



Supervisor

Matt Letourneau

Dulles Direct Newsletter



January 2021

Welcome to the January edition of the Dulles Direct newsletter. I don't think anyone was sad to see 2020 go, but 2021 hasn't exactly gotten off to a stellar start either. I hope everyone had a good holiday season and is staying healthy and financially secure. Unfortunately, our email vendor made some changes and is no longer supporting a hyperlinked table of contents, so that feature is missing from this newsletter. There are quite a few items, so you'll have to scroll down and hopefully they will bring back the ability to insert a table of contents sometime soon. I did include a list of topics on the right side of the page for your convenience.

The Board of Supervisors is about to enter our busiest part of the year, with the budget being presented next month. At our January organizational meeting, the Board's assignments were retained, meaning I will continue as Chairman of the Board's Finance, Government Operations and Economic Development Committee. I was also re-appointed to the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, and the Route 28 Transportation Improvement District Commission. At NVTC, I was re-appointed as their representative to the Metro Board of Directors, where I will continue as one of Virginia's two principal board members.

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At our January 19 Business meeting, the Board passed a resolution for a Day of Unity and Remembrance for those lost to COVID-19. We held a brief ceremony to honor the 170+ members of our Loudoun community that have lost their lives to the virus. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families.



I also was pleased to join the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce's "Metro Monday" event for a discussion about Silver Line Phase II and Metro's budget challenges stemming from the pandemic. I'll have more on that topic below.

Finally, on a personal note, I had surgery about a month ago at Georgetown University Hospital to detach my eye muscle from the titanium plate that was installed as part of the fracture repair to my face. The surgery was technically successful. However, there has been no other improvement in my symptoms or vision - which was not entirely unexpected. If there continues to be no improvement, my surgeon will begin preparations for another surgery to manually align the eye muscles (called strabismus). I don't know yet many details or when exactly that will take place. The surgery did set me back some in terms of my balance and concussion symptoms. I've had to go back to some of the

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beginning exercises to try to regain where I was. Apparently that is fairly common after general anesthesia. The situation is also the same with the nerve damage (no improvement). Overall, it is still a challenge and patience is key. Given the COVID risk and my situation, I expect to be attending most Board meetings virtually for the foreseeable future.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Latest Numbers

According to the official numbers released today by the Virginia Department of Health, there have been 20,077 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Loudoun County. 179 individuals have died from the virus in Loudoun. Virginia now has 497,912 confirmed cases with 6,379 deaths. You can see these numbers yourself at the Loudoun County COVID-19 [GeoHub](#). Current pandemic metrics point to Northern Virginia experiencing “high disease burden and increasing trend,” which means we are still very much in a major risk.

The sense of fatigue and frustration from restrictions is palpable and I totally get it. But the risk of getting COVID has never been higher. While we aren’t at risk of having to turn anyone away, hospitals in Northern Virginia continue to see high patient volume and challenging cases. I personally know some otherwise healthy people that have contracted COVID and really had their life turned upside down for at least a few weeks. It is no joke and the long term effects of infection are still being evaluated.

As I mentioned above, it is now more important than ever to social distance, wear a mask, wash your hands frequently, consider smaller gatherings only when absolutely necessary, and stay home if possible. With vaccination efforts underway (the next section will cover that process), we are looking at the

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possibility of significant herd immunity this year. I want life to return to normal as much as anyone, but that will require continued diligence to make sure that the virus doesn't spread in our communities.

Free Twice Weekly Testing Events

Loudoun County will hold twice-weekly, free drive-thru COVID-19 testing events at multiple locations beginning in February. Unlike past testing events hosted by Loudoun County, these weekly fixed events will not be mass testing sites and instead are intended to provide regular, predictable testing opportunities for the community. As a result, capacity at these fixed testing sites will be limited.

The events will be on **Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 AM – 2 PM:**

- **February 2 and 4:** [Franklin Park, 17501 Franklin Park Drive, Purcellville](#)
- **February 9 and 11:** [Philip A. Bolen Memorial Park, 42405 Claudia Drive, Leesburg](#) (Enter the park on Crosstrail Boulevard from Sycolin Road)
- **February 16 and 18:** [Cascades Library, 21030 Whitfield Place, Potomac Falls](#) (Access the testing location in the back parking lot, near the senior center)
- **February 23 and 25:** [Dulles South Recreation & Community Center, 24950 Riding Center Drive, South Riding](#)

To help reduce wait times, those who plan to attend the testing event are strongly encouraged to complete a registration form for each person who will be receiving a test prior to arriving at the testing site. The forms are available here: [English \(PDF\)](#) | [Español \(PDF\)](#)

Forms will also be available at the testing site. The registration form is required and asks for general demographics and contact information, including name, date of birth, address, phone number and current symptoms, if any.

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

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

[COVID-19](#)

The testing events are open to all. There are no age or residency requirements. No prescriptions or appointments are necessary. A person does not have to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 in order to be tested. A PCR test (nasal swab) will be administered, which tests for the novel coronavirus. Results will be available within a week. No antibody testing will be offered. **No COVID-19 vaccine will be available at these events.**

More information, including links to the registration forms, is posted on the County's website at loudoun.gov/COVID19testing.

Residents with questions about COVID-19 may call the Loudoun County Health Department's information line at 703-737-8300 or send an email to health@loudoun.gov.

Latest News on Vaccination Efforts

I have been providing some interim updates on Facebook about vaccines. For those that don't follow my page, you can do so [here](#).

My Take

I'm going to keep giving you my take on things and then share the best information that I have. Now remember, the Loudoun County Health Department is the local branch of the STATE agency. It is not County government. County government has been asked to play a support role by Dr. Goodfriend and his team and we have done whatever we've been asked to do. The situation is not good. The biggest, most fundamental problem is the lack of vaccines. There have been lots of stories about vaccines not being distributed and Virginia ranking low in the percentage of vaccines distributed, but the more we've looked into that the more clear it is that it's really just a data problem. There aren't huge quantities of vaccine going unused. The state made some early decisions that were puzzling and made

things more confusing. The single biggest source of the data issue is that until last week, a large share of vaccine was going directly to hospitals, with the rest to health districts. With the large share of vaccine going to hospitals that had different reporting requirements and a major lag in reporting vaccine administration, the data on distribution became a jumbled mess.

More concerning, this system created a huge advantage for health districts in which a hospital provider was willing to assist the health district. For instance, Valley Health System in the Winchester area partnered with Shenandoah University to completely take over their health district vaccination efforts. That meant they were using their own vaccine supply PLUS the health district's. Similarly, Inova Health System took over vaccination for Fairfax County Public Schools.

Loudoun County has been on its own. No health providers were able to create or take over our distribution system/program. That's why the initial forms that the health district is sending are on SurveyMonkey and not a professional healthcare platform. It is not for lack of effort, believe me. There was simply nobody out there with the bandwidth to provide vaccines and assistance to the Loudoun Health District. For the resources that they've actually had, the Loudoun Health District has done the best it possibly could. The County staff assisted with setting up three pod sites (one for LCPS, and two for the County) and utilizing EMTs and the Medical Reserve Corps for distribution. To date, the Loudoun Health District has administered at least one dose to nearly 27,000 people, which is ahead of the pace of several of our neighbors.

From this point forward, all doses are now going to the health districts. That is why you may have seen news that Inova cancelled appointments for their patients. They had just begun starting to vaccinate their own patients in the appropriate categories, but they no longer will receive their own supply of

vaccine and it will all go directly to the Health Districts. Given that Loudoun County now has a waiting list of over 50,000 people, this is probably a good thing for us.

The Current Situation & Vaccine Supply

As it relates to vaccine supply, VDH is reliant on the federal government to distribute vaccine doses to them in the first place. The current pace for statewide doses coming from the federal government is approximately 105,000 doses per week. The new administration has signaled their desire to see distribution increase by as much as 16%, but that rollout will take time and we don't know if our actual number of weekly doses will go up that much in the near future.

To give you some idea of scale, the Loudoun Health Department received 4,800 doses this week. After setting up the newest pod at the former Nordstrom at Dulles Town Center, the Loudoun Health District now has the ability to vaccinate over 5,000 people *per day*. At this rate, with the backlog that exists, it's going to take several months to get through the 1B groups. We simply need more vaccine, but the state is telling us that they don't expect significant increases to be coming anytime soon. So, we're all going to need to be very patient.

Rest assured, every dose that enters Loudoun County is being used. The health department is not scheduling appointments right now because every dose they have is spoken for, and from week to week they are not certain how many doses they will receive. They do want to make sure they are able to administer the second shot to those who have received the first, and thus need to reserve doses for that.

Who Is Eligible & What to Do

Loudoun and the rest of Virginia are now in Phase 1b of vaccine distribution, which equals eligibility for

about 50% of residents. Per federal guidelines, adults aged 65 and older have been moved from vaccination Phase 1c into Phase 1b. For the time being, experts are recommending that about half the vaccine supply should be administered to those 65 and older, as they are at the greatest risk for complications and severe illness due to COVID-19.

The latest update also moves people aged 16 through 64 years with a [high-risk medical condition](#) or disability that increases their risk of severe illness from COVID-19 into Phase 1b.

As I referenced above, the Loudoun County Health Department is now requiring all requests for the vaccine by individuals and organizations that are in the Phase 1a and Phase 1b priority groups to be submitted via an [online pre-screening survey](#). This form verifies your eligibility and requests your contact information. After submitting the form, you will be contacted through the County's Alert Loudoun system to inform you that your survey and information have been received, and that a vaccination appointment will be scheduled in the coming weeks as more doses become available. As more vaccines arrive in Loudoun, those who have submitted the online pre-screening survey will be offered vaccination appointments in priority order. Please be patient; once you submit an online pre-screening survey, there is no need to call the Health Department.

Requests for the vaccine will no longer be accepted by email, as previously announced. Only those who do not have access to the internet should call the Health Department's COVID-19 hotline at 703-737-8300 between 9 AM and 5 PM to sign up for the vaccine. Due to significant call volume, there may be a delay in reaching an operator.

Many members of the Phase 1a and 1b priority groups may be enrolled for vaccination by their employers; this is the most efficient way of getting signed up for vaccinations. Employers, members of

the 1a and 1b groups who have not been contacted by their employers, residents over the age of 65, and adults with high-risk medical conditions may begin the process for scheduling an appointment by filling out the prescreening survey or calling the hotline if they don't have internet access.

Phase 1b now includes front-line essential workers, persons aged 65 years and older, people living in correctional facilities, homeless shelters and migrant labor camps, and people aged 16 through 64 years with a high-risk medical condition or disability that increases their risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Please note that while the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has indicated that teens aged 16 to 18 who have underlying medical conditions are eligible, the Loudoun County Health Department is currently only accepting pre-screening vaccination surveys from adults 18 and older because the Health Department's supply of the vaccine - the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine - is only approved for those 18 and older.

In addition to those 65 and over and those age 18 to 64 with medical conditions, the Health Department will schedule appointments - when available - for members of the 1b front-line essential worker group in the following order, which is required by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH):

1. Police, fire and hazmat workers
2. Corrections and homeless shelter workers
3. Childcare/K-12 teachers/staff
4. Food and agriculture workers
5. Manufacturing workers
6. Grocery store workers
7. Public transit workers
8. Mail carriers (USPS and private)
9. Officials needed to maintain continuity of government

The Health Department is coordinating special vaccination events for law enforcement, fire and hazmat, corrections and homeless shelter workers,

public school employees, and local government workers. There is no need for individuals working in these sectors to contact the Health Department to schedule appointments.

[Learn more about the vaccine priority groups on the VDH website.](#)

Additional information about the ongoing vaccination efforts will be published as it becomes available. To stay informed about when it is your turn to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, you should sign up to receive text or email updates about COVID-19 from Loudoun County:

- Text LCCOVID19 to 888777 to receive text alerts in English.
- Text LCCOVIDESP to 888777 to receive text alerts in Spanish.
- Sign up for email and text updates on COVID-19 in [Notify Me, Blogs category, “Coronavirus \(COVID-19\).”](#)
- Follow Loudoun County on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- Visit the county’s website, loudoun.gov/coronavirus.

The Board has been getting some very frustrated (understandably) emails from residents who think we are falling down on the job on this issue. As I explained, all of this is ultimately run by the state. But, rest assured, every member of the Board has been engaged, asked numerous questions, talked to state officials, talked to private providers, etc. to try to improve this situation. I personally have had dozens of calls with staff and various entities on all sorts of logistical pieces. I will do whatever I can to help here and I know my colleagues will too.

DULLES UPDATES

Braddock Road at Supreme / Summerall Widening Update

Earlier this month, I was joined by staff in the Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure to provide a status update on this project to the HOAs that are located adjacent to the widening area. Residents in Kirkpatrick Farms and Braddock Corner were invited to participate and ask questions. There was not a large turnout at the meeting, which took place virtually.

As discussed at the meeting, the widening will occur between Foley Headwaters and Kilkeen Way and will include the construction of a signal at the Supreme/Summerall intersection, associated turn lanes, and a multi-use path on the northern side of Braddock. There are some right of way needs along the Kirkpatrick Farms community frontage that are expected to impact landscaping and fencing. However, the existing berm will only be slightly altered to ensure proper drainage and will mostly stay the same height above the roadway. The HOA would be compensated for impacts to landscaping and fencing through the land acquisition process.

Design is complete and we expect land acquisition to begin soon. Some utility work has already started and construction is scheduled to begin in 2022. A link to project materials, including the latest timeline and a recording of the meeting with the presentation is available [here](#).

DULLES LAND USE UPDATES

Milestone Tower - Gardenia Drive *SPEX 2020-0023*

At our February 10 Public Hearing, the Board will hear a special exception request for a cellular tower at the Kirkpatrick West Fire Station located on

Gardenia Drive. While this project is in the Blue Ridge District, it is close to Dulles and some of our residents will be interested in its status. The purpose of the tower is to provide upgrades and improvements to the radio network that firefighters and other first responders use to communicate. Milestone, who will be developing the project should it be approved, hosted an online community meeting to explain the application and address any potential concerns. For the application page including supporting documents, click [here](#). If you'd like to sign up to speak at the Public Hearing regarding the Milestone Tower, please click [here](#).

LOUDOUN UPDATES

Final FY22 Budget Guidance

At our January 5 Business Meeting, the Board approved final guidance to the County Administrator in preparation for our FY22 budget process. I proposed a motion to direct the County Administrator to prepare the budget at the overall equalized tax rate of \$1.015 with options to increase or decrease by 2 cents. Up until this point, preparing the budget at the equalized tax rate had been the guidance from the Board. However, staff had cautioned the Board that some staff priorities could not be accommodated in addition to the Board identified priorities (like collective bargaining) at the equalized tax rate. My motion included a provision that would have prioritized the needs of our departments over those priorities identified by Board members. Unfortunately, my motion failed 3-6 with Supervisors Buffington and Kershner also voting in support.

A motion was then introduced to prepare the budget at 1 cent above the overall equalized tax rate (\$1.025) with options to increase or decrease by 1 cent. I voted against the motion, but it passed 6-3. I understand

that we want to get as many departmental priorities funded as possible, but residents are continuing to feel the fiscal impacts of COVID-19 and I supported a lower tax rate to help ease their burden. Ultimately starting at a lower tax rate would have given the Board more options and the opportunity to see the tax impact of adding in items that some Board members view as priorities.

I am hopeful the Board will be prudent during the budget process and avoid any further rate hikes. The current tax rate is \$1.035 and the homeowner's equalized rate would actually be \$.995. Even the equalized rate would be an increase for the owner of a home assessed at the average value and in the Dulles District, our homes frequently see assessments rise higher than other places in Loudoun. The reason that the overall equalized rate is so much higher than the homeowner's equalized rate is that commercial property values have seen a significant drop this year due to the pandemic and the equalized rate for commercial properties is actually \$1.07.

As part of the item at the January 5 meeting, the Board approved County staff to research a grant or other funding source to support body worn cameras for law enforcement officers. We will continue to have this discussion as the budget process advances, but I wanted to make you aware of the initial Board direction.

I do want to note that the baseline assumption on that fiscal guidance was a 12.8% increase in the LCPS Budget, which was their preliminary estimate. The Interim Superintendent has since proposed a 9.3% increase corresponding with a 2.2% enrollment increase. This allows much less of a potential gap in funding at the overall equalized tax rate level. The County Administrator will present his proposed budget and CIP the second week of February and budget work sessions will begin in March.

The Board of Supervisors will host budget public hearings at the end of February (dates and times

below). For information on remote participation including to sign up to speak, please click [here](#).

- Tuesday, February 23 from 3 PM - 5 PM
- Tuesday, February 23 at 6 PM
- Saturday, February 27 from 9 AM - 12 PM

2021 Personal Property Tax Rate

As part of the FY22 budget guidance process, the Board of Supervisors must vote on a personal property tax rate for our current tax year. At our January 19 Business Meeting, the Board voted to set the personal property tax rate for tax year 2021 at \$4.20 per \$100 of assessed value for normal vehicles without a separate classification. \$4.20/\$100 is the same rate as in 2020 (and the same rate since 1987). For a full chart of vehicle tax rates including exceptions, click [here](#). The computer equipment tax rate, which is the source of much of our annual data center revenue, was also set at \$4.20 per \$100 of assessed value, as it has been in recent years.

The Committee did debate a motion from Supervisor Briskman to reduce the rate 10% for electric and hybrid (called “clean special fuel” in Virginia) vehicles. Doing so would have had a budget impact of \$700,000. I strongly opposed that motion and it failed on a 2-3 vote (joining me in opposition were Chair Randall and Supervisor Kershner). There is already a plethora of tax incentives available for electric and hybrid vehicles at the federal level, depending on the brand and sales. Electric and hybrid vehicles have the same impact on congestion and road quality as traditional gas powered vehicles – the more cars there are, the more we pay to maintain roads and construct new ones, whether they are electric or hybrid cars or not. Therefore, it makes little sense to impact the local County budget and reduce our ability to pay for our needs by effectively shifting the burden to everyone who doesn’t drive an electric or hybrid car.

Greenway Update

At the beginning of the month, I joined Senator John Bell, Delegate Suhas Subramanyam, Delegate David Reid, Delegate Wendy Gooditis, former Delegate David Ramadan, and my Board of Supervisors colleague Chair Phyllis Randall to announce a unified legislative effort to define the terms in which toll increases are decided by the State Corporation Commission. This is essentially the same bill as Delegate Ramadan first drafted.

While I fully expect the Greenway's army of lobbyists and lawyers to fight back against the proposed legislation, the package represents very positive steps forward. The bill would set in place much firmer rules for when the SCC can allow toll increases, as well as limiting the number of years that can be requested for toll increases at a time (to one). To get SCC approval to refinance existing debt, the Greenway operator would have to prove their ability to pay off the debt incurred in the refinancing process, as well as prove that refinancing is necessary to operate, maintain, or expand the Greenway. Under the bill, if the current or any future operator of the Greenway wishes to change operations, they will have to publicly share their financial plan and demonstrate a minimum bond rating to prove fiscal stability. Furthermore, the bill allows VDOT to independently review all traffic-related analyses submitted by the Greenway in support of higher tolls. One of the most important elements of the bill is the requirement that the proposed Greenway toll rates be "reasonable" to users in relation to the benefit they are deriving from using the road. One term that is thrown around a lot is that tolls shouldn't "materially discourage" use of the road. It is my opinion that current rates and rate increases do discourage commuter use of the Greenway, so ensuring this language is part of the bill was a top priority.

I don't want to jinx anything, but the County staff, former Delegate Ramadan, and the delegation have

put a lot of work into this and so far so good. The bill has passed both the House and Senate Transportation Committees with large majorities. We are continuing to work hard to ensure its passage on the floor.

We are still awaiting the SCC's final decision in the current toll rate increase sought by the Greenway. They requested a more than 30% increase over the next 5 years! The rulings haven't always gone our way in the past, but we are hopeful that could change. The SCC staff and hearing examiner have been agreeable to the County's position and very open to hearing our concerns. I am cautiously optimistic that the SCC will delay implementation or limit the number of years they approve toll rates. I'll continue to keep you updated as we learn more.

Redistricting Process

Now that the U.S. Census is complete, the County must look at how to redraw our local election district boundaries to even out population within each district. Redistricting occurs every ten years and the current Dulles District was created in 2011. Since that time, the estimated population of our district has grown from 39,000 residents to 66,000. We are second only to Blue Ridge, which has grown to an estimated 88,000 residents. The smallest district is Sterling at an estimated 41,000 residents. We are anticipating that if the Board keeps 8 districts, each will be about 53,000 residents, meaning that myself or whoever replaces me will lose some of you as constituents!

There have been delays in getting the census data which will affect redistricting at every level. If the redistricting data is released by its current estimate in April, Loudoun could receive adjusted data in May at the earliest. Much of the way districts are drawn is governed by State Code, but the County can put some parameters on how our process will work. The Board will be meeting in February to discuss the process in more detail, the number of districts, and how to address the districts and the residence of existing

Board members within the boundaries. I expect that there will be plenty of opportunities for public input and ways that different proposals can be submitted. I hope that we can better align Dulles to make sure that communities of interest, such as HOAs and population centers, are not split across multiple districts. I will provide an update in next month's newsletter on the outcome of our meeting.

Resolution on Loudoun Delegate Dave LaRock

At our January 19 Business Meeting, the Board considered a resolution to call for Delegate Dave LaRock to resign his position due to his activities around the January 6 Capitol riots, which included asking the Vice President not to certify Virginia's election results (which were not even challenged), being present on the Capitol grounds at the time of the riot, and writing that those who rioted were actually not supporters of the President, which has since been disproven by the FBI and by numerous video footage released.

I strongly disagree with Delegate LaRock's actions and words. They were irresponsible and factually wrong. As an elected official, he has a responsibility to convey facts. But this was not an item that belonged in front of the Board of Supervisors and I therefore abstained from the vote. I have repeatedly encouraged my colleagues to stick to County business in the Board Room, with less success over the past year than I would have hoped. It is certainly anyone's right to encourage Delegate LaRock to resign, but they should do it on their time, not during a business meeting with County staff. This topic of course brought out significant public comment, which resulted in a long meeting and the Board cancelling its planned closed session that evening, as it was after midnight by the time we got around to it. It bothers me that this sort of thing is interfering with our County business. Delegate LaRock is an elected member of the House of Delegates and is accountable to his constituents and his colleagues in the House of Delegates. The leadership of that body

has removed him from the House of Delegates' Transportation Committee, and I'm sure the voters will have their say in the future.

The resolution to call for Delegate LaRock's resignation passed 6-1-1-1 with my abstention, Supervisor Kershner opposed, and Supervisor Buffington - a Capitol Police officer who was on duty during the meeting and the day of the riot - absent.

Proposed Conveyance of Aldie Properties

The County owns three parcels in the village of Aldie. These parcels were acquired in 2015 for the purpose of constructing a new fire station to replace the existing Aldie station that is passed its useful life and not adequate for housing the personnel and equipment needed to service the community. It is also located in a floodplain and has flooded on many occasions. Following community input on the plans that had been developed for these parcels and potential impact on historic structures in the village, the Board moved forward on securing another site closer to Gilberts Corner at the intersection of Route 50 and Route 15. So, that now leaves us with the question of how to dispose of these properties that have been determined through community input to not be viable for County services.

There has also been some community opposition to a by-right development that is occurring on property near the village of St. Louis. In response to that opposition, the majority of the Board endorsed a potential acquisition of that property due to concerns over impacts on the wells of surrounding residents and a desire to preserve the property. It is important to note that the developer of the St. Louis property does not have to sell the parcel, and in fact has the legal right to continue with their by-right project. We in the Dulles District are very familiar with by-right development that has been occurring to our south and west for several years. There are some DEQ issues on

the St. Louis property, but it appears that they can be resolved through mitigation. So the County would essentially be buying them out - at their choice and discretion. While I can't discuss the negotiations between the County Attorney and the developer as they were confidential, I can share that the developer has invested a certain sum of money in the subject property and has indicated they would not consider selling the parcel and giving up the project unless they are made whole.

What has been proposed is that the County would acquire the St. Louis property at a reduced price of \$1.5 million in exchange for conveying the Aldie properties to the developer and establishing a \$600,000 escrow for the rehabilitation of the historic structures and construction of an access road through the properties to an adjacent parcel owned by the developer. The developer has proposed that they would rehabilitate the historic structures and use them as part of a new commercial development that would include a restaurant, tavern, brewery, B&B/inn, retail, and art space. The property behind that is already owned by the developer has been floated as a potential park, and this development would be used to provide parking and infrastructure to support it. These would all be beneficial to the tourism industry and would make the land viable in the long term without going to the default of large lot housing that occurs in Western Loudoun.

The proposed project itself will need to be the subject of a separate legislative approval process. The applicant will need to make a land use application which will go through the County's regular, extensive review process. Every county agency will be asked for a referral, so issues like steep slopes and traffic are all examined in detail. The application would still go to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors for a decision. The Board cannot obligate a particular outcome on a land use case as part of a separate agreement. The developer is therefore taking a significant risk that they don't get the approval of their proposed commercial development.

A Public Hearing on the proposed conveyance was held earlier this month and there are many legitimate issues that have been brought up by those who spoke or have written in to the Board. I totally understand why some may be concerned about this situation which seemed to come out of the blue, but that was because it came as a result of legal negotiations with the developer and the Board didn't have a choice ... and we knew there would be ample opportunity for public engagement down the road. I expect that this will be a fully transparent decision that is well discussed before any action by the Board. The Finance committee will be reviewing the potential land acquisition aspects at our meeting on February 9 and the full Board would make a final decision at a future Business Meeting.

Metro Budget / Silver Line Phase II

Metro has now begun work on the FY22 budget. The system will be operating at about 80% capacity until July when the new budget comes in. Congress provided about \$600 million in funding, which will help avoid drastic cuts. The question for the Metro Board will be whether all of that should be applied at once to stay at the 80% service level and help aid an economic recovery, or whether cuts should be made in July. If everything is applied at once, Metro will once again be facing revenue shortfalls in January 2022 and will have to undertake station closures and major service reductions. We will need to make our decision by April.

In the meantime, I personally believe that Phase II won't be open until the fall of 2021. There continue to be issues on the construction side of the project that are out of Metro's control. I'm concerned about the slow progress on these. I'm also concerned that some Metro Board members from other jurisdictions may seek to delay the opening of Phase II even further as a cost cutting measure. I have vowed to oppose that and will be providing information to

residents on how to comment in the Metro Board budget process.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

#LoveLoudounFood Winter Restaurant Campaign

Have you heard about the #LoveLoudounFood restaurant campaign? Show your support for Loudoun restaurants by posting a picture of your meal on Facebook or Instagram, tag the restaurant and use the hashtag #LoveLoudounFood. Every post you make enters you to win a dinner for six for Super Bowl Sunday, a Valentine's Day dinner for two or a St. Patrick's Day dinner for six. It's an easy (and tasty) way to support our restaurants this winter. Complete campaign information can be found on the [Loudoun Is Ready Restaurant campaign landing page](#).

Virtual Family Caregiver Education Series

The Loudoun County Area Agency on Aging will host a virtual family caregiver education series starting on Thursday, February 18. To register for these free virtual programs, please send an email to aaasupport@loudoun.gov. Here are the program topics:

- Thursday, February 18 from 1 PM - 2 PM: "Getting Your Legal Ducks in a Row: Legal Planning for Older Adults & Caregivers"
- Tuesday, February 23 from 1 PM - 2 PM: "Caregiving from a Distance During a Healthcare Crisis"
- Thursday, March 18 from 1 PM - 2 PM: "Taboo Topics: How to Talk to Your Parents About the Future More Comfortably"

For the digital announcement and more information, please click [here](#).

As part of the caregiver series, SHARE for Dementia will be providing a 5-session virtual program that works with caregivers and persons with early stage dementia. This is a free program and includes a family toolkit, 5 sessions with a SHARE counselor, and more. For more information, please click [here](#). To make an appointment with a SHARE counselor, send an email to aaasupport@loudoun.gov or call (703) 777-0257.

Youth Mental Health First Aid Training

Seats are available in the next virtual Loudoun County Youth Mental Health First Aid training scheduled for February 9 and 10, 2021, from 1 – 4 PM. each day. Adults who interact with young people are encouraged to sign up for the training.

The free classes cover:

- Common signs and symptoms of mental illness
- Common signs and symptoms of substance use
- How to interact with a person in crisis
- How to connect the person with help

The deadline to register is January 29. Find details and a link to register at loudoun.gov/mhfirstaid.

Winter Weather Information

VDOT is responsible for clearing over 14,000 miles of road, and have a budget of well over \$50 million to do so. VDOT is encouraging folks not to drive if it is snowing, and to be safe in the case of a winter weather event. If we do get snow, VDOT's goal is to have one passable lane on every road within 24 hours when snowfall is 2-4" and within 48 hours for 4-6". Over 6" is expected to take at least 72 hours. If you

feel that your street is missed after these time frames have passed, you can use the resources below to get more information on plowing status and/or report your issue directly to VDOT:

- Click [here](#) for news releases, important messages, frequently asked questions and links to many other resources, including:
- [@VaDOTNOVA](#) on Twitter
- www.511virginia.org for road conditions and traffic cameras
- www.vdotplows.org for neighborhood status and locations of plows
- <http://www.virginiadot.org> or 800-FOR-ROAD (367-7623) to report issues

Donations to Local Food Banks

Donations to the Dulles South Food Pantry can be made in person at the former Arcola Volunteer Fire Department, located at 24300 Stone Springs Boulevard (new temporary location for the next few months) on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM or [online](#). The Dulles South Food Pantry provides food assistance up to twice a month to any person who resides in the school attendance zones for the following high schools: Freedom, John Champe, Lightridge, Independence, Rock Ridge and Briar Woods. Call 703-507-2795 or email <mailto: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.

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.

Did someone forward this to you? Click below to sign up to receive future updates directly.

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