



Dulles Direct Newsletter

August 2014

Welcome to the August edition of the Dulles Direct Newsletter. I hope everyone has enjoyed their summer—it went by too quickly for me! During the month of August the Board takes a recess from our regular business and committee meetings, so I don't have a lot to report in terms of legislative activities. However, it has been a particularly busy month for traffic issues, and I've received a lot of questions recently about various road and development projects and traffic concerns. I have been working with VDOT to address many of these issues and will continue to follow up on some that are awaiting input from their traffic engineering department. In this newsletter, I'm providing an update on some of the projects happening around the district.

When school opens next week in Loudoun, we'll have two new schools in the Dulles District—Cardinal Ridge Elementary in South Riding, and Rock Ridge High School in Loudoun Valley Estates. We are also opening an addition at Mercer Middle School. I was involved in all of these projects from the beginning so I'm excited to see them open. Please be extra careful to watch for walkers and busses that will be traveling through our neighborhoods, and be aware that the Sheriff's Office will be conducting extra patrols around schools.

The national Movoto Real Estate Blog recently ranked Loudoun County the #1 County in America, based on criteria that included unemployment rate, high school graduation, median income, and other factors. It's great to get that kind of recognition, but we still have a lot of work to do to improve our infrastructure and build our commercial tax base.

I will be holding my next quarterly Dulles Direct Town Hall Meeting in late September. Be on the lookout for an announcement once a date and location have been finalized.

If you have any questions on these or any other items, please feel free to contact me by e-mail at matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov. I also provide regular updates on my [Facebook page](#) and if you were forwarded this newsletter and would like to subscribe, you may do so by [clicking here](#).

Rt. 50 Reconstruction Project Update

The third eastbound lane of Rt. 50 was opened this week and I have been hearing from many of you that are noticing the improvement. I am glad that things are improving as we move towards the beginning of the school year.

As school is beginning and everyone returns to their normal routines, our region typically enters one of the busiest commuting seasons of the year. Don't be surprised to see things take a dramatic turn for the worse everywhere beginning next week. Studies show that traffic volume remains high for about four weeks, and then begins to return to "normal." Delays will be bad virtually everywhere. I also don't want you discouraged if Route 50 is not "as good" as you hoped it would be next week. As you can see, there's still a lot of work to be done, including the construction of new signals and of course the westbound lanes. In other words—when the project is done, it will be better than it is today. That said, the third lane eastbound will certainly make it better than it would have otherwise been.

For more information on the Rt. 50 Reconstruction Project please see the timeline and status update that I provided following our last Town Hall meeting by [clicking here](#).

Legislative

Old Arcola Elementary School Building

At the second Board meeting in July, Supervisor Clarke brought forward an item to pursue the renovation and repurposing of the Old Arcola School on Gum Spring Road, potentially as a standalone preschool. After considerable discussion, the item was referred to the Board's Finance and Government Operations Committee.

While I supported sending this to the Board's Finance Committee for review, repurposing this building as a County facility will have some major challenges. First, County staff estimates that it would cost about \$10 million to restore the building to an acceptable condition for reuse. The building is quite old, and is not in compliance with any modern standards for accessibility, among other issues. Given that the building is located only about 2 miles from the Dulles South Multipurpose Center, which is undergoing a \$35 million expansion, I think it will be unlikely that the Board will want to invest that much money in the same area. In addition, as we all know, Gum Spring Road is severely congested and navigating the intersection of Gum Spring and Evergreen Mills is already a big challenge. I am very hesitant about adding any kind of use which will bring more cars into this intersection on a daily basis (such as a preschool).

If the desire is for a standalone preschool, that would be an entirely new model for the County. We do not operate any standalone preschools, nor are any planned for. County operated preschools have been co-located with Community Centers to date which allows the space to be used for multiple activities and provides efficiencies in operational costs. While I know there's demand for preschools, I'm concerned about expanding our services given all the other priorities we have.

I look forward to discussing this in Finance next month and working towards a solution that makes the most sense for the County. I think we are also open to a private entity or non-profit that is interested in renovating and using the facility, so the public discussion on this will help determine if there is any interest.

Dulles District

Riding Center Drive and Unicorn Drive Intersection

Recently there have been a number of concerns raised regarding Riding Center Drive and in particular the intersection at Unicorn Drive. We've had a couple of incidents in which the small medians were struck by motorists, causing damage to the sign posts.

I brought together VDOT, the Sheriff's Office, and the South Riding Proprietary for a discussion to see if there is anything we can do to improve this area. All were in agreement that removing the medians would be counterproductive, because the medians generally slow traffic down. As an immediate step, reflective material was placed on the medians to increase visibility. For a longer term solution, I asked VDOT to evaluate the intersection to see if a higher visibility crosswalk can be installed. This would involve more prominent striping on the road itself. VDOT is currently evaluating the intersection and the amount of pedestrian traffic. My understanding is that the crosswalk at Unicorn will not be utilized by elementary school walkers headed to Liberty. Finally, the Sheriff's Office has begun increased patrols on Riding Center Drive, which will continue through the start of school.

VDOT generally does not like crosswalks at uncontrolled intersections such as Unicorn Drive and is reluctant to install them. Their feeling is that they create a false sense of security for pedestrians. When using a crosswalk, remember that Virginia law does not require vehicles to stop for pedestrians unless you are already in the middle of the crosswalk.

Tall Cedars Parkway West of Gum Spring Road Reopens

In late May, the new section of Gum Spring Road was opened north of Tall Cedars Parkway. At that time, the section of Tall Cedars between Gum Spring Road and Millstream Drive was closed for up to 90 days while turn lanes were constructed and the elevation of the intersection was addressed.

Tall Cedars was reopened on August 1 and the detour utilizing Greenstone was removed. Woodlawn Development, which was doing the work as part of a proffer agreement related to the Virginia Manor development, got the work done ahead of schedule. The new intersection provides a safer access to and from Tall Cedars and sets the intersection up for signalization in conjunction with the completion of Tall Cedars from Gum Spring Road to Pinebrook Road to be completed in 2016. The next project related to this will be the installation of turn lanes at Providence Ridge Drive. That work was delayed due to a legal issue, but the issue has just about been worked out and we're in the process of developing a construction schedule.

Southpoint Drive Now Open

With the new Gum Spring configuration, many people have been concerned about access to the Gum Spring Village Center. The opening of Southpoint Drive from Millstream to Gateway Village Place last week will make that a bit easier. This connection was proffered by Van Metre in conjunction with the closing of the old Gum Spring Road alignment. With the completion of this road, there is now a link to Gateway Village Place from a location next to the Gum Spring Library.

New Signal at Donovan Drive/Bull Run Post Office Road and Braddock Road Intersection

Those of you who have been reading this newsletter for the last few years may recall a bit of a fight I had regarding the configuration of Cardinal Ridge Elementary School. The original LCPS plans called for the entrance to be directly on Braddock, but knowing how badly traffic backs up at drop off and pickup times, with the agreement of School Board Representative Jeff Morse I forced a change in the plans to require an entrance on Bull Run Post Office Road.

The results of that change are now in place, and you can see the newly paved and widened section of Bull Run Post Office Road in front of the school, along with a signalized intersection and turn lanes.

Unfortunately, when the signal was activated, it was set up to provide both the north and south sides of the intersection with a green light at the same time. This was an approved VDOT plan, with both sides required to yield when turning. While they might be the letter of the law, it is very unusual to have this configuration, at least without a sign. Not surprisingly, some drivers have been confused.

I asked VDOT and the Sheriff's Office to evaluate the synchronization, and based on our concerns VDOT has decided to require that a sign be placed on the mast arm alerting drivers that they need to yield.

East Gate Park and Ride Lot

Work has begun on the East Gate Park and Ride Lot located on Tall Cedars Parkway near the intersection with Edgewater Street. The Board of Supervisors approved the contract earlier this summer, and the contractor has begun working on erosion and sediment control. The next step will be clearing the site.

The East Gate Park and Ride will include a 218 space park and ride lot as well as a rectangle athletic field with 63 additional parking spaces. We expect completion by summer of 2015. My goal continues to be to have Silver Line express bus service from this location when the park and ride lot opens.

Retail Development

There is understandably a lot of interest in the upcoming retail development in the area. I am regularly in discussions with commercial developers as they are considering properties in the area as well as those that are actively in development. There's been some recent activity on several projects that I will discuss at a later date as things progress. In the meantime, here is some information on a couple of projects that have been in the news lately:

- Dulles Landing: Work continues on the Dulles Landing project. There has been a lot of work on infrastructure related projects including the connection of Dulles South Parkway to 606. According to The Beatty Companies, they expect to deliver the buildings to most of the retailers that have signed this fall, which includes Home Goods, Michaels, and Ulta. The Walmart building will likely be completed next spring.

- Property next to the Dulles South Safety Center: I have heard from a number of people asking about the development of the property next to the Safety Center. This is being developed for a bank, childcare and a convenience store (7-11) with gas pumps. A traffic signal is being installed at the intersection with Loudoun County Parkway. The signal is being paid for by the developer of the property and was approved by VDOT. The property itself is zoned commercial, which means that the owner of the property is free to find any tenant within the list of approved uses (and there are many).

- Whitman Property Commercial: This is an application to rezone approximately 10 acres from residential to commercial to allow the construction of a retail store, convenience store with gas pumps and a childcare center. The property is located on the southeast corner of the Braddock Road and Gum Spring Road intersection. Access will be from Gum Spring Road unless improvements are made to Braddock Road allowing for a second entrance from that side of the property.

This application was recently accepted for review by the County and is still undergoing referrals from various County departments. There is a residential rezoning also owned by this property owner—see below.

Residential Development

There are a number of residential development proposals in or near the Dulles District that are in various parts of the process at this point. Any additional residential development receives a great deal of scrutiny from me as we are working to get caught up on infrastructure needs from already approved and by-right development.

I am going to share some information on some of the more immediate applications below. This isn't an all-inclusive list, I will periodically include information on others in future newsletters. You can find more information on these and others by using the Loudoun Online Land Application System (LOLA) found at www.loudoun.gov/lola.

- Stone Ridge East II: This is an application by Van Metre to rezone 14.44 acres to develop 80 single family detached and attached units on property south of the planned alignment of Tall Cedars Parkway and east of Gum Spring Road. The bulk of this property is currently allows 1 home per acre, under the proposed rezoning they would be allowed 4.79 units per acre. The proposal keeps the portion of the property that is currently zoned commercial fronting Tall Cedars as commercial for future retail uses. The Planning Commission recently recommended approval unanimously after ensuring the developer met the County's expected contribution for unmet housing needs in addition to contributions for regional road projects, transit, and capital facilities. The Board of Supervisors will review at our Public Hearing on September 10th. The location of this parcel is between Gum Spring Road and a new section of Stone Ridge. Given that it is going to develop and that there are other nearby parcels that have been rezoned, it is probably in everyone's best interest for it to be developed as part of Stone Ridge rather than a small standalone community.

- Brambleton: The developer of Brambleton has submitted a total of 5 separate applications to amend their current approvals for development. All told, the applications would increase the approved residential units in Brambleton by about 800. To offset the increase, they would proffer school sites to serve the community and give a time certain on the completion of Loudoun County Parkway. I have met with the developer and had discussions about various pieces of this rezoning. Because the applications are not technically linked, each component can (and should) be considered as a standalone. I have also discussed at length with School Board Representative Jeff Morse and LCPS staff.

The majority of new units would be on the west side of Brambleton, with a small number in the Town Center itself. However, one of the five applications requests a conversion of land that is currently zoned commercial to residential uses in an area south of Shreveport Drive. This would put more residential development directly in the flight path of Dulles Airport and erode our commercial tax base. I expect the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors review of these applications to take several months, so I will provide more updates in future newsletters.

- McIntosh Assemblage: This is an application from Stanley Martin Homes to rezone approximately 97 acres to develop 81 homes. The property would be rezoned from three homes per acre to one home per acre and is located in the Blue Ridge District on Braddock Road west of Northstar Boulevard and the next Dulles South Middle School. The Planning Commission is expected to review this case in November and depending on action there, the Board may see it in January 2015.

- Elk Lick Preserve: This is an application from the EPH Group to rezone approximately 64 acres to allow the construction of 83 homes. The request would rezone the property from a combination of one and three homes per acre to all one home per acre. This property is located on Braddock Road, across from the Lands End Drive entrance to South Riding. The Planning Commission is expected to review this case in December and depending on action there, the Board may see it in February 2015.

- Whitman Property Residential: This is an application from Van Metre to rezone approximately 51 acres to allow the construction of 245 homes at the intersection of Braddock and Gum Spring Road. The request would rezone the property from one home per acre to 4.8 homes per acre. This property is located on the northeast corner of the Braddock Road and Gum Spring Road intersection. Van Metre is proffering to make improvements to the intersection up to \$1 million including widening and realigning the eastern approach of Braddock Road providing better sight distance and additional turn lanes.

This application was recently accepted for review by the County and is still undergoing referrals from various County departments. Given how difficult this area already is and the large number of units, you can be sure that I will be very carefully reviewing this application.

- Lambert Property: This is an application from Ryland Homes to rezone approximately 190 acres for the construction of 206 homes. The request would rezone the property from 3 homes per acre to one home per acre. This property is located on Bull Run Post Office Road south of Cardinal Ridge Elementary.

This application was originally filed with the County in 2006 and at that time requested approval for 335 homes. After a period of review by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, the application was made inactive before action could be taken. Earlier this year the application was reactivated and is now going through a shortened referral period by County staff to review the new request for fewer homes before going to the Planning Commission later this year.

- Poland Hill: This is an application by the owners of the Poland Farm located along Poland Road to rezone approximately 53 acres for the construction of 143 homes and a continuing care facility. The request would rezone the property from 1 home per acre to 2.7 units per acre.

This application was recently accepted for review by the County and is still undergoing referrals from various County departments. The owners of these properties have not engaged a developer and are seeking to go through the rezoning themselves, and have been open to discussion about how to develop this property in a way that is less impactful to residents. After the referral process we'll continue those discussions.

- Lim Property: This is an application from Ryland Homes to rezone approximately 17 acres to allow the construction of 80 homes. The request would rezone the property from one home per acre to 4.8 homes per acre. This property is located at the southeast corner of the Belmont Ridge Road and Croson Lane intersection, adjacent to the Windermere community. The applicant is proffering the widening of Croson Lane from Belmont Ridge to where it is four lanes currently as well as a contribution towards the signal at the Belmont Ridge intersection that is currently under development by the County.

This application is still in the referral stage by the County and is not currently scheduled for the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors.

Land use is one of the most challenging tasks for the Board. Many decisions typically aren't black or white, because properties can be developed by-right without any contributions, and the County has to look at various precedents set by previous Boards. As I've said many times, my goal is to get our area caught up in infrastructure, and building new homes is going to make it that much harder. That said, growth is going to occur regardless of the Board's actions, so there are times when it makes sense to try to manage it and receive capital contributions and infrastructure improvements.

Announcements

New Legislative Aide

There are some changes in my Board office in Leesburg. My Legislative Aide, Tom Parker, will be leaving to pursue another opportunity at the end of this month. Tom has been with me since I took office in January 2012 and quickly distinguished himself as one of the best and most professional Board aides in the County. I appreciate the work that Tom did for me, for the citizens of the Dulles District, and for the County. He will be missed!

Replacing Tom as my new Legislative Aide is Monica Filyaw. Most recently, Monica was the Chief Aide to another member of the Board of Supervisors, and has had a distinguished career that includes senior level positions in the federal government. Monica lives in the area and is familiar with our challenges. She can be reached at monica.filyaw@loudoun.gov.

South Riding Business Expo and Yard Sale

I will once again have a booth at the South Riding Business Expo and Yard Sale on Saturday, September 6. I enjoy this event and meeting constituents, but unfortunately for the first time since I took office I will not be able to be there myself. The Board of Supervisors will be holding a special meeting all day Saturday related to a personnel matter, and I need to be present for that meeting.

However, Planning Commissioner Jeff Salmon will be available at my booth to discuss issues, and a member of my staff will be present as well. If you have issues or questions, feel free to stop by, and if they can't be answered, they will be passed on to me directly for follow up.

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](#).

Commuter Bus Advisory Board Opening

I will have an upcoming vacancy for the Dulles District representative on the County's Commuter Bus Advisory Board. This board acts in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors on policy and operational matters as they pertain to the system of buses which operate between the County and the Washington D.C. area. The Commuter Bus Advisory Board is aware of day-to-day problems and provides a forum to discuss them in detail. When appropriate the board makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Board generally meets once a month. If you are interested in applying, please send your resume to matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov.

Dulles South Food Pantry

The Dulles South Food Pantry is a multi-faith emergency food pantry. They provide nutritious food, personal supplies and other services to those in need in Dulles South and the surrounding area that come to them regardless of income, faith or other criteria. They are an all-volunteer organization focused both on feeding the hungry and promoting the self-sufficiency of those they serve. Donations to the Dulles South Food Pantry are tax deductible

The Dulles South Food Pantry needs canned chicken & tuna; soups and stews with protein; 2 or 5 lbs. bags of rice or rice mixes; pasta; boxed potatoes; breakfast cereal and pancake mix; granola bars; fruit (in cans, plastic or dried); canned beans; pasta sauce (no glass please); seasoning packets; toothpaste; shampoo; and grocery store gift cards in any amount. They are now able to accept food donations at Dulles South Multipurpose Center located at 24950 Riding Center Drive in South Riding, Virginia during business hours.

The Dulles South Food Pantry is open to distribute food the 1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays of the month from 5 pm to 8 pm located at 24757 Evergreen Mill Road, Dulles VA 20166.

For additional information please visit their website at www.dsfp.org.