally effective ◐ More effective ● Most effective



Considerations

- ***What is the long-term vision for the County's transportation network?***
 - Where does the County wish to be in 20 or 30 years?
- ***What role can the County play in implementing this vision?***
 - How might current arrangements change in the future to better position the County?
- ***What additional studies can be done to prepare for this vision?***
 - Significant additional effort will be needed before taking any definitive actions.
 - Identification of specific costs attributable to specific Fairfax County activities.
 - Concentrated studies on particular alternatives.
 - Development of County-State agreement to transfer responsibilities.



County of Fairfax, Virginia



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Staff Recommendations

- Work with VDOT to track specific maintenance expenditures in Fairfax County. For example:
 - Mowing: How many acres? How many cycles per year?
 - Paving: How many lane miles?
- Identify low risk activities that the County wishes to improve and work with VDOT to enhance.
- Begin studying in more detail Urban Transportation Service Districts
 - What areas in the County would be suitable candidates?
 - Refine cost estimates.