



Dulles Direct Newsletter April 2014

Welcome to the April edition of the Dulles Direct Newsletter. April has been another busy month, with final adoption of the FY2015 budget and discussions over VDOT's planned Dulles Cargo, Passenger and Metro access connection from the Bi-County Parkway to the Airport.

This month, I enjoyed speaking to students from J. Michael Lunsford Middle School at the LCPS Administration Building as part of Lunsford's career day. I was hosted by School Board Representative Jeff Morse and Delegate David Ramadan also participated. The students had excellent questions and I think we definitely have some future public servants at Lunsford!

This coming Saturday—May 3—I will once again host a booth at the South Riding Business Expo and Yard Sale. I will be available to answer questions and talk to you about any topic you wish. I know there are some strong views out there on various issues and I always enjoy engaging directly with constituents on all sides. The event runs from 8:00 am-12:00 pm at the Dulles South Multipurpose Center.

We have some big changes coming to the Gum Spring Road/Route 50 area. Lots of details below—but anyone who travels in this corridor will want to attend an Information Session that I'm organizing on May 15 at Mercer Middle School at 7 pm. We'll be explaining exactly what is happening when and what the impacts will be.

Finally, we're finalizing the date for the next quarterly Dulles Direct Town Hall Meeting. It will be my annual Route 50 construction update. I'll be hosting officials from VDOT and Shirley Contracting. Of course, I'll also take questions on anything else on your mind.

As always, feel free to contact me via e-mail at matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov. Also, make sure to follow my [Facebook](#) page for more timely information.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Dulles Access Road

As I shared with you in an [e-mail earlier this month](#), VDOT is accepting comments on their study of several alternative locations for the Dulles Access Highway. VDOT's preferred alternative is to construct lanes in the median of Route 50 between Northstar Boulevard and Loudoun County Parkway—known as Alternative 3c. Alternative 3c would construct interchanges at some existing intersections and close others. I have concerns with this route and have stated my support for Alternative 2, which would establish a new east/west route between Northstar Boulevard and Route 606. This new route would ultimately give more capacity for traffic going to Dulles Airport and the future Metro station at Route 606.

Over 500 people attended a public information session at Liberty Elementary last week and VDOT has already received over 1,500 comments. If you have not yet given your input on the proposed alternatives, I encourage you to read my [e-mail notification](#), visit the [VDOT project page](#) and e-mail your comments to meeting_comments@vdot.virginia.gov and bos@loudoun.gov. Make sure to put Improving Access to Dulles Airport in the subject line. You have until May 7th to submit your comments.

The VDOT information session was a bit confusing and a little chaotic, so I know there are still questions about exactly what is being proposed and what the impacts will be. There is strong support for the Route 50 option—3c—coming from residents in Brambleton, and even stronger opposition to that alternative coming from residents who live in the Route 50 corridor and would have to deal with the construction impacts from another project on 50. I think it is unfortunate that some have attempted to portray the differences in opinion over the route as “pitting communities against each other,” when I at least have been clear that I think that Alternative 2 is better for everyone, including Brambleton residents. The reality is that VDOT and the Board of Supervisors are holding a public process, and Route 50 corridor residents have a right to be a part of it and express an opinion. I happen to think the impacts of Alternative 2 on Brambleton would be quite minimal, since the road doesn't actually go through Brambleton and stays well south of existing residences. I also think that residents on the west side of Brambleton would benefit from access to the Alternative 2 route at Northstar Blvd and 606.

One of the issues I do want to address is the future of Route 50 as a limited access highway. Proponents of Alternative 3c are arguing that it is consistent with the Countywide Transportation Plan (CTP)—a long term road planning document-- because the Plan calls for 50 to become limited access at some point. While it is certainly true that the CTP, which was first developed in 1995, calls for 50 to become limited access, adding interchanges and removing stoplights to benefit commuters on 50 is a far cry from ripping up 50 to put express lanes in the middle for Airport traffic. There are no median lanes on 50 in the CTP, so it is not accurate to say that 3c adheres to the CTP.

The CTP was last updated during the previous Board's term—this Board has never voted on it. As I said, it is a planning document, and over time as things happen in the County it is amended. None of the options being discussed right now are on the CTP, so amendments will need to occur either way.

Contrary to what one of my colleagues on the Board keeps saying, there is not adequate existing Right of Way on 50 to implement Alternative 3c. That's why VDOT has listed in a public

document properties that will be impacted by having land taken if express lanes are built in the median of 50. I've heard from many of those landowners and as you might expect, they're very concerned. They're also concerned about what their access to Route 50 will actually look like.

My position has always been that if 50 is to become limited access at some point, there must be adequate infrastructure to support it. If funding at some point becomes available to add interchanges to Route 50 - in a way that benefits the commuters - I would support that, and I think the Route 50 residents would as well. But that is a much different project than median lanes on 50 - which is construction literally on Route 50 (as opposed to the sides). Tall Cedars Parkway is being built as the southern collector road to 50, but under the VDOT proposal it is not adequate to deal with the immense number of residential homes that have been built. The VDOT analysis with this project shows that Tall Cedars Parkway east of Loudoun County Parkway moves to a Level of Service F under the 3c scenario (yes, that means what it sounds like—failing). I would certainly hope that the County and VDOT would not just blindly adhere to what is on a planning document from years ago and ignore actual data that now exists, as well as development patterns that have changed. That's one of the reasons why the CTP is updated every 5 years—things change.

Tall Cedars is going to be a very useful road for our community when it is completed, but if VDOT's projections are correct and it needs to move 22,000 vehicles a day, instead of the 9,000 vehicles it moves today, it will be swamped. There are too many intersections, and the route parallel to 50 is quite circuitous. I think most of you intuitively know this because you use these roads every day and you know what it is like. Quite frankly, the 3c proponents don't use the road every day like we do and I'm not sure they really understand exactly what the situation is.

Finally, Alternative 3c has an interchange only at Northstar, Gum Spring, and 606. The CTP shows this as well. Neither shows an interchange at StoneSpring Boulevard, and I think that's a big problem. The issue is both hospital access and community access for Stone Ridge. Yes, there will be hospital access from other intersections that is less direct, but...why wouldn't we want direct access?

The issue we're dealing with in this debate is not whether 50 should be limited access at some future point in time (that's a discussion for a different time)...it is whether this plan to put express lanes in the median makes more sense than going to the north and adding 4 lanes for the same cost. I think that most people looking at this objectively would come to the conclusion that adding a new connection between Northstar and 606 with 4 lanes (instead of 2) for the same (actually less) money makes the most sense.

Doing so also preserves options for 50—in the event that it ever needs to be widened for people who actually live here. It is better for the Airport, as well. Think of Route 606 in its current state—what happens when there is an accident? Total gridlock because it is one lane. Now think of the one “express” lane in the median of 50 that is being proposed—what will happen if there's an accident or a vehicle breaks down? Because it's limited access, there's no way on or off. And we'll be stuck with this condition for decades and it won't be easy to change. We've seen this before (606)—and we're spending millions to fix it. Why would we voluntarily design another road that will have the same problem? Let's use some common sense.

The Board of Supervisors will have an update at our May 21 meeting and Chairman York has stated this item will be forwarded to a Public Hearing this summer or fall to allow full comment to the Board before a route is endorsed. I agree with his decision, so we can take our time to have a deliberate process and hear from all the impacted homeowners.

There are a lot of other issues related to these proposals, and I could probably write pages more. Over time, I will continue to provide my updates and analysis on the alternatives. Please continue to weigh in to VDOT and the Board of Supervisors with your views, and feel free to ask me any questions that come to mind.

FY15 Budget Update

As I shared in an [e-mail earlier this month](#), the Board of Supervisors approved the FY15 Budget on April 2. There were a lot of positives for the Dulles District in that budget, and if you didn't see the original email I urge you to go back and take a look.

The one outstanding issue was the school budget, which had to be reconciled. The School Board has now completed their process to determine how they will allocate the additional \$68.3 million in funding. I appreciate the work they did to finish their process and avoid many of the reductions that were originally discussed. In particular, the School Board identified a 17 percent increase in operations and maintenance that was built into their budget request and lumped in with the supposed "new student enrollment" figures. I had been questioning those "new student enrollment" figures as incorrect from the very beginning and I'm glad that there was finally some transparency about what they actually were, albeit very late in the process. The School Board reduced that increase in O and M down to 4 percent, which eliminated the need to reduce many programs.

The School Board also made a choice to fund \$23 million in compensation increases. When the Board of Supervisors made its recommendations, we included about \$15 million in compensation increases, which would have funded a 3% increase in salaries. The School Board decided instead to implement a new salary structure which had a higher cost associated it and will result in raises far beyond 3% for some teachers. The delta between their decision and the Board of Supervisors recommendations would cover just about all of the reductions that were made, which is why we made the statement that no programs would need to be reduced with the 8% funding increase that the Board of Supervisors provided. We can debate the merits of the decision to go with the higher amount for salaries and cut other programs to fund it, but I wanted you to understand why there was a discrepancy.

Proposed Commuter Bus Fare Changes

With the start of Silver Line Phase II service, Loudoun County will lose the ability to use gas tax revenue to subsidize commuter bus service. Therefore, we've been working on a plan to make up the lost revenue so that we can continue bus service. We have developed a proposed fare structure for the next five years which will make the commuter bus service revenue-neutral. This would be achieved by raising fares by \$2 over the next 4 years.

I certainly understand nobody wants to pay more, but other costs (such as tolls) are also rising and I believe the commuter bus service will still present a good value. The Board of Supervisors will be holding a Public Hearing on the proposed fare changes on May 14 at 6 pm at the Loudoun County Government Center. More information on the proposed fare structure can be found [here](#).

Combined Fire and Rescue System Changes

Over the last year, the Board has been working to design and ultimately implement an ordinance that includes a new governance structure for our combined career/volunteer fire and rescue system. This is actually one of the most significant things we've worked on because it addresses the challenges of operating a rapidly growing fire-rescue system that has many dedicated volunteers and career staff working alongside each other.

The main shortcoming with the existing system is that each volunteer company has its own governance, with no oversight that extends beyond that company. Loudoun County has 19 different fire and rescue volunteer companies—which provide a great service. However, as you can imagine, from an operational standpoint it is not easy to have 19 different fire chiefs, plus the career chief who oversees over 60% of the actual calls for service. Over the past few years, we've had disciplinary issues and serious financial management problems with some of the companies.

At the Board's April 16 meeting, we approved a new ordinance that creates a Combined System Chief with oversight over the entire system—volunteer and career. Under that Chief will be two Assistant Chiefs—one that oversees career staff, and one that oversees volunteers. The Volunteer Assistant Chief will also be responsible for strengthening the volunteer companies.

While the system sounds simple, it is the result of nearly two years of discussions and work from many individuals, including the Fire and Rescue Commission made up of volunteers who worked countless hours on the details of this proposal. At the end of the day we probably didn't make everyone on both sides of the system entirely happy, I think we came up with a good, clean solution that will ensure proper management and continued outstanding emergency response.

As the Dulles District Supervisor, I am frequently briefed and made aware of emergency situations that occur in this district. I continue to be proud of the excellent service our Fire and Rescue companies—career and volunteer-- provide citizens. Our response time metrics are very good and the quality of care and professionalism is evident.

Top Golf

Earlier this month the Board approved an application to bring a new golf facility to Loudoun County. Top Golf will be building an interactive golf facility at the intersection of Route 7 and Russell Branch Parkway. The facility will include more than 100 driving ranges with laser scoring, as well as high quality food options. The issue before the Board was whether to allow

this facility in an area zoned for commercial office space. Given the proximity to One Loudoun, which is emerging as an entertainment area, and the multitude of other undeveloped parcels for office, I voted in favor of the application. I think the community will enjoy having this amenity in Loudoun. Now if only I had time to learn how to golf...

Data Center Zoning Amendment

We all know that Loudoun has for some time been a favored location for data centers. Data centers bring many benefits to the County in terms of tax revenue with little requirement for services in return. However, the actual zoning for data centers has been somewhat ambiguous and never actually spelled out in the Zoning Ordinance until now.

Earlier this month the Board approved a Zoning Ordinance Amendment to define and add the new use “data center” to certain zoning districts, and provide performance standards for the development of these facilities. This was another lengthy process and included input from staff, the data center industry and residents of areas near property eligible for data center development. There were some concerns raised about the impacts of noise on the surrounding communities. While understandable, the County has an existing noise ordinance which would apply to all facilities, including data centers. I therefore felt it didn’t make sense to single out data centers and apply a special standard just to them—because there are other facilities that could also have noise impacts that are also approved uses on the same parcels. The amendment also dealt with issues relating to the screening of mechanical equipment and other design related elements.

I hope that by clarifying the use data center, operators will continue to see Loudoun as a desirable place to do business and residents will continue to enjoy the benefits that these businesses bring to our community.

Redskins Marketing Agreement

There has been some discussion recently regarding the agreement that the Board entered with the Redskins. The Board began an 8 year marketing agreement in 2012 as part of a larger multi-pronged package to keep the Redskins in Loudoun. The County agreed to contribute \$2 million over four years in addition to a \$4 million grant from the Commonwealth of Virginia and a \$6 million contribution from the Virginia State Lottery. The County’s contribution came from restricted use Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) funds, not the County general fund that we use to fund operations of the county and school system. These TOT funds are revenues received from a tax on hotel stays within the County. They are only to be used to support activities that promote Loudoun County in the area of travel and tourism. Most of the funding received goes directly to Visit Loudoun. Since the vast majority of Loudoun’s hotel stays are business related, TOT funds were approved for use for economic development activities by the County Attorney.

There’s one element that is getting lost in the discussion—which is the fact that the Board’s piece of this package was part of the larger agreement that kept the Redskins in Loudoun. As part of that agreement, the Redskins agreed to make a \$30 million investment in Redskins Park,

which increases the value of the property and therefore the amount of tax revenue we collect on it. Over the last five years, the Redskins have paid nearly \$1 million in taxes to the County—and make no mistake, there was a very real possibility the team was going to leave for another jurisdiction that was aggressively courting the Redskins. As Chairman of our Economic Development Committee, I was close to those discussions, and I know the situation we were in. Loudoun had to come up with a match to the state offer, or the state's offer would have been reduced. Bottom line: it was worth our investment to keep the Redskins here because they generate revenue for the County.

In addition to keeping the Redskins in Loudoun, we are now able to leverage our agreement for recruitment activities. The Redskins have been an excellent partner to help set up meetings with prospective businesses, as well as bring to games and training camps. Loudoun also receives a great deal of advertising—backdrops at press conferences, television and radio, etc—that gives us national exposure.

The Redskins just announced plans to open a Washington Redskins Bar and Grill at One Loudoun, and we are now working with them on a sports medicine facility on their campus that will generate additional revenue for the County. The Redskins have also begun fleshing out a concept for a Hall of Fame, which would bring outsiders into the County and generate more revenue.

While it is easy to dismiss our relationship with the Redskins, a closer look at the return on investment reveals the County is faring well in this deal.

Lexington 7 Rezoning Denial

Pulte Homes requested approval to build an additional 240 townhomes on 35 acres in the Lexington 7 development off of Route 7. Pulte offered to proffer Riverside Parkway improvements. However, the Board denied the rezoning on an 8-0-1 vote—and we found a way to fund those road improvements on our own. My main concern was the lack of school capacity at any of the schools in the vicinity of this proposed development. Once again, the Board has shown that we are reluctant to rezone commercial property to residential.

DULLES DISTRICT UPDATES

Gum Spring Road and Route 50 Transition

Since September 2012, I have been sharing information with the community on changes coming to the Gum Spring Road and Route 50 intersection. You have no doubt seen the activity at the intersection and on West Spine Road. I have held several coordination meetings with all of the parties involved in this project. Following the most recent meeting, we have made the decision to go forward with the changes and open up West Spine Road on May 21.

When the intersection opens on May 21, the existing portion of Gum Spring Road will be closed just before the intersection with Tall Cedars Pkwy. This will close permanently with a cul-de-

sac to be constructed. Access will still be provided at Route 50 for the Gum Spring Village Center. However, any through traffic for Gum Spring south of the Gum Spring Village Center will want to use the new portion of Gum Spring at the new signal located just to the east of the Gum Spring Village Center.

The section of Tall Cedars Parkway between Gum Spring Road and Millstream Drive will also close for 60-90 days to allow a reconstruction of the Tall Cedars and Gum Spring intersection to fix elevation issues and install turn. There will be a detour route established during this time using Greenstone Drive to Stone Springs Boulevard. Following completion of this intersection, work will begin on a new turn lane for Providence Ridge.

I will be hosting a community information session on Thursday, May 15 at Mercer Middle School beginning at 7 pm to discuss all of these plans in detail and to answer any questions. We'll have some visual to show the work and the detours, and also discuss the next phase of changes beyond this which will also impact Gum Spring Road.

Through Truck Restriction on Sanders Lane Rejected by Loudoun Board

Recently, the Prince William County Board of Supervisors requested that VDOT institute a “no through trucks” policy for Sanders Lane in Prince William County. Sanders Lane connects from Route 234 to Lightridge Farm Road and Braddock Road just to the west of the Kirkpatrick Farms Community. As part of their request the Prince William Board had to provide an alternate route. This alternate route sent all restricted trucks up Gum Spring Road to reach Braddock Road.

VDOT presented this request to our Board because it impacted roads within Loudoun County. Supervisor Clarke and I both objected to Prince William's request, and the Board voted to reject it.

We all know that with the level of development going on in our area and further to the west on Route 50, there will be some level of truck traffic to service these areas. Also, our County is the location of many quarries providing materials needed for construction around the region. This is one reason why the discussions surrounding the Bi-county Parkway are important. This would provide not only another connection for our residents to travel north/south, but also a safer route for the traffic associated with ongoing development and the businesses located in our area. If additional access isn't provided at some point, Gum Spring Road will become the de facto Bi-County Parkway, and it won't be because of a request from Prince William County. Obviously, there are major concerns with the details of what VDOT is studying, and I won't go into all of that here—but this particular incident was a good reminder of why this discussion is happening in the first place.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

South Riding Business Expo and Yard Sale

Come see me at the South Riding Business Expo and Yard Sale on Saturday, May 3. I will once again have a booth and be available to answer questions and discuss issues. The event runs

8:00am-12:00pm and is held at the Dulles South Multipurpose Center located at 24950 Riding Center Drive in South Riding.

There will also be a number of local businesses showcasing their products and services in the parking lot of the Multipurpose Center. For more information, click [here](#).

Waxpool Road Improvement Project

The Loudoun County Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure (DTCI) is holding a public meeting to receive comments on the design of the Waxpool Road Improvement Project - a Loudoun County Locally Administered Project (LAP). The proposed design includes re-configuring existing turn lanes, providing multiple new turn lanes, and pedestrian access. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. The meeting will be located at Discovery Elementary School at 44020 Grace Bridge Drive, Ashburn, VA 20147.

If you have any questions, contact the County Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure, at (703) 737-8624 or at ots@loudoun.gov.

Please provide your written or oral comments at the meeting or submit them by June 20, 2014, to the email ots@loudoun.gov - please reference "RTE - 625 Waxpool Road Improvements" in the subject line.

Love Your Neighbor, Feed Your Neighbor

Saturday, May 3 is the 3rd Annual Food Drive to benefit Loudoun County Area Food Pantries. Love Your Neighbor, Feed Your Neighbor is a partnership effort by multiple, local, faith-based ministries to feed those who are food-insecure in Loudoun County.

Last year this county-wide food drive, with the help of more than 1,100 volunteers, collected nearly 70,000 lbs of food for Loudoun's hungry. With your help, they hope to improve on these results.

There will be a collection point for nonperishable food at the South Riding Business Expo and Community Yard Sale at the Town Hall tent from 8:00am to 12:00pm. For other collection sites and more information, go to www.lynfyn.org.