



Dulles Direct Newsletter

June 2014

Welcome to June's Dulles Direct Newsletter. I hope summer is off to a great start for everyone. The Board of Supervisors has been spending a great deal of time on public transit issues—including parking garages for our future Metro stations and buses. We're continuing to pursue public-private partnerships to construct three parking garages—two at the Route 772 station near Loudoun County Parkway, and one at the Route 606 station. Negotiations are now underway with two firms that have presented attractive proposals and we are also studying our planned road network around the stations in great detail. While Phase II of the Silver Line is still years away, its success is predicated on decisions that are being made now.

In the very near future, you will be receiving my Fiscal Year 2014 Dulles District Annual Report by mail. This is the third report that I've sent and provides information about a whole spectrum of projects and issues that I frequently receive questions about. I hope you find it to be a good resource.

LEGISLATIVE

Braddock Road/Pleasant Valley Road Roundabout Clears Hurdle

As many of you saw, Delegate Ramadan and I announced that the Commonwealth of Virginia has given the final go-ahead to construct a roundabout at Braddock and Pleasant Valley Road.

To recap, the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) voted to award a \$4.178 million contract for the construction of the roundabout, despite a final push by roundabout

opponents to kill the project. In addition, over one million dollars has been allocated for design, engineering, and contingency purposes.

Despite its location in Fairfax County, fixing the Braddock and Pleasant Valley intersection has been one of my top priorities, and I'm glad we can announce with confidence that the project will be moving forward. I'm pleased Loudoun made an unprecedented decision to fund this project outside of our County line because of the impact it has on Dulles South commuters.

Construction is expected to begin this fall, and be completed by May of 2016. I know that many of you wish the completion date was going to be sooner, but this will be a complicated project. There is a significant utility line relocation operation that will need to take place, and like the Route 50 project, the intersection has to remain open during construction. It won't be quick or easy, but in the end it will provide much-needed relief.

Opponents from Fairfax County are still continuing to fight this improvement. They're now hoping that certain federal permits are not issued to move ahead. However, VDOT had received preliminary federal approval for this project during their process, so there is no reason to think that there will be any issue. Obviously, this is something that I'll be personally monitoring very closely. I do expect to hold a public kick off meeting this fall when the project timeline and work plan have been decided.

Dulles Access Highway Update

The Board of Supervisors had a discussion about the Dulles Access Highway at our June 16 Board meeting. Overall, I thought it went well.

Chairman York made a proposal for the County to undertake an analysis of our Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) between Route 15 to the west, Route 28 to the east and Route 7 to the north, and the County line to the south. As an addition to the current CTP, the Chairman requested that staff conduct analysis for VDOT's Alternative 2, Alternative 3C, and a new scenario which I will outline below. The motion passed the Board unanimously.

The new scenario that the Chairman mentioned was to eliminate the planned cul de sac on Evergreen Mills Road, and widen Evergreen Mills between Northstar Blvd and Route 606. This scenario could accomplish a lot of what VDOT's Alternative 2 would, so I think it merits further examination.

Since the Public Hearing, I've been asked why the County and VDOT are looking at this project at all. I think it is a fair question, and the various entities haven't been all that clear. First and foremost, as I've said before, if the Bi-County Parkway is going to be built to the south, it shouldn't simply end at Route 50. If it did, then all of us who use 50 to commute would just have to deal with even more traffic and no more capacity. Governor McAuliffe recently made favorable comments about the Bi-County Parkway, so I think it is very prudent to continue to pursue a Dulles Access Road that will provide additional capacity for Bi-County Parkway traffic.

Beyond that, there's been a lot of talk about air cargo—and indeed, some have focused solely on air cargo in making their views known about the various alternatives. I think that's a mistake, and it certainly isn't Loudoun County's primary interest. The reality is that Dulles Airport currently has one dedicated freight flight. It is certainly possible that Dulles will eventually have more cargo. In fact, that would be a good thing. But that's hardly the driver of this discussion.

The real advantage for Loudoun County would be to create better access to the Route 606 corridor, to our future Metro stations, and for passengers using the Airport. Loudoun has long planned major employment centers around our Metro stations, but the road access is not very good. The primary east/west route is the Greenway—with its outrageous tolls. We're widening Route 606, but that doesn't solve the entire problem, and that needs to happen just to serve existing traffic. In order to develop our commercial sites to their greatest potential, there needs to be additional road capacity—and that's where the Dulles Access Road (and Bi-County Parkway) come into play. In thinking about these sort of projects, people tend to think about things as they are now, not how they will be in ten, fifteen, twenty-five years. Look at how much our area has changed in that time—and in many regards, we were unprepared for it. That type of change isn't going to stop, and the Board of Supervisors is “all in” on developing our commercial tax base for a lot of reasons. Therefore, we also need to be thinking about how to get people to the thousands of new jobs we hope to create around our Metro stations. The existing road network isn't going to cut it—even with Metro.

However, at the public hearing, there was some sentiment—that the County and state should build its existing road plan and nothing else, and focus its funding elsewhere. That would be a more plausible argument if the County wasn't already building out our road plan—but we are. The annual report you'll receive in the mail goes into detail on just the road projects that impact Dulles South, but there are plenty of others around the County that now have funding reserved for them in the next six years. And that's only the next six years, and it doesn't include additional state funds that might be spent in Loudoun (which is now a possibility). So, while I'm always open to suggestions about other things we can do to reduce congestion, I think we're pretty much doing everything existing that is planned—including a lot of mass transit, new bicycle lanes, and a lot of new roads.

It will be at least several months, if not more, for anything else to happen on the Dulles Access Road discussion. VDOT has made two significant decisions—both of which I think are positive for those of us who don't want their proposed express lanes on Route 50 (3C) as VDOT has recommended. First, they've agreed that they have to run each scenario through a new congestion relief formula mandated by the General Assembly. The formula itself hasn't been developed yet—so that is unlikely to happen until next year. Second, they've decided that at least on the state level, the Dulles Access Road and the Bi-County Parkway should be considered together instead of independently. That should reduce the risk that the Bi-County Parkway gets built, but the Dulles Access Road doesn't.

Finally, I'll point out that the discussion the Board is having is about where the road would go—not whether it will even be built. That goes back to the state congestion relief formula and the availability of funding in the future.

I will of course provide additional updates on this as events unfold, and I'm always happy to discuss it in greater detail. I don't expect to see any further action on this project until at least the end of this year.

Silver Line/LC Transit Update

Phase I of the Metro's Silver Line is scheduled to provide service to Wiehle Avenue (Reston) on July 26.

The Phase I delays have not affected the timeline for Phase II of the Silver Line's extension to Loudoun. The project is still estimated to be completed by 2019.

Those of you who follow this newsletter know that we are planning service to Wiehle from Dulles South via a new park and ride lot at East Gate. That project is moving forward and will probably take about a year to complete. I have been working with staff in the Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure on the exact plans for this service, as well as additional relief for the existing long haul service out of Stone Ridge.

LC Transit riders are getting frustrated because buses are so full. As I've previously mentioned, LC Transit long haul service from Dulles South saw a 40% increase in ridership over the past year—a jump that far exceeds the rate of population growth. The major challenge to adding additional service is parking—there needs to be a place for commuters to park. We are moving forward with another Stone Ridge park and ride lot that will augment the current one, and exploring other options to try to get some more immediate relief. You should know that all of us, including are staff, are very well aware of the current challenges and are expending a great deal of effort to try to solve them.

County Projects 33,000 Approved, But Unbuilt Homes

Due to interest from Board members, Loudoun County staff have been working hard on an updated version of the Approved Residential Projects table. The table was just released and is available online at www.loudoun.gov/residential-pipeline. The updated table shows major residential projects, defined as those with 20 or more units, approved as of January 1, 2014, and the number of units remaining to be issued building permits in those projects. The Board has been seeking to gain a better understanding of exactly what is likely to develop, because most of these projects have been underway for years, meaning we've had no involvement in them. This document is used for transportation and student enrollment planning as well.

Overall, the data tells us that there are still 33,000 homes that can be built either with by-right zoning or through previously approved rezonings. In previous town hall meetings, I have been using a 27,000 figure, which was an estimate from *Leesburg Today*. This data is more precise and you'll hear me refer to it in the future. Of those 33,000, 14,000 units are in the Ashburn

planning area, and over 12,000 are in the Dulles planning area—which is generally the southern part of the County (planning areas don't follow magisterial districts—they are larger.)

The new data doesn't change my philosophy—which is that we need to catch up with infrastructure and be very cautious about approving new residential development. But it is helpful to understand exactly where these projects are, and I think it will be very useful when the Board takes up the next update to the Comprehensive Transportation Plan in 2016.

DULLES DISTRICT

Route 50 Timeline Update

At my Town Hall meeting last month, representatives from VDOT and Shirley Contracting shared the most recent update on the Route 50 expansion project. The bulk of the work for this project has been spent in the tedious process of relocating utility lines – and most of that work is out of sight. As was discussed at the meeting, the project is still on time for three completed lanes eastbound by this fall and three lanes westbound by the end of this year. Work will continue into 2015, but most of that will be in Fairfax County and the work necessary to complete a shared use path and landscaping.

Please see my most recent announcement concerning the Route 50 project [here](#).

Riding Center Drive Accident

There has been a lot of discussion about a recent incident on Riding Center Drive involving a 7 year old girl struck by a motorist. This was obviously a very upsetting accident and pretty much the worst nightmare for those of us who have children—my oldest is seven and this kind of thing is always on my mind.

First and foremost, my understanding is that the girl was released from the hospital a few days after the accident and is doing well.

Beyond that, there was a great deal of speculation in the community about exactly what happened and who was at fault. While I'm still going to refrain from going into great detail, I do want to let you know that the Sheriff's Office has completed a comprehensive investigation of the incident. After consultation with the Commonwealth Attorney's Office, no charges were filed against the driver of the vehicle that struck the girl. The investigation found that speed was not a factor in the accident, and the driver was fully cooperative. The accident was not caused by conditions on Riding Center Drive or the Unicorn intersection.

Obviously, I am sensitive to concerns about speeding and pedestrian safety, but those were not issues in this particular incident—and I think it is important to note that given some of the initial reactions when the incident happened.

Gum Spring Library HVAC Issues

Regular visitors to the Gum Spring Library (as the top branch in the entire system, there are many) have noticed ongoing issues with air conditioning. In fact, the library was forced to close for several days. (I announced those closures on my [Facebook](#) page).

Components of the HVAC system were struck by lightning during a recent storm. Multiple parts failed at different times, so when it appeared that the issues were resolved, another problem emerged. The most recent part that failed has to be custom built. Our General Services team put together a work around for the part which allows for the system to be partially run, with scheduled breaks. I'm told that installation of the new part shouldn't take much longer, so in the meantime we appreciate your patience. As a side note, there are some outstanding programs at the library this summer, and the summer reading program has seen huge participation.

Outstanding Loudoun Volunteer Family of the Year

It is always an honor to participate in the annual Volunteer Loudoun Outstanding Volunteer Award ceremony. This year, I was particularly proud because the winner of the "Outstanding Family" category was the Cardone Family from South Riding.

Whether they were donating a paycheck to feed, clothe and ensure the safety of families in need, sending a child to Camp High Road, or creating a program to allow dads to connect with their child and their school, the family was recognized for epitomizing the spirit of volunteerism that exists throughout the County. Stefani uses her work as a parent liaison at Lunsford Middle School and Freedom High School as a platform to reach out to neighbors in need, partnering with Arcola Church to support needy families in the Dulles South area.

Stefani and Joe also built a wonderful program at Hutchinson Farm Elementary – the Husky Dads. The program allows fathers to attend their child's school for a day and participate in programs that encourage kindness, respect, and responsibility.

Their son Michael built a shed for Camp High Road as his Eagle Scout project after learning what the camp was doing to provide enriching camp opportunities for at-risk youth. He planned the construction, raised the necessary funds, and enlisted the help of family and friends to create this lasting gift to the camp. The Board of Supervisors is thankful to the Cardone family and to many others for helping to make Loudoun County great.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

StoneSprings Hospital Center Construction Camera

While we can all see the construction of StoneSprings Hospital Center when we drive past, we can now see an aerial view and time lapse of the progress at their website www.stonespringmedical.com/our-services. The Hospital Center is expected to open in December of 2015.

Dulles South Food Pantry Off to a Great Start

The new Dulles South Food Pantry has been off to a great start, thanks to some great volunteers and generosity. The food pantry will be open for distribution the 1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays of the month from 5 pm to 8 pm. Nonperishable items can be donated on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10 am-12 pm, and Mondays from 7-8 pm. Produce and bakery items are being accepted on those same Wednesdays from 10 am – 12 pm and from 3 pm – 5 pm. For more information, visit www.dsfp.org.