



## Dulles Direct Newsletter January 2017

Welcome to the January edition of the Dulles Direct newsletter. I appreciate those who attended my Town Hall meeting last week. There's a full update on our discussion and proposed solutions for ongoing challenges on Elk Lick Road below.

At the beginning of each year, the Board of Supervisors has an organizational meeting. For 2017, I will be continuing to serve as Chairman of the Board's Finance, Government Operations and Economic Development Committee, which oversees our day to day operations and our fiscal policy. Below you'll find an update on the FY2018 budget, which we've been working on for many months now.

I will also continue to serve on the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Board of Directors, and on the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, which handles public transportation funding and issues. At MWCOG, I was elected First Vice Chairman of the Board, and will continue to represent Virginia on the three-person Board Executive committee. At NVTC, the Commission elected me

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Secretary-Treasurer, which makes me the first Loudoun NVTC officer in our history. I appreciate the opportunity given to me by my regional colleagues to have a leadership role in these organizations. I will also continue to serve as a member of the Route 28 Transportation Improvement District Commission.

As my son is in scouting, I always enjoy the opportunity to help scouts earn badges by speaking to them about government. This month, I visited with the Arrow of Light scouts at Pack 910 (Liberty Elementary). They had a lot of good questions and I enjoyed being able to spend time with them.

Last week, I moderated a discussion forum that was hosted by NVTC with Virginia's members of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Board. I have written a lot lately about Metro's safety and financial woes. At NVTC, we have been discussing issues related to suggested operational changes and dedicated funding sources for the agency. Metro is the only major transit system in the nation without a dedicated, ongoing revenue stream. WMATA receives individual appropriations from each member jurisdiction, and the WMATA Compact even allows for each member to opt out of paying their share if they can't afford it. As a result, unlike local governments such as ours, WMATA can't finance its capital projects. Paying cash for each expenditure-such as \$1 billion of new rail cars-creates serious financial strains. Finding a different way to operate would allow WMATA to reduce its annual costs significantly and free revenues for safety improvements and improving reliability. However, there is also a strong desire-and need-for reforms, including labor costs.. NVTC appoints and gives direction to WMATA's Virginia Board members, and three out of the four Virginia members have been serving for just one year-which means that they are bringing a fresh look and approach to the WMATA Board. I could spend most of this newsletter writing about Metro's issues and my thoughts on them, but for now I do want you to know that we in Loudoun understand how important Metro is to our future, and



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that we need a functioning, reliable and safe system to fully take advantage of our Silver Line investment. I'm heavily engaged in the regional conversation about this and will remain so throughout the year.

Speaking of transit-I'm once again putting out a call to all of you LC Transit or Metro users to volunteer your time as my Dulles District representative on the County's Transit Advisory Board. I'm specifically looking for someone who uses either the Dulles South or the East Gate services. I've had this position vacant for over a year. If you are interested, email me at [matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov](mailto:matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov) and we'll send you the details.

Before we get into the rest of the newsletter, I wanted to congratulate Dulles District School Board Representative Jeff Morse on his election as Chairman of that body. I appreciate the good working relationship that we have had since being elected in 2012. I look forward to continuing our work together on school issues in the Dulles District and the upcoming FY18 budget. It should be a point of pride for us in Dulles South-which I used to call the forgotten end of the County-that the Chairman of the School Board, the Chairman of the Planning Commission and the Chair of the County's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Board are all from our district.

## **ELK LICK ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS**

It is always difficult to recap an hour long discussion in a newsletter, but for those who couldn't attend my town hall meeting, here is what we discussed. We started the discussion with a presentation from the County's consultants, VHB, about the extensive traffic study that was conducted at six intersections in the Elk Lick Road area. I initiated the study because of my concerns about the poor safety record of Elk Lick at Route 50 and Tall Cedars. VHB presented the crash history of the intersections, which showed 19 crashes at Route 50 and 18 at Tall Cedars from 2013-2015. As a result of

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the study, VHB, the County's Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure, the Sheriff's Office and VDOT have made recommendations.

The final two options under consideration at Elk Lick are to create a cul-de-sac which will close the road at Route 50, or to close the median at Route 50, but allow right in/right out access. In either scenario, almost all of the crashes would be eliminated.

Those in attendance at the meeting seemed to suggest that a full closure is too restrictive and that allowing the right in/right out would be safer while still allowing traffic to access eastbound Route 50 from Elk Lick. I tend to agree, and therefore am leaning towards supporting the median closure with right in/right out access. There was some discussion about a less restrictive option, which would still allow westbound turn access, but VDOT and the consultant does not support that, and four of the accidents in 2016 came from this movement.

At Tall Cedars, the options were to consider channelizing the intersection similar to what has just been constructed at the intersection of Loudoun County Parkway and Center Street, or to install a traffic signal. In the first scenario, no left turns would be permitted from Elk Lick, and traffic could not continue straight across Tall Cedars on Elk Lick. The stop signs on Tall Cedars would be removed allowing that traffic to flow to South Riding Boulevard or Loudoun County Parkway before reaching a traffic control device (signal). The second option would be a traditional signal, which provides the benefit of having a full crosswalk at the intersection.

Those in attendance thought the signal was the better option as it would continue to allow all movements at the intersection while improving safety. It would also permit crosswalks to be installed to accommodate significant pedestrian traffic to/from the apartments and condos to the shopping center and Town Hall area. However, both VHB and VDOT have recommended that the County consider a phased

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approach to any of these changes, in which we would implement the median change at Route 50 first, and then reevaluate conditions at Tall Cedars once we see how traffic patterns change. Modeling suggests that Elk Lick traffic volume may decrease without full access to Route 50 on the other end.

Another key component of all of these changes is Defender Drive. Models suggest that Defender Drive would see a significant increase in traffic volume with the median closed. As many of you know, my office has received many complaints about vehicles parked along Defender, both from residents and nearby businesses. We have been unable to take action, because VDOT permits commercial vehicles to park along Defender unless they are not operational. The Sheriff's Office conducts strict enforcement on Defender and has issued many tickets for expired plates and tax stickers, but there's nothing we can do about the vehicles parking there.

However, as a result of the increased volume, staff recommends that the Board consider reconfiguring Defender Drive by eliminating the parking lane and creating two travel lanes on the outside, with a dedicated center turn lane.

At this point, I am still accepting feedback on these options from those that wish to weigh in. The presentation is available to view on my Dulles District site by [clicking here](#) and you can email me with any feedback.

The next steps will be for staff and the consultant to present the findings of the study to the full Board of Supervisors, at which point we will decide on a course of action. If we move forward on the Route 50 intersection, we may consider an interim approach in which we place temporary barriers there, and then pursue a project similar to what we've done at Center Street and at Poland/Edgewater. The full project cost here is likely \$1.25-\$1.5 million, so I would need to obtain funding for these improvements from the Board, VDOT, or both.

Please feel free to email me your thoughts or questions at [matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov](mailto:matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov).

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

### **FY18 Budget Update**

The FY2018 budget process is in full swing. Recently, the Board of Supervisors provided final fiscal guidance to the County Administrator which he will use to present a base budget to the Board. The Board's guidance is for that base budget to be at the existing tax burden, which we call the equalized tax rate. This year, it looks like the equalized rate will be a half cent less than the current rate, at \$1.14/\$100 assessed. Of course, property assessment values vary by unit type and area of the County.

The County Administrator's budget will be able to accommodate some enhancements, but probably not everything that we'll need to do. We will be looking for savings and efficiencies, but there are some areas in which we simply have to invest. Quite frankly, the school budget discussion has such dominance over the overall budget that other critical service areas don't receive enough attention. As a result, we are now seeing very long waits for service in key functions like mental health and substance abuse. As the County grows, so do demands—we've seen a 37% increase in Child Protective Services cases over the past two years, for instance, which has resulted in an unsustainable workload for the existing workforce. We will also need to provide for the staffing of new fire stations such as the Kirkpatrick West station and our new Recreation Center and Senior Center in Dulles South. The Recreation Center staffing will be revenue offset while the Senior Center will not.

My philosophy is to provide the best value possible for your tax dollars, while ensuring that critical needs such as public safety are met. In the coming years, we will be addressing our employee pay scale and formula, which is now lacking compared to our neighboring jurisdictions. Unlike many other jurisdictions, the Board of Supervisors in Loudoun has already

undertaken major structural reforms in areas like pensions, benefits and health care. While that is good for our long term outlook and our bottom line, it means that for employees, these benefits are sometimes no longer enough to offset lower wages.

The County Administrator will be presenting his Capital Improvement Plan at my Finance committee meeting on February 14 and his proposed operating budget to the full Board on February 15. The School Board will be presenting their proposed budget to the Board of Supervisors on February 22. As has been the practice over the last several years, there will be a series of budget public input sessions leading up to the Board's work sessions. The public input sessions will be on February 28 at 6:00 pm and March 2 at 3:00 pm, both at the County Government Center in Leesburg. A third session will take place on March 4 at 9:00 am, this will be held at the Loudoun County Public School Administration Building in Ashburn.

#### **HS-9- New Dulles South High School**

The full Board of Supervisors ratified the Finance Committee's plan for accelerating funding for the new high school, HS-9. Appropriations for the school have been accelerated by 6 months and we provided an immediate \$3.5 million to begin work on the design right away. This will allow the school to open in the fall of 2020 and reduce the need to use MS-7 as an intermediate school by one year.

The County and the School Board jointly executed the contract to purchase approximately 150 acres that will be the home of HS-9 on Lightridge Farm Road and a future elementary school. The decision was made to jointly purchase the property so that the residual acreage not needed for schools could be available for a future County use such as a park or athletic fields. There have been some questions raised about the price of the property--\$10 million--because it is on the County tax rolls at just \$4 million. However, that is because the property is in an agricultural land use program which means it cannot be developed unless the Board of Supervisors takes it out of the program



(which we will for this purpose). That drives the assessment down. The school system presented the Board of Supervisors an outside appraisal which appraised the property at about \$10 million.

## **DULLES DISTRICT UPDATES**

### **Loudoun County Parkway/Center Street Improvements**

The bulk of the work on the permanent intersection improvements at Loudoun County Parkway and Center Street has been completed and the left turn lanes are now open. Contractors were able to take advantage of good weather to accelerate completion. The landscaping portion of the project will be completed in the spring when the weather is more favorable for establishing turf and new plantings. The County is working with the South Riding Proprietary on that part of the project.

### **Mooreview Parkway Contract Awarded**

The Board of Supervisors has awarded a \$4.4 million contract for the construction of Mooreview Parkway between Croson Lane (Moorefield Station Elementary School) and Old Ryan Road. An early spring 2017 construction start is planned and it is expected to take 12 months. Weather permitting, we expect that roadway to be completed in spring 2018. The ability to bid this project had been delayed while Columbia Gas completed the relocation of major gas transmission lines that intersect the roadway alignment.

### **Names Sought for Dulles South Multipurpose Center Buildings**

The Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services has initiated the process for naming the new recreation center and senior center under construction in South Riding.

The current Dulles South Multipurpose Center was opened in July 2008. Phase II is an 81,000 square foot recreation center, with recreation and fitness areas, an elevated running track, a competition and leisure pool,



a climbing wall and program facilities. A name is sought for the area comprising both Phase I (existing center) and Phase II (new recreation center).

A second name is sought for Phase III, which provides a 17,000 square foot full-service senior center. Phase II and III is anticipated to open in fall 2017.

Names can be submitted by email to [prcs@loudoun.gov](mailto:prcs@loudoun.gov) or by mail to Steve Torpy, Director, Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, 20145 Ashbrook Place, Ste. 170, Ashburn, VA 20147. Include your full name, email/mailling address and phone number in your correspondence. The deadline for submissions is 5:00 pm on February 17, 2017.

### **Brambleton Library**

Those of you in the northern part of the district or that frequent the Brambleton Town Center may have noticed that they have broken ground on the site of the future Brambleton Library.

The developer of Brambleton is building the new library as part of a proffer agreement that the Board approved last year. They will provide 40,000 square feet of library space on the bottom two floors of a commercial office building, similar to the model that was used in the Gum Spring Library. By having Brambleton construct the library, we were able to accelerate the opening. Following completion of the physical space, the County will outfit the building and prepare it for opening by mid-2018.

### **Signal at Tall Cedars and Poland**

After years of work to resolve deeded open space issues, the signal at Tall Cedars Pkwy and Poland Road will finally be going live next month. This project has hit a number of snags over the past several years as the County worked to acquire needed right of way. Delays in that process required design plans to be resubmitted to VDOT which added unanticipated time to the project. The signal arms are in place and you will likely see crews working on Saturdays to expedite work to establish electricity and communication services at the

intersection. It is expected that the signal will be activated in February. If you use that intersection, keep an eye out for changes in the coming weeks.

### **Providence Ridge Turn Lane**

The frustration continues on this project. I've never seen such a small project present so many problems and encounter so many delays-from easement issues to an expired contract award, and now to delays related to a VDOT pavement striping permit that wasn't obtained by the contractor. Now that it finally has been obtained, it is apparently too cold for the actual paving work to be done-it needs to be over 50 degrees for a few days. So, it looks like we'll be waiting until the weather warms up to finish that project. I'm not very happy.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Dulles South Station Quarterly Meeting**

The upcoming Dulles South Station Quarterly Meeting is being held on Thursday, February 2 at the Dulles South Public Safety Center (25216 Loudoun County Parkway in South Riding). The meeting begins at 7:00 pm. Topics will include a firearm safety discussion, summarized 2016 heroin/opioid statistics, and significant events from the station.

### **Loudoun Symphony Event**

Join the Loudoun Symphony for Winter Respite on Saturday, Feb 4 at the Community Center in Middleburg. The program begins at 4:00 pm and features music by Bach, Beethoven and Hayden. The orchestra and guest soloist, violinist Teresa Gordon, will perform in a music-in-the-round format with the audience seated around the orchestra. Warm your ears on a cold February day with the talented Loudoun Symphony Orchestra. Refreshments will be available. Details, including ticket information, are on the LSO website: <http://www.loudounsymphony.org/lso>.

### **INOVA Loudoun Mobile Health Unit**

Inova Loudoun Hospital Mobile Health Services will be providing blood pressure screenings at the Dulles South Multipurpose Center (24950 Riding Center

Drive in South Riding) on Tuesday, February 7, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. For further information call the Mobile Health hotline at 703-858-8818 or visit at [www.inova.org/mobilehealth](http://www.inova.org/mobilehealth).

### **Input Sought on Transit Services**

Loudoun County has launched an annual effort to obtain input from members of the public about the County's bus routes and transit services. The public may provide feedback until March 31, 2017, through a survey or by attending community meetings scheduled in the coming weeks. The county will host information sessions that provide opportunities to learn more about the county's existing bus network and formal process for soliciting and receiving feedback from the community regarding transit routes and services.

The county is seeking suggestions specifically for new or modified bus routes and enhanced services. The county encourages members of the public to provide input by taking an online survey at [www.loudoun.gov/TransitSurvey](http://www.loudoun.gov/TransitSurvey).

Members of the Transit Advisory Board and county transit staff will be on hand to meet with the public during upcoming information sessions:

- Saturday, February 4, 2017, 10:30 - 11:30 am, Cascades Library, Meeting Room A, 21030 Whitfield Place, Potomac Falls
- Tuesday, February 28, 2017, 7:00 - 8:00 pm, Dulles South Multipurpose Center, Banquet Room #3, 24950 Riding Center Drive, South Riding
- Wednesday, March 15, 2017; 7:00 - 8:00 pm, Loudoun Valley Community Center, Gymnasium, 320 West School Street, Purcellville

The information collected from the public will be analyzed along with a broad range of factors - including ridership and available funding - to develop plans for future transit services. As part of the County's

annual budget process, the Board of Supervisors will consider recommendations for changes to bus routes and services based on the community input and staff analysis. Any changes to bus routes approved by the Board will be announced prior to taking effect on July 1 each year. The current input sessions will inform bus services that begin July 1, 2018. More information about Loudoun County's transit service is online at [www.loudoun.gov/transit](http://www.loudoun.gov/transit). Anyone with questions about the input process or the online survey may call 703-771-5665 or email [rideshare@loudoun.gov](mailto:rideshare@loudoun.gov).

### **Scholarship Opportunities Available Through NOVEC, VMDAEC**

Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative and Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives are accepting applications for higher-education scholarships from high school and home school seniors who receive electricity from electric cooperatives.

The NOVEC Scholarship Program will award \$1,500 scholarships to qualified graduating public high school students in NOVEC's service territory in Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William and Stafford counties, and the City of Manassas Park. An additional \$1,500 scholarship will go to a student in NOVEC's service territory who either attends private school or is home schooled. From the scholarship winners, selection committees will choose the overall outstanding student for the \$1,500 J. Manley Garber Scholarship. The recipient of this scholarship will receive a total of \$3,000 to help with his or her college education.

Complete the NOVEC scholarship application and submit all required materials no later than March 13, 2017. More information is available at [www.novec.com](http://www.novec.com) or contact Donna Snellings at [scholarships@novec.com](mailto:scholarships@novec.com).

A high school or home-schooled senior - whose parents or guardians are electric cooperative members in Virginia, Delaware, and part of Maryland - may also

apply for a scholarship from the VMDAEC Educational Scholarship Foundation. An applicant must be entering college or a technical/trade school in fall 2017.

The foundation will award \$1,000 scholarships to students who have been selected based on their financial need, academic achievement, and personal statements. VMDAEC will send scholarship funds directly to a recipient's chosen educational institution for help with tuition, room and board, student fees, or book purchasing. The application is due by February 10, more information and guidelines are available under the Community Resources tab at [www.vmdaec.com](http://www.vmdaec.com). For more information, contact Nina Jacobs at [scholarship@vmdaec.com](mailto:scholarship@vmdaec.com).

### **Interactive Road Maintenance Map**

Loudoun County has launched a new online tool to help residents determine the entity that is responsible for maintaining roads within the county, including snow removal and surface repairs.

The interactive, searchable map provides users with a resource for navigating the complex maintenance responsibility system for the county's road network. In addition, the map links to a webpage with contact information for the various entities to help residents report concerns about maintenance to the correct entity.

Users may search by a street address, view responsibility by color-coded system or click on a particular road and a pop-up box will appear indicating road maintenance responsibility. The responsibility for road maintenance in Loudoun County varies by road. Most roads are maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), one of the county's incorporated towns, and private entities, such as homeowners associations (HOA).

As newly-constructed roads are developed, maintenance responsibility may change from one entity to another, such as from a developer to a homeowners

association. The Loudoun County map will be updated on a monthly basis.

A link to the map and contact information for the various entities involved in road maintenance in the county may be found on the Loudoun County website at [www.loudoun.gov/roads](http://www.loudoun.gov/roads).

### **VDOT Snow Removal**

If your street is maintained by VDOT, their goal is to have at least one passable lane on every road within 24 hours when snowfall is 2-4", 48 hours for 4-6", over 6" is expected to be at least 48 hours.

If you feel that your street is missed after these time-frames have passed, you can use the resources below to get more information on plowing status and/or report your issue directly to VDOT:

- [www.virginiadot.org/novaemergency](http://www.virginiadot.org/novaemergency) for news releases, important messages, and links for some of the items below
- [www.511virginia.org](http://www.511virginia.org) for road conditions
- [www.vdotplows.org](http://www.vdotplows.org) for neighborhood status and locations of plows
- @vadotnova on Twitter
- 800-FOR-ROAD (367-7623) to report issues

### **Dulles South Food Pantry**

The Dulles South Food Pantry has expanded its geographic boundaries to serve families in the Brambleton community who are in need of food assistance. Since its inception two years ago, the food pantry has served any person who resides in the school attendance zones for the Freedom High School and John Champe High School clusters in Dulles South. Thanks to the generous support the pantry has received from the community, the food pantry is pleased to begin serving the areas that have been assigned to attend the new Brambleton Middle School opening in 2017.

The food pantry is now open every Wednesday in the historic white chapel at Arcola United Methodist Church, 24757 Evergreen Mills Road, Dulles, VA

20166. On the first and third Wednesdays of the month, the pantry is open to walk-ins from 5-7pm. Other Wednesdays the pantry is open by appointment. Call 703-507-2795 or email [info@dsfp.org](mailto:info@dsfp.org) to schedule a private appointment.

Since opening two years ago, the food pantry has distributed more than 150,000 lbs. of food and currently averages nearly 140 visits a month from local families. Additionally, the pantry provides weekend food to over 100 students in 10 different Dulles District schools. See the Dulles South Food Pantry's website at <http://www.dsfp.org/> for information on how you can help the food pantry fight hunger locally. The Dulles South Food Pantry Inc. is a multi-faith emergency food pantry providing nutritious food, personal supplies and other services to those in need in the Dulles South area regardless of income, faith or other criteria. It is an all-volunteer organization focused both on feeding the hungry and promoting the self-sufficiency of those it serves. Donations to the Dulles South Food Pantry, Inc. are tax deductible.

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