



Dulles Direct Newsletter July 2017

Welcome to the July edition of the Dulles Direct newsletter. I hope everyone is having an enjoyable summer. The Board of Supervisors had a busy July, but will not meet in August, though my work on regional commissions related to Metro will continue. In this newsletter, I'll update you on some of the Board's activities, including our decision to eliminate vehicle decals starting next year.

I was pleased to bring forward a Resolution of Commendation to recognize Freedom High School's 2017 Odyssey of the Mind team. The team was the first from Loudoun County to win an Odyssey of the Mind World Championship! Congratulations to Coaches Bill and Judy Munley and students Sarana Adhikari, Virginia Campbell, Manisha Kusuma, Michael Munley, Apekchha Pradhan, Zander Rodriguez, Aditi Shukla on their accomplishment. It has been a great run for this group, who have had success in OM for many years.

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Welcome Air India to Dulles Airport and Loudoun County! I was pleased to be on hand this month to welcome the first Air India flight to Dulles Airport. For years we have been working with the Airports Authority and our colleagues in DC and the Virginia state governments to bring nonstop air service from India to Dulles. This service will save hours for those traveling to India and open up countless business opportunities in the National Capital Region. The route is also expected to bring 30,000 travelers and \$30 million in annual economic impact to the DC region. The flight is operating three times a week initially. For more information, visit flydulles.com or contact Air India.



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LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Board Votes to Eliminate Personal Property Tax Decals

The Finance Committee, which I chair, has been reviewing Loudoun's personal property tax decals for several months. After extensive review, the Board voted this month to eliminate the decal requirement starting in July 2018. As part of these changes, the County is also pursuing an agreement with several towns in Loudoun to take over the collection of their taxes in exchange for a portion of the revenue they collect. This would streamline the process, since the towns already rely on data collected by the Commissioner of Revenue.

My focus during this discussion has been on our ability to continue to enforce personal property tax collection without a decal. While initial estimates were that eliminating decals could cost the County as much as \$5 million, we now believe that the difference in revenues collected will be about \$1 million because the Commissioner of Revenue and the Treasurer have implemented several measures to collect revenue which are separate from the Sheriff's Office Deputies assigned to Project Fairness and the decals. As part of our discussion, we asked County Administration and those two officials to bring a full enforcement plan

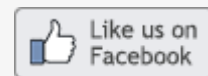
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back to the Board, which could include some additional enforcement measures.

The decal fee will be replaced with a vehicle licensing fee, which will also be \$25. I have been asked by some why we will still have a fee without the decal. Under the existing system, the County's expenses for the decals were already far less than \$25-most of those funds were going toward administering taxes and conducting enforcement. That will still be the case. While the County will no longer have the expense of printing and sending decals, as I mentioned, we do expect revenue to drop since enforcement will be more difficult.

Property taxes are not popular, but they are a part of the system we have in Virginia, and they help localities pay for the many unfunded mandates that the Commonwealth imposes on us. Loudoun County has one of the lowest personal property tax rates in Northern Virginia and has not raised the rate in nearly two decades. Eliminating the decal requirement will at least reduce the annoyance associated with maintaining a sticker on our vehicles. Some have called for the elimination of personal property taxes completely. I certainly understand the sentiment, but in Loudoun, we collect over \$300 million in personal property taxes. In order to make up that revenue, the County would have to raise the property tax rate to around \$1.50/\$100 assessed (the current rate is \$1.125)! This burden would be felt exclusively by real property owners, and not renters who also use County services. We continue to strive to provide a good value for taxpayers, and keep our tax burden reasonable for the level of service we provide and the region we live in.

Work Beginning on the FY2019 Budget

Now that we have just begun Fiscal Year 2018, the Finance Committee held our first official meeting about the FY2019 budget and gave some initial guidance to the County Administrator about our priorities. Over the course of the coming year, and likely well beyond that, you will see me talking to you

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quite a bit about Loudoun County employee compensation.

Loudoun County has a policy to pay employees 95% of comparable jurisdictions for the same job, with the comparisons being Fairfax, Prince William, Arlington and Alexandria. Over the years, however, it is quite likely that we have fallen well below that, and as a result, we are facing higher turnover in some departments than I would like to see, and extreme difficulty recruiting specialized positions. This is having negative consequences throughout the organization, including on the budget. For instance, when we hire a public safety employee, we pay for their training, which is extensive and takes over a year. If they leave the County after just a few years of service-as some do in order to receive more money-then we are out the sunk cost of their training, which can run into the six digits.

As a result, the Board of Supervisors authorized a comprehensive review of employee compensation and classification. The Human Resources Department brought on a consultant to begin this review last year, and the first phase of the report is coming back to the Finance Committee in September.

That report will essentially tell us what the scope of our problem is, and give us some idea of how big it is. We will then set some policy parameters around what compensation should be-and that will include revisiting that 95% policy I mentioned. (In my view, we should not be paying 95% of comparables, but we also shouldn't only use counties to our east as those comparables). Once we've made those choices, a second phase will begin, in which the consultant will literally review every single employee classification and determine what the market rate is for that position.

The cost to the County for adjusting compensation will very likely be quite large-more than we can handle in a single budget year. We will likely be phasing in changes over a multi-year period, starting with FY2019. That will mean some belt tightening in other

areas, and perhaps curtailing expansions of further services other than opening new facilities. It will also have implications for the schools. The School Board and School Administration have been making adjustments to its pay scales for the last several years, and have increased compensation quite significantly at some levels to be more competitive with other jurisdictions. As a result, the school pay scales are more in line with the market than the County's are. While I certainly don't want the schools to fall behind, I do think that the focus for large "catch up " amounts needs to shift from LCPS to county government for the next several years.

Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission Compensation

As I shared with you last month, the Board considered compensation increases for the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission beginning in 2020. The Board held a public hearing this month on the item-three residents spoke, all in favor of the proposed changes. At our final business meeting of July, the Board voted to approve the compensation changes on a 5-4 vote. As the co-author of the proposal, along with Chair Phyllis Randall, I voted in favor of the motion.

It is important to note up front that there can be no change in compensation during a term. So, any changes cannot take effect until 2020 at the start of a new term, with potentially new Board members. I have no idea who may or may not seek reelection on the Board, and obviously the voters will have the final say on who actually serves. Historically, more than half the members of the Board change from one term to the next. Currently, Board members receive \$41,200 annually, the Vice Chair receives \$45,320 and the Chair receives \$50,000. These salaries were set in 2008, and have not been adjusted since. (Board members are not eligible for raises given to County employees, and there is no automatic adjustment).

The new compensation approved will be as follows:

Position	2020	2021	2022	2023
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Chair	\$81100	\$82722	\$84376.44	\$86063.97
Vice Chair	\$73363	\$74830.26	\$76326.87	\$77853.40
Board	\$66826	\$68162.52	\$69525.77	\$70916.29

The Board's action will also increase the compensation provided to the Planning Commission beginning in 2020. Today's compensation is \$21,315 for district members as well as the Vice Chair and \$22,334 for the Chair. In 2020 that will go to \$25,000 for district members, \$27,500 for the Vice Chair and \$30,000 for the Chair.

Voting to raise salaries, even for the next term, is never an easy discussion. The limited feedback I have received from Dulles District residents on the changes has been positive, and I appreciate that. The discussion has prompted questions about what the role of the Board is, whether it is a part time position, and whether the amount of the increase was appropriate. I'll take a moment to address some of those issues.

When asked whether the Board of Supervisors is a part time position, I put it this way-when you are on the Board, you're always on the Board for the length of your term. It isn't a 9-5 job, and because of that, it is possible for Board members to have other employment. But, the duties of the job require you to be on call at all times of the day, night, and weekend. Scheduled meetings are generally in the evening, with the exception of some of the regional boards and commissions that we serve on. While the meetings themselves run in the 5 hour range, there is often a great deal of preparation for them and plenty of work to bring initiatives and prepare policies. Outside of the legislative functions, there are numerous other parts to the job, which also occur at all times.

With regard to the amount of the increase, the argument was made that the Board should not receive an increase larger than County employees received during this period. The problem with that argument is that the position of Supervisor has changed quite

significantly since 2008. If a County employee has their workload increase by over 60%, the County adds additional employees for the same function. That is obviously not the case with the Board of Supervisors. The change in salary tracks exactly with the growth in the County's budget since 2008-so the amount that the Board of Supervisors is supposed to be "supervising" went up by the same percentage as the 2020 salary during that period. It is also true that many County employees do not stay in the same classification for 12 years-they are promoted and move up. On the school side, teachers have a pay scale, so that a teacher who was hired at \$43,000 in 2008 would be making over \$61,000 in 2020 based on the current pay scale. With that said, as I mentioned earlier, the Board is working on major adjustments to employee compensation, which I anticipate will be at least partially in place before the next Board is seated.

With all that in mind, Chair Randall and I set about figuring out what a fair compensation was for a body that, by 2020, will be overseeing a \$3 billion budget and a county of 400,000 people. The compensation levels we ended up with are close to what half the median income in the County will be, and we believe that they will make the job of serving a little more accessible to many citizens. I believe it is really important to have a Board that is representative of the community at large. It is important to make sure that the voice of all of our citizens are represented, not just those who are wealthy and don't have other commitments. I certainly don't think that anybody should expect to get rich in public service, but I do think that the compensation level needs to reflect the level of time commitment and work needed to effectively do the job.

Metro System Funding

Metro's ongoing funding issues are well known regionally. As Vice Chairman of the Council of Governments and Secretary/Treasurer of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, I have been updating you over the past several months on all of

these issues, as well as our efforts in Loudoun to bring new ideas to the table to address them.

I have been working closely with our Loudoun County staff to develop alternative options for the region to fund Metro's future capital needs. The only idea previously put on the table was a new, 1 cent regional sales tax which I believe is unfair to Loudoun and to Northern Virginia. Over 50% of the taxes collected for this sales tax would come from Virginia, which is only currently responsible for just over 30% of Metro's costs in the existing formula. This month, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a resolution opposing the 1 cent sales tax.

Our County Administrator, our finance staff, and our bond counsel have developed an alternative that would allow our existing Metro contributions to go much further through a bonding process called a service contract agreement. While there are issues that need to be discussed with the proposal we are developing, we believe this idea has merit and is worth serious consideration by the region. It would provide a big boost of funding for Metro's needed capital projects, while keeping costs reasonable for the jurisdictions involved. I have been meeting and speaking with other elected officials, the McAuliffe Administration, and regional leaders to help them understand our proposal so that it will be seriously considered by the General Assembly and the region as a potential way to help bridge the gap between what we planned to pay Metro and what the system actually needs for capital.

As I've said many times, Metro also needs significant reforms to its structure, labor agreements, and culture. I have also been deeply involved in proposing concrete ideas to do that that could be implemented at the federal and state levels, and I will continue to be engaged in those discussions throughout the rest of the summer.

Fighting for the Perimeter Rule at Reagan National Airport

Members of Congress from other places can't stop trying to meddle with the Washington region's air system. This time, it was Texas lawmakers who wanted a flight to San Antonio and tried to do it by amending a much needed defense bill. Washington Reagan-National Airport isn't supposed to have flights over 1,250 miles, which is called the perimeter rule. Over the years, perimeter rule exemptions by Congress and the Department of Justice have eroded domestic flights at Dulles, which in turn makes it harder to sustain the international service that we have and the region depends on. Because of unplanned passenger growth at DCA, MWAA is now having to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in upgrades at DCA just to be able to handle the existing number of passengers. Fortunately, Congresswoman Barbara Comstock was able to fend off this amendment in the Rules Committee, and won a battle to have it declared non-germane.

I have no doubt that they'll be back, probably on the FAA Re-authorization Bill if it comes to the floor. I'm thankful for her leadership to protect Dulles and the decades of planning that local governments and states have put into our regional airport system.

Both the Board of Supervisors and the Council of Governments Boards weighed in to members of the House, and we are on standby to do it again if needed. As a former Hill staffer myself, I know how hard these fights can be, but this issue is a longstanding priority for the County.

DULLES DISTRICT UPDATES

Dulles South Recreation and Community Center/Senior Center Update

I continue to receive weekly updates on the progress being made to complete our long awaited Recreation and Senior Center. Below is the latest information.

The County staff have already begun working through punch list items within the Senior Center area. Final

finishes including flooring, handrail, and plumbing fixtures remain underway. The folding partitions in the multipurpose room have been completed and installation of accessories has begun.

Interior finishing work continues in the Rec Center areas including painting, lighting, and millwork. Installation of pool equipment including the scoreboard and starting blocks in the competition pool is underway. Tile and finishing work continues in the locker rooms, family changing areas, and the lifeguard offices. Pool equipment start-ups and training will begin soon. Testing, balancing and commissioning activities including the pools will be underway into August. Site work continues with paving and striping completed last week.

We have now experienced two vandalism incidents within the building, one much more serious than the other. The contractor is staffing a security guard onsite in the off-hours from approximately 5:30 p.m. - 5:30 a.m. each day. They have confirmed that they do not anticipate delays for the repair/replacement work that would extend beyond the 90 day outfitting period that we have planned for the project. Some items such as glass and roofing have a 6-10 week lead time on being replaced, so we will need to wait for those areas to be completed, but the building won't be ready to open within that time anyway. I still anticipate a first quarter 2018 opening for the project, and will keep you posted.

Bull Run Post Office Road Paving

In the fall of 2015, I worked with VDOT to fund the paving of the gravel segment of Bull Run Post Office Road between Cardinal Ridge Elementary and the existing pavement at the double sharp curves. Since that time, the condition of the existing pavement that was not touched during that project has deteriorated into an area of large potholes. As a result, I have been lobbying VDOT hard to get this stretch included in a future paving plan.

I am pleased to report that VDOT has confirmed to me that they will be including this stretch of Bull Run Post

Office Road for repaving in this year's paving schedule using surplus FY17 paving funds. The work will be completed before December and we should have a more firm date as the contractor confirms their schedule. I will be working with neighbors in the area on notifications of paving dates and will note that like last time, the road may end up being closed for a period to expedite completion.

Tall Cedars Parkway Update

Phillips Construction has been making great progress on the construction of the missing segment of Tall Cedars Parkway between Gum Spring Road and Pinebrook Road. They have moved into the paving phase and are running ahead of schedule. The project is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2018, but I'm hoping we will be able to beat that.

As part of that project, I worked to have the signal for the Tall Cedars Pkwy and Gum Spring Road intersection expedited. The foundations are in place with all signal equipment on order. We expect that the signal should be up and operational by the end of the summer.

Claiborne Parkway Update

Work is also moving along nicely for the project to complete Claiborne Parkway between Ryan Road and Croson Lane. It was recently determined that blasting was required and that portion of the project began on Monday, July 24. It is expected to last for approximately three weeks. Blasting is generally scheduled to occur between the hours of 12 noon and 5:00 p.m. All blasting will be managed in accordance with the Loudoun County Fire Marshal's requirements. The total project is expected to be complete in the summer of 2018.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dulles South Station Quarterly Meeting

The next Dulles South Station Quarterly Meeting will be held on Thursday, August 3, 2017 in the Community Room at the Dulles South Station (25216 Loudoun County Parkway in South Riding). The

meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. and will last approximately one hour.

Topics will include a presentation and overview of the Neighborhood Watch program, review of the Sheriff's Office 9-PM Routine and community crime prevention strategies, and discussion of significant events from the station.

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, 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 this fall.

The food pantry is 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, 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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