
CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department Name: Department of Transportation

Equity Lead(s): Martha Coello, Neil Freschman and Mena Nakhla

Date: November 30, 2023

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN REPORT

Goal 1: Build awareness of equity among FCDOT staff.

Goal 1 Progress:

FCDOT hired a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Manager in 2023; the DEI Manager will lead equity efforts within the department. The DEI Manager coordinated equity training with One Fairfax to offer to the department. Trainings included “Race: The Power of an Illusion” and “Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government.” Additional external equity trainings and webinars were shared with staff as they became available.

FCDOT Equity Team, led by the DEI Manager, sends quarterly Equity Newsletter discussing equity issues related to transportation engineering and planning. The Equity Newsletter’s purpose is to share information and provide resources available to staff to bridge equity and transportation.

The employee survey indicates that 92% of survey respondents are familiar with the One Fairfax policy and 86% of survey respondents are aware of the department’s equity efforts, including equity training offered and the department’s Equity Impact Plan.

Goal 2: Continue incorporating equity into FCDOT plans and projects.

Goal 2 Progress:

FCDOT staff have been continuing to apply the County’s Vulnerability Index as part of the decision-making process. Additionally, staff utilize the Vulnerability Index Dashboard released by the One Fairfax Office, and many have used the Vulnerability Index for equity analysis on projects and programs for Board of Supervisors’ review and approval.

As part of their work coordinating on regional transportation projects, FCDOT worked on advancing associated pedestrian projects in or adjacent to medium and high vulnerability communities, including the sidewalk in Reston near Reston Parkway, trail connections at Nutley Street and I-66, and a shared use path through Fair Lakes. Equity was also taken into consideration for the study phases, proposed recommendations, and lighting installations related to the I-495 and I-66 projects. Most recently, FCDOT advocated in the letter from the Chairman to the Virginia Department of Transportation on

CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT

November 21, 2023, for the inclusion of equity as a key determinant for alternatives to be recommended for further study in the I-495 Southside Express Lanes project.

The Capital Projects and Traffic Engineering Division is the caretaker of the Transportation Prioritization Plan (TPP). During the prioritization process, advancing equity was significant to the process. Staff designed an instrument to collect feedback from residents prioritizing transportation projects; feedback was provided to the Board of Supervisors. The Vulnerability Index was used to determine areas of need for project prioritization. Vulnerability Index information was shared with the public as part of FCDOT inclusive community engagement effort. Several community engagement sessions were planned in-person and virtually to accommodate citizen's varying schedules; these sessions provided directions on how to give feedback prioritizing projects. This allowed for individuals from different areas of the county to participate. Additionally, a recording of the virtual meeting was posted for residents to view at a time that is convenient for them. Staff explored the possibility of either translating the video to different languages or providing closed captioning in different languages.

The Spot Improvement Screening Program is a data-driven process that was developed to prioritize locations for future spot transportation projects in the County. Safety, equity, and multimodal factors were identified as important focus areas. Stakeholder coordination was a key component in developing the framework criteria by which spot locations would be prioritized. Fairfax County's Chief Equity Officer Karla Bruce advised the team that the County Vulnerability Index would be the best metric for assessing equity priority at spot locations. Using safety data, multimodal data, and the County Vulnerability Index, a list of priority spot locations was developed. We anticipate using the prioritized list of locations to either inform future project selection under existing funded programs like the TPP, or to implement a future stand-alone program to address high-priority locations.

The Active Transportation Section continues to implement the Active Transportation Plan previously developed and published. One of the major goals is Equity and Social Justice; providing an active transportation network that adequately addresses the mobility and recreational needs of communities of color and low-income communities, as well as the needs of the most vulnerable users - including small children and their caregivers, youth, people with disabilities, and older adults.

The Board of Supervisors authorized a review of the Comprehensive Plan Transportation Policy. As part of the review, FCDOT staff is applying an equity lens to existing elements of the current policy as well as future recommendations.

As part of the County's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) policy and goal, FCDOT worked to include the DBE goal in bid documents for the Richmond Highway BRT project – specifically trying to attract DBE firms that do demolition or site remediation activities.

CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT

Goal 3: Continue incorporating equity into FCDOT services.

Goal 3 Progress:

Public transportation providers that receive federal funds are required to submit an updated Title VI Program to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) every three years. Agencies must document that they are not discriminating on the basis of race, ethnicity, or national origin, and describe the proactive steps they are taking to ensure they do not discriminate in the future. FCDOT Transit Services updated Title VI, as required as a recipient of FTA funds. FCDOT and Fairfax Connector operate programs and services without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

To reduce the financial burden on County residents, children aged 12 and under can ride Fairfax Connector for free when accompanied by a paying adult; this policy took effect May 1, 2023. This policy, in addition to the Fairfax Connector's free student bus pass program, allows all youth in Fairfax County to utilize one of the County's transportation options for no cost.

The Transit Service Division is currently in the process of completing a 10-year strategic plan to be presented to the Board of Supervisors. For the first time, this plan will add equity as a major element of the strategic plan and will guide transit development in the next ten years.

Describe other equity-related work completed in CY 2023 (efforts that advance racial and social equity that your department was involved in within the department or countywide) not in the department's Equity Impact Plan.

FCDOT continues to engage communities in the decision-making process by implementing an inclusive community engagement framework. FCDOT continues to find ways to engage with community partners, including non-profit organizations, for sharing resources and collecting vital community feedback about projects and services.