



## Loudoun County, Virginia

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### **SUPERVISOR MATT LETOURNEAU'S FISCAL YEAR 2014 DULLES DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT**

Welcome to my third annual letter. Over the past year, the Board of Supervisors has continued to make progress on two of my biggest priorities: building a transportation network to meet our growing needs, and attracting new jobs and businesses.

The Board now has over \$700 million in road and rail construction planned to help ease the congestion that we face, with several key projects now underway. Loudoun County is consistently rated among the top counties for job growth in the country.

We've grown our budget responsibly to meet critical needs, and are providing new amenities and services without increasing the tax burden on homeowners. Our County is in strong fiscal shape, with AAA bond ratings from all three credit rating bureaus.

There is no doubt that we still face many challenges. While this Board of Supervisors has approved very few new homes, there are still over 33,000 housing units that were approved by previous Boards or that are slated to be built without needing approval in Loudoun. We have our work cut out for us to accommodate this growth in future years.

Below are specific details about some projects and issues of interest to Dulles citizens. Due to space constraints, I can't address everything I'm working on in this report. However, if you'd like to stay up to date and get more details, visit my website at [www.loudoun.gov/dulles](http://www.loudoun.gov/dulles) to sign up for my monthly email newsletter and my Facebook page.

It is an honor to serve as your local government representative. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov](mailto:matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov).

#### **Transportation**

The Dulles South area faces some of the worst traffic in the nation. Loudoun's infrastructure has not kept pace with growth—which is also true in other parts of Northern Virginia. Our traffic congestion is an impediment to economic development and to the quality of life for our residents. In order to address it, I have been working on solutions that will make a difference in our daily lives. It will take a while, but by 2020 our local infrastructure should be vastly improved.

**Route 50:** There is finally a light at the end of the tunnel on VDOT's Route 50 reconstruction project. The Route 50 project is on track for the completion of 3 lanes eastbound by this fall, and three lanes westbound from Stonecroft Blvd by the end of 2014. Some additional work in Fairfax County will continue into 2015, along with landscaping and construction of a shared use path.

I recently hosted a Town Hall meeting with representatives from Shirley Contracting and VDOT to discuss the project. The vast majority of construction work has been related to the relocation of numerous utility lines, and much of that work has been out of sight. All told, Shirley has relocated 25,000 truckloads of dirt, removed 4,000 truckloads of asphalt, and placed over 8,800 truckloads of construction materials to date. They've also laid miles of utility lines while keeping them and the road operational.

Because this project was actually under budget, a decision was made to add a fourth lane between Route 28 and Stonecroft Blvd and to construct a spur from the Route 28 off-ramp to westbound Route 50 for Lee Road traffic. The spur will eliminate the need for cars to cut across four lanes of traffic on Route 50 from Route 28. The spur is expected to be completed by the end of the year, while construction on the fourth lane will continue into 2015.

A critical component of this project will be the synchronization of traffic signals. Those changes will be in place once permanent intersections are completed in 2015. Additional details about the Route 50 reconstruction project are available at [www.loudoun.gov/dulles](http://www.loudoun.gov/dulles). The final product won't be a cure-all, but it will provide 50% more capacity, and traffic modeling shows a vastly improved level of service.

**Dulles Access Road:** The community came together in an unprecedented way to fight VDOT's recommendation to build express lanes in the median of Route 50 to provide access between the proposed Bi-County Parkway and the Airport. As many of you know, I have been leading the opposition to this proposal and have been joined by Delegate Ramadan, Delegate LeMunyon and Senator Black. Over 2,500 of you submitted comments to VDOT favoring a different alternative that makes far more sense from a traffic management perspective. Since the public comment period on the project ended, the Secretary of Transportation has agreed to subject the proposals to the Commonwealth's new congestion relief formula. In addition, the Board of Supervisors is now conducting our own County analysis of the entire transportation network, including these proposals, to help us determine the best options. I don't expect any real action on this project until at least the end of this year. Your involvement has made a difference to slow this project down and force a new discussion about the best options to provide access to the Airport.

**Route 606 Widening Project:** The Board of Supervisors has allocated \$40 million in local tax funding to join VDOT and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority to widen Route 606. The construction bid was recently awarded for less than the budgeted amount to Shirley Contracting as a design-build project. Route 606 will be widened to 4 lanes plus a bicycle/pedestrian lane, with the option for future expansion in the median to six lanes. As Route 50 construction comes to an end, you will start to see construction on 606 begin. I expect work to finish in mid-2017, before the Silver Line arrives in Loudoun.

**Braddock and Pleasant Valley Road:** Recently, Delegate David Ramadan and I announced that the Commonwealth Transportation Board has given final approval for construction of a roundabout at Braddock and Pleasant Valley Road. This project faced intense opposition from some residents of Fairfax County but was supported by traffic engineering and common sense. Over the past year, opponents attempted to kill the project with an amendment to the Virginia state budget, but Delegate Ramadan was able to defeat the amendment with the assistance of Loudoun County. About \$4 million for the project is coming from the Commonwealth, with \$1 million from the Loudoun Board of Supervisors—the first such commitment outside of our border. This project is expected to be completed in late 2016. Once again, your involvement in the public hearings on this project was very helpful. I will be sharing more details about this project when I have them this fall.

**Tall Cedars Parkway:** As you may have seen, the developer-proffered section of Tall Cedars between Riding Center Drive and Pinebrook Road opened this past May. I obtained funding to construct the remaining two lanes of this section, plus the four lane segment between Pinebrook Road and Gum Spring Road. This project is well underway but has experienced

delays in the right of way acquisition phase. The County Attorney's office is working to overcome these legal issues but the completion of the project will likely be delayed until 2016.

**Northstar Boulevard:** Northstar Boulevard will be linked from Tall Cedars Parkway in Stone Ridge all the way across Route 50 to Brambleton. Funds have been allocated by the Board in three separate phases. The section from Shreveport Drive to Route 50 will cost \$34.3 million and is funded over the next three years. The section from Route 50 to Tall Cedars Parkway is \$12 million, funded in FY 2016-2017, and widening the section from Tall Cedars Parkway to Braddock Road from 2 lanes to 4 lanes will cost \$13.9 million and is funded in FY2018-2019. Northstar is the route for the proposed Bi-County Parkway, which would link Loudoun to Prince William County.

**Bi-County Parkway:** It remains to be seen exactly how the Bi-County Parkway will be built and what the timing will be. The Commonwealth has agreed to consider the Bi-County Parkway in conjunction with the Dulles Access Road, since the projects are related. I am supportive of the Bi-County Parkway in concept, because there is no denying that the population of Loudoun and Prince William is going to continue to grow both short and long term. Our regional road network is in such bad shape because of the short sighted decisions that have been made over the years. For political reasons, elected officials often try to avoid controversy, even if it leads to a better long term outcome. The reality is that if another road is not built, Gum Spring Road will face increasing pressure and eventually become overrun with traffic. Route 28 is being expanded once again, but there is not much more that can be done. I therefore think it is incumbent on us as local elected officials to try to think ahead and take steps to add capacity while we still can. All that said, I do have concerns about exactly how the road would be built between Route 50 and Braddock, and my concerns are well known to VDOT. It is obvious that a limited access "highway" of the type that was in the original study would not be compatible with what has developed in this section, so this would have to be worked out with VDOT if the project moves forward. I will continue to be an advocate for the community to make sure that if the road is built, it is done so in a way that is compatible with existing schools and homes.

**Arcola Boulevard:** This new north/south road will link Route 50 (at the new Gum Spring Road intersection) with Evergreen Mills Road and 606—relieving congestion on Gum Spring. The existing Valero gas station could be relocated. \$26 million has been allocated in FY2017-2018 for construction.

**Glascock Boulevard:** Running from Loudoun County Parkway to Northstar Boulevard, the section east of Arcola Boulevard is funded at \$14.7 million in FY2019-FY2020 and west of Arcola Boulevard at \$16.6 million in FY2020. It will allow for better access to the new Dulles Landing shopping center and StoneSprings Hospital Center that are currently under construction and provide access on the north side of Route 50.

**Edgewater/Poland:** The temporary roundabout at Edgewater and Poland has worked well. Since the time it was installed, there have been no accidents and congestion has been reduced on Edgewater. As the end of the Route 50 project approaches, I will be working with the community to explore making this configuration permanent, with different materials and structural changes to the road.

**Gum Spring Road:** Later this summer, construction will be complete at the Tall Cedars Parkway intersection. The new intersection will be safer and provide access to the north and south. A right

turn lane will also be installed at Providence Ridge Drive. On the north side of Route 50, the Board has hired a consultant to conduct an analysis of the Gum Spring/Evergreen Mills intersection, which is constantly congested. We're hoping to identify potential solutions and understand the specific topographical challenges we face in this area given the limited space and wetlands.

**Claiborne Parkway:** The project to complete Claiborne Parkway from Ryan Road to Croson Lane is underway. The County is currently working to acquire the right of way needed to complete this missing link. This project has taken longer than I would have liked and is now expected to be completed in 2016.

**Gloucester Parkway:** The Board has accelerated the extension of Gloucester Parkway from Loudoun County Parkway to the intersection of Pacific Boulevard and Nokes Boulevard. This completes an additional east-west roadway that will take vehicles off of Waxpool Road. Construction is scheduled to begin this fall and is expected to be complete by the end of 2016. Pacific Boulevard is also being extended from Nokes Boulevard to Russell Branch Parkway through developer proffer.

**Waxpool Road Intersection Improvements:** Improvements will be made at the intersections of Waxpool Road and Loudoun County Parkway, Broderick Drive and Pacific Boulevard that will help ease congestion. Construction is expected to begin in early 2016.

**New Traffic Signals:** Traffic signals will be installed at the intersections of Riding Center Drive and Braddock Road, Donovan Drive and Braddock Road, Poland Road and Tall Cedars Parkway, and Riding Center Drive and Tall Cedars Parkway.

### **Public Transportation**

**Metrorail:** Preparations for the Silver Line service to Loudoun are well underway, and have been a major focus of the Board of Supervisors over the past few months.

First, Phase I service to Wiehle Avenue in Reston will begin July 26. Some of our bus service to existing Metro stations will serve Wiehle Avenue instead. A new bus transit hub for Metro service at Loudoun Station in Ashburn (near the Greenway/Loudoun County Parkway intersection) will open to serve Phase I.

Phase II of the Silver Line will be extended to Loudoun by 2019. The project has begun and none of the Phase I delays are affecting the timeline. The County will be constructing two parking garages at the 772 (end of line) station and one parking garage at the 606 station. A total of more than 4,900 spaces will be built. The Board is negotiating public-private partnerships to build and operate the garages, with parameters set by the County.

**Buses:** Key to the success of Metrorail will be access to stations. In addition to new roads and bicycle lanes that will be constructed in the immediate vicinity of the stations, the Board is also building a local transit bus system with our two Metro stations as hubs. Over the next six years, the Board has allocated over \$7 million to purchase a fleet of new transit buses to begin local express service to Metro. In the Dulles area, a new park and ride lot will be built in **East Gate**. When this lot opens in 2015, new transit buses will serve the Wiehle Avenue station.

Our long haul service continues to be extremely popular. LC Transit ridership from Dulles South has increased by 40 percent over the past year—a rate that far exceeds growth in the area. As a result, there is currently a shortage of parking spaces and seats on buses. I am working to obtain additional bus service, and the County is working with the Stone Ridge developer to construct an additional park and ride lot near the existing one to accommodate more vehicles. We are also exploring the launch of vanpool services to help meet demand.

Finally, for the first time, the County is considering the addition of a fixed route bus to the Dulles area. I was able to get a route included in the County's master plan submitted to the Commonwealth, and surveys were conducted last month to help determine the level of interest and stops for bus service.

### **Budget/Schools**

Overall, the County budget was increased by \$172.9 million, while the tax rate was reduced to \$1.155. The budget increase was paid for by an increase in overall County revenue from economic growth. The overall tax burden is equal to last year's for the average homeowner.

The budget for Loudoun County Public Schools was increased by over 8%, to \$922 million. Student enrollment will increase next year by 3.4%, so the Board's budget increase outpaced enrollment growth. The Board of Supervisors has been steadily increasing per pupil expenditures, from \$11,014 when I took office to \$12,195 in this budget. Overall, LCPS will add a net increase of 177 employees next year.

LCPS is governed by the School Board and the Superintendent of Schools. The Board of Supervisors can only transfer funding—we cannot control how it is spent. The School Board chose to increase salaries for teachers, reduce class sizes, and improve network infrastructure with the additional funds the Board provided.

There have been some concerns this year about school funding, and there's been a great deal of misinformation. Some have been led to believe that school funding was cut—when it was not. In addition, I have been increasingly concerned with the quality of budget information provided by LCPS Administration. Loudoun County Administration once again won a prestigious award for the presentation and quality of our budget proposal. On the other hand, the school system's budget lacks this level of transparency, and the response to legitimate concerns and questions from the Board of Supervisors was far less than forthcoming. This led to some public disagreements and an overall politicization of the budget process. With a new Superintendent in Loudoun, there is now an opportunity to improve the budget process, and I hope all sides will take advantage of it. Everyone wants a strong school system, but sound fiscal management has to be a priority to ensure that funds are spent in the right places.

In September, two new schools will open in the Dulles District—**Cardinal Ridge Elementary School** (South Riding) and **Rock Ridge High School** (Loudoun Valley Estates). In addition, the Board of Supervisors has reserved funding for a new **Academies of Loudoun** high school in Ashburn that will provide additional opportunities and challenges for our students.

## **Quality of Life/Amenities**

There are some exciting enhancements from both the public and private sector that will improve the quality of life in the Dulles District.

**Dulles South Multipurpose Center Expansion:** Last year voters narrowly approved a bond referendum for the expansion of the Multipurpose Center to add an indoor recreation center and a senior center. I appreciate the strong support from our community for this referendum. During this year's budget process, I obtained funding for the senior center. Funding for the recreation center was included in last year's budget. Both phases of the project have been combined into one, which has led to some delays initially, but will ultimately make for a smoother project. I expect this project to break ground this fall and be open in 2016.

**Dulles Landing:** Dulles Landing is a regional shopping center being constructed at the 606/Route 50 intersection. The anchor tenant will be Walmart, with other national retailers also in the center. The developer's latest estimate is that stores will begin opening by the beginning of next year.

**StoneSprings Hospital Center:** Construction is well underway for Loudoun's second hospital at the intersection of Gum Spring Road and Route 50. StoneSprings will be a 230,000 square foot, \$147 million full service hospital with 124 beds. It will employ over 500 people on day one and contribute over \$2 million in taxes every year. Construction is expected to take about one year, and HCA is working to have the hospital fully open and operating by the end of 2015.

I continue to work hard on other retail developments in the Route 50 corridor. There are some exciting projects underway that are becoming more and more viable as the area develops. The opening of the hospital will be a major milestone and help drive daytime traffic which is needed to sustain restaurants and stores.

## **Public Safety**

Overall, we live in a very safe community, and Loudoun has the second lowest crime rate in the Washington region. This year, I worked with staff and Sheriff Chapman to provide the money necessary to hire, train, and outfit four new deputies for the Dulles South Station. These deputies will assist with patrol, traffic demands, and calls for service in our area. Four deputies will allow for an additional two officers per shift. Overall, the County increased the Sheriff's department budget by \$3.1 million.

On the fire rescue side, the County opened a new Fire Station in Brambleton (to replace the outdated Arcola station on Gum Spring Road), and authorized funding for a new fire station in Kirkpatrick Farms. The overall Fire-Rescue budget was increased by \$6.8 million from FY2014.

## **Economic Development**

I'll end my report with an update on our efforts to attract new businesses and jobs to Loudoun. As Chairman of the Board's Economic Development Committee, I spend a great deal of my time working on these efforts, which will reduce commuting times and boost our tax base. We've had another successful year. Loudoun has an unemployment rate of about 4 percent. 33 businesses relocated or expanded in Loudoun, resulting in over \$247 million in investment. The County continues to work with high caliber companies about additional investments in Loudoun, and I remain optimistic about our future.