CITY OF FAIRFAX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING AGENDA
Wednesday October 1, 2025 6:00pm
In Person at Economic Development Offices

10306 Eaton Place, Training Room 115 AB, Fairfax, VA 22030

1. Call to Order — Chair Hermann
2. Adoption of October Meeting Agenda **[VOTE]** — Commissioners
3. Adoption of September Meeting Minutes **[VOTE]** — Commissioners
4. A Resolution Recognizing the Economic Opportunity Fund as Committed for Unplanned and Strategic Program and/or Incentive Creation **[VOTE]**
5. Mason Enterprise Center- Fairfax (15 mins w/ Q&A) — Center Director Hill
6. Business Investment Update (10 mins w/ Q&A) — Senior Assistant Director Spittell
    a. Welcome to Liz Keller
    b. John Cabot Fellowship – Fall 2025 and Spring 2026
7. Finance and Operations Update (10 mins w/ Q&A) — Interim CEO / Assistant Director Easley
    a. Adoption FY25 Rollover **[VOTE]**
    b. Audit Completion and Delivery
8. Programs Update (15 mins w/ Q&A) — Assistant Director Borwey
    a. ShopMason
    b. Local Shopping Initiative
    c. FCRW
9. PR and Marketing Update (10 mins w/ Q&A) — PR and Marketing Manager Jones
    a. Q1 FCED Press Recap
    b. Upcoming Ad Partnerships
10. Tourism Update (15 mins w/ Q&A) — Tourism Specialist Gerson
    a. Z-Card Review
    b. RFP for Tourism Brand and Marketing Strategy
    c. LOVEworks sign update
    d. Parking Wayfinding in Old Town

e. 2024 Tourism Data from VTC

11. New Business — Commissioners

12. Public Comment (5 mins) — Public

13. Adjourn — Chair Hermann

*****Next Meeting: November 5, 2025*****
6 pm, 10300 Eaton Pl. Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Subject to Change. Please Check gofairfaxcity.com for more information.

FAIRFAX CITY
Economic Development Authority

Fairfax City Economic Development Staff Report

Date: October 1, 2025

TO: Economic Development Authority Commissioners

THROUGH: Matthew Easley, Interim CEO/ Assistant Director, Finance and Operations

FROM: Marie Spittell, Senior Assistant Director of Business Investment

SUBJECT: Business Investment Update

ISSUE(S): This report provides an update on FCED'S business investment activities. It includes a presentation from the Business Investment Manager with time for questions, a welcome to Liz Keller, and an overview of the John Cabot Fellowship for Fall 2025 and Spring 2026.

WELCOME TO BUSINESS INVESTMENT SPECIALIST:

Liz Keller is a business development and economic policy professional with a background in consulting, partnerships, operations, and project management. She currently serves as a Business Investment Specialist with Fairfax City Economic Development, where she supports strategic investment and growth initiatives. Previously, she contributed to international economic development efforts through USAID-funded programs and advised small businesses at Virginia-based SBDCs. Liz holds a B.A. in Economics and Sociology from the University of Virginia and an M.A. in International Economic Policy from The George Washington University.

JCU FELLOWSHIP:

Fall 2025 – Three fellows have been selected to work with FCED during the fall semester. Building off of the research performed by the inaugural JCU-FCED Fellows in spring 2025, the fall cohort will be working to deliver specific recommendations on how FCED can utilize Italian business associations, media outlets, and other conveners to market Fairfax City as a destination for Italian businesses that are interested in U.S. expansion. Recommendations could take the form of articles, webinars, and events.

The fellows are:

- Laura Bocchese – Sophomore majoring in Economics and Finance, with a minor in Legal Studies
- Alessia Faenza – Senior majoring in International Business
- Valentino Marocco – Freshman majoring in Marketing

Spring 2026 – Recruitment of the Spring 2026 fellows will begin in November 2025 and they will start their fellowship in January 2026. They will be tasked with conducting an evaluation of countries that could be a candidate for FDI attraction in Fairfax City's key industries. Based on the information uncovered, a certain number of countries will be selected for deeper research into their business ecosystem and how FCED might approach them for attraction efforts. The fellows will travel to Fairfax City during the week of May 11th. We will not be able to attend SelectUSA because the dates conflict with their finals schedule. Instead, during their week in the DC area we will meet with a variety of organizations that would be able to help us with business attraction from our target countries.

FISCAL IMPACT: None, outside of already approved programs.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue executing on the above initiative.

ALTERNATIVE

COURSE OF ACTION: Recommend pausing or closing the above initiative.

RESPONSIBLE STAFF/

POC: Marie Spittell, Senior Assistant Director of Business Investment

COORDINATION: Interim Director Hardin

ATTACHMENTS: N/A

FAIRFAX CITY
Economic Development Authority

Fairfax City Economic Development Staff Report

Date: October 1, 2025

TO: Economic Development Authority Commissioners

THROUGH: Matthew Easley, Interim CEO/ Assistant Director, Finance and Operations

FROM: Tara Borwey, Assistant Director of Programs and Retail Strategy

SUBJECT: Programs Update

ISSUE(S): The Economic Development Authority is responsible for overseeing certain programs relying on EDA-allocated funds that advance the economic development goals of Fairfax City. This report serves as an update for FCED programs, such as Shop Mason, the Local Shopping Initiative, Fairfax City's Restaurant Week, and Fall Festival.

SHOP MASON:

This year, the ShopMason program introduced a defined schedule for managing influencer campaigns, resulting in more opportunities for Fairfax City businesses to participate. FCED is encouraging businesses to provide promotional items to entice influencers to shop and dine in the city, further strengthening engagement. FCED staff is pleased with the development of the program and will continue to leverage the partnership by suggesting campaign themes, such as *Best Places to Study and Sip in Fairfax City*, while also planning for future collaborations.

LOCAL SHOPPING INITIATIVE:

Businesses have begun enrolling in the Small Business Holiday Shopping Month iteration of the Shop Local Initiative. In past years, the program highlighted Small Business Saturday and the Flex Card Buy One Get One promotion; this year, the effort will expand to encompass the entire holiday shopping season. The campaign will emphasize advertising all Flex Card businesses as destinations to dine and shop throughout the holidays, as well as marketing businesses that host events, collaborations, and shopping specials. The event will once again be hosted in partnership with the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce (CFCC) and the Old Town Fairfax Business Association (OTFBA). The budget for this iteration was approved as part of the FY26 budget and is $18,000.

FAIRFAX CITY RESTAURANT WEEK:

The most recent Fairfax City Restaurant Week, hosted in partnership with the CFCC and the OTFBA, featured 30 participating restaurants and introduced a revised 10-day schedule (Friday through the following Sunday). Participating businesses provided positive feedback on the predictability and consistency of the new format. Final tax metrics are pending from the Commissioner of the Revenue. Staff will share the consultant's report once those numbers become available. The budget for this iteration was approved as part of the FY26 budget and is $20,000.

FALL FESTIVAL:

The 49th Annual Fall Festival will be held on Friday, October 11, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Old Town Fairfax. FCED will staff a booth throughout the day, located within the consolidated City departments section. Attending this event provides an opportunity to engage directly with the community and share information on upcoming initiatives, including the Small Business Holiday Shopping Month and the Flex Card Buy One Get One promotion. The budget for this event was approved as part of the FY26 budget and is $500.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

RECOMMENDATION: Continue moving forward on all the above initiatives.

ALTERNATIVE COURSE OF ACTION: Recommend pausing or stopping on any of the above initiatives.

RESPONSIBLE STAFF/POC: Tara Borwey, Assistant Director of Program

COORDINATION: Interim Director Hardin, Programs division, PR & Marketing division, and Finance and Operations division.

ATTACHMENTS: N/A

Fairfax City Economic Development Staff Report

Economic Development Authority

Date: October 1, 2025

TO: Economic Development Authority Commissioners

THROUGH: Matthew Easley, Interim CEO/ Assistant Director, Finance and Operations

FROM: Brittany Jones, PR and Marketing Manager

SUBJECT: PR and Marketing Update

ISSUE(S): The Fairfax City Economic Development (FCED) PR and Marketing Division is responsible for overseeing outward-facing media initiatives as well as coordinating collateral content and providing program managers with direction and guidance on related initiatives. This report will provide updates on recent press and upcoming advertising partnerships. Please see below for a detailed overview of these updates.

Q1 FCED PRESS RECAP:

During the first quarter of FY26, FCED's PR and Marketing division issued seven press releases and generated 182 unique media mentions, including television coverage. The announcements receiving the strongest traction were Area 2 Farms' opening of an urban farm in Fairfax Circle and Sweet Science Marketing's start of a new lease at the Mason Enterprise Center.

UPCOMING AD PARTNERSHIPS:

Recent advertising partnership agreements have been signed with Audacy, the Washington Business Journal, and DC News Now as part of a larger campaign to highlight Fairfax City businesses and attract new ones. This campaign will feature selected local businesses with compelling stories, positioning them as brand ambassadors through radio, television, and online advertisements. Their testimonials will showcase the benefits of doing business in Fairfax City. Funds for these advertisements are included in the current fiscal year's marketing budget.

FISCAL IMPACT: Reflected in the FY26 budget for PR & Marketing initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue executing on the above initiatives.

ALTERNATIVE
COURSE OF ACTION: Recommend pausing or closing any of the above initiatives.

RESPONSIBLE STAFF/
POC: Brittany Jones, PR & Marketing Manager; Cheyenne Galloway, Marketing Associate; Markus Moore, Communications Fellow

COORDINATION: Interim Director Hardin and all relevant divisions within Economic Development

ATTACHMENTS: N/A

FAIRFAX CITY
Economic Development Authority

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Date: October 1, 2025

TO: Economic Development Authority Commissioners

THROUGH: Matthew Easley, Interim CEO/ Assistant Director, Finance and Operations MAE

FROM: Stephanie Gerson, Tourism and Placemaking Specialist

SUBJECT: Tourism Update

ISSUE(S): This report provides an update on the department's ongoing tourism-related initiatives, as outlined in the Strategic Workplan. Specifically, it addresses the Z-Card review the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Tourism Brand and Marketing Strategy, and the status of the LOVEworks sign. In addition, this report highlights progress on the Parking Wayfinding project in Old Town and shares the 2024 tourism data recently released by the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC).

Z-CARD UPDATE:

The Fairfax City Z-Card has been updated, which was last completed in 2022. Updates were necessary to align with the city's, FCED's, CUE Bus, and George Mason University's brands. The map now highlights the small area plans, parks, and areas of interest in Fairfax City. Additional features include hotel listings and resources to help orient visitors to city businesses and destinations. Two inserts provide context on Fairfax City's proximity to DC and highlight the assets of Old Town Fairfax.

BRAND & MARKETING STRATGEY RFP:

The Finance division, in collaboration with Tourism, issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) on September 12, 2025, for the development of a tourism-focused brand and marketing strategy guide. This guide will provide a framework to shape and implement future tourism marketing efforts.

LOVE SIGN:

The LOVEworks sign project is moving forward, though the installation has been postponed. The sign is being fabricated and prepared for installation with support from Andrew Wilson, Special Projects Manager. The anticipated unveiling is targeted for the Christmas Market.

OLD TOWN PARKING WAYFINDING:

In collaboration with City staff and the Old Town Fairfax Business Association, to advance the implementation of the 2019 Old Town Fairfax Streetscape Standards and the 2025 Old Town Fairfax Parking Study. The project focuses on parking lot signage, with the goal of establishing consistent styles that are clearer for visitors and improve wayfinding.

2024 VTC TOURISM DATA:

The Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) released its annual tourism economic impact data, providing insights at both the state and local levels. According to VTC, visitor spending in Fairfax City reached $120.7 million in 2024, representing a 1.7 percent increase over 2023. Tourism-supported employment totaled 1,155 jobs, and local tourism-related taxes reached $5.8 million. These taxes include local sales, income, lodging, usage fees, licenses, and other revenues to local authorities.

Northern Virginia accounted for 47.5 percent of Virginia's overall tourism spending, with Arlington County at 13.6 percent, Fairfax County at 11.2 percent, and Loudoun County at 14 percent. This data underscores Fairfax City's position within a high-tourism, high-spending region, highlighting opportunities to expand the City's tourism profile and capture greater market share.

FISCAL IMPACT: None currently.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue moving forward on all above initiatives.

ALTERNATIVE
COURSE OF ACTION: Recommend that staff pause or close any of the above initiatives or programs.

RESPONSIBLE STAFF/
POC: Stephanie Gerson, Tourism and Placemaking Specialist

COORDINATION: Interim Director Hardin, Programs Division, PR & Marketing Division, and Finance and Operations Division.

ATTACHMENTS: N/A