

I hope you and your loved ones have a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a healthy and peaceful New Year.

## Parade and Santa's Neighborhood Visit

Every December, Santa hitches rides through Leesburg neighborhoods with the Leesburg Volunteer Fire Company. On December 12th, a crowd of Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and neighborhood pups turned out to help Santa ride down King Street in the Town's annual Christmas and Holiday parade.



## Sweats for Vets

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to foster camaraderie and mutual aid among veterans of overseas conflicts. For over 15 years, the annual Northern Virginia Sweats for Vets program has collected thousands of new sweat suits for homeless veterans and patients at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Martinsburg, West Virginia.

Sweats will be collected until Wednesday, December 22nd at the Loudoun County Government Center and Ida Lee Recreation Center in Leesburg. All sizes will be accepted, but there is a greater need for sizes L, XL, and XXL. Sweats should be new and unwrapped. VFW hopes to collect 800 sets of sweats this year. Thank you!



## Home for the Holidays Pet Adoption Event Today

Today, Saturday, December 18th, Loudoun County Animal Services (LCAS) will host "Empty the Shelters – Home for the Holidays," pet adoption event from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm. Adoption fees will be waived for all available pets, including cats, kittens, dogs, small pets and livestock. The event will take place at the new Loudoun County Animal Shelter, 42225 Adoption Drive in Leesburg. (Please note that Kincaid Boulevard is closed from the direction of Battlefield Parkway and that motorists must take Sycolin Road to Crosstrail Boulevard to access the facility.)

In an effort to help as many pets as possible, LCAS is transferring in dogs and cats from overcrowded and under-resourced partner shelters throughout the region before the event. The event will be full of holiday cheer with goodie bags for adopters and more. Santa himself will even stop by for a visit. Prospective adopters can view available pets [online](#). All dogs, cats and rabbits adopted from LCAS are spayed or neutered and receive a microchip which is registered to their adopter. Dogs and cats also receive age-appropriate vaccinations.



## FY 2023 Budget Guidance

As you may recall, the County's two major tax rates that impact our residents are currently \$.98 per \$100 of assessed value for real estate and \$4.20 per \$100 of assessed value for personal property. As a resident, you pay the personal property tax on your car. As a business, you pay personal property taxes on a range of business property, including your business computers. Data centers pay hundreds of millions of dollars each year on their many computer servers. These servers are where the Internet and "the cloud" are physically located. Without them, there is no Internet and no "cloud."

At the December 7th Board business meeting, I supported the motion to prepare the [FY 2023 proposed budget](#) at a real property tax rate of \$0.94 per \$100 of assessed value and the personal property tax rate of \$4.20 per \$100 of assessed value for tax year 2022 and \$4.15 for tax year 2023. The Board further moved to program one half cent of the real property tax rate as a dedicated revenue source to affordable housing needs, prior to splitting new local tax funding between the County government and school budgets.

Since FY 2018, personal property tax revenue, especially revenue generated from business personal property taxes on computer equipment, has been the primary funding mechanism to support the County's year-over-year expenditure growth. As you know, the



personal property tax paid by data centers has provided upwards of one quarter of the County's revenues and has recently been enough to fully cover the County's annual non-schools operating budget (about \$600 million/year). Although personal property taxes paid by data centers continue to increase, on average, by 27% a year - the fastest increase among all commercial sectors, the rate of increase has slowed. You may have read about a \$60 million "shortfall" in data center revenues. That is a very misleading figure. The data center industry continues to provide significant annual revenue increases to the County. We, at the County, incorrectly assumed the increase would be \$60 million higher than it turned out to be. This was a good-faith but erroneous budgeting assumption on our part, not a failure of the data centers to generate more revenues. According to the data center coalition, their most recent figures show a \$96 million increase in tax revenues to the County over the previous year. The personal property tax not only impacts data centers but also impacts all businesses and residents in the County. In Virginia, we don't have the authority to differentiate tax rates for commercial vs. residential entities.

The estimated homeowner's equalized rate is \$0.895 per \$100 of assessed value. The FY 2023 proposed tax rate on real estate of \$0.94 is four cents below the current tax rate, but five cents above the equalized tax rate - the rate at which the average homeowner's tax bill remains the same. Each penny of the real estate tax has approximately a \$60 impact on the real property tax bill for an average home. Even though the real property tax rate recommended is a significant reduction from what it is now (please see table below), I am concerned about those members of our community, especially those with lower incomes, who cannot afford higher taxes.

**Table 3. Real Property Tax Bill Impacts**

Scenario	Tax Year	Real Estate Tax Rate	Average Home Value	Tax Bill	Change from TY 2021
Current	2021	\$0.98	\$555,200	\$5,441	
1	2022	\$0.89	\$609,800	\$5,427	(\$14)
2	2022	\$0.98	\$609,800	\$5,976	\$535
3 and 4	2022	\$0.94	\$609,800	\$5,732	\$291

We welcome your input regarding the budget and encourage you to follow the open, transparent process. The County Administrator will develop a FY 2023 proposed budget, which will be presented in February 2022. We will then carefully analyze the proposed budget and the available options, as well as receive input from the public throughout March 2022. Adoption of the FY 2023 budget is in April 2022.

## Proposed 5-Cent Plastic Bag Tax

The Board is considering applying a [5-cent per bag tax](#) on plastic grocery bags and will vote after the first of the year on this issue. I have colleagues and constituents who have made honest and credible arguments on both sides of this issue, but I haven't heard from very many constituents and would like to give you an opportunity to weigh in before we vote.

There are arguments for a plastic bag tax: plastic bags are a significant source of land and water pollution - when empty at landfills, they tend to get caught by the wind and blow everywhere; and taxing them tends to drive a significant percentage of consumers (70% in some locations) away from using plastic bags toward using paper bags and reusable cloth bags.

There are also arguments against a plastic bag tax: the tax is regressive, burdening lower income residents more than higher income residents; plastic bags can be recycled at participating grocery stores, while cloth bags, which often contain plastic fibers, cannot be recycled; consumers are currently fed up with having to remember masks and COVID vaccination cards and will be more fed up with having to make sure they always have their reusable bags with them when they go shopping; paper bags require that trees be cut down and milled at paper mills that generate significant air and water pollution; and the application of this tax to the smaller retail businesses will place a significant accounting and cost burden on these smaller businesses.

Feel free to [e-mail me](#) with your feedback about this issue. Thank you!

## Collective Bargaining Ordinance

At the December 7th Board business meeting, we approved a [collective bargaining ordinance](#) that establishes the authority for Loudoun County to recognize, bargain with, or enter into a collective bargaining agreement with a labor union or employee association as a bargaining agent for eligible Loudoun County government employees. The change in the structure of Loudoun County's employer-employee relationship will not alter the programs and services used by Loudoun residents. Under Virginia law, public employees are not permitted to strike or engage in sick-outs or work slowdowns. Public employees are also not permitted to make the financial decisions that the Board of Supervisors retain, such as setting the budget and the tax rates. Also under Virginia law, public employees cannot be forced to join a union or pay union dues

Why do I support collective bargaining for public employees? I believe that public employees should have the same Constitutional right of free association as the rest of us. Under the First Amendment's right of association, they should be allowed to meet and work together toward a shared objective. The most commonly expressed frustrations we have heard from our public employees have come from our dedicated firefighters and our overworked child protection specialists. These two fields are critical to public safety. Firefighters suffer from higher than average cancer rates and other long-term conditions related to exposure to toxic materials that they encounter as they fight fires around the County. Shortages among our overworked child protection specialists compromise the County's ability to protect children from dangerous living conditions. There are other reasons: [68% of Virginia's registered voters support collective bargaining](#) for public employees. Where collective bargaining is allowed, wage discrimination against women and minorities is significantly decreased.

The final ordinance will be posted online in the coming weeks.

## New Names for Route 7 and Route 50

At the December 7th Board meeting, we approved changing the name of Harry Byrd Highway to Leesburg Pike and changing the name of John Mosby Highway to Little River Turnpike. These designations honor the names traditionally used for these roads, which were developed as major transportation and trade routes between Alexandria and the Shenandoah Valley in the early 1800s. This change does not affect segments of Route 7 and Route 50 within the incorporated Towns.

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Warm Regards,

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**Business of the Month**  
**The Guest Room**



**(703) 771-9484**  
Hours: Mon-Sat 10 - 5



**The Guest Room** offers a wide array of top quality fine furnishing brands that are handcrafted in America. Visit us at our new location: The Shops at Dodona Manor (formerly Southern Exchange), 312 E. Market Street, Suite D in Leesburg. We also have decorative accessories, bedding and local art work to complete the look of your room. We believe that creating a beautiful, comfortable home is important. That's why we've been helping customers for over 16 years. Come in and be a guest in our home. We are so proud to share that The Guest Room recently received an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau! Thanks for being A+ customers!



## Mayor Kelly Burk's Corner

As 2021 comes to an end, I would like to thank everyone for their support as the Town of Leesburg navigated through the on-going pandemic. It was a relief to see so many businesses opening, events taking place, and people walking the streets of our Town. To all the people in Leesburg that make our town a great place to live and work, thank you. To the Town staff who work so diligently to do their jobs, thank you. I look forward to what the New Year brings us. Until then, I want to wish everyone a wonderful and safe holiday season!

**Trail Access Grant:** The Town of Leesburg has received a Trail Access Grant, in the amount of \$23,000, which will be used towards the Potomac Crossing Trailhead project.

The Virginia Department of Conservation awarded the 100% reimbursement grant to four localities for accessible trail projects, providing trail access for people with disabilities.

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**Main Street Community:** The Town of Leesburg is now an exploring Main Street Community with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Main Street is a national model created by the National Main Street Center (NMSC), a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It is designed to bring jobs, dollars, and people to small towns and commercial districts while leveraging private investment and capitalizing on the unique appeal of historic downtowns.

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**Town Hall Art Exhibit:** The Leesburg Commission on Public Art (COPA) is pleased to announce a new art display currently available for viewing on the first floor of Leesburg Town Hall (25 West Market Street). Mixed Media by Deborah Tripp features 50 pieces of artwork created by students from the Academies of Loudoun. The public is encouraged to attend. The exhibit will run through February 2022.

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**Bulk Leaf Collection:** Leesburg's bulk leaf collection will end the week of December 27th. Leaves must be in the street no later than 6 am that Monday as Town crews make their final run through the neighborhoods. After this date and time, any new leaves must be set out in covered trash cans or placed in bags for collection by Patriot Disposal, Inc., the Town's trash and recycling contractor. If residents have leaves during the winter months, and they are prepared as noted above, they will be collected as trash on residents' regular trash and recycling collection days. For more information, please call 703-771-2790.

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**Snow Emergency Routes:** A snow emergency is declared when enough snow, sleet or other icy precipitation has accumulated, or is predicted to accumulate, on Town roadways to warrant plowing. When a snow emergency is in effect, all vehicles must be removed



from streets designated as Snow Emergency Routes. Any vehicle not removed from the designated streets when a snow emergency is in effect will be towed at the owner's expense. Snow Emergency Routes are as follows:

- King Street, from the Union Cemetery to Country Club Drive
- Loudoun Street, from Liberty Street to Harrison Street
- Market Street, from Fairview Street to the Route 7/15 Bypass

Please see the [snow emergency routes map](#). For more information about the Town's snow removal operations, please visit [here](#).

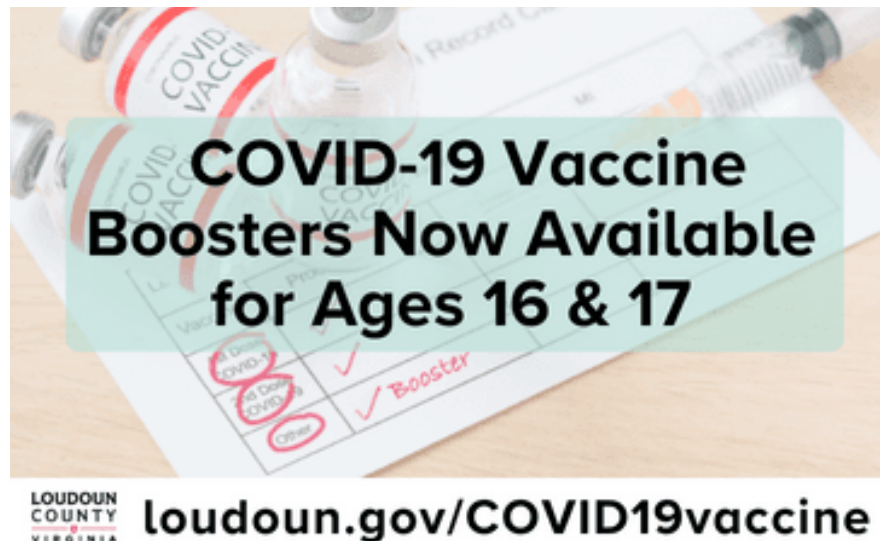


## Community Information



**COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Appointments for 16- and 17-Year-Olds:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorized the use of a COVID-19 booster dose for 16- and 17-year-olds after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention expanded its COVID-19 booster recommendations to include people in this age group.

Individuals who are 16 and 17 years old and who received their second dose in the two-dose series of the Pfizer vaccine at least six months ago are eligible for the booster. The Pfizer vaccine is the only COVID-19 vaccine currently approved for ages 17 and under. To make an appointment online for a COVID-19 vaccine at the county's Dulles Town Center site, visit [here](#). Anyone without internet access or who needs assistance making an appointment can call the county information line at 703-737-8300 weekdays 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. In addition, COVID-19 vaccine is widely available in the community from many providers, such as medical offices and pharmacies including, but not limited to, CVS, Giant Food, Harris Teeter, Safeway, Walgreens, Walmart and Wegmans. Visit [vaccines.gov](#) to find a vaccination site near you.



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**Human Service Nonprofit Grant Application:** Loudoun County's nonprofit grant application for community nonprofit organizations is due by 4:00 pm, December 21st. The amount of funding for FY 2023 will be determined by the Board as part of the County's adopted FY 2023 budget. In FY 2022, the budget for human service nonprofit grant funding was \$1.8 million.

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**Free COVID-19 Vaccination Event:** The Loudoun Health Department, in partnership with Loudoun County Public Schools and Giant Pharmacy, has scheduled a free community-based walk-in COVID-19 vaccination clinic for all residents on January 3rd from 4:00 to 7:00 pm at the Leesburg Elementary School. Children ages 5 to 17 can receive their first or second dose if accompanied by a parent or guardian. Individuals aged 18 and over can receive their first dose, second dose, or their booster shot as needed.

# Free COVID-19 Vaccine Event




First and Second Doses for anyone age 5 and older.  
Pfizer Boosters available for those 16+.

**MONDAY, JANUARY 3**  
**4:00 - 7:00 PM**

**Leesburg Elementary School**  
**323 Plaza St, NE**  
**Leesburg, VA 20176**

**WALK-IN  
ONLY!**

**No Moderna or Janssen vaccine available at this event.**  
Pfizer can be used as a booster for any of the vaccine types.

**Complete a vaccine form in advance to reduce  
your wait time: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)**   
Complete one form per person.

**LOUDOUN  
COUNTY**  
VIRGINIA

**Health  
Department**

**VDH** VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH  
*To protect the health and promote the  
well-being of all people in Virginia.*

Leesburg District | 1 Harrison St, S.E., 5th Floor, Leesburg, VA 20175

[Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

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