



Dulles Direct Newsletter March 2017

Welcome to the March edition of the Dulles Direct newsletter. The focus in March is always on the budget, and this month was no different, as the Board conducted detailed reviews of every County department and Loudoun County Public Schools. We've now completed all of those worksessions and will be voting on our final budget on April 4. As is my tradition, I will be sending out a detailed report on the budget-including how I voted, and why-following the vote on the 4th. I have just a brief update below, but expect more details to come.

FY2018 Budget Update

As I shared with you last month, the County Administrator presented a proposed \$2.5 billion budget that was based on an equalized tax rate of \$1.135/\$100 in assessed value, one cent less than the current rate. The School Board also presented their \$1.24 billion budget request, which represented a 9% increase. Student enrollment is expected to increase by 3.8%.

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After a series of budget work sessions throughout the month of March, the Board has completed a long series of straw poll votes which result in a \$2.5 billion budget at a tax rate of \$1.125/\$100 assessed. That rate is 2 cents lower than the current rate, and 1 cent lower than the equalized tax rate, which represents the amount that the average homeowner will pay this year when accounting for assessment changes. I expect this to be officially adopted at our Business Meeting on April 4.

I entered this budget process concerned with making sure we are able to provide increased funding to our human service agencies that had been overlooked for the past several years. The budget that will be adopted provides needed staffing increases to handle increased workloads in Child Protective Services and Mental Health areas. We also provided increased funding for employment services for individuals with developmental disabilities. In addition, the budget includes staffing for new facilities like the recreation and senior centers in Dulles South, Kirkpatrick West Fire and Rescue Station and Brambleton Library. County employees will also be receiving a 3% pay increase.

The School Budget is funded at \$1.165 billion, an 8.5 percent increase from last year. I'll go into more detail on this next week, but this is the 2nd largest increase in the school budget in a decade, and actually a larger increase than when the school budget was "fully funded" a few years ago. While the School Board has sole discretion on how money is spent, this rate will allow them to accommodate growth in enrollment, increase funding for Full Day Kindergarten and provide pay increases to staff that in many cases will exceed what County employees will receive. I look forward to providing you with more details following final budget adoption.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

One Loudoun

There has been an ongoing discussion at the Board of Supervisors over a request from the developer of One Loudoun in Ashburn to revise many approvals that



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they already have in place and convert some commercially zoned land to residential.

The developer was requesting an additional 725 units (685 apartments and 40 townhomes) over what had already been approved. I felt that this number was too high and also had concerns over the intention to not place any ground floor commercial in their requested multi-family buildings. The application lacked the specificity that we normally see, in that the applicant did not designate exactly where and what type of units they were requesting and the precise location of those buildings.

By the time the application made it to the Board for a vote, the request had been reduced to 300 units, but there remained several other unresolved issues. The debate on the application was quite heated. I ultimately could not support it, and it failed on a 4-5 vote. At that meeting, I indicated that if the applicant were to make significant changes, I would consider bringing it back for reconsideration at the next meeting.

Following that meeting, Supervisor Ralph Buona and I took over negotiations, and met with the applicant to discuss our concerns. I wanted to see a specific plan and vision that would be advantageous to the County and result in a continuation of the true mixed use, town center approach that we've seen at One Loudoun so far. Reconsideration must occur at the next meeting, which was March 7th and by the time we reached that date, Supervisor Buona and I agreed that there had been enough progress to warrant bringing the application back, but not enough to actually vote on it that evening. So, we approved the motion to reconsider, and then sent the item to the March 23rd business meeting.

As is often the case, the last details required a great deal of effort. The final proposal from the applicant was for 160 multifamily units and 40 townhomes. Most importantly for me, the applicant agreed that at least 80% of the frontage on Exchange Street, where the buildings will face, will be utilized for

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retail/commercial business, and no ground floor residences will be permitted. The frontage must extend 100 feet back into the property, which is fairly deep. This will ensure that we're seeing residential and commercial grow in sync, as it should be with this type of development.

Given that Supervisor Buona and I had negotiated the changes, I did ultimately support the application, and the new version passed on a 7-1-1 vote. Some people have criticized this as "caving" or giving into developers. But the reality is that I wouldn't have voted for the application if I thought it didn't benefit the County. One Loudoun is the most successful mixed use development in the County, but if it is going to continue to grow, it is not unreasonable to add some smaller units to help support the businesses there. The rental/apartment market in Loudoun is very tight, and there is high demand. The people who will be moving into these units are much less likely to have children, so the drain on our resources is less. Several businesses, including one of Loudoun's most prominent, are moving into office space at One Loudoun, so this will provide a less expensive place for those employees to live, and it will also help support the restaurants and amenities already there. We'd like to do a very similar type of thing in Dulles South at Avonlea Town Center. I am more than willing to stand on principle when that is what is required, but I felt that the original application was mishandled by everybody involved and we were able to fix it-so in my book, that's a win-win.

LCPS Fund Balance and Self-Insurance Fund

Some of you may have seen ongoing discussions between the Board of Supervisors and the School Board over unspent funds in the amount of \$23.8 million from FY17. The School Board, under the advice of Superintendent Dr. Williams, sought to hold this money as a reserve for their self-insurance fund; however the Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator felt that much of a reserve was excessive and a portion should return as unused fund balance, as the law requires.

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Both the County and LCPS self-insure for their employee health plans. This means that claims are paid from premiums paid by employees and the County/LCPS in our own self-insurance funds. The plans are administered by third-parties, but we handle paying claims ourselves. The premiums and needed reserves are based on actuarial analysis. It is important to note that the County, through the Board of Supervisors, is a backstop to the LCPS self-insurance fund, meaning that we are obligated to provide funds to meet any shortfall.

That's exactly what happened several years ago, and it happened because the previous School Administration and previous School Boards mismanaged the funds. While keeping down the cost of healthcare for employees is admirable, the market dictated increases in premiums just as the rest of us have had to pay, and it does no good to have a fund that can't pay claims. The previous Superintendent and School Boards failed to make those adjustments, or to provide other health care plan options to their employees. As a result the fund ended up with a \$7.5 million deficit. The Board of Supervisors stepped in and provided the money for the shortfall, along with a stern warning to the School Board to get its act together and fix the fund. To their credit, and Dr. William's credit, they have done that in a variety of ways. The fund is now healthy and in no danger of being underfunded.

Therefore, sticking \$24 million of extra money into the fund at this juncture isn't the best use of taxpayer dollars. The LCPS fund would have had a reserve of over 16%, compared to the County's self-insurance fund, which is at 8%. I should also note that LCPS would have the right to shift that money out of the self-insurance fund at any time to fund things outside their budget, which would not be an appropriate practice.

The Board of Supervisors decided to send \$10.9 million of the \$23.9 million back to LCPS for the self-insurance fund, and spend the rest on other school items that need to be funded. Specifically, we decided

to purchase 36 new school buses at a cost of \$5.2 million, which had been requested and were needed to update our aging fleet. We also spent \$3.8 million in capital funds to construct turf fields at Heritage and Dominion High Schools, which were the next two on the list and had also been requested by the School Board. (I will note that these funds have to be used for one-time expenses-they can't be used for ongoing school operations, or to give teachers raises or anything like that.)

The School Board is now questioning the legality of what the Board of Supervisors did, and two School Board members even have suggested that the Board of Supervisors has somehow taken employee contributions away, which quite frankly is a completely irresponsible thing to say. There are multiple Attorney General opinions that state that unless funds are actually expended at the end of the year, they revert back to the Board of Supervisors, and the money we are talking about is not the money that employees contribute, but rather the money that the Board of Supervisors has given the School Board in the first place. As the entity with taxing and bonding authority, the County has a large Finance division, and of course I chair the Board's Finance Committee that spends a great deal of time on all of these issues every month. We have more resources, better access to financial information, and a large Attorney's office to help us make these decisions, and that is why we step in and make them when necessary.

Countywide Intersection Improvement Program

Historically, transportation improvement projects in Loudoun were handled by VDOT or by private developers constructing segments of roadways, including proffered intersection improvements. However, it became clear that the State was no longer doing its part when, in 2012, the County began to take on more responsibility for constructing needed road infrastructure.

To date, intersection improvement projects have been approached on an ad-hoc basis typically reacting to

specific concerns or Board Member Initiatives to begin a process of addressing the concern or deficiency. I have introduced several in my time on the Board. There is no specific source of funding for these projects and we typically look for available proffers or unused funds left in other project accounts. This means that traffic concerns or incidents were not being timely addressed due to funding availability.

To begin to project future needs and plan for funding that may be needed to address intersection improvements, County staff has proposed a Countywide Intersection Improvement Program. As part of this proposed program, the County has prepared a database of existing intersections along major roadways as identified in the current Countywide Transportation Plan (CTP), which include a median break (for 4-lane roadways) or turn lanes (for 2-lane roadways). There are a total of 724 intersections identified, and 544 of those intersections are currently unsignalized. Traffic volume and vehicle crash numbers are included in the database.

Each unsignalized intersection was analyzed and ranked from one to five. The purpose of the scoring system was to determine those intersections with the highest likelihood of requiring improvements over the next several years. A ranking of 1 indicates a low priority intersection and a ranking of 5 indicates a high priority intersection in need of some form of enhanced intersection traffic control in the near future, such as signalization or the construction of a roundabout.

Some of the Dulles District intersections that scored as a 5 in the database are: Elk Lick Road and Route 50/Elk Lick Road and Tall Cedars (see update below), Mooreview Parkway and Old Ryan Road, Stone Springs Boulevard and Tall Cedars Parkway, Edgewater Street and Tall Cedars Parkway, and Nations Street and Tall Cedars Parkway.

If the plan is adopted and funded it would set aside a certain amount of funding each year to be used towards the analysis, design and construction of needed

improvements over the next several years. We would begin with the highest priority intersections in FY19. There are clearly still some details to be worked out with this program, so it has been sent to my Finance Committee for a more thorough review. But I think this proposed program is a good concept and might allow us to have a better process to understand what we have to do, and when, with various intersections around the County.

DULLES DISTRICT UPDATES

Elk Lick Road Intersections with Route 50 and Tall Cedars Parkway

Following feedback from many of you and a meeting with businesses in the area, the Board has unanimously approved \$600,000 to move forward with safety improvements in the Elk Lick Road corridor.

When I shared the results of the study at my Town Hall meeting and in my January newsletter, I told you that the recommended actions were to close the median on Route 50, making Elk Lick Road a right in/right out only. This would require a reconfiguration of Defender Drive to establish a center turn lane with one travel line in each direction on the outside. The study also recommended that the intersection of Elk Lick at Tall Cedars either be signalized or restrict left turn movements in a way similar to what was done at the Center Street and Loudoun County Parkway intersection.

These recommendations came to the Board last week, and sufficient funds were in the capital projects contingency fund to allow us to begin this phased approach. We will be working to implement the median closure on Route 50 and changes to Defender Drive as soon as possible. We need to work with VDOT on a design and construction assessment. At this time we will hold off on any changes to the Tall Cedars intersection until we allow the other changes to take effect and review the impacts on this intersection. It is believed that traffic levels there may be reduced to

the point where there may no longer be significant changes needed to the Tall Cedars intersection, but we will see. I'll have further updates once we have a better timeline-to be honest, when I shared all of this at my last Town Hall, I did not anticipate being able to have funding in place so quickly. So, this is all very good news and I appreciate the Board's support for these needed changes.

Claiborne Parkway

The Board of Supervisors has approved a \$6.7 million contract to Phillips Construction for the construction of Claiborne Parkway between Croson Lane and Ryan Road. This project is sorely needed to provide direct alternatives to Belmont Ridge Road and Old Ryan Road as a means to get from Brambleton and areas south to Broadlands and the rest of Ashburn. It will also provide capacity for when Metro comes in 2020, when this area will see a major uptick in traffic getting to the Ashburn Metro station.

Construction should begin later this spring and is expected to take 18 months. I will be planning a "Pardon Our Dust" meeting with the contractor as we get closer to construction starting and have a better idea on schedule.

Mooreview Parkway

The Notice to Proceed has been issued for the construction of Mooreview Parkway between Croson Lane and Old Ryan Road. Those that live in the area should already be seeing activity on site by contractor William A. Hazel, Inc. The \$4.38 million contract was awarded on January 3, 2017.

Construction is expected to take 12 months. This road is a critical link to serve the Ashburn Metro station from the west side of the Greenway when it opens in a few years and will provide an alternative to Old Ryan Road.

Proposed Through Truck Restrictions on Goshen Road, Sacred Mountain Street, Marrwood Drive and Lenah Mill Boulevard

At a Public Hearing held on March 15, the Board of Supervisors approved forwarding a request to VDOT and the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) that would place a through truck restriction on Goshen Road, Sacred Mountain Street, Marrwood Drive and Lenah Mill Boulevard in the area near John Champe High School.

The CTB has up to nine months to act on the request and, assuming they act favorably, VDOT would then place the necessary signs for enforcement. VDOT has identified Northstar Boulevard to Stone Spring Boulevard to Route 50 as the alternate route to using Goshen Road which is unpaved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

New System Provides Real-Time Updates on Sports Facilities

Loudoun sports league participants can now get real-time updates regarding the status of County athletic fields and gymnasiums used for practices and games. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services has launched a new system with RainoutLine.com for posting the daily status of fields and gyms at department sites and Loudoun County Public Schools. The status is updated at 3:00 p.m. on weekdays, 7:00 a.m. on weekends and more frequently as needed.

With the new system, users can:

- View the status of facilities at loudoun.gov/fieldstatus, RainoutLine.com or on a mobile device.
- Sign up for customized email alerts for the field(s) and gym(s) of their choice at RainoutLine.com.
- Call the phone line at 703-454-0011 and enter the extension for the field or gym of their choice.
- Download the free RainoutLine.com iPhone or Android mobile app (search Loudoun County Parks, Recreation and Community Services).

Status options include open/game-time, delayed and closed, in addition to details like school blackout, weather delay and parking restriction. Facilities are listed alphabetically, starting with outdoor facilities.

Household Hazardous Waste Events

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) events for the spring have been scheduled. All HHW events are held on Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The 2017 Household Hazardous Waste spring collection schedule is as follows:

- **April 8:** Harmony Park & Ride, 39464 East Colonial Highway, Hamilton
- **May 6:** Ashburn North Park & Ride, 45151 Russell Branch Parkway, Ashburn
- **June 24:** Freedom High School, 25450 Riding Center Drive, South Riding

Loudoun residents are welcome to bring HHW from their homes to these events. Typical HHW includes: fluorescent light bulbs, dry-cell batteries (alkaline, Ni-Cad, Lithium, rechargeable, etc.), oil-based paint/stain/varnish, paint thinner, mineral spirits, metal polish, rust remover, wood strippers and preservatives, furniture polish, waxes, sealants and solvents, bleach, pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, fertilizer, pool chemicals, muriatic acid, ammonia, mercury thermometers and thermostats, gasoline, gas-oil mixes, expired fuel, auto cleaners and flushes, brake and transmission fluid, windshield washer fluid, fire extinguishers, moth balls, pet care products, and photo chemicals.

The limit per household is 15 gallons of liquid HHW (container size not to exceed 5-gallon), and 40 pounds of solid HHW. Participants must have proof of Loudoun County residency such as a vehicle decal or applicable town sticker. For more information about the Household Hazardous Program, please call 703-771-5500 or visit www.loudoun.gov/hhw.

Drug Collection Units

Did you know you can dispose of unwanted and unused prescription medications at a drug collection unit at the Dulles South Public Safety Center?

The drug collection unit is intended to reduce the amount of unneeded medicine in residents' homes and decrease prescription drug abuse, which has soared in recent years, especially among teenagers.

The drug collection unit is located in the lobby at the Dulles South Public Safety Center, 25216 Loudoun County Parkway in South Riding and available Monday-Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The service is free and anonymous.

Since the inception of the DEA take-back program in 2010, nearly 8,000 pounds of unwanted and unused prescription medications have been taken off the streets of Loudoun County.

The drug collection unit for year round disposal was awarded through a grant from CVS Pharmacy as part of the Safer Communities program.

Keep Loudoun Beautiful

Each Spring, Keep Loudoun Beautiful (KLB) and volunteers pick up litter along hundreds of miles of roads and waterways in the County. They are able to recycle plastic, glass, metals, paper, tires, and electronics.

In 2016, KLB collected 216 bags of recycling, 615 bags of trash, 163 tires, and a lot of other bulky recycling and trash.

Registration for the upcoming Goose Creek clean up begins on April 1. The event will be held from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm on Saturday, May 6.

For more information on this event and other clean ups, visit <http://www.keeploudounbeautiful.org>. You can also visit their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/keeploudounbeautiful/> or contact Carrie-Anne Mosley at camklb@gmail.com.

Reminder to Lock Vehicles



The Loudoun County Sheriff's Office is reminding residents to be extra vigilant in locking their vehicles. Criminals are searching for unlocked vehicles and valuables such as purses, electronics, cash or and firearms have been stolen. In some cases, the garage door opener in the vehicle has been used to get into the garage and then access the home.

The Loudoun County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit is offering residents several tips for deterring thefts from vehicles:

- **KEEP YOUR VEHICLE LOCKED.**
Most stolen items are taken from vehicles that are left unlocked.
- Remove all items from your vehicle, including garage door openers, when not in use. When you cannot do this, put the items out of sight (inside a lockable glove box or trunk). If your vehicle has an integrated garage door opener, please keep the openers out of sight.
- Park inside your garage, where possible, and keep the garage locked. Or, try to park your vehicle near or under an illuminated area.

Report suspicious activity immediately by calling the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office non-emergency line at 703-777-1021 or call 9-1-1.

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 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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