



Loudoun County, Virginia

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SUPERVISOR MATT LETOURNEAU'S FISCAL YEAR 2015 DULLES DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

Welcome to my fourth annual letter as your Supervisor. As I complete my first term in office, I am pleased to report that we continue to make great progress in improving our community. As it currently stands, the Board of Supervisors has over \$800 million in road and rail projects planned in Loudoun. Many of these projects are now underway, which I discuss below.

Loudoun County continues to be rated among the top counties for job growth in the country. As Chairman of the Board's Economic Development Committee, I am proud that we have created over 5,000 new jobs and received over \$2 billion in new private investment during my term—some of it right here in Dulles South, we are finally beginning to see long awaited commercial and retail development. The Board has been able to capitalize on revenue growth while budgeting responsibly to meet needs, and provide new amenities and services without increasing the tax burden on homeowners. As Chairman of the Board's Finance Committee, I am also pleased that Loudoun is in extremely strong fiscal shape. All three major credit rating agencies have given us their highest AAA ratings, with positive outlooks due to our strong fiscal management.

Below are specific details about some projects and issues of interest to Dulles citizens. Due to space constraints, I can't address everything that I'm working on in this report. However, if you'd like to stay up to date and get more details, visit my website at www.loudoun.gov/dulles to sign up for my monthly email newsletter and link to my "Supervisor Matt Letourneau" Facebook page.

I am honored to serve as your representative on the Board and if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov.

Transportation

Loudoun's transportation infrastructure has not kept pace with growth. My frustration is one of the reasons I ran for office four years ago. Our traffic congestion remains an impediment to economic development and to the quality of life for our residents. However, based on construction underway and funding in place for future projects, I believe we have finally turned the corner and can expect relief over the next several years, even with continued growth.

Route 50: This fall, we will finally see the end of this long time project. In the past year, Shirley Contracting has opened three lanes in each direction throughout the corridor. Final paving is underway. I have requested intersection studies to ensure that traffic signal timing is appropriate for each intersection as permanent signals are installed.

Construction is well underway on a spur from Rt. 28 to channelized turn lanes for Lee Road. While this spur will add a stoplight before the Lee Road intersection, it will eliminate the merge across several travel lanes that takes place today and causes severe congestion westbound in the afternoon. Construction of a fourth lane between Avion Parkway and Stonecroft Boulevard continues, as well as work on shared use paths for bicycles and pedestrians.

We won't know the final impacts of the widening project until all construction activities are complete and the signals are optimized. However, we are already seeing that traffic is moving quicker westbound in the evenings and has created a bottleneck at the Loudoun County Parkway intersection. Construction has begun on a third westbound lane from Loudoun County Parkway to Stone Springs Boulevard. The work is being completed by different property owners on the north side of Rt. 50, so timing is dependent on the completion of different sections. I have been told to expect it to be complete by next spring, and the County is working with those landowners to ensure that it is.

Route 606 Widening Project: Route 606 will be widened to 4 lanes plus a bicycle/pedestrian lane, with the option for future expansion in the median to six lanes. The contract was awarded last summer to Shirley Contracting and the groundbreaking for the project occurred in mid-July. Right of way acquisition is ongoing and utility relocation will be beginning soon. The construction plans call for all lanes to remain open during the project, with each side completed separately and then merged. The project is expected to be finished in 2017.

Loudoun County Parkway: At long last, agreements are in place to complete the missing link of Loudoun County Parkway, with the Brambleton developer doing much of the work in accordance with new proffer commitments. Construction is well underway now, but cannot be completed until the 606 project is finished and the final intersection can be constructed. I have been working with County and VDOT staff to ensure that the new 606/LCP intersection has enough capacity. The current concept is to build three left turn lanes heading toward South Riding to reduce wait times at the new intersection.

Braddock and Pleasant Valley Road: Hopefully by now you are well aware of the project to construct a roundabout at the intersection of Braddock and Pleasant Valley in Fairfax County. Delegate David Ramadan and I worked with our respective bodies to secure the needed funding to move forward on the project with the support of Delegate Jim LeMunyon and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Last summer the contract was awarded to Fort Myer Construction and as of this spring construction was officially underway. The contractor will maintain all lanes during peak travel hours and limit lane closures to off peak or evening times. This project is expected to be completed in 2016.

Tall Cedars Parkway: This project will complete the missing segment of Tall Cedars Parkway between Gum Spring Road and Pinebrook Road. As I shared with you last year, the project has seen significant delays working through the right of way acquisition process. I have been told that the County Attorney's Office is finalizing agreements with the property owners this summer and the project should begin before the end of the year. We are anticipating that completion will likely be in late 2016 or early 2017. As part of the new Avonlea Town Center development that Peterson Companies announced this spring (see below), the missing two lane section between Pinebrook Road and Riding Center Drive will be completed. They should be starting on this by this fall.

Claiborne Parkway: The project to complete Claiborne Parkway from Ryan Road to Croson Lane has also seen significant delays in the right of way acquisition process. The County Attorney's Office has just reached an agreement with the Forest Manor HOA to secure the needed property and we hope to begin construction before the end of the year. Completion is expected in late 2016 or early 2017.

Edgewater/Poland: The temporary roundabout at Edgewater and Poland has worked well. With the support of the South Riding Proprietary, I worked with VDOT to make it permanent. I secured \$950,000 in this year's budget to fund the permanent project. Design will begin this fall and I hope to move swiftly into construction after the design is finalized.

Stone Springs/Gum Spring Road: There have been significant changes in the Gum Spring Road corridor this year. This spring we saw the realignment of Gum Spring on the north side of Rt. 50 to link to the signal at Stone Springs Boulevard. This provides additional intersection capacity at Rt. 50 and implements the site plan for the hospital opening later this year. I recently worked to have the intersection adjusted to allow for more space for cars making left turns on each side of Stone Springs. The Board also studied the entire Belmont Ridge/Gum Spring corridor. There are no easy solutions to fix it, and parallel roads are underway to help relieve the congestion. Potential solutions will cost around \$12 million and could be considered in future years.

Arcola Boulevard: This new north/south road will link Route 50 at the intersection of the southern portion of Gum Spring Road with Evergreen Mills Road and 606—relieving congestion on the northern portion of Gum Spring. The existing Valero gas station will be relocated. \$26 million has been allocated in FY2017-2018 for construction and there are some proffers in place that, if triggered, would accelerate this even sooner.

Dulles West Boulevard: Running from Loudoun County Parkway to Northstar Boulevard, the section east of Arcola Boulevard is funded at \$17.2 million in FY2019-FY2020. It will allow for better access to the new Dulles Landing shopping center and Stone Springs Hospital Center and provide access on the north side of Route 50.

Northstar Boulevard: Northstar Boulevard will be linked from Tall Cedars Parkway in Stone Ridge all the way across Route 50 to Brambleton. Funds have been allocated by the Board in three separate phases. The section from Shreveport Drive to Route 50 will cost \$56.3 million and is funded over the next six years. The section from Route 50 to Tall Cedars Parkway is \$36.7 million, funded in FY 2016-2017 and FY 2019-2020. Northstar is the route for the proposed Bi-County Parkway, which would link Loudoun to Prince William County. This road will also be an important parallel for Stone Springs Boulevard.

Bi-County Parkway: The status of the Bi-County Parkway is up in the air at this point. The project is on hold by the State and Prince William County is considering removing their portion of the roadway from their plan. I am supportive of the Bi-County Parkway in concept, because there is no denying that the population of Loudoun and Prince William is going to continue to grow both short and long term. However, a limited access “highway” of the type that was envisioned by VDOT isn't compatible with what has developed south of Route 50. The reality is that if Northstar is not connected to the south, Gum Spring Road will face increasing pressure and eventually become overrun with traffic. Route 28 also continues to be expanded where possible.

Dulles Access Road: We came together as a community to fight VDOT's recommendation to build express lanes in the median of Route 50 to provide access between the proposed Bi-County Parkway and the Airport. The Board received the results of our own analysis of the entire transportation network, including VDOT's proposals, this spring. The results showed that Loudoun's Countywide Transportation Plan would be sufficient to handle volume, with the addition of widening Evergreen Mills Road to link Northstar and 606. This is very similar to what I

advocated for in the first place, and the Board has added this link to our transportation plan to make it eligible for future funding.

Gloucester Parkway: Construction is underway on the extension of Gloucester Parkway from Loudoun County Parkway to the intersection of Pacific Boulevard and Nokes Boulevard. This completes an additional east-west roadway to significantly reduce congestion on Waxpool Road. The extension of Pacific is also under construction in this area through developer proffer.

Belmont Ridge Road Widening: Belmont Ridge is in the process of being widened from Croson Lane to Route 7. The work is being done in multiple phases, and should be completed by 2020.

Waxpool Road Intersection Improvements: Improvements will be made at the intersections of Loudoun County Parkway, Broderick Drive and Pacific Boulevard that will help traffic from the Wegman's shopping center and through traffic on Waxpool Road. Construction is expected to begin in early 2016.

New Traffic Signals: The design and planning is underway for traffic signals to be installed at the intersections of Riding Center Drive and Braddock Road, Braddock Road and Supreme/Summerall, Poland Road and Tall Cedars Parkway, Riding Center Drive and Tall Cedars Parkway, and Croson Lane and Belmont Ridge Road.

Public Transportation

Metrorail: Phase I service to Wiehle Avenue in Reston began last summer. Currently there is express service to Wiehle from Loudoun Station and East Gate as well as some of our other bus service routes that went to existing Metro stations were diverted to the new station.

Phase II of the Silver Line is expected to be extended to Loudoun in 2019. The project has begun even though there have been some changes that resulted in a 13 month delay from their original timeline. These delays are due in part to new storm water management regulations. The County will be constructing two parking garages at the Ashburn (end of line) station and one parking garage at the Loudoun Gateway station. The Board has negotiated public-private partnerships to build and operate the garages, with parameters set by the County.

Buses: I see local transit access as key to the success of Metrorail. In addition to new roads and bicycle lanes that will be constructed in the immediate vicinity of the stations, the Board is also building a local transit bus system with our two Metro stations as hubs. In the Dulles area, the East Gate Park and Ride Lot opened on August 17 and is served by transit buses with express access to the Wiehle Avenue station. We are also working on plans to add additional long haul commuter bus service at this lot next year with buses freed up from other parts of the County.

Our long haul service continues to be extremely popular. We are over capacity in Dulles South and are greatly limited by the number of available park and ride spaces. The County is currently working on additional capacity in Stone Ridge, expected to be completed in late 2016 or early 2017. There is a future planned lot in the Arcola Center area when that development triggers their proffer.

Dulles South received its first local fixed route transit service earlier this year. Route 85 began service in February and has a fixed route throughout Dulles South. However, ridership has been very limited and the service may be discontinued, at least for now.

Budget/Schools

The Board approved a tax rate of \$1.135/\$100 assessed value which represents the “equalized rate”—meaning that at this tax rate, the owner of a property assessed at the average value will be paying the same as last year. While the rate has been reduced by two cents to account for growth in the County’s revenue, assessments of individual properties will vary depending on housing type. Even with the equalized tax rate, this budget increases overall funding because of revenue that has come from new residential and increased commercial growth - a sign that the Board’s economic development efforts continue to pay off. Since I’ve taken office, the Board has reduced the tax rate from \$1.285 to \$1.135. These reductions have been made to take into account the increase in assessed values of homes and commercial property in the County.

The Board fully funded the School Board’s budget request of \$982.1 million, an increase of 7.7%. Student enrollment will increase this year by 3.4%, so the Board’s budget increase far outpaced enrollment growth.

The Board was able to fund this request and maintain the equalized tax rate through the use of \$2.6 million in new state funding allocated for teacher salaries and by utilizing \$17.6 million in prior fiscal year fund balances. While these fund balances are generally not used to fund operating budgets, we are able to allocate this portion for onetime costs such as capital expenses or debt repayment. Of the \$17.6 million in fund balance (surplus) allocated, about \$10.8 million is coming from FY2015, with the rest from FY2014 that was previously allocated specifically for this purpose.

Even with this allocation, the Board will still be able to fully fund our reserves and pay down additional debt, which is how we have historically used fund balances. The only real change is allocating the funding now instead of waiting until the end of the fiscal year. Now that the books are closing on the previous fiscal year, we know that the County still has a significant surplus, which I think validates the decision to use some of it to fund school requests.

Entering this year’s budget discussion, there were still concerns expressed by some that the Board of Supervisors was not keeping up with growth in the school system. When I took office in FY2012, Loudoun was spending an average of \$11,014 per pupil. With this year’s budget, that number for FY2016 is now \$12,705. That means that even accounting for growth, the system is now spending over \$1,600 more per student. That said, there were actual cuts in the school budget made by prior Boards due to the recession. What I have consistently said is that the recovery in the school budget must be sustainable, and can’t be made up for overnight or it will ultimately be subject to the same boom and bust cycle as it fell victim to in 2009. The bottom line is that with this budget, school funding has increased by \$225.1 million (29.3%) since I took office, when enrollment has increased by 10,087 (15.3%) students.

The addition at Freedom High School is the only new school facility set to open this year in the Dulles District. However, funding has been appropriated to begin work on a Dulles North Elementary School opening in 2016, Dulles North Middle School opening in 2017, Dulles North Elementary School opening in 2018, the Academies of Loudoun in Ashburn opening in 2018, and a Dulles North High School opening in 2020. Not yet appropriated but planned in the future are a Dulles South Middle School opening in 2019, Dulles South Elementary School opening in 2019, and a Dulles South High School opening in 2021.

Quality of Life/Amenities

Dulles South Multipurpose Center Expansion: The Board recently awarded the contract for the construction of the Recreation Center and Senior Center expansion to Forrester Construction and broke ground on August 1. Both phases of the project have been combined into one, which has led to some delays initially, but will ultimately make for a smoother project. The Board has already begun funding the staff positions needed to plan for the facility's opening. The Aquatic Center contains a 50 meter competition pool with seating and a large leisure type pool with water features and a 30-foot tall slide. Other recreation spaces include open fitness areas with a rock climbing wall, an elevated jogging track, a multi-purpose gym, and a dance room. The Senior Center includes a variety of indoor spaces for programs, fitness areas, a game room, and a large multi-purpose room, two art rooms, a technology room, a small conference room, a wellness office, and a lounge. The project construction is expected to take about 20 months.

Dulles Landing: I am pleased that Dulles Landing is now open and off to a strong start! We are working with the developer on a potential future phase that would contain some different types of stores than the ones opening now.

Avonlea Town Center: For over 2 years, I worked to bring well-known local developer Peterson Companies (Fairfax Corner, National Harbor) into the Avonlea Project. Earlier this year, I gained Board approval for plans to build a Town Center at the intersection of Rt. 50 and Pinebrook Road. The first announced tenant is Cinopolis, a high end movie theater. I continue to work with Peterson to expand this project and bring in dining and retail options.

StoneSprings Hospital Center: Construction is nearing completion on Loudoun's second hospital at the intersection of Stone Springs Boulevard and Route 50. StoneSprings will be a 230,000 square foot, \$147 million full service hospital with 124 beds. It will employ over 500 people on day one and contribute over \$2 million in taxes every year. Construction is expected to be complete and the hospital operational by December of this year.

I continue to work hard on other retail developments in the Route 50 corridor. There are some exciting projects underway that are becoming more and more viable as the area develops including plans for the Sheraton Hotel site, which we're hoping will finally develop into a hotel. The opening of the hospital will be a major milestone and help drive daytime traffic which is needed to sustain restaurants and stores.

Public Safety

We continue to live in a very safe community. In fact, new data from the Council of Governments shows that Loudoun is now the safest community of all 22 jurisdictions in the Washington region. The Board has continued its investment in public safety by providing additional funding for traffic safety deputies to be deployed in the County and additional career staffing in Fire and Rescue to fill coverage gaps at volunteer stations that have been unable to fully staff units. Planning for a new fire station in Kirkpatrick Farms is underway and it is expected to be open during FY 2017.

Proposed Power Lines on Route 50

Normally, I send my Annual Report immediately following the end of the previous fiscal year. This year, I decided to wait a little longer so that I can provide you as much information as possible about a project that greatly concerns me and many other citizens

As many of you are aware, Dominion Virginia Power has filed an application with the State Corporation Commission to place 230kv power lines with a height of 100 feet or higher within a 100 foot right of way along Route 50. The line would run over 4 miles from the existing power lines west of Stone Ridge to the site of a new data center complex being constructed on Poland Road.

Why does Dominion need the new power line?

The power line is needed to provide power to a property located on Poland Road near its intersection with Route 50. A 600,000 square foot data center complex is being built in this location and Dominion has determined that the existing power grid is not sufficient to serve this facility.

Why is the data center being built in this location? Did the County approve it?

The data center property resides in Loudoun's Commercial Light Industrial (CLI) zoning district. Data centers have been an allowable use in this zoning district since 2000, meaning that the data center did not require County land use approval. While Loudoun County is proud to be America's #1 data center market, our Department of Economic Development did not market this site for data centers. Given the substantial distance from existing power lines and the proximity to residential, I do not believe this is a good location for a data center. However, our efforts to convince the company building the data center campus to build elsewhere have not been successful to date, and there is nothing that can legally be done to stop it from being built. Construction is well underway on the first building.

Can Dominion refuse service to the customer?

Dominion is required by law to provide power for all properties and projects.

Who approves the location of this power line? Does the County have any authority?

The Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) must approve all power line applications. Part of the SCC's role is to ensure that the most cost effective route is being selected so that rate payers do not pay an excessive burden.

Loudoun County does not have any authority over the location of the power lines. In this case, there is only a role for the County if Dominion is seeking to build a transmission substation that will serve more than just the data center. The Board of Supervisors, however, has voted to enter the proceedings as a respondent and has standing to make arguments to the SCC. The Board is represented in these proceedings by County Attorney Leo Rogers, who has extensive experience working on power line and SCC cases.

What is wrong with using Rt. 50 as a route for the power line?

Loudoun County has planned for many years for Route 50 to be a gateway to the County. I have concerns about the impacts that the power lines will have on the entrances to communities and to development along the corridor. I have worked hard over the past four years to attract new investment to the Route 50 corridor, such as the Avonlea project. The amount of right of way needed for the power lines will have a significant negative impact on the ability of those projects to move forward.

Can the power lines be buried?

The County looked seriously at this option and determined that our best strategy was to propose alternative routes rather than burying the lines. Burying 230kv lines is very expensive, and the SCC would be reluctant to approve the additional expense. Instead, the cost would have to be borne by local taxpayers, which could include a special tax district which I would oppose. In addition, burying the lines would require more right of way and structures to be built on both sides of the line. Also, the County is planning to upgrade the intersection at 606 and Route 50 to an interchange. However, the interchange has not yet been designed. While it is expensive to move towers, it is even more expensive and difficult to move buried power lines.

What type of outreach was conducted by Dominion?

Dominion held a community meeting in April 2015 at Little River Elementary School in South Riding. Less than 2 months later, the final application was filed with the SCC, which is an extremely short turnaround and a very limited amount of public input. By comparison, a project in Prince William County has been under discussion for over 18 months, and Dominion still has not filed an application yet.

What are you doing to stop this?

When I became aware of this project, I worked with the County's Economic Development staff, other developers, and the data center operator directly to try to move the project to a different location. At the same time, I worked with Planning staff to develop alternative routes to Dominion's proposed routes. The Board endorsed three alternatives that would avoid Route 50 between Northstar and Loudoun County Parkway, and would try to mask the power lines on the east side of Loudoun County Parkway alongside the quarry. I have been in discussions with Dominion and the Airports Authority about utilizing some airport property to avoid Route 50. As of this writing, Dominion has halted the public process in order to evaluate the County's proposed routes, which is a positive development.

Finally, Supervisor Janet Clarke (Blue Ridge) and I introduced a zoning amendment which would require Board approval for all future data centers in the CLI zoning district. While this amendment won't help with the current data center, it could prevent future data centers from popping up next to residential in the Route 50 corridor.

How can I get involved?

We need help from the community to win this fight!

- **Visit my website** at www.loudoun.gov/dulles to view a copy of the presentation from my July Dulles Direct Town Hall Meeting on the proposed power lines. This presentation provides information on the history of the Rt. 50 corridor, the CLI zoning district and the process moving forward. There are also maps of Dominion's proposed route and the County's preferred alternatives.

- **Visit the SCC Docket Search** to view the application documents <http://www.scc.virginia.gov/DocketSearch> (enter case number PUE-2015-00053). You can also submit comments directly to the SCC through this page as well.

- **Visit the No Towers On 50 website** for more information on local efforts to fight this, how you can help, and to sign the petition objecting to Dominion's proposed route, www.notowerson50.org.

- **Attend the Public Hearings** and speak out against the proposed route. As soon as the hearings are rescheduled, I will be sharing that information with you through my monthly e-mail newsletter and Facebook page.