



Dulles Direct Newsletter

August 2013

Welcome to the August Dulles Direct Newsletter. I hope it was an enjoyable summer. Back to school is always an exciting time. This year, we will be opening up a new elementary school in the Dulles District—Moorefield Station, which will serve Dulles communities such as Belle Terra, Forest Manor, Forest Ridge, and Windermere. Meanwhile, progress is continuing on Cardinal Ridge Elementary School near Lunsford on Braddock Road.

The first week back to school traditionally brings the worst traffic of the entire year, so plan accordingly. In meetings with myself and Delegate Ramadan, VDOT has committed to providing better information about the Route 50 project, including specific updates on exactly what they are doing, milestones and timeline. Yesterday, VDOT took a step in the right direction by issuing a statement on the project detailing some of what is currently underway. That includes a change to the intersection configuration at Pleasant Valley-Loudoun (see below). As many of you know, I personally commute from the South Riding area to Washington, D.C. every day—so I experience this frustrating commute like everyone else. As always, if you see something unusual—like a traffic signal that is performing differently—please let us know.

Finally, I will once again be manning a booth at the South Riding Yard Sale and Business Expo on Saturday, September 7. More details are at the end—please stop by with your questions and comments, or just to say hello. We are also working to schedule the fall Dulles Direct Town Hall meeting, which is challenging because of back to school nights. However, I expect to have a date and location confirmed soon and will make that announcement.

DULLES DISTRICT UPDATES

Edgewater and Poland Intersection Update

In the coming weeks, the temporary roundabout that I have previously discussed at the intersection of Edgewater and Poland will be installed. I had hoped that VDOT would be able to complete this project by the time school started. However, there was a delay in obtaining the

required materials. I think it would be very unwise to have the new configuration installed during the first week or two of school when everyone is still adjusting their schedules, so we have mutually agreed on the week of September 16 as the tentative installation date. I will communicate further with specifics once they have been set.

As a reminder, VDOT will be installing rubberized pylons at the intersection to create a roundabout. Changes to the lane configurations on both Edgewater and Poland will be made so that vehicles will enter the roundabout slowly. VDOT's analysis shows that the new configuration will significantly improve traffic safety and will move vehicles on Edgewater much better, reducing delays. The mini-roundabout is intended to be a temporary solution, at least until the Route 50 project is complete and traffic configurations at most intersections will be reevaluated.

Loudoun County Parkway and Center Street Intersection Update

As you know, the configuration changes at Loudoun County Parkway and Center Street are now in place. After November 22, the County will once again conduct a comprehensive traffic study of this intersection and other impacted intersections in the area to see how they are performing. Once a thorough review is completed, I will be consulting with the County and VDOT and will share the results of the analysis with the South Riding Proprietary and the community.

Dulles District Community Visits

I have used my break from regular Board meetings in August to visit with groups around the District. I spoke to the HOA Boards of Loudoun Valley Estates, Brambleton, Stone Ridge, paid a joint visit with Delegate Ramadan to Kirkpatrick Farms, and visited with seniors at the Dulles South Senior Activity Center. At all my stops, I went into detail about the upcoming bond referendum (information below) and fielded other questions. Based on the questions and feedback from residents, I remain convinced that the Board of Supervisors is focused on the right projects and issues. I am working on setting up my next Dulles Direct Town Hall meeting in late September and will share details once we have them.

Dulles South Multipurpose Center Bond Referendum FAQs

As you may know, I've been working since the beginning of this year on the expansion of the Dulles South Multipurpose Center. The fate of this effort will depend on the results of a bond referendum to be held this fall. A new group has launched in the community to support this referendum, and they have launched a website at www.voteloudounrec.org Prior to the election, I will discuss each of the four questions in detail, but I wanted to start with frequently asked questions about the Multipurpose Center—please share this with friends and neighbors:

1. **What are Phases II and III of the Dulles South Multipurpose Center?** Phase II of DSMC is a 65,000-square-foot addition to the current DSMC to include full gymnasium, fitness center, indoor running track, and competition and leisure swimming pools. Phase III is a 15,000-square-foot addition to the current DSMC to construct the Dulles South Senior Center. These

projects require voter approval to move forward. Both phases were originally proposed years ago, but were never funded by the previous Boards of Supervisors.

2. **What changed?** As part of his effort to bring amenities that are present in other parts of Loudoun County to Dulles South, I proposed building both phases during Loudoun County's FY2014 budget process. After deliberating, the Board of Supervisors voted to include both projects in the County's Capital Improvement Plan.

3. **How much does Phase II cost?** Phase II has already been designed. Total cost for construction of Phase II is \$36 million. However, \$19 million has been allocated for the project from developer contributions. The remaining \$17 million would be financed through General Obligation funds, which must be approved by the voters. Once open, Phase II will be operating at 100% cost-recovery—meaning that the operations of the center will be funded completely through fees and membership.

4. **How much does Phase III cost?** The Board of Supervisors allocated \$675,000 in the FY14 budget for the design of Phase III, allocated from last year's budget surplus. \$5.9 million is being requested in the bond referendum to pay for construction.

5. **Why do we need Phase II?** There are no indoor recreation areas in Dulles South. The closest facilities are in Fairfax County, and Loudoun residents must pay a premium to use them. Thousands of area children participate in swim leagues and must drive to the Claude Moore Recreation Center in Sterling during the winter months. While the private sector has provided health clubs with swimming pools, membership costs can be cost-prohibitive and the focus of those facilities is different.

6. **Why do we need Phase III? Isn't there already a Senior Center?** There is not a full senior center in Dulles South. Two preschool classrooms in the existing facility have been given to the seniors to use as a Senior Activity Center operating as a satellite location of the Leesburg Senior Center. However, space is limited, so only one bus picks up seniors each day. Since the seniors share space with the preschool, it is difficult to offer much programming. Seniors are a growing segment of the population in the Dulles South area. The other senior centers in the County—in Cascades, Leesburg, and Purcellville—are not accessible to seniors in Dulles South.

7. **Can we afford this?** Loudoun County is one of a very small percentage of counties in America to receive AAA bond ratings—the highest available—from all three major credit agencies. This has been achieved through careful management of debt and finances. Both Phase II and Phase III fit within the existing debt guidelines for the County and are utilizing debt service that has been planned for. The debt service for these projects will be spread over many years at very low interest rates, minimizing the impact for taxpayers. I worked with my fellow Board members to fully vet the fiscal impact of the project before voting to fund it.

8. **Why do it now?** Interest rates for municipalities are at an all-time low, and construction costs are also quite low. \$19 million has already been allocated for Phase II, but since costs escalate every year, the buying power of those funds will decrease as time goes on. It makes

sense to take advantage of favorable circumstances now, and provide amenities for which Dulles South residents have waited.

9. If approved, when will these facilities open? If approved by voters, construction of Phase II would start in early 2014. The facility is expected to take about a year and a half to construct, and would open in mid-2015. The design process of Phase III will begin shortly. Phase III construction is slated for FY2015, and would likely take about a year. Although construction wouldn't begin on Phase III until 2015, I offered an amendment to the questions to place both projects on the ballot this year, to avoid having to seek voter approval for Dulles South Multipurpose Center projects in consecutive years.

10. What are the other projects on the ballot? The Board of Supervisors has voted to place four bond referendum questions on this year's ballot. One question deals with schools, one with transportation, one with public safety, and one with parks and recreation. Within the parks and recreation question, the expansion of the Dulles South Multipurpose Center is paired with athletic field upgrades for the 25-worst school fields in the County utilized by youth sports leagues, and with the construction of the Lovettsville District Park.

The exact wording of the question is below:

QUESTION: Shall the County of Loudoun, Virginia contract a debt and issue its general obligation capital improvement bonds in the maximum amount of \$34,255,000 to finance in whole or in part, the cost to upgrade irrigation systems of athletic fields throughout the County; the costs of the Dulles South Multi-Purpose Center; the costs of Lovettsville District Park and other public park facilities throughout the County?

() YES

() NO

Dulles District Commission Appointments

The Dulles District is lucky to have outstanding citizen volunteers who serve on advisory boards and commission appointed by the Board of Supervisors. Over the past several months, I made several appointments to fill vacancies:

Arthur Skaer serves as the Dulles District representative on the Loudoun County Commission on Aging. Arthur and his wife have lived in South Riding since 1997 and are very active in the community. Arthur stated he wanted to serve because he is passionate about improving physical fitness among seniors, as evidenced by his work with Northern Virginia Senior Olympics and by leading a walking club at the Dulles South Senior Center.

Angela Drews is now the Dulles District representative on the Heritage Commission. Angela has a Master of Arts in History with a Historical Administration emphasis and previously served as Museum Collections Manager for Richard Nixon's presidential gifts, part of the National Archives and Records Administration. She has also worked on the museum collections of Harry

Truman and Abraham Lincoln's boyhood home. Angela stated she hopes to learn more about Loudoun County history and be an active part of the community while serving on the commission. Angela, her husband, and daughter have lived in South Riding since 2010.

Angela Campbell serves on the Court Grounds and Facilities Committee as an at-large member, although she was nominated by me and lives in the Dulles District. Angela currently works as an attorney at McCandlish and Lillard in Leesburg and has previously served as counsel in the U.S. Senate. As an attorney who regularly practices at the courthouse, Angela looks forward to protecting our courthouse grounds and ensuring they remain a source of pride for our community. She and her family have lived in the Dulles District since 2004. Thank you to Arthur and both Angelas, and to my other appointees who have volunteered to serve the community!

Buffalo Trail ES Configuration Update

The traffic configuration at Buffalo Trail Elementary School has been a concern for some time, due to the fact that the traffic signal at Seven Hills Drive and Gum Spring Road has not met warrant for installation by VDOT and the proffers to install it have not been triggered.

The good news is that we are closer to a better "temporary" solution. Supervisor Clarke and I have worked with County staff and Woodlawn Development to accelerate construction of the rest of Seven Hills Drive, which will connect to Royal Hunter Drive to provide a direct route to Braddock Road for school traffic. This should help with traffic flow around the school tremendously once it is open. Currently, the developer expects to have the work complete before Thanksgiving (with the usual caveats about weather and unforeseen construction delays).

In the meantime, LCPS will once again be paying for Sheriff's Deputies to control traffic in the mornings. I recently sent a letter to Dr. Hatrick with Supervisor Clarke and School Board Representatives Morse and Turgeon requesting that a deputy also be provided in the afternoon to allow buses to exit to the left (north) across the newly opened four lane stretch of Gum Spring Road.

Dr. Hatrick responded that due to lighter traffic volumes, LCPS believes that the buses should be able to make the turn without a deputy. However, should that not be the case, LCPS will consider hiring a deputy for the afternoon. I will be monitoring this situation closely.

Tall Cedars/Elk Lick Update

Over the summer I heard from several residents with concerns about the intersection of Tall Cedars and Elk Lick Road. This is a particularly difficult intersection because it is close to the traffic light at Tall Cedars and South Riding Boulevard. VDOT has already employed extra traffic control devices by installing larger than normal stop signs and even stop sign ahead warning signs, yet we are still seeing issues. Therefore, at my request and that of Delegate Ramadan, VDOT will take steps to further analyze driver/vehicle navigation through this intersection and work towards developing alternative strategies for improving safety.

Route 50 Widening Between Loudoun County Parkway and Gum Spring Road

See below for the "big" Route 50 project information. I have received a number of questions about the new lane that seemingly has been completed but is not open on Rt. 50 between Stone Ridge and South Riding. This is not part of the Route 50 project, but rather is a proffer that Van Metre had as part of the Stone Ridge rezoning. The short answer is that although the lanes look like they are done, they still have to go through an acceptance process with VDOT, and we've been told that configurations have to change at the intersection at West Spine Road in order for everything to work correctly. The West Spine Road construction is being conducted through proffers by a different developer (Woodlawn), and there have been delays on that project due to access and land use issues. So, the bottom line is that Van Metre, Woodlawn and VDOT all need to work out some issues before the lanes will open. My office is involved in these discussions and we're working to see what can be done to speed things up, including trying to ascertain whether they are technical/engineering issues or proffer sequence issues. I cannot tell you exactly when the lanes will open, other than to say that it probably won't be in September and I'll provide an update when I have some good information. Please know we are working on it.

ROUTE 50 UPDATE FROM VDOT

VDOT issued the following statement yesterday that I wanted to share with all of you. This follows a lengthy meeting Delegate Ramadan and I had with the Northern Virginia District Administrator and the entire project team this summer at VDOT headquarters to review in detail every issue that has been raised to us in my town hall meetings and our constituent emails. We talked about many "little" fixes that might make a difference, and VDOT and Shirley have been studying and experimenting with some of those. As you can see in this statement, after much discussion, Shirley and VDOT have been able to widen the intersection at Pleasant Valley-Loudoun to allow two (safe) turn lanes that meet code. There are also some signal timing changes being made that hopefully will help. At the end of the statement, you'll see a link to a video interview with Susan Shaw, the Design-Build manager for VDOT on this project.

ROUTE 50 WIDENING PASSES HALF-WAY MARK: VDOT On Schedule to Complete in June 2015

CHANTILLY--Why is it taking so long to widen Route 50 to six lanes in Fairfax and Loudoun Counties? The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) wants motorists to know that its \$95 million project to reconstruct and widen nearly four miles between Poland Road in Loudoun County and Route 28 in Fairfax County is more than 50 percent complete, and remains on schedule to open three eastbound lanes in November 2014 and three westbound lanes by spring 2015.

"We know that three and a half years of construction on one of the busiest commuter corridors in northern Virginia is extremely frustrating for motorists, but we are working to accelerate the project wherever possible," said VDOT's design-build engineer Susan Shaw. "The fact is we are not simply widening the roadway; this project calls for miles of utility relocation and a complete reconstruction of the roadway."

To ease traffic flow onto eastbound Route 50 crews are adding a second right turn lane at Pleasant Valley Road in Loudoun County. That work will be complete before the Labor Day weekend. VDOT is also monitoring and tweaking signal timings to keep traffic moving.

Since construction began in October 2011, motorists have put up with daily lane closures, narrowed lanes, shorter turn lanes, and miles of concrete barriers on Route 50.

A major component of the project is relocating about a dozen utilities including approximately:

- *10 miles of fiber optic cable*
- *4.5 miles of phone lines*
- *4.5 miles of overhead electric*
- *3.5 miles of cable TV*
- *A 2,000-foot gas line, and*
- *Installation of a 3.5-mile water line.*

"The utility work alone is \$10 million," said Shaw.

Crews have completed the new eastbound bridge east of Pleasant Valley Road in Fairfax County and are working to relocate a gas line before shifting traffic onto the bridge in late September. Westbound traffic will move to the new bridge in late October. Crews will then demolish the temporary bridge and begin construction of the new westbound bridge which will be completed in spring 2014. The bridges will carry three lanes of traffic in each direction with a 10-foot wide trail on each side.

The Route 50 project will relieve current and anticipated congestion, provide pedestrian and cyclist accommodations, and improve safety along the corridor. The road will also be more level and provide wider buffers between travel lanes and roadside hazards.

When completed motorists will have an additional travel lane in each direction; new pavement designed to handle projected traffic loads; widened and upgraded bridges; bike/pedestrian trail on both sides of the road; crosswalks with curb ramp and pedestrian signals, and improved turn lanes.

Project costs include \$10 million for preliminary engineering; \$19 million for right of way acquisition; \$10.5 million for utility relocation, and \$55.4 million for construction.

Route 50 carries 62,000 vehicles per day. Watch a brief video on the widening [here](#).

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

NVTA Awards FY14 Transportation Projects

As part of Governor McDonnell's transportation plan (HB 2313) approved by the General Assembly last spring, approximately \$270 million in transportation funding has been allocated to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) for distribution to Northern Virginia

municipalities. Among the Loudoun projects funded were the widening of Belmont Ridge Road (Rt. 659) north from the Dulles Greenway to south of Route 7 (\$20 million), hot spot improvements on Route 28 between 267 and Route 7 (\$6.4 million), new transit bus (\$880,000), and a Leesburg Park and Ride lot (\$1 million). Also, while technically in Fairfax County, an important project for Dulles residents was included—the widening of Route 28 from six to eight lanes southbound from the Dulles Toll Road to Route 50 (\$20 million) and northbound from McLearen Road to the Dulles Toll Road (\$11.1 million). The Board of Supervisors and staff are already working to formulate our request for FY2015 for NVTA projects.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Delegate David Ramadan Town Hall Meeting September 14

Delegate David Ramadan will hold a Town Hall meeting on Saturday, September 14 from 6:30pm until 8:00pm at Liberty Elementary (25491 Riding Center Dr Chantilly, VA). He will take questions from residents and provide updates on various topics.

Small Business Development Center September Programs

The Loudoun County Small Business Development Center is a great resource for new or existing small businesses in the County. They host a variety of educational programs throughout the year. For information on upcoming programs in September visit their website at www.loudounsbdc.org.

South Riding Business Expo and Community Yard Sale

South Riding Proprietary will once again be hosting their Business Expo and Community Yard Sale on Saturday, September 7th, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Dulles South Multipurpose Center. For more information on registering or securing yard sale spaces click [here](#). I will have a booth there and be happy to answer any questions.

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