

# Supervisor Matt Letourneau's Dulles Direct Annual Report



*Dear Dulles District Resident,*

Welcome to the 2022 Dulles Direct Annual Report. I provide this written report to you each year to share information about many of the things happening in our community. I hope you find it useful. To those of you receiving this report for the first time—welcome! This year, we've added residents who will be part of the future Dulles District in 2023 as a result of redistricting (more on that below).

COVID-19 has brought many challenges and changes in our lives, but Loudoun has weathered these storms pretty well. Still, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the over 400 lives we've lost due to the pandemic, and the disruption it caused to our children's education and our mental and physical wellbeing. Most recently, we have been grappling with the effects of inflation and supply chain disruption, which are having a significant impact on County construction projects and costs.

On a personal note, some of you will recall that I was in a serious accident while coaching baseball in September of

2020, which caused extensive injuries to my eye and face. While I still suffer from nerve damage and balance and fatigue issues, my eye function is better and my life has largely returned to normal. I appreciate all the continued well wishes and concern over the last few years. My baseball coaching days are over, however!

I'm now in my eleventh year serving on the Board of Supervisors, and it continues to be a great honor. I'm proud of the progress we've made, although there is still work to be done. Overall, we live in a great community and I'm glad that I can once again see all of you in person around the Dulles District. I want to thank my two staff members, Tom Parker and Jared Midwood, who work out of my Leesburg office full-time and do a great job for our constituents.

I also want to mention that in February 2020, I was appointed by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission to be one of Virginia's two Principal Directors on the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Board of Directors (WMATA). The Metro Board consists of eight Principal Directors, two each from Virginia, Maryland, D.C., and the federal government. Metro is the third largest transit agency in the United States and provides essential services for our region. It is certainly not without its challenges, chief among them a major loss in ridership and revenue during the pandemic. In July of 2021, my Metro Board colleagues selected me to chair our Board's Finance and Capital Committee, so I am deeply involved in those issues. I have more updates about Metro and the Silver Line to Loudoun below.

I encourage you to follow me on Facebook (look for "[Supervisor Matt Letourneau](#)") for news and event updates, and also subscribe to my monthly email newsletter by visiting [loudoun.gov/dulles](https://loudoun.gov/dulles). My staff and I are available to help however we can, so feel free to email me at [matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov](mailto:matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov).

*Matt Letourneau*

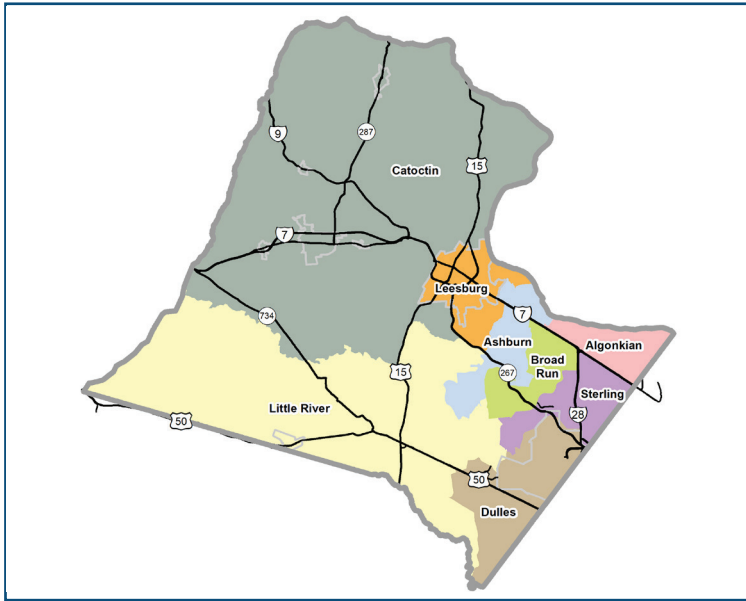


*This Annual Report is broken up into ongoing Board initiatives and activities, a budget/financial overview, updates on transportation and infrastructure, and some private sector developments of interest.*

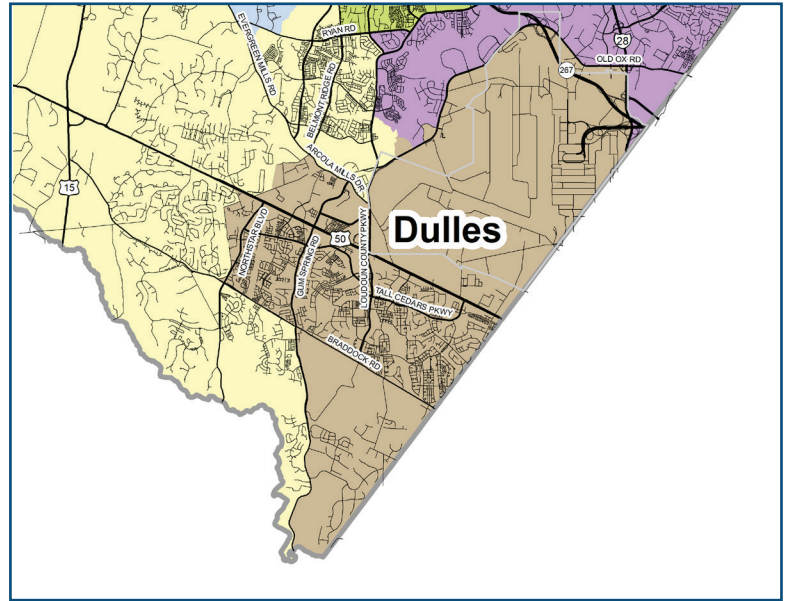
# Board Initiatives and Activities

## Redistricting

The Attorney General recently approved the Board of Supervisors' new election district maps, which will go into effect for the November 2023 elections for the Board of Supervisors and School Board. The current Dulles District has over 66,000 residents and had to be reduced to about 52,000 because all eight election districts must have equal populations. South of Route 50, the Dulles District remains the same. North of Route 50, Loudoun Valley Estates, Moorefield Green, Belle Terra, and Forest Manor were moved to other districts because of population. However, Dulles Landing, Arcola Center, StoneSprings Hospital Center, Winsbury, South Fork, and Briarfield Estates will now be in the Dulles District. While we were able to keep many HOAs together, the population limits and lack of geographic boundaries made it impossible to bring areas south of Braddock and west of Gum Spring into the Dulles District. Many of those are in the new "Little River District," which replaces the current "Blue Ridge District"—but is more compact.



*Adopted Loudoun County election districts*



*Adopted new Dulles District*

## Airport Impact Overlay District

The Board has been working on a Comprehensive Plan amendment to adjust the Airport Impact Overlay District (AIOD) contour lines for Dulles Airport based on the newest noise study conducted by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. This process has created some confusion which we've tried to clear up with an article you can find on my website. To be clear, the AIOD is a zoning tool used around the country in areas with significant airplane noise in order to restrict residential development in the loudest areas, and require noise attenuation and/or disclosure in other areas. It does not govern flight patterns and is not binding on the FAA, which decides where aircraft fly. MWAA's previous study was from 1993 and is now out of date. For more information on the AIOD updates, please visit [www.loudoun.gov/5657](http://www.loudoun.gov/5657).

## New Zoning Ordinance

Land use decisions by the Board are based on our Comprehensive Plan, which was updated in 2019 for the first time in 20 years. Applications are measured for

consistency with that plan. The Zoning Ordinance provides all the technical details of the Comprehensive Plan. The County is in the process of drafting a new Zoning Ordinance to match the new Comp Plan. It's a long and complicated process which started in 2020 and should be finished sometime next year.

## Unmet Housing Needs

The lack of affordable housing in the region has cascading effects on the entire economy. I hear from local businesses all the time about how difficult it is to find employees to work in stores and restaurants, and many public sector employees like teachers, Sheriff's deputies, and firefighters struggle to find housing in Loudoun. While the market will ultimately play the biggest role in dictating home prices, the County has made major investments in our affordable housing programs. The Board recently adopted an Unmet Housing Needs Strategic Plan, which seeks to address the growing issue in the County. The Board has dedicated about \$5 million annually to help support new projects, and has expanded programs that provide loans to affordable housing

developers. Regular residential applications are required to set aside certain percentages of housing as affordable units and the County has taken steps to keep some larger complexes affordable.

## **The Future of Data Centers**

Data centers are a polarizing topic. On one hand, the County receives over \$500 million in tax revenue every year from data centers, mostly from taxes on the computer equipment inside. Without data centers, each one of you would be paying literally thousands of dollars more in taxes each year to support County and school budgets. It is important, therefore, that we keep a thriving data center industry in Loudoun. That said, the overwhelming piece of feedback I hear from residents is “no more data centers!” A lot of the data centers in Loudoun were built “by-right” using existing zoning—without being approved by the Board. More recently, we’ve seen applications in areas that allow data centers by-right but not at the size and scope of where the market has gone. I think the largest issues arise when data centers are developed close to residential housing, as we’ve seen with the by-right data centers that have been built near East Gate. That’s why I recently voted against two JK Technology Park data center applications near Stone Springs Boulevard and close to existing neighborhoods, both of which passed the Board 5-4—which I think is unfortunate. However, from a big picture standpoint, the Board asked our staff to do a study of available land for future data centers, which formed the basis of a new initiative that is being incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance update I mentioned. Stay tuned to my email newsletters for updates on that.

## **Form of Government/Law Enforcement**

There has been much debate in the County about our traditional form of government, which includes an elected Sheriff as the primary law enforcement agency. There are pros and cons to this model, and some of the Board wished to bring a ballot initiative seeking authority to change our model to a Police Department. In my judgement, we lacked the facts to explain to voters the implications of making that decision, and I was successful in getting the Board to agree to a comprehensive study first. The study was presented to the Board earlier this year and was illuminating. Essentially, converting to a Police Department would impact our insurance liability coverage, require expensive new capital facilities, and require us to terminate employment for and then attempt to rehire about 300 deputies. Given the workforce shortages in law enforcement, that is a very risky undertaking. As a result, the Board decided not to move forward with discussion on changing the form of government, and instead focus on legislative changes that would better define the position of Sheriff (currently open to any resident 18 years of age who has lived in the County for 6 months—very minimal qualifications, to say the least).

## **Collective Bargaining for County Employees/Labor Requirements for Projects**

The Board of Supervisors adopted a collective bargaining ordinance, which will open up the County workforce to unionize. I did not support this ordinance, which passed on a 6-3 vote. Already, the County has had to invest over \$1.8 million to create a Labor Relations department—funding that I would rather have invested in our employees. The new ordinance creates three bargaining units, which can petition for recognition, and then would be responsible for negotiating pay, benefits, and various other issues with County Administration. Over the course of my tenure on the Board, I believe we have always been responsive to employee concerns, and I led the effort to conduct a Compensation and Classification study to ensure that our wages and job functions are market-based. We even created a new Public Safety Pay Scale. Most recently, the County provided larger wage increases than surrounding jurisdictions.

The Board also adopted a prevailing wage ordinance, which I opposed because I find it to be totally unnecessary. The County conducted a study which showed that our contractors already pay prevailing wage, so the only difference is the amount of bureaucratic red tape now required to prove it. This will lead only to less efficiency and higher costs—not actual higher wages to workers.

In addition, the Board is currently considering a further initiative to require that all capital projects have Project Labor Agreements with unions. Given the incredibly tight construction market, placing these requirements on contractors will drive up costs and reduce competition, leading to the use of more out of state companies since very few in Virginia would be able to meet these new regulations. The Board has commissioned a study on this issue, and I will be strongly opposing the change when it comes to a vote.

## **Plastic Bag Tax**

I’m sure by now you’ve encountered the County’s 5¢ plastic bag tax, which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on a 5-4 vote earlier this year. Although I do support efforts to reduce plastic consumption, I did not support the tax. Evidence is very mixed on the effectiveness of this tax and I would have rather provided reusable bags to residents and incentivized less plastic instead of punitive measures.

## **Renaming Route 50 and Route 7**

After an extensive public process and a County review of segregationist symbols, Route 50 is being renamed from “John Mosby Highway” to “Little River Turnpike” and Route 7 from “Harry Byrd Highway” to “Leesburg Pike.” Little River Turnpike was actually the longtime name of Route 50 in Loudoun until the early 1980s, so this will be a return to our heritage.



## A Snapshot of County Finances

At the end of 2021, I completed six years serving as Chairman of the Board's Finance, Government Operations, and Economic Development Committee. I am now Vice-Chair of the Committee and remain committed to responsibly stewarding the County's resources and planning for the future. The County retained its AAA bond ratings again this year, which means we can fund important road and infrastructure projects at the lowest possible interest rates.

For the fiscal year beginning in July, the Board approved a \$2.5 billion operating budget and a \$3 billion six-year Capital Improvement Program. The budget sets a tax rate of .89 per \$100 of assessed value, a 9 cent reduction from the prior year's tax rate but above the equalized rate, resulting in an average increase of about \$225 for the year (which is less than most of our surrounding jurisdictions). The budget also lowers the personal property tax rate to \$4.15 for Tax Year 2023. The Board also approved assessing vehicles at 80% of their market value to help alleviate the unprecedented increase in values due to supply chain and chip shortages.

We are entering into a period of continued fiscal pressure. Revenue from commercial activities—retail centers, sales of goods and services, etc.—continues to be down from previous years due to COVID-19 and supply chain issues. Data center revenue growth is slowing due to fewer projects and less land availability, while costs to the County are rapidly rising due to inflation. In addition, workforce shortages mean that we must remain competitive on wages and benefits, which will increase costs further. As a result, I expect that the next few budget cycles will see expenditures exceed growth, meaning the Board will either need to make service reductions or raise taxes, which is obviously not where we want to be. I have been telling my colleagues that I think we're going to have to tighten our belts for the immediate future.

### Loudoun County Public Schools Budget and School Construction

Our community cares deeply about education, which is reflected in the significant investments we make in our schools. The Board of Supervisors is responsible for providing an overall allocation to Loudoun County Public Schools, while the School Board has authority over governance and spending on individual items.

We did have some disagreements with our School Board colleagues during this past year's budget cycle. They requested a \$75 million increase in local tax funding for their \$1.6 billion budget, which represented a 5.9% increase. In a normal year that request wouldn't stand out, but the school division has seen much lower enrollment growth—in fact their enrollment is lower than where it was before the pandemic. Therefore, the Board of Supervisors allocated an increase of \$53.7 million, which was enough to fund a 5% raise for LCPS teachers and staff, fund the opening of the new Elaine Thompson Elementary School, and handle other expenditure increases.

I do not think the contentious school budget process is healthy for either body on a yearly basis, so I have proposed a straight revenue sharing agreement that would essentially dictate the amount that the County and LCPS would receive depending on revenue and the tax rate. The Board has directed County Administration to engage in discussions with the school division and School Board on this topic, which ultimately could be enacted by establishing a Board of Supervisors policy. The School Board is currently discussing this proposal.

#### School Construction

While it is less than it has been in the past, about 27% of our FY23 capital budget is devoted to school construction. Over the past decade, Dulles District School Board Representative Jeff Morse and I have worked closely to address overcrowding and at least in Dulles South, I'm pleased to say that all of our schools are now under their building capacities.

With regard to new schools in our area, Elaine Thompson Elementary School opened this fall and is located in the Arcola Center development. ES-32 will be co-located with Hovatter and Lightridge High School and is being accelerated to open for the 2024-2025 school year serving grades K-2, while ES-34 is planned to open in 2029 on a proffered site in Silver District West. MS-14 is planned to open in fall 2024 on the Rouse Property on Evergreen Mills Road. HS-14 will be co-located with MS-14 and is scheduled to open in 2028. That site will one day host an elementary school as well.

## Recently Completed Projects

When I took office in 2011, infrastructure was severely lagging behind population growth and the County was not funding road construction. During my first year in office, I was among a group of Supervisors who decided to dedicate two cents from our tax rate as a recurring revenue stream for transportation projects. In the years since, we have developed a robust six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to set aside funds for infrastructure, school, and transportation projects years in advance (this year, the CIP totals \$3 billion). While we have much more work to do (you can see we have many projects in various stages of development in the next section), it is important to note the progress that has been made so far. In the last year, the following projects were completed in or serving residents of the Dulles District:

- Ashburn Senior Center
- Animal Services Facility
- Conklin Park Bike Trail
- East Gate View Drive restriping/bike lanes
- Elk Lick Road/Route 50 median closure
- Hal & Berni Hanson Regional Park
- Hovatter Elementary School
- Hutchison Farm Elementary classroom addition
- Route 50 Intelligent Transportation System
- The North Star School
- Tall Cedars/Elk Lick permanent intersection improvements
- Through truck restrictions on Cedar Ridge Boulevard & Ticonderoga Road
- Traffic calming project in Stratshire Crossing and Westridge



*New animal shelter and Animal Services HQ*



*Hanson Park ribbon cutting*



*Conklin Park Bike Trail ribbon cutting*



*Elk Lick Road/Tall Cedars Parkway*



## Ongoing Transportation Projects

You may recognize some of these ongoing projects from previous annual reports, budget reports, and newsletters. Projects in our CIP are funded over multiple years and often receive altered timelines or funding amounts, so this information is the most recent and accurate available. One thing to note: our budgetary constraints are based on how much we can borrow and the amount of debt we can take on—not just the tax rate. For more information on the projects below, visit [www.loudoun.gov/underconstruction](http://www.loudoun.gov/underconstruction).

**Arcola Boulevard:** Arcola Center is constructing Arcola Boulevard between Route 50 and Route 606/Loudoun County Parkway in keeping with their proffers. Most of the construction from Route 50 to Arcola Mills is complete with the exception of the signal at Arcola Mills. The tie-in at Route 50 is nearly complete, including the addition of a right turn lane from westbound 50 onto northbound Arcola Boulevard. Once that tie-in is complete and the signals are finalized, the developer plans to open Arcola Boulevard from Route 50 to Dulles West Boulevard and Dulles West to Dulles Landing for traffic. Arcola Center has sealed off access to Dulles West Boulevard until the opening.

The segment from Arcola Mills Drive to Route 606/Loudoun County Parkway is also proffered, but that proffer has not yet been triggered. The County provided funding to accelerate this piece of the project, and we just completed right of way acquisition. This segment should be open by late 2023. Once the proffer trigger is reached, the Arcola Center developer will reimburse the County for construction costs.

**Arcola Mills Drive:** Arcola Mills Drive (previously Evergreen Mills Road) will be widened from Belmont Ridge Road to Stone Springs Boulevard at a total cost of \$57.6 million. Construction funding will begin in FY25, with an estimated completion year of FY30. This portion of Arcola Mills Drive will be a three-lane roadway with a continuous left turn lane and right turn lanes spaced between Belmont Ridge and Stone Springs. Construction includes intersection improvements at Belmont Ridge and Stone Springs and a new bridge over the South Fork of the Broad Run. The road will feature a sidewalk on one side and a shared use path on the other.

**Belmont Ridge Road Widening:** The final portion of Belmont Ridge to be widened is from Truro Parish Drive to Croson Lane. The total cost is \$42.7 million, and a groundbreaking ceremony took place earlier this year. Construction should be completed by summer of 2024, weather permitting.

On a slightly different note, the Board directed staff to conduct a corridor safety and operational study of Belmont Ridge Road from Northstar Boulevard to Evergreen Mills

Road last year, after receiving feedback from residents in the area on crashes and speeding.

**Braddock Road:** We accelerated the timeline for widening Braddock Road to four lanes from the eastern entrance of Paul VI to Loudoun County Parkway. Revenue programmed for the Northstar Boulevard widening between Tall Cedars Parkway and Braddock was swapped to this project allowing land acquisition and construction one year earlier. Construction will now begin in FY27, while the swap did not impact the planned FY28 construction for widening Northstar. The total project cost is \$44 million, and a public information meeting was held in September to gather feedback on the preliminary design.

Braddock is also being widened from Royal Hunter Drive to Gum Springs Road through a developer proffer. The developer is still acquiring right of way and getting final approval for the road plans. They expect to move forward early next year. Right of way acquisition for the widening at the Supreme and Summerall intersection is complete and utility relocation should be finished soon. Construction is set to begin early next year. The project also includes the installation of turn lanes and a signal at the intersection.

Fairfax County has approved an agreement with VDOT to move forward on improvements to Braddock Road and Old Lee Road. This allows VDOT to begin preliminary engineering and design to straighten the “S” curve and intersection improvements as recommended in the safety study that was completed in 2020. This has been a major priority for me. Several years ago, I requested a VDOT study on the safety and operations of the Braddock Road corridor which led to action. Design should begin early next year and is expected to take up to 2 years before land acquisition and utility relocation could begin to allow for construction.

**Croson Lane:** Croson Lane will be widened to four lanes between Claiborne Parkway and Old Ryan Road. A sidewalk will be constructed on one side and a shared use path on the other. Estimated completion is FY27, with construction funding starting in FY25. The total anticipated cost is \$18.8 million. Traffic scoping documents have been approved, and a traffic study is being initiated.

**Dulles West Boulevard:** The segment between Arcola Boulevard and Loudoun County Parkway is mostly finished and is awaiting completion of Arcola Boulevard. As noted above, we are working on a plan to open this segment with a southern portion of Arcola Boulevard. The four-lane median divided roadway between Arcola Boulevard and Northstar Boulevard will cost \$78.7 million and include shared use paths on both sides of the road and a bridge over the South Fork of the Broad Run.

Currently it is in design with estimated project completion in FY27.

**Loudoun County Parkway Widening:** Loudoun County Parkway is being widened from Ryan Road to Shellhorn Road as part of a proffer package I negotiated for the mixed-use Silver District West development located just off the Greenway and LCP. The road will be widened to six lanes within the median (a third lane in each direction), and completion is currently expected by the end of next year.



*Progress on Northstar Boulevard from Tall Cedars Parkway to Route 50*

**Northstar Boulevard:** Northstar Boulevard will be extended from Brambleton to Tall Cedars Parkway. The project is in two sections. Design and construction of the four-lane, median divided segment from Route 50 to Evergreen Mills Road (formerly Shreveport Drive) has been funded at \$90 million and received a \$25 million federal TIGER grant, as well as funding from VDOT, NVTA, and the County. The estimated date for completion is early 2024.

Construction of Northstar from Tall Cedars to Route 50 is funded at \$45.8 million including funding from NVTA. Estimated completion is currently late 2023. The groundbreaking was last fall; the bridge over the Broad Run is being constructed, a box culvert has been installed to regulate waterflow underneath the roadway, and construction modifications are ongoing at the intersection of Northstar and 50.

Northstar Boulevard will be widened from Tall Cedars Parkway to Braddock Road; the project is budgeted at \$39 million with the bulk of construction funding becoming available in FY27. The current anticipated completion is FY30. I have asked that the design for this project incorporate a grade-separated pedestrian crossing to access the school campuses on the west side of Northstar.

**Route 50 Intersection Improvements:** As a result of a process I initiated to improve operations on Route 50, a VDOT project is on the books to install safety and operational improvements along a six-mile stretch of Route 50. The project includes:

- Replacing the northbound Gum Spring Road right turn lanes at Route 50 with a free flow right turn lane and a new eastbound Route 50 merge lane from Gum Spring Road to Hutchinson Farm Drive
- Extending the westbound Route 50 left turn lanes onto Gum Spring Road
- Extending the eastbound Route 50 left turn lanes onto Loudoun County Parkway
- Converting a westbound left turn lane at Pleasant Valley Road (Loudoun) to an auxiliary through lane running to Tall Cedars Parkway
- Improving traffic signal timing and the intersection layout at Avion Parkway
- Improving traffic signal equipment and timing at Centreville Road



The total cost is just under \$11 million and is financed with federal, NVTa, state (including Smart Scale), and County CIP funding. Construction is expected to begin in 2024.

### **Route 50/Loudoun County Parkway Interchange:**

The County has begun the process for the required Interchange Access Report for this project. This is expected to take approximately 18 months to complete. The IAR is a formal process with VDOT to determine if an interchange is justified and what type of design it will have. Construction funding is not included in the current CIP because the project is estimated to cost \$300 million and will require regional, State, and federal dollars to bring to fruition. We recently received \$32 million in NVTa funding that will help to fund design and right of way acquisition. There is no timeline for completion of the overall project, however this IAR process will help bring us closer to obtaining funding and a plan for completion.

**Route 50 Northern Collector Road:** The Route 50 Northern Collector Road would serve as an alternative to 50 that would connect from Tall Cedars Parkway to Route 28 at the Air and Space Parkway interchange. This may be the most challenging project we've ever attempted and I'm still not sure it will come to fruition, though if it doesn't it certainly won't be for lack of effort. We continue working with MWAA and Fairfax County on the necessary cooperation to keep this project a reality. The current cost in the CIP is \$246.9 million, with construction not yet in the six-year plan. Design is funded in FY26 and land acquisition is funded in FY28. The benefits of this project are clear: it will reduce congestion on 50 and the regional road network in general. However, it is not currently on the Fairfax County transportation plan. One piece of good news: as a member of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, I was able to get this project adopted as part of the region's long term plan, making it eligible for federal funding.

**Route 50 & Trailhead Drive:** The Board has awarded a design and construction contract for the Route 50 and Trailhead Drive roundabout project to Shirley Contracting Company Inc. in the amount of \$5,997,300. This project will be constructed as a hybrid roundabout with the potential for future expansion. Two westbound lanes will be built to provide for left turning and through/right turning traffic. The northbound approach from Trailhead will include a bypass lane to eastbound 50. Land acquisition and utility relocation will follow the design process and is currently estimated for spring of 2023. There is no construction timing estimate for this project yet.

**Shellhorn Road:** We have many Shellhorn Road projects identified in our CIP, some of which are developer-helmed and some of which are being constructed by the County. I'll provide brief overviews here:

- Shellhorn Road (Loudoun County Parkway to Lockridge Road): The westernmost portion is complete as a proffer from Sentinel Data Centers, and provides access to their site. From that location to Lockridge is a combination of County project and developer proffer. The County is using a tool referred to as "furtherance of a proffer" to complete our portions. These segments are going through review of design and bridge plans. The proffers from Silver District West require them to construct their segment prior to the 650th unit or within 36 months of plan approval, whichever occurs first.
- Shellhorn Road (Lockridge to Moran Road—County Project) is the final County administered project and is currently at 90% design. Construction is currently scheduled to begin in 2027.

**Waxpool Road/Loudoun County Parkway:** The intersection of Waxpool Road and Loudoun County Parkway is being improved for better traffic flow. The final plan is for triple left turn lanes onto southbound Loudoun County Parkway and a channelized free flow right turn with an acceleration lane from northbound Loudoun County Parkway onto eastbound Waxpool. There will be significant utility relocation required due to the large amount of fiber running through the intersection. The project is funded at \$10.5 million and completion is estimated in FY26.

**Westwind Drive:** Westwind Drive will connect from Loudoun County Parkway to Old Ox Road with a sidewalk on one side, a shared use path on the other, and a bridge over the Broad Run. The design process has begun, including required federal environmental impact studies due to the planned crossing of the Broad Run. The total cost is estimated at \$53.2 million with a targeted completion date of FY28.

## **Other Transportation Projects**

**Metro:** As I mentioned, as one of Metro's Board members, I have responsibility for the governance and operations of the system. Metro has had challenges in a number of areas over the past year, but I'm optimistic about the future. After several significant safety shortcomings, the Board announced personnel changes including the appointment of Randy Clarke, previously CEO of Capital Metro in Austin, TX, as our new General Manager. Randy has hit the ground running and has already begun improving customer service and operations.



Of most interest for all of you is the Silver Line. As you will recall, the project itself was NOT constructed by Metro; it was built by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. The story of that project and the delays it has incurred could take up pages of this newsletter, but I'm happy to report that we finally opened the Silver Line to Ashburn on November 15th. Since the Board approved moving forward with the project in 2012, we have already seen new, revenue-positive development around the Ashburn Metro Station, with much more to come there and at the Innovation Station. Stay tuned.

**Additional Transit Options for Commuters:** The opening of Phase II of the Silver Line brought about our largest expansion of bus service in the County's history. We have expanded our commuter services by integrating a neighborhood service model, as opposed to the traditional park and ride lot service. This resulted in 21 new bus routes and over 150 new bus stops being launched in November. There are some teething pains with this service, as our contractor was not able to fully hire and train enough drivers to operate all of them with buses; vans are being used for some routes and there have been some scheduling adjustments. For the latest information on specific routes and schedules, please visit [loudoun.gov/silverlinebusroutes](https://loudoun.gov/silverlinebusroutes).

### **Metro Station Area Pedestrian and Bicycle**

**Improvements:** Loudoun and VDOT are working jointly on a \$43.5 million project to complete bike and pedestrian connections needed to access Metro stations in the County. The Board endorsed the location and design of the projects last December. Each project is expected to come online at different times between 2023 and 2026; the projects are



*At the new Dulles Railyard with Metro GM Randy Clarke*

being grouped according to ease of utility relocation, which will allow certain projects to be built sooner than others. The first project will be to extend the Route 606 shared use path across the Dulles Greenway to the Loudoun Gateway station. Construction on this piece should be done late next year. Later projects require right of way acquisition in the areas of Wynridge Drive, Waxpool Road, and Smith Switch Road—with construction expected in 2024. The final phase would be completed in 2026 and include segments along Shellhorn, Prentice Drive, Pacific Boulevard, and Loudoun County Parkway.

## **Quality of Life Amenities and Retail Development**

We have worked hard over the last decade to bring services and amenities to the Dulles District, such as libraries, recreation centers, and parks. Unfortunately, private sector development timing is largely out of our control and has been incredibly challenging—especially since the pandemic. The Board of Supervisors has continued to create opportunities for high quality, mixed use/commercial development with retail and dining through our zoning, but ultimately it is up to the private sector to build them. Below are updates on some specific developments.

### **County Facilities**

**Conklin Park Bike Trail:** South Riding Proprietary partnered with the County to construct a BMX Bike Trail at Conklin Park, which opened in September and is operated by PRCS. The new trail is especially good for beginners and has received great feedback from the community.

**Dulles South Community Park:** A new PRCS park is planned to be co-located on the Lightridge High School

site, featuring passive and active recreation. In this year's budget, I was able to accelerate the design of this park from FY24 to FY23 using proffer funds that we already had for that purpose. The park will cost about \$23.2 million and construction funding is planned through FY27. A completion date of FY29 has been estimated at this point, although I'll look for ways to accelerate the project in future CIPs.

## Hal & Berni Hanson Regional Park

Hanson Park opened in September on both sides of Evergreen Mills Road just west of Belmont Ridge. Amenities of the 257-acre park include 17 lighted athletic fields, the historic Lee-Hanson House, an event lodge and nature center, a skate park designed by world renowned skate park designer Wally Hollyday, a disc golf course, splashpad and playground with inclusive features, and over 75 acres of recreational space such as natural hiking trails and paved bike trails. I worked on this park for over 10 years and I'm so happy it is now open for the community to enjoy.



### Private Sector Development

**Arcola Center:** The Arcola Center developer continues working to refine the retail component of their project. They are working with Kohl's on site plan revisions needed to accommodate their plan; no other tenants have been announced. The Board approved converting a portion of the retail area to flex industrial to allow commercial suite type buildings to be constructed adjacent to the data center areas. These buildings typically house small service uses or fitness and dance class facilities. Data center development is specifically prohibited in this section.

**Avonlea:** Peterson's latest plans were approved by the Board at our April Business Meeting this year. The approval is for a mixed-use development with 447 multi-family residential units, a 300,000 square foot continuing care facility with up to 220 beds, and up to 200,000 square feet of commercial uses, including office, retail, and restaurants. While this iteration of Avonlea isn't exactly what I had in mind all those years ago, it presents opportunities for additional retail and dining tenants in the future and is consistent with the County's vision for a suburban mixed-use community. It has been a long and painful process to get shovels in the ground at Avonlea, but they have already restarted site work to prepare the different sections for development.

**Cedar Terrace:** Toll Brothers removed their portion of the property behind Home Depot from the Avonlea application

and has resubmitted their own mixed use development. They are proposing over 1,000 residential units and only 70,000 square feet of retail space between Market Square and Avonlea. The submitted proposal would be in conflict with the new Airport Impact Overlay District expected to be approved this fall. This is in the early review stages by County staff and likely wouldn't be reviewed by the Board until next year. I'm told a new version is in the works that would be compliant with the new AIOD, which I will review.

### Defender Drive–East of South Riding Boulevard:

There has been a lot of activity along Defender Drive on the east side of South Riding Boulevard. Construction has begun on the granite showroom and manufacturing business between Home2Suites and The Fitness Equation. Construction for a childcare center is underway on the opposite side of the street. Also on that side is a planned 12,000 square foot inline retail building and an additional pad site. No end users have been announced for these sites. There is a much larger parcel that is behind the retail and childcare that is currently proposed for 208 residential units. I have concerns about residential in this location that has long been planned for commercial development and wouldn't meet the uses identified in our 2019 Comprehensive Plan. This application is in the staff referral stages and I don't expect any review by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors until next year.



**Defender Drive–West of South Riding Boulevard:**

On the other side of South Riding Boulevard an application has been filed which proposes a 262-unit apartment development across from VA Tire and Auto and McDonalds. The fully residential application also does not meet the requirements of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan which identifies the area as Suburban Mixed Use. This application is still very early in the staff referral process so, any action is still a long way off. However, I am not sure how they are going to be able to show compliance with the Comprehensive Plan in that location.

**Dulles Landing:** Many of you may recall the campaign that Dulles Landing launched this year seeking to keep the Board from adopting the new noise contours for Dulles Airport. They incorrectly stated that it would prevent them from expanding their retail and restaurant offerings. However, the real reason was that they wanted us to allow them to construct residential units in some of the highest airplane noise areas in the County. They didn't share with you that the zoning they need to build out the center is already in place and has been for several years. While the Board isn't expected to adopt the new noise contours until January, I understand that Dulles Landing is dropping their plans for residential. I hope that they can work cooperatively with the County moving forward on improvements to their existing center—I have already made several suggestions on how to make it more attractive to shoppers—in an effort to bring more of what the community wants to see.

**East Gate Hotel Site:** We have all been frustrated with the lack of activity on the partially constructed hotel in East Gate. The owners were on the cusp of finalizing their financing just before the pandemic hit in early 2020. The hotel market has struggled to return, especially in our area. Earlier this year, the owners held a pre-application meeting with County staff to discuss some mixed-use concepts they have for the site. Nothing concrete has been presented yet. Unfortunately, we are limited in what we can legally do to force demolition of the structure since it remains secured and has not become a public safety hazard and is not in danger of impacting surrounding properties. I continue to work with the County Attorney's Office and we are pursuing revisions to the County's Ordinance on Nuisances to make it applicable in situations where the structure does not meet the State Code definition of blight. This ordinance revision will be one of my initiatives for 2023.

**Loudoun Crossroads:** The former MC Dean site on Pleasant Valley Road is under development as a retail center. I am excited that Silver Diner is planning on opening their second Loudoun location here; their goal is to be open for customers in the summer of 2023. The development will also include a fast-food restaurant and gas station with additional pad sites available.

**Old Arcola Residential:** The Board voted earlier this year to transfer ownership of the Old Arcola School to a developer who is working on plans to renovate the building and add onto it as part of an affordable housing development. The Old Arcola School building will house nine units and a new building will be added on to provide an additional 64 units. In addition, a parcel on the opposite side of Stone Springs Boulevard is proposed for development with 226 units. The proposal would provide 33% of the total units as affordable housing—one of the largest percentages we have seen in an application like this. The property around the Old Arcola School will still be managed by the County with a reconfigured recycling drop off center, cricket pitch, and soccer field for use by the public. This application is still in the staff referral stages and I know that the developer has held meetings with residents in Winsbury and South Fork already.

**Pinebrook Landing:** Toll Brothers has proposed redeveloping the site that is currently home to Greenworks Nursery with nearly 500 residential units. The properties that make up the area that is part of the application was designated as Suburban Mixed Use in the 2019 Comprehensive Plan and wouldn't necessarily envision a fully residential use on the site. However, the larger issue is that this property is in an area that has been identified as Ldn 65+ in the new noise contours for Dulles Airport and would not permit residential development once those are adopted next year. The application has been on hold pending adoption of those contours and an alternative will need to be pursued.

**Whitman South Commercial Center:** The Whitman South commercial center is located at the southeast quadrant of Braddock Road and Gum Spring Road, west of Paul VI High School. We recently received an update from Van Metre on the timeline for some of the users. The inline retail building is complete and tenants have begun opening. Virginia Tire and Auto and the gas station are expected to start construction next year.

## In Conclusion

As you can see, we have a lot going on in our part of Loudoun County—and we couldn't fit everything due to space constraints! However, please feel free to reach out to me anytime with questions at [matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov](mailto:matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov). I look forward to seeing you and hearing from you, and thank you again for the opportunity to serve as your Supervisor.

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## Silver Line Extension to Loudoun Now Open

November 15 was a historic day for Loudoun County as we officially opened the Silver Line Extension to Ashburn. I was honored to speak at the grand opening ceremony at the Dulles Airport station as a member of the Metro Board of Directors and the only remaining member of the Board of Supervisors who was part of the Board's 5-4 vote on July 3, 2012 to opt into the project. The County also held a ribbon cutting and street party at the Ashburn Metro station.

The Silver Line extension brings 6 new stations and 11.5 miles of track. Loudoun County Transit is operating two new bus routes, 381 and 382, serving South Riding and Stone Ridge. The Ashburn and Loudoun Gateway stations have ample parking and easy access for residents. The trip from Ashburn into downtown DC takes about an hour and will cost \$2 on nights and weekends and \$6 during week-days. The Silver Line also serves stops in Reston and Tysons for access to shopping and businesses.

For more information, visit  
[https://www.loudoun.gov/  
2100/Silver-Line-in-  
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