



October 2020

Welcome to the October edition of the Dulles Direct newsletter. I hope everyone is doing well and staying healthy. I am pleased that we're back with a full length newsletter this month, with lots of information about ongoing County issues.

As you've no doubt seen, there is some cause for concern that COVID-19 is back on the rise so we must remain vigilant. I have an update on that below.

Unless you've been living under a rock, you know that Tuesday, November 3 is Election Day. Many of you have already taken advantage of early voting, but for those that haven't and have questions, I have information and thoughts about the ballot initiatives in the Announcements section below. As far as the election itself is concerned, there are many strong feelings this year in particular, and I'll simply say that political differences do not define us as a community. Regardless of the outcome (and when we find it out), we will still need to tackle challenges here in our local community together.

Second, I want to wish our Indian community a very happy early Diwali! I will be sponsoring a resolution at the November 5 Board of Supervisors Business Meeting to honor the holiday, which runs November

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12-16 this year. Diwali celebrates the triumph of light over darkness. If there was ever a year we needed that message, it's 2020.

Finally, Veterans Day is coming up soon, and I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who have served in the Armed Forces. We are fortunate in our area to have many active and retired military families, and there are not enough words to thank them for their sacrifices for our country.

In a continued effort to be transparent about my health following my injury, I will offer this update now that we are about 6 weeks post-incident. I continue to appreciate all the well wishes I have received from constituents and beyond. They are very meaningful and uplifting as I recover. Physically, I am seeing some improvement and have been able to resume some of my normal activities, but it is a slow recovery. I have good days and bad days, some with very bad headaches in which I can't accomplish much, and others that are more productive. I do find that I don't have a lot of stamina and need to take it easy for a day after I attend a meeting or have a few doctor's appointments. Unfortunately, the vision in my right eye has not returned yet. The eyes are out of alignment and the pupil is in a constant state of dilation, which makes it very sensitive to light. I have double vision and blurred vision when I do try to use the eye, but I am doing exercises that the team at the Inova Loudoun Concussion Clinic have given me to try to slowly improve it. We also have some special glasses on the way that will no doubt add to my stylish new look. I have been told by doctors that surgical intervention may be necessary to fix those eye issues, but that typically would not take place until 6 months post-injury. That means I will be likely wearing my eye patch for quite a bit longer. Suffice it to say I will be a pirate for Halloween this year!

At the clinic we are also working on my balance, which is still very diminished. The doctors are also monitoring continued fluid buildup below the eye and the fracture in the sinus cavity. I still have a lot of

[Legislative Items: Plastic Bag Tax Consideration and Collective Bargaining](#)

[Announcements](#)

Matthew F. Letourneau

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pressure and discomfort in that area. I am seeing a facial nerve specialist to evaluate the prognosis of the nerves that have been severed and a neurologist to evaluate brain-eye function. At some point there will need to be a realignment of the titanium plate in my cheek due to the way it settled, which will be another procedure. There are a lot of doctors and a lot of appointments!

I have been able to resume activity in the Board Room, albeit on a more limited basis. I chaired most of the October Finance Committee meeting, where we had some important discussions about the upcoming Fiscal Year, and attended a large majority of the Board's Business meeting last week and about half of our Strategic Planning Retreat. I did miss the Public Hearing the day after Finance Committee met, as back to back meetings was too much for me at that point. I have also been involved in ongoing conversations with my colleagues, land use applicants and staff about things happening around the County. I am still unable to use a computer or drive, so that is limiting, but we are finding ways to manage. I have also resumed full participation on the Metro Board, which I am able to do by phone as Metro meetings are still 100% virtual.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Latest Numbers

According to the official numbers released today by the Virginia Department of Health, there are 7,946 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Loudoun County. 130 individuals have died from the virus in Loudoun. Virginia now has 179,639 confirmed cases with 3,643 deaths. The number of hospitalized patients in Loudoun remains steady. You can see these numbers yourself at the Loudoun County COVID-19 [GeoHub](#). At this point, we are monitoring a small spike in Loudoun County (40+ cases per day). This is consistent with minor spikes in the entire region - including Washington DC and Montgomery County, Maryland.

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[VDOT Snow Plowing
Information](#)

Loudoun Health Department Director Dr. Goodfriend recently gave an interview with The Washington Post. He said that after conferring with his colleagues in neighboring jurisdictions, the micro spikes are likely due to people attempting to return to normal behavior with more in-person socializing and restaurant dining. Dr. Goodfriend continues to urge care and not to become complacent as we head toward cooler weather; the coronavirus spreads easier in lower humidity.

Halloween & Fall Guidance

The Virginia Department of Health has issued [Halloween guidance](#). The VDH guidance is similar to that issued by the [CDC](#) (more on that below). You may recall that the County does not regulate the hours when trick-or-treating may occur. However, some towns or HOAs may set hours or limitations on those activities, so be sure to check with them.

The County Health Department has utilized these resources to provide information to families as they consider what activities they wish to participate in this Halloween. In short, the Health Department is recommending not to participate in traditional trick or treating, go to haunted houses or crowded events, ride hayrides or tractors with people not in the same household, or travel to and from areas outside your immediate community. Safe Halloween activities include contactless treat delivery, pumpkin carving, outdoor decorating, outdoor costume parades at a safe distance, and virtual Halloween costume contests - preferably with family and local friends so as to limit potential spread of the virus. More information is available [here](#). For our part, our family will be going out with the kids dressed up, but will be looking for houses where we can do contactless trick or treating. I really encourage parents to talk to their older children about not taking all the candy when it is left out unattended - that often happens but this year, let's make sure the younger kids have a good Halloween experience even though they may not be ringing door bells.

[Loudoun County Road Maintenance Information](#)

[Loudoun County Traffic Incident Map](#)

[Sign Up for Alert Loudoun](#)

[Loudoun Express Request \(LEx\) Citizen Request System](#)

[Loudoun Online Land Applications System \(LOLA\)](#)

[COVID-19](#)

The CDC has provided updated [holiday guidance](#) that extends out to Thanksgiving, cautioning that fall holidays will need to be different this year to prevent the spread of the virus. Similar to the Halloween guidance, the CDC is promoting low-risk Thanksgiving activities such as having a small dinner with immediate family, no-contact food delivery to friends and family, a virtual dinner and recipe sharing get together, online shopping rather than in-person on Black Friday, and watching sports events, parades, and movies from home. You can find a full list of recommended and not recommended activities at the CDC link.

DULLES UPDATES

Tall Cedars Parkway / Stone Springs Boulevard Signal

Tangible signs of progress! At long last, we are in the final stages of the installation of the traffic signal at Stone Springs Boulevard and Tall Cedars Parkway in Stone Ridge.

The County's contractor installed the mast arms at the intersection last week, which marks an important milestone in the project as we work towards completion. It will take approximately 30-45 days to pull wiring, connect signal controls and communications, complete testing and inspections, and load signal timings. The signal will then go into a 72 hour flash mode before VDOT will approve it for operation. The estimate from project staff is that this could all be complete in the late November/early December timeframe.

There have been some questions about why the Stone Springs lanes are no longer both marked for through traffic. This configuration was in response to a specific request from VDOT based on their experience at other signalized intersections in Northern Virginia that had two through lanes, each shared with turn movements. In similar locations, VDOT indicated there were many angle crashes due to driver confusion regarding which

lane the opposing through vehicles were approaching from. The configuration is based on a VDOT qualitative safety concern. The County's signal designer then analyzed the optimal signal phasing for this lane use. The proposed signal phasing and lane configuration is projected to operate at acceptable levels of service and the configuration is the same as Millstream Drive at the Stone Springs intersection.

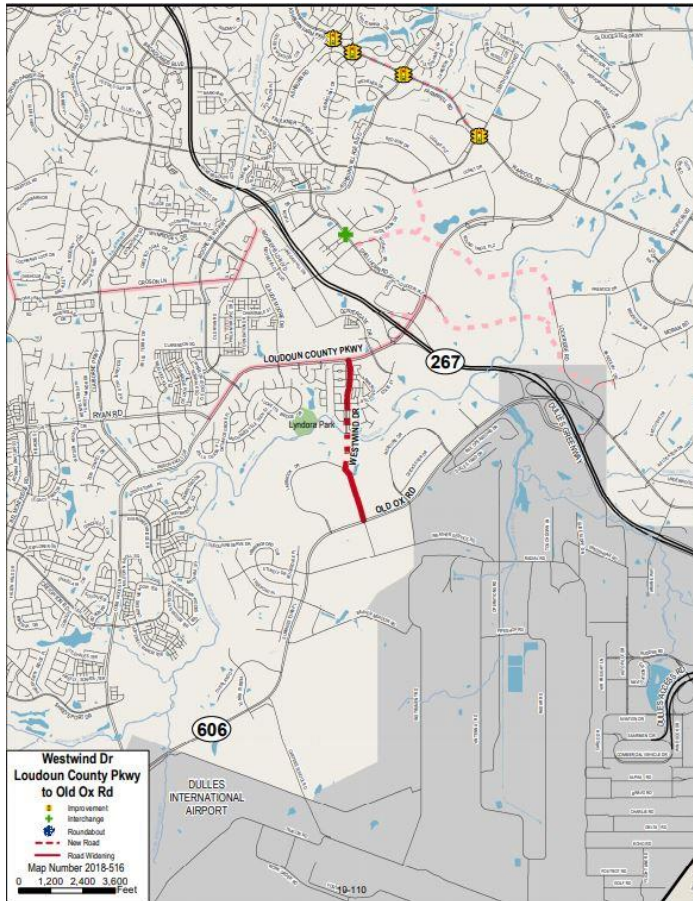
I will work with project staff on providing some additional signage as drivers are becoming familiar with the new configuration, and make sure the Sheriff's Office is aware of the issue.

Contract Award for Design of Westwind Drive

The Board of Supervisors voted at our October 20 Business Meeting to award the contract for the design of Westwind Drive to Parsons Transportation Group. Westwind Drive has long been planned in the Countywide Transportation Plan as a future connection from Loudoun County Parkway to Route 606 and an additional alternative to the Greenway. Parsons will provide roadway and civil design services, including the following: field and utility surveys and base mapping, environmental/historic/cultural resource issues, wetland delineation and associated permitting, preparation of a NEPA document, floodplain studies and permitting, traffic/warrant studies, design of roadway and associated appurtenances, utility company coordination/relocation, preparation of right of way plats, public meeting support, and construction coordination.

I have already asked the County's project staff to ensure that once the design portion of the project gets started, they coordinate with the Westwind community to limit the impact that the road and its construction will have on adjacent properties. The project has received State Smart Scale funding, which includes the requirement to meet various federal environmental impact regulations. This adds significant time to the design phase of the project, which is expected to take

approximately two years. The soonest that construction could begin is FY25.



DULLES LAND USE UPDATES

To view application materials, visit www.loudoun.gov/lola and enter the application number. For more information on signing up to speak on these or other items at future meetings, click [here](#).

H&M Property Data Center
ZMAP 2019-0017 & SPEX 2020-0022

This application is for 1.75 million square feet of data center uses, including a utility substation, in the Suburban Industrial / Mineral Extraction Place Type.

The current zoning would allow 3.2 million square feet of by-right mineral extraction, processing, and industrial uses. The subject property is located on the north side of Route 50, directly abutting Dulles Airport. The area is heavily industrial, making this a good place for a data center.

However, I made a commitment in 2015 that I would do everything in my power to block an extension of the 150 foot transmission lines on Route 50, and I'm keeping my word. From the very beginning of this application, I made it clear that I needed to see alternative power route plans and a commitment that the Route 50 lines wouldn't be extended.

The item came to the September Public Hearing (before my injury) and the Board approved my motion to send it to the October 20 Business Meeting. Unfortunately, I did not have the commitments I wanted by the October 20 meeting, so I moved it to the November 5 meeting.

In the ensuing period, I think we have arrived at an acceptable solution. I have had in depth discussion with Dominion and AWS. Dominion has stated in writing that they will not be pursuing a power line path along Route 50, and instead have identified three other solutions which come off the road and aren't as visible. They are required to include the Route 50 path analysis in their application to the State Corporation Commission, but it will be a section about why their route does not work. I also received a letter from AWS supporting that position.

I appreciate the work of the Loudoun County Attorney, Leo Rogers, and our Executive Director of Economic Development, Buddy Rizer, who intervened with Amazon executives to bring us toward this solution. I expect the Board will approve the project at the next meeting, and the County will be actively supporting the preferred power line plans next year when they are submitted.

Arnold Property

ZMAP 2019-0009

This application is to rezone about one acre on the north side of Braddock Road and south side of Kimberly Rose Drive to allow four single family detached units. Access from Braddock Road to these homes will be eliminated and will exclusively be provided from a shared driveway at Kimberly Rose Drive. The site is currently comprised of a single-family detached residence that has long been the source of zoning complaints from neighbors. The South Riding Proprietary is coordinating with the applicant since the application includes the relocation of some existing HOA owned open space and the homes would be incorporated into the existing community.

The Planning Commission heard the application at their September Public Hearing and forwarded it to the Board with a recommendation of approval. One of the issues they were able to resolve was a concern about the project's potential impact to the adjacent church cemetery. The revised proffers, which have been reviewed by the church's pastor, include increased setbacks and buffering for the cemetery, and an open view fence (to allow viewing but prevent pedestrian intrusion onto the cemetery). The buffers are up to code with zoning standards for cemeteries and other burial grounds.

This application originally proposed to place six townhomes on this property, but last year I informed the applicant I wouldn't support that plan due to inconsistency with the existing neighborhood. The applicant then revised the plan to match the West Riding community around it. Overall it will be good to no longer have a vacant, dilapidated property in a fairly visible location. The item is currently scheduled to come before the Board of Supervisors at our November 12 Public Hearing; if you would like to comment on this application, visit this [link](#).

Hogan Kent Greene
ZMAP 2019-0019

This application is in the Blue Ridge District, but borders Dulles and will affect some of our residents so I will cover it here. The application is to rezone nearly 41 acres for the development of 144 residential units, including affordable dwelling units. The site is comprised of three parcels located on the south side of Braddock Road and immediately east of Pinebrook Elementary School. Access is currently provided by private driveways directly to Braddock, but will eventually be from a single point to Braddock. Over half the site is forested currently and there is a large flood plain area on the eastern side of the property. The Planning Commission heard the application at their September Public Hearing and forwarded it to the Board with a recommendation of approval.

This is the first application that has been submitted under the Transition Compact Neighborhood Place Type that is in the new 2019 Comprehensive Plan. The place type was narrowly focused on specific areas in the Transition Policy Area that were identified as compatible with a more compact development pattern (this is surrounded by areas that were developed at a more suburban density) and allows for smaller lots, leading to smaller, more affordably priced homes. The proposal still meets the 50% open space requirement of most Transition Policy Areas and looks to include additional attached housing options, such as duplexes and quadraplexes. Some may note that there are several Zoning Modification requests included with the application, and those are required to make it work because our zoning revisions based on the new Comprehensive Plan are still working through the process and won't be complete for nearly two years.

Overall, this is the type of parcel that the Board will have less discretion with in terms of development because of the previously approved housing on all sides. The goal of the new TCN place type was to ensure open space and to provide some additional, more affordable housing options while avoiding the townhouse styles that are so prevalent. It is staff's view that the applicant has met the goals of the new place type, and I did have an early meeting with one of the

developers who made that commitment at the beginning of the process. Van Metre is now on board as the builder, and I will be having further discussions with them and coordinating with Supervisor Buffington. I was attending another meeting, but a briefing for the Kirkpatrick Farms Community was held with Van Metre last night, and concerns were brought up by some of the residents closest to the property that the applicant will be working to address during this process. The item is currently scheduled to come before the Board of Supervisors at our November 12 Public Hearing; if you would like to comment on this application, visit this [link](#).

LOUDOUN UPDATES

Voting Information

On November 3, the Loudoun Office of Elections will conduct a General Election that will feature the vote for President and Vice President as well as United States Senator, Member of the United States House of Representatives for the 10th District, two Virginia Constitutional Amendments and four Loudoun County bond questions.

The County has set up a webpage dedicated to the election [here](#). For an example ballot, click [here](#).

Early voting continues until Saturday, including at the Dulles South Senior Center. If you choose to vote by mail, your ballot must be postmarked no later than Election Day. You can also vote on Election Day in person at your polling location (which can be confirmed on the Office of Elections website listed above). Due to COVID-19, preventative measures will be in place at polling locations. Staff has been working closely with the Health Department and Emergency Operations Center to ensure voter health and safety. Social distancing of 6 feet or greater will be employed. All voters will be required to wear masks while in line or voting. Disinfectant measures will depend on the individual polling place but will be a priority, as all

locations will be equipped with face coverings, sanitizing wipes, disinfectant, and more. Medical Reserve Corps volunteers will be stationed at the polling locations to help with these practices

Text LCVOTES to 888777 to receive text alerts from the Loudoun County Office of Elections and Voter Registration or sign up for the Election Update category through [Alert Loudoun](#), the county's email and text notification system. Follow the Office of Elections and Voter Registration on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Loudoun County Government also posts general information on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

UPDATE: The Moorefield voting precinct in the Dulles District has been moved to Briar Woods High School, located at 22525 Belmont Ridge Road. Affected voters have been notified.

Visit loudoun.gov/novemberelection for more information about voting in the November general election in Loudoun.

Bond Questions

When it comes to bond questions, I say the same thing every year. You are voting solely on the method of financing, not whether or not we should undertake the projects themselves. The Board of Supervisors and School Board have decided the projects are necessary, fit within our capital budget, and will be constructing them sometime in the future. If the bond referendum fails, we would have to consider whether or not to move forward with these items using an alternative financing with higher interest rates, costing more money. I strongly encourage you to support the ballot questions.

1. QUESTION: Shall the County of Loudoun, Virginia contract a debt and issue its general obligation capital improvement bonds in the maximum principal amount of \$123,755,000 to finance, in whole or in part, the costs to design, construct, and equip Douglass School Renewal; the costs to design, construct, and equip

LCPS Facility Renewals and Alterations; the costs to design, construct, and equip School Security Improvements; the costs to design, construct, and equip a Student Welcome Center at Sterling Elementary School; and the costs of other public school facilities as requested by the Loudoun County School Board?

2. QUESTION: Shall the County of Loudoun, Virginia contract a debt and issue its general obligation capital improvement bonds in the maximum principal amount of \$29,516,000 to finance, in whole or in part, the costs to design, construct, and equip a Fire and Rescue Training Academy Expansion; the costs to design, construct, and equip Philomont Fire and Rescue Station Replacement; and the costs of other public safety facilities approved in the County's Capital Improvement Program?

3. QUESTION: Shall the County of Loudoun, Virginia contract a debt and issue its general obligation capital improvement bonds in the maximum principal amount of \$3,825,000 to finance, in whole or in part, the costs to design, construct, and equip Philip A. Bolen Park Phase II; the costs to design, construct, and equip Scott Jenkins Memorial Park Phase III; and the costs of other public park, recreational and community center projects approved in the County's Capital Improvement Program?

4. QUESTION: Shall the County of Loudoun, Virginia contract a debt and issue its general obligation capital improvement bonds in the maximum principal amount of \$151,210,000 to finance, in whole or in part, the costs to design and construct Segments 1 and 1B of Braddock Road; the costs to design and construct the widening of Loudoun County Parkway from Ryan Road to Shellhorn Road; the costs to design and construct improvements to Route 15 between Montesor Road and Point of Rocks Bridge; the costs to design and construct a roadway from Route 50 at Tall Cedars Parkway to Route 28; the costs to design and construct a roundabout at Route 50 and Trailhead Drive; the costs to design and construct sidewalk segments along River Creek Parkway; the costs to

design and construct the County's Sidewalk and Trail Program; and the costs of other public road and transportation projects approved in the County's Capital Improvement Program?

Proposed Amendments to the VA Constitution

1. Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to establish a redistricting commission, consisting of eight members of the General Assembly and eight citizens of the Commonwealth, that is responsible for drawing the congressional and state legislative districts that will be subsequently voted on, but not changed by, the General Assembly and enacted without the Governor's involvement and to give the responsibility of drawing districts to the Supreme Court of Virginia if the redistricting commission fails to draw districts or the General Assembly fails to enact districts by certain deadlines?

Background: Under the current iteration of the Virginia state constitution, the General Assembly and Governor are responsible for drawing new election district lines. The proposed amendment would give this responsibility to a 16-person bipartisan commission, made up of eight members from the General Assembly and eight citizens of Virginia (chosen by retired circuit court judges). The commission would have a certain amount of time to draw new districts and submit maps for approval; if they exceed that time by too much, the Supreme Court of Virginia would assume the responsibility. I am supportive of Amendment #1 because I believe it will lead to a better, more efficient process. This amendment had the support of the General Assembly in 2019 and then when the political majority changed in Richmond in 2020, the leadership of the new majority party opposed it. However, several of the newly elected members of the majority party voted in favor of the amendment, which is why it is on the ballot.

Under the proposed system, at least six of the eight General Assembly members and six of the eight appointed citizens must agree to any plan that is

submitted for approval. This ensures wide bipartisan agreement among commission members on new districts.

2. Should an automobile or pickup truck that is owned and used primarily by or for a veteran of the United States armed forces or the Virginia National Guard who has a one hundred percent service-connected, permanent, and total disability be free from state and local taxation?

Background: I am also supportive of Amendment #2, which is designed to give those individuals with disabilities related to their military service a tax break. This would have minimal fiscal impact.

Library Governance

Many don't realize that the Loudoun County Library System is actually operated as a separate entity from Loudoun County Government and not under the direct purview of the Board of Supervisors. At this month's Finance Committee meeting we reviewed an informational item regarding how the County's libraries are governed and what alternative structures are available under State Code as part of our ongoing discussions about the County's form of government and operating structure.

Currently, the Loudoun County Public Libraries are under the management of the Library Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is appointed by each member of the Board of the Supervisors to serve a four year term. These terms do not run concurrently with the Board of Supervisors. The Director of Library Services is employed by and reports to the Library Board of Trustees and every employee of the library system is technically an employee of the Board of Trustees, not the County. There has been a cooperative agreement since 1996 between the Board of Supervisors and Library Board of Trustees that has extended County human resources and other employment policies to those employees.

The Code of Virginia generally requires that all counties govern their libraries through a board of trustees. However, they have carved out exemptions for counties that have one of the alternative forms of government, which, as I addressed in an earlier [newsletter](#), the Board of Supervisors is currently studying whether to pursue. Exemptions were also provided by the General Assembly to Caroline, Chesterfield, and Shenandoah Counties. Counties that don't have a Library Board of Trustees have volunteer advisory boards that provide input to the Board of Supervisors on operational matters relating to the library system. Prince William County just dissolved their Board of Trustees in favor of an advisory board and Arlington County also utilizes an advisory board. However, Fairfax County has chosen to maintain a Board of Trustees even though it is not mandated by State Code.

Our discussion at the Finance Committee included representatives from the Library Board of Trustees and focused on how our current structure is working today, what other local counties are doing, and potential problems as we look to the future. For example, the Board of Supervisors funds nearly 100% of the costs necessary to operate the library system, but we cannot make decisions on the use of facilities or personnel during emergency situations such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. With ongoing discussions about potential collective bargaining for County employees (see item below), it isn't clear whether that system would apply to library employees and with whom they would be bargaining with.

In the end, the committee forwarded the item to the full Board of Supervisors to discuss as part of a potential legislative agenda item. There is more to discuss and questions to be answered, but it is clear that if a change in structure were to be pursued, it would have to come as either part of our ongoing discussion of Loudoun's form of government or as part an exemption provided by the General Assembly. I think this is a discussion worth having. While we have an award winning library system that we can all be proud of, I am not necessarily

convinced that the current added layer of bureaucracy is necessary in the future. The existing system dates back more than a century to a time when counties had very minimal governments and few resources. Could the County more efficiently operate the libraries, and integrate them into our full spectrum of services if they were part of the County government? The Board will evaluate that question as part of this discussion.

FY22 Budget Preliminary Guidance

Each fall the Finance/Government Operations and Economic Development Committee (which I chair) and the full Board of Supervisors gives preliminary budget guidance to our County Administrator, Tim Hemstreet. This month, County staff provided revenue and expenditure estimates for FY22, and it is clear that this year will be quite different than what we have experienced in the past.

In a typical year, the estimated equalized real property tax rate would be pretty close to the same for residential and commercial properties. Due to COVID however, we are in unusual economic times. The value of commercial property has been taking a hit, with the commercial equalized tax rate sitting at \$1.105. The strong housing market, on the other hand, means that the residential equalized tax rate is at \$1.005. The average of all properties combined is \$1.035 which is the same as the current tax rate. So if the Board set the budget at the average equalized tax rate, the increased assessed value would cause an increase in taxes for homeowners and a decrease for commercial property owners.

The Board provided preliminary guidance for planning purposes that directed the County Administrator to prepare the FY22 Proposed Budget at the average equalized tax rate of \$1.035, as well as provide options to increase by \$0.01 or decrease by \$0.03. By having these options, the Board can consider what additions or deletions can be made to the budget before final approval next spring. The budget guidance parameters will be finalized in December, and hopefully we will

have a better picture of the revenue impacts we can expect as COVID continues to affect our community. The County Administrator will present his proposed budget in early February 2021 and the Board will give final approval in April 2021. Typically, the guidance would have the same range above and below the existing tax rate, but given the pandemic and the discrepancy between equalized tax rates, the Board decided to limit the options above the equalized tax rate. While that was a 3-2 vote at Finance, the guidance passed the Board 9-0 the following week.

Development Rights Programs Considered - And Why I Didn't Support Them

Conservation is a very good thing. The County has an aggressive land use program which allows for property owners to receive tax incentives in exchange for not developing their properties. This is part of our strategy to keep the areas west of Route 15 more rural in nature.

The Board considered two new programs that were supposed to be designed to help in those efforts. One of them didn't pass; the other one did. I voted against both of them. Here's why:

Transfer of development rights (TDR) refers to a method by which developers can transfer the development rights of certain parcels within a designated "sending area" to another "receiving area" in order to increase the density of their new development while reducing development in other areas. In essence, a TDR program helps shift density from one area to another as identified by the County. In Loudoun's case the discussion on TDRs has focused on limiting development in the western portion of the County and increasing it in the east. I have long had concerns over how a program like this would impact the eastern part of the County that is already planned for significant densities, especially nearest to Metro. I questioned where we would actually want to see this further increase as part of a TDR program.

We went through an extensive process to create a new comprehensive land use plan for the County that already maximized the level of density that we found acceptable in eastern Loudoun. Around our Metro stations, we created a new urban policy area which allows for very dense, Reston Town Center-like development. The problem is not the zoning or the right to do it, it's the current lack of a market for that kind of product. In suburban areas, we are dealing with road and school congestion. The last thing we need is more density that we didn't plan for "in exchange" for something not being built somewhere else. Even worse, this density would be by-right, which means that the Board wouldn't even vote on it.

As a result of some of these concerns, a motion was made to initiate a market study for a residential to commercial TDR program. A program like this wouldn't allow for more residential density, but it would allow a commercial developer to increase their Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in commercial projects in the east. In real world terms, we're talking about data centers. Basically, in exchange for not developing a property in the west, a developer would be allowed by-right to increase the size of a data center somewhere in the east - likely to the three story height that many are now seeking. I'm a hard no on that proposal. There may be some projects that would be appropriate for bigger, taller data centers, but not by-right in which we lose control.

This motion failed on a 4-4-1 vote with myself, Vice Chair Saines, Supervisor Briskman and Supervisor Glass opposed, and Chair Randall abstaining.

The other type of program is called Purchase of development rights (PDR), which allows the local government to purchase the development rights of private property in order to permanently protect the land from development. This is more straightforward - basically, the County uses taxpayer dollars to obtain the right to develop land in certain places, likely western Loudoun.

In theory, I find this less objectionable than TDRs, but I still have a lot of unanswered questions. How exactly would we decide which property we would be buying and who would benefit from it? What happens if we have more interested "sellers" than we do money to buy them? Furthermore, as I mentioned above, we're in for some tough fiscal times. FY22 in particular is going to be a year with very limited funding for new initiatives. I can't imagine budgeting millions of dollars for a program like this right now.

This time, the motion passed 8-1, and I was the lone no vote. We'll see where this goes and whether the program actually gets funded. I do appreciate the sentiment behind being proactive about protecting land. We've been one of the leaders in terms of the amount of land placed into conservation easements, a lot of it voluntarily from landowners. But I'm still a details person and the Finance Chairman, and I think it's important to evaluate things from that lens.

Firearms Issues

I have received some questions about votes the Board took on firearms related issues earlier this year. I had intended to provide an update last month but was unable due to my injury. Here is a review of the discussions.

First, over the summer there was a motion for the Board to receive an analysis of the new laws the General Assembly passed related to firearms. Whether people like it or not, there was a lot of legislation in this area, and some of it impacts County operations including LCSO and the Family Services Division. For some reason, this motion got turned into another Second Amendment argument and was opposed by an activist group which argued that it would lead to restrictions on guns. In reality, it was merely a request for analysis that we needed to have, and the motion passed 7-2 - I voted for it. We received the update and that was pretty much that.

One of those new laws ends the blanket exemption on localities restricting firearms on County property, which had previously existed. The exemption did not apply to schools, childcare facilities and select other properties, in which firearms are already banned by state law. There were two motions made on this topic: The first was a motion to move forward with an ordinance to ban firearms on all County properties (which passed 6-2-1), with Supervisors Buffington and Kershner opposed. I abstained from this vote because I agreed with some of the intent but not all of it. I would have supported a motion to prohibit firearms in County buildings in which said prohibition could be enforced (such as the County Administration Building). It is normal practice for government buildings not to allow firearms - everything from the White House to City Halls across America have this policy. Magnometers are commonly used for screening. Select County facilities are manned with armed Sheriff's deputies, so there are "good guys with guns" on the premises any time the buildings are occupied. The County's employee policy already prohibits employees from bringing firearms to work, which is a term in our insurance policy and standard practice. So the only individuals allowed to bring firearms are visitors, and at that point I'd just assume have the deputies be armed and nobody else. However, in other circumstances, it clearly will be impossible to enforce an ordinance like this and I'm not sure it's even wise to try. For instance, the policy would apply to even the largest parks and trails, which in parts of the County are quite spread out and conducive to encounters with wildlife. Help is not going to be on the way anytime soon if there is a physical threat from another person or an animal. If someone does intend harm, they aren't going to be stopped by a sign saying not to do it, but the law abiding citizens will follow the rules. So I think that's an overreach, and I have a lot of questions about it when it comes back to the Board (which it will, including at a public hearing in the future).

The other motion was to prohibit firearms at any "County sponsored event." This motion failed 4-5, and I opposed it along with Chair Randall, Vice Chair

Saines, and Supervisors Buffington and Kershner. There are no such things in the code as County-sponsored events. There are events that the County supports, and there are events that use VDOT right of way, which our staff thinks might be included in this motion. The problem with it is that there are a lot of private, HOA, etc. festivals and events (like those in South Riding and Stone Ridge). If a street is blocked off, and LCSO is involved, any individual legally carrying a firearm could easily wander right into it without realizing and be violating the law. Perhaps more to the point, in order to actually do this, staff would probably have to create a whole new process to regulate private events that use any kind of public property, and that will create major additional burdens for HOAs and other groups. Staff stated that this new law was very vague and not well written or understood, and the Board acted appropriately by not pursuing this.

Another issue was related to noise from firearms. We've had problems with loud firearm discharge at night from undeveloped properties in the Dulles District. Supervisor Umstattd was seeking a legal analysis of any potential modifications to the noise ordinance to include noise from firearm discharge, which is currently completely exempt. The noise ordinance prohibits excessive noise which is "clearly audible inside another home" between the hours of 10 PM and 6 AM *EXCEPT* for firearms. It is currently perfectly legal for someone to go out on a property that is outside the firearm discharge prohibition area and that meets the required setbacks (even if it is across the street from South Riding, for example) and shoot the loudest weapon they can find at 3 AM. I don't think this makes much sense. I have no desire to ban the use of firearms on private property, but if the noise is audible from inside a home overnight, that's a problem. I don't know what options would have been presented and whether I would have ultimately supported a modification. The motion failed 4-5. The same activist group framed this issue as a "gun ban," which it was not.

I also attempted to accelerate a motion to create a new commercial outdoor shooting range classification, which the Board initiated over 18 months ago but which staff has not acted on. Having commercial ranges with performance standards would ensure safe places to shoot and avoid the kind of neighbor disputes we are having in parts of Loudoun. However, my motion failed 3-6, so we'll be waiting a while on that one.

Plastic Bag Tax Consideration

While it is still in the very early stages of discussion, the Board voted 5-4 on September 15 to bring information on a possible plastic bag tax to a future Finance Committee meeting. I didn't support this motion as I have concerns with a bag tax. I know this approach has been used in other jurisdictions and the goal of reducing plastic usage is admirable. That being said, I generally don't favor incentivizing through punishment. In reality, in this County, I think that kind of tax will be regressive. Most people for whom money isn't a major concern won't think twice about it, but those who have financial limitations will be impacted. Because of COVID, there have been restrictions on the use of reusable bags, so now isn't really a great time to be considering this anyway, and I'd rather see efforts made to decrease their use through distribution rather than taxation. As far as I know, the County hasn't made any real effort to do this, nor conducted any kind of public information campaign.

Collective Bargaining

We're going between a lot of hot topics! There is going to be a lot more to write about this one, so I'll try to keep this fairly short. The General Assembly passed a bill to allow localities to recognize unions for the purpose of collective bargaining.

There is clearly strong interest from the majority of the Board to move forward with this. The GA passed no other rules or regulations around it, so whatever

happens will have to be set up from scratch by the County.

I have a lot of concerns about this, and in particular the financial implications over the short and long term. The County will have to create a new Labor Relations Division, and again, our budgets are really tight right now. I am grateful for our outstanding County employees every day, and I want them to have good salaries, benefits, and working conditions.

Unfortunately because of COVID we haven't been able to fully implement the merit based increases we had planned this year, but we did a mid-year bump during the last fiscal year as part of the new classification and compensation process. I am not convinced that either salaries or benefits would improve under a collective bargaining situation since historically the Board has exceeded negotiated rates. I believe there are generally good relationships between employees and managers and I've seen the County be very responsive to employee concerns. At the same time, the Board would lose flexibility during situations like this pandemic which could ultimately result in worse outcomes.

The Finance Committee will be discussing this topic in November and receiving more information about the costs and what the County will need to set this up if the Board voted to move forward. In the meantime, the Board voted 6-3 to allow unions to begin to organize in County facilities, hold information sessions and recruit members. I opposed this motion because I think it was premature to do that before the County has made a decision about how we are going to proceed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Freedom Eagle Trot 5K

The Freedom Eagles Athletic Booster Club is sponsoring the 2020 Virtual Thanksgiving Eagle Trot 5K to benefit Freedom Athletics and the Ryan Bartel Foundation. You can participate any time between Wednesday, November 25 and Friday, November 27.

Log your time on the website and upload a photo to receive an official race t-shirt. You can register on the Virtual Eagle Trot [website](#). More details are available at the link.

Step Up Loudoun Youth Competition

The 2020-21 Step Up Loudoun Youth Competition will take place virtually due to COVID-19. The competition encourages middle and high school youth around the nation to identify an issue in their community and work as a team to solve it. [Registration](#) is now open and costs \$25 per student.

Transit System Adjustments

Beginning Monday, November 2, Loudoun County Transit will modify Commuter Bus and Metro Connection Bus services to meet increased passenger demand. The number of trips on existing routes will be increased, and new Commuter Bus routes will be added to include stops at the Dulles South (Stone Ridge II) and East Gate Park and Ride lots. Members of the public can view bus service details and changes [here](#).

Toys for Tots

Loudoun's 2020 Toys for Tots season begins on October 1. This year due to COVID-19, it is not possible to have large volunteer groups working together in person, nor are Loudoun's fire stations (which typically serve as drop-off locations) available for public access. In light of these restrictions, Toys for Tots has partnered with local non-profit organizations Help for Others, LINK, Mobile Hope, and The Salvation Army. Individual families and other organizations requesting toys will register with one of these four non-profits. The non-profits will then provide Toys for Tots with the total number of sign-ups. Toys for Tots will directly purchase the toys online or in local stores; the toys will then be shipped directly to the partner non-profits. Instead of seeking toy donations this year, Toys for Tots will be seeking monetary donations so they can purchase the toys

directly and minimize handling to help curb the transmission of germs. If you wish to donate, please do so by mid-November by clicking on the "donate local" button on the Toys for Tots [website](#). You can also make a check payable to "Toys for Tots" and either mail it to Toys for Tots c/o Loudoun County Marine Corps League, P.O. Box 162, Purcellville, VA 20134 or drop it off at one of the following locations:

- Reception in the Town Hall main lobby (25 West Market Street in Leesburg)
- Ida Lee Park Recreation Center (60 Ida Lee Drive NW in Leesburg)
- Leesburg Executive Airport (1001 Sycolin Road in Leesburg)

Fire Safety Information

Loudoun County Fire & Rescue has released updated fire safety information that includes common causes of fires and preventive tips / information that can be used to stop the start and spread of fires. Some of you may remember the recent fire in the Dulles District caused by a Lithium Polymer (LiPo) battery. The updated information contains guidance on LiPo battery fires:

"When LiPo batteries are run to exhaustion they get extremely hot. Immediately plugging them in to re-charge before they have an opportunity to cool, and then leaving them on the charger unattended, allows for a potential failure to occur inside the batteries and go un-noticed. When a lithium-polymer battery is failing due to impacts, jarring, vibration, or excessive heat, low resistance is created, which generates more heat. This heat creates lithium oxide (Li₂O) that produces more resistance and causes more heat. The process continues until the battery bursts open from the pressure. At this point, the combination of heat, oxygen, and humidity in the air react with the lithium, resulting in a very hot and dangerous fire. If the battery is near or on anything combustible, by the time the battery is capable of self-extinguishing when all the lithium or oxygen is consumed, the room is on fire."

For more fire safety information, please visit <https://www.loudoun.gov/797/Fire-Prevention-Safety>.

LCPS School Boundary Revision Meetings

There are two new elementary schools slated to open in the next two years: Hovatter (co-located on the Lightridge High School site) in the fall of 2021 and Elaine E. Thompson (located in the Arcola Center development) in the fall of 2022. Since both schools will need new attendance zones, LCPS has identified that current attendance boundaries could potentially change for the following elementary schools: Aldie, Arcola, Buffalo Trail, Cardinal Ridge, Creighton's Corner, Goshen Post, Hutchison Farm, Legacy, Liberty, Little River, Madison's Trust, Pinebrook, Rosa Lee Carter, and Sycolin Creek.

A series of School Board meetings will be held to review, propose, and adopt school attendance zone adjustments for the aforementioned schools (should those adjustments be required). A list of upcoming meetings can be found [here](#). Reminder: The Board of Supervisors is not involved in the attendance boundary process; that is solely the responsibility of the School Board. This item is being provided for informational purposes only.

Muscular Dystrophy Association Collections

Loudoun County Fire & Rescue's "Fill the Boot" campaign in support of the Muscular Dystrophy Association will be virtual this year, due to COVID-19. Until October 31, LCFR will join the Loudoun Career Fire Fighters Association and MDA to promote the online campaign. The link to donate is [here](#) and will also be posted to social media platforms. For questions about the campaign, please contact Technician Alan Turner at alan.turner@loudoun.gov. Thanks in advance for your support!

Household Hazardous Waste Event

The next Loudoun County Household Hazardous Waste collection event is scheduled for, November 21 at Claude Moore Park (46150 Loudoun Park Lane in Sterling). The event will take place from 8:30AM - 2:30PM. The household hazardous waste program provides a safe and free way for residents to get rid of hazardous material that may have accumulated in their homes. Household hazardous waste is any waste produced in the home that is dangerous or potentially harmful to human health or the environment. Please don't bring ammunition, propane tanks, motor oil and car batteries, electronics, medical waste, or paint. For more information about the Household Hazardous Waste Program, call 703-771-5500 or visit the [website](#).

Donations to Local Food Banks

Food banks need help now more than ever!

Donations to the Dulles South Food Pantry can be made in person at 24757 Arcola Mills Drive on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM or online at dsfp.org/donate-money. The Dulles South Food Pantry provides food assistance up to twice a month to any person who resides in the school attendance zones for Freedom High School, John Champe High School, Independence High School, Rock Ridge High School and Briar Woods High School. Call 703-507-2795 or email info@dsfp.org to schedule an appointment. See the Dulles South Food Pantry's [website](#) for information on how you can help the food pantry fight local hunger. Donations to the Dulles South Food Pantry, Inc. are tax deductible.

Donations to Loudoun Hunger Relief can be made in person at 750 Miller Drive SE in Leesburg or via their [website](#).

Blood Donation

The American Red Cross continues to have an urgent need for blood and platelet donations. Donation sites follow the required social distancing during the collection events at this extremely critical time. No

drop-in donations are allowed. To schedule an appointment, please visit [redcross.org/give-blood](https://www.redcross.org/give-blood).

Inova Blood Services has blood drives scheduled and take donors by appointment.

Visit <https://www.inovablood.org/> to schedule and appointments. Residents who have had a positive COVID-19 test and are symptom-free for 14 days may be able to donate plasma. The plasma should be rich in immunoglobulins that may be helpful to patients who are actively fighting a COVID-19 infection.

Visit <https://www.inovablood.org/covid19plasma/> for more information.

Loudoun Medical Reserve Corps Volunteering

The Health Department continues to seek volunteers for the Loudoun Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). With the COVID-19 pandemic a reality, the need for Loudoun Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers - both medical and nonmedical personnel - is greater than ever. The MRC is asking medical doctors, nurses, physician assistants, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, dentists, veterinarians, and other medical professionals to consider volunteering their time to help protect the community's health during the pandemic and beyond. For example, medical professionals may be needed to help with influenza vaccination events as flu season approaches and with COVID-19 vaccinations when there is a vaccine, as well as potential testing and other events. Nonmedical professionals can help support testing activities, contact-tracing efforts, operating the Loudoun County Health Department's information line, logistics support, and other nonmedical functions. For more information, visit loudoun.gov/mrc. Register through the Virginia Volunteer Health System.

Rebuild VA Economic Recovery Fund

Governor Ralph Northam announced \$70 million for small businesses and nonprofit organizations whose normal operations were disrupted by the COVID-19

pandemic. The funding will be made available through Rebuild VA, a new economic recovery fund, and grants of up to \$10,000 will be awarded to approximately 7,000 applicants to cover eligible expenses.

Rebuild VA will be administered by the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity (SBSD).

Businesses must certify that they have not received federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) or Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) funds or other funding from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

For more information about Rebuild VA, eligibility criteria, covered expenses, and how to submit an application, please visit this [site](#).

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