

Supervisor Matt Letourneau's DULLES DIRECT ANNUAL REPORT



Welcome to my sixth Annual Report as your representative on the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. You'll notice some changes to this year's report—both in timing and in format. Instead of following the fiscal year, I'm now publishing at the end of the calendar year, and I hope our new format is easier to read and just as informative for you.

2017 was another busy year. I continue to serve as Chairman of the Board's Finance, Government Operations and Economic Development Committee, which has oversight over many government functions. Work is well underway on our FY2019 budget, and I'm pleased to report that we ended FY2017 with a \$85 million surplus, much of which is being applied to future expenditures. I'm also happy to report that the Wall Street credit rating agencies continue to rate Loudoun among the nation's best, a testament to our sound financial practices.

I also spend a great deal of time on regional issues. This month, I was elected Chairman of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Board of Directors. I'm honored to be the first Loudoun Supervisor to ever Chair this important regional body. I am also the first Loudoun Supervisor to be elected Vice Chairman of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, which oversees public transit in Virginia. Reforming Metro and improving its finances has been a major focus on both bodies.

My top priorities continue to be economic development and transportation. Loudoun had

another outstanding year attracting new businesses and creating jobs. We remain #3 in job growth in the United States. Among the most exciting projects I've personally worked on is our recently announced deal to bring the DC United's team headquarters and a second division soccer team to Loudoun, at favorable terms to the County. We remain focused on taking advantage of our opportunities near Metro stations, which ultimately will help us attract the type of jobs that many residents now leave the County for. That is the single best thing we can do to improve commutes.

2017 marked some major milestones for transportation. It was gratifying to finally open up the missing links of Loudoun County Parkway and Tall Cedars Parkway—two projects that I have been deeply involved in during my entire time on the Board. 606 has already seen some milestones, and several other big projects are now under construction.

It won't be possible for me to cover everything we're working on in this Annual Report, but in the following pages you'll find updates on many topics. Remember, you can receive my monthly email newsletter and receive more frequent updates on my official Facebook page by signing up at www.loudoun.gov/dulles.

I remain appreciative of the opportunity to serve you. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have further questions or comments at matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov.

Matt Letourneau

Transportation Updates

The County's transportation program looks very different today than it did when I took office in 2012. Back then, we were involved in very little, while today we have over \$1 billion in projects underway or planned in the near future. For years, development has occurred in Loudoun without adequate infrastructure investment to keep pace with growth. The state's funding was minimal, so I was among a group of Supervisors who decided to begin dedicating a portion of our County budget for road construction. These funds allow us to leverage money coming in from state and regional sources. Land use is still a challenge, due to legal precedents, the length of development (projects approved decades ago are still building) and certain types of housing development that don't require County approval. However, our six year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) includes projects that are under construction or will be starting construction in our area.

Road Projects:

Route 50: This year, the third westbound lane from Loudoun County Parkway to Stone Springs Boulevard was completed. I still hear about signal timing issues and have worked with VDOT to confirm that they have set the maximum throughput that they can in the corridor. Ultimately, the signals will only allow so much traffic through, which is why the widening of 606 and other projects detailed below are important in providing more options for commuters.

In last year's report, I discussed my proposal for a new Route 50 Task Force as a joint initiative between Loudoun and Fairfax County to help coordinate our planning for the corridor. The visions for Route 50 between the two counties are different. Loudoun's Countywide Transportation Plan calls for interchanges and overpasses at current signalized intersections, while Fairfax mostly does not on their side. Unfortunately, I was unable to get any traction with my counterparts on the Fairfax Board, but we were able to move forward on a study to identify short term and long term improvements that can be made to get traffic moving on Route 50. I will be working to have as many of these incorporated into the Capital Improvement Plan during the upcoming budget process. I have also been working with the Sheriff's Office to increase enforcement in certain hotspots, especially on the eastern end of 50 near the County line, which is one of the worst spots in the entire County.

Route 606 Widening Project: The Route 606 widening project is making great progress. Despite some early delays, we have already seen traffic shifted to new pavement to allow reconstruction of the existing roadway, and new lanes have been added on both ends of the project. Completion of the entire project will be in late 2018, and things are still on schedule. You should see incremental improvements throughout the year as various pieces of the project come online.

Loudoun County Parkway: Now that we've completed the final missing piece, it is much easier to get between Dulles South and Ashburn. The Parkway is experiencing congestion near 50 and near the Greenway. For the stretch between Ryan Road and the Greenway, I have begun exploring ways to start a widening project. Close to 50, long term, an interchange is planned at Route 606 and Route 50, but the cost estimates are over \$300 million and it will take years to assemble that much funding. Development of some of the other roads discussed below, like Northstar and Arcola Blvd should help in the meantime.

Claiborne Parkway: We finally broke ground on the missing link of Claiborne Parkway from Ryan Road to Croson Lane this summer after years of issues with right of way acquisition and utility line relocations. The same contractor that completed the Tall Cedars Parkway months early is constructing this project and we expect a summer 2018 completion.

Mooreview Parkway: We broke ground on the project to complete the missing link of Mooreview Parkway between Croson Lane and Old Ryan Road in March. Construction is well underway and this is expected to be complete in Spring of 2018.

Paving Projects: Bull Run Post Office Road was recently paved on the gravel segment, but the additional traffic on the already existing paved section near Cedar Ridge Boulevard had caused it to worsen. VDOT accommodated my request to repave that second portion last fall.

Ticonderoga Road has been added to VDOT's unpaved road projects list in the current six-year planning cycle. VDOT is currently working with property owners in the area to confirm some alignment changes and prepare for paving in FY20-21.

Edgewater/Poland Roundabout: This project has moved more slowly than I hoped. It's a VDOT project, and they are a funding partner on it. They have completed the design of the new roundabout for this intersection and are currently working through utility relocation and acquisition of right of way. I wanted it to be completed before we entered the winter season, but the permanent roundabout won't be in place until later this year. At the same time we complete this project, the County will be constructing a pedestrian connection along Edgewater Street between the intersection and Paramount Place. I have asked VDOT to closely monitor the condition of the flex posts this winter, as they are often damaged by plows and trucks.

Elk Lick Road/Route 50/Tall Cedars Parkway: Following the results of a recent study and input from residents and businesses in the area, we are moving forward with changes to Elk Lick Road and its intersection with Route 50. Early this year, interim measures will be put in place to close the median on Route 50 and convert Elk Lick to a right-in/right-out only. Permanent pavement markings will be placed onto Defender Drive creating two marked travel lanes with one center turn lane between Elk Lick Road and South Riding Boulevard. This will remove the current parking areas along the shoulders. The permanent solution will be put in place later this year. After this is implemented, we will re-evaluate the Tall Cedars intersection to see if traffic volumes still warrant any changes there. I would prefer to not have to put in another traffic signal, but we will if we have to.

Arcola Boulevard: This new north/south road will connect Route 50 at the intersection of Gum Spring Road to Evergreen Mills Road and Route 606—relieving congestion on Stone Springs Boulevard, Route 50, 606 and Evergreen Mills Road. The existing Valero gas station on the Route 50 end will be relocated. The project has been broken into two phases.

Phase 1- Route 50 to Dulles West Boulevard is planned for funding in FY2019-FY2020 at a total cost of \$10.76 million. Phase 2- Dulles West Boulevard to Route 606 is expected to cost \$41.5 million, of which the Board currently has \$23.4 million budgeted in FY2020-FY2022 for construction. There are some complications with a state award that we received, and some proffer commitments with developers that we are working through.

Dulles West Boulevard: Extends from Dulles Landing to Northstar Boulevard. The section between Dulles Landing and Hutchinson Farm Drive is planned for funding at \$8.1 million in FY2019. This will help immensely with the exit from Dulles Landing by allowing westbound traffic to exit without utilizing Loudoun County Parkway. The section between Hutchinson Farm Drive and Arcola Boulevard is planned for funding at \$9.1 million in FY2020. The remaining section to Northstar Boulevard is expected to cost \$43.7 million, of which the Board currently has \$22.7 million budgeted in FY2021-FY2022 for design and right of way acquisition. This is essentially a parallel road to Route 50 on the north side, like Tall Cedars Parkway south of 50.

Northstar Boulevard: Northstar Boulevard will connect from Tall Cedars Parkway in Stone Ridge across Route 50 to Shreveport Drive in Brambleton. Funds have been allocated by the Board in two separate phases. The section from Tall Cedars to Route 50 is wrapping up final design this fall and the project is moving into the right of way acquisition phase. We have planned funding for the construction of this phase in the next two fiscal years, in the amount of \$30.5 million. The segment from Route 50 to Shreveport Drive is just beginning the design phase with a contract expected to be approved this fall. The total project will cost \$59.9 million and is planned for funding in FY2019, pending regional funding awards that we are fighting for.

Evergreen Mills Road: We are currently planning for intersection improvements at the intersections of Evergreen Mills Road with Belmont Ridge Road and Stone Springs Boulevard. That project widening Evergreen Mills between those intersections is budgeted at \$23 million in FY2020-2022. We are also planning to widen Evergreen Mills in multiple segments over the next several years. Widening from Stone Springs to Arcola Boulevard (to the east) is budgeted in FY2021-FY2022 at a cost of \$14.3 million. The segment from Northstar Boulevard to Belmont Ridge is budgeted to begin receiving funding in FY2022 with future year allocations required at a total cost of \$52.3 million. Further north, the Board has undertaken a safety audit as a result of several major accidents that occurred over the past year.

Westwind Drive: This project in the Ashburn part of the Dulles District will provide an additional way to get between Loudoun County Parkway and Route 606 near the Greenway by completing the missing link between State Street and Ladbrook Drive to connect to Route 606. The \$43.7 million project is budgeted in FY2019-FY2020, but state funding has been awarded in FY2023, so the timing is currently uncertain.

Belmont Ridge Road Widening: Belmont Ridge is in the process of being widened from Croson Lane to Route 7. The work is being done in multiple phases, and should be completed by 2020. We have also added to the Capital Improvement Plan widening the segment from Shreveport Drive to Evergreen Mills Road. The project is expected to cost \$17.3 million and \$1.4 million for design is budgeted in FY2022.

Loudoun County Parkway and Waxpool Road: \$5.5 million is budgeted for improvements at this intersection. We anticipate the final design to include turn lane additions to accommodate the westbound Waxpool Road left turns onto southbound Loudoun County Parkway, as well as a free flow right turn for the eastbound right turns from Loudoun County Parkway onto Waxpool Road. Until the design process is complete, we will not have an estimate on when construction may begin. However, we want this project to move forward as quickly as possible and will push to have a contract issued as soon as we can in cooperation with VDOT.

Braddock Road: We are in the planning stages for widening and improving various sections of Braddock Road over the coming years. First, we have funded turn lanes and a signal to be installed at the intersection of Braddock and Supreme/Summerall. This project will include the widening of Braddock Road in the vicinity. We have begun the design phase and expect to have that finalized next year with the total project to be completed in 2020. We have also added to the CIP the widening of Braddock Road between Royal Hunter Drive and Gum Spring Road. This segment is estimated at \$6 million and funding is budgeted to begin in FY2022. Unfortunately, I can't force much action on the Fairfax County side to widen and straighten the "S" curve, but I have requested VDOT to act by adding a turn lane at Old Lee Road. I recently requested traffic and safety data on the "S curve", which clearly demonstrate the problem. Making some progress on this issue will be one of my projects during 2018.

New Traffic Signals: In addition to the signals mentioned as part of certain projects above, in 2018 we should see new signals at: **Tall Cedars Parkway and Stone Springs Boulevard, Tall Cedars and Riding Center Drive and Tall Cedars and Pinebrook Road.** We are also making some progress on getting one in at **Northstar and Braddock** in advance of the schools being built nearby.

Public Transportation:

Metrorail: Phase II of the Silver Line is expected to be extended to Loudoun in early 2020 and is on schedule. In addition to the construction of the actual rail line and stations, there are 3 parking garages being built—two at the Ashburn station near Loudoun County Parkway, and another near 606 at the Loudoun Gateway station. The County has entered into a partnership on the northern garage at the Ashburn station. The other two garages are being built by the County directly and the construction contract was awarded this summer.

Metro's ongoing funding issues are well known regionally. 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. The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a resolution opposing the 1 cent sales tax.

The Loudoun County Administrator, finance staff, and 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 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. Ultimately, the state and federal governments must increase their investment.

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. Congresswoman Barbara Comstock recently introduced legislation that will enact many of these reforms, and I consulted with her during the drafting of her legislation.

LC Transit Bus Service: This summer saw the addition of two additional long haul commuter buses serving Dulles South. The buses were brought on to correspond with the opening of a new 300 space parking lot in Stone Ridge. We continue to see strong demand for commuter bus and Metro connection service while local transit routes in Dulles South have not been so successful and have been suspended. However, I expect that as Metro opens in Loudoun in 2020 there will be more opportunity for riders in Dulles South to make connections to other areas of the County and beyond, and will be working on new routes to serve Metro.

County and School Budgets

My philosophy is to provide as much value as possible, while trying to keep the tax burden reasonable. The current budget addressed longstanding needs in areas like Child Protective Services and Mental Health, and funded new facilities coming online this year.

Each year, our work on the budget begins over the summer with preliminary revenue estimates. Over the course of the fall, the Commissioner of Revenue completes property assessments, and those numbers are updated in January. During this particular year's budget process, the actual numbers beat revenue estimates, which left us in a more favorable position leading to a surplus.

The approved FY2018 tax rate of \$1.125/\$100 is one cent less than the equalized tax rate. This means that the owner of a home at the average assessed value has a reduction of \$90 in their real estate tax bill. Changes in assessments vary across the County so, your specific situation may be different. When I took office in 2012, the tax rate was \$1.285, so the rate itself has been decreased as assessments increased at roughly the same ratio.

Education is always a top priority for our community and receives much of the attention during budget season. The Board approved an \$82.8 million increase (8%) for Loudoun County Public Schools in FY18. The school system saw an increase of 2,555 (3.2%) new students this school year. The School Board dedicated this additional funding for increases due to enrollment growth, salary increases for teachers, and expansion of full day kindergarten.

During the coming years, the County must now focus on our employees. Studies have shown that Loudoun employees are making about 86% of their counterparts in comparable jurisdictions. As a result, we are experiencing high turnover rates and having trouble attracting candidates for some positions. Ultimately, these things cost us more money in the long term. During the FY2019 budget, I will be seeking to bring pay up to the County's current policy, and for future years, we are undertaking a classification and compensation study to modernize our pay structure.

New School Construction to Relieve Overcrowding: A huge portion of the County capital budget is dedicated to new school construction and expanding capacity and many of those projects impact our district. The County's capital budget is a fiscally constrained plan. We must stay within certain debt limits in order to maintain our AAA bond ratings, and schools are competing for the same funds as county functions like public safety stations, parks, and libraries. While a portion of the tax rate supports debt service on bonds used to pay for construction, an increased tax rate does not equate to more schools because we can only fit so much within each year's cap.

These are new schools with the year they are now planned to be opened thanks to adjustments over the last couple of years: Goshen Post Elementary, (next to Champe HS), fall 2018, Dulles North elementary (site TBD), fall 2019, Dulles North elementary (site TBD), fall 2022, and Dulles South elementary (next to Lightridge High), fall 2023. Classroom additions at Arcola, Creighton's Corner, Legacy, Liberty, Pinebrook and Rosa Lee Carter will open by fall 2018 to either relieve overcrowding or expand full day kindergarten. There are five more of these additions planned, locations to be determined prior to opening in fall of 2022.

Willard Middle (west of Northstar), fall 2018, Independence High (next to Hanson Park), fall 2019, and Lightridge High (south of Braddock), fall 2020. The Academies of Loudoun opens this fall, serving students admitted to those programs countywide. While it is not a County project, the Catholic Diocese of Arlington is building a new Paul VI High School at the Braddock/Gum Spring intersection in South Riding, with a projected opening date of fall 2020.

Economic Development

I continue to focus on economic development as a key element of providing needed services to our residents at a reasonable tax rate. Commercial development is a net positive for the County, using fewer services and creating revenue. This year was another record year for our Department of Economic Development. We added or retained 6.1 million square feet of commercial and industrial development. This accounted for over \$3.3 billion in new business investment in Loudoun County this year alone. The total for the last three years is \$7.2 billion in new commercial investment. This is not only the best in Virginia, but in the entire nation for a county of our size. Twenty-four Loudoun companies have been recognized on Inc's Fastest Growing list and we have been recognized as both the happiest county in America and the healthiest county in Virginia. Our agricultural community continues to thrive with Loudoun being home to the most wineries and breweries and the largest equine industry in Virginia. This brings much needed tourism revenue to our County.

Envision Loudoun

The County is still working through the review of our Comprehensive Plan for land use, known as Envision Loudoun. The current policies have been in place for over 20 years, and split the County into three areas—dense development east of Northstar Boulevard, less dense development between Northstar and Route 15, and rural-type development west of Route 15. Although a lot of development is occurring in our area, these policies have kept 2/3rds of Loudoun rural. The Board recently incorporated an update on land use policies around the future Metro stations into the Envision Loudoun process. We felt this was important because the station areas could be slated for thousands of new residential units that would have an impact on the overall land use policies in the County. There have already been many public input opportunities and I expect more to come before we head towards adoption this year. For more information visit www.envision-loudoun.org. It is crucial that we do not open up areas of the County for more dense residential development that do not have the infrastructure in place—as some have proposed. At the same time, some policies clearly need updating.

Public Safety

Loudoun is continually ranked as one of the safest jurisdictions in the Washington region. This year, the Board provided funding to staff the new Ashburn station that is currently under construction, and the Crisis Intervention Team partnership with the Department of Mental Health. Forty full-time equivalent positions were added to staff the new **Kirkpatrick Farms Fire and Rescue Station** that will be opening later this year. Kirkpatrick Farms will provide relief to the Dulles South station in South Riding, and be either the primary responding unit or a backup unit for most of Dulles South.

Parks and Recreation, Amenities and Retail Update (continued on back)

Dulles South Recreation and Senior Center: Construction of the Senior and Recreation Center additions are nearing completion and the facility is expected to be open in the next few months after it is outfitted with furniture and equipment and staffing work is complete. The Aquatic Center contains a 50 meter competition pool with seating, a large leisure pool with water features and a 30-foot tall slide. Other recreation spaces include a fitness facility with rock climbing wall, jogging track, gym, and dance room. The Senior Center includes a variety of spaces for programs, fitness areas, game room, large multi-purpose room, two art rooms and more.



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You can contact me by email at matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov or call my office at 703-771-5069.

Brambleton Library: Residents in the northern part of the district will benefit from this new full service library under construction in the Brambleton Town Center. The 40,000 square foot facility is expected to open midyear.

Hanson Park: This Regional Park has a total of 17 athletic fields (1 Cricket field, 4 diamond fields, and 12 rectangular fields) as well as other park amenities. Assuming full funding is identified in FY19, we expect construction to begin this year with completion in 2021.

Retail Development Update

Though delayed, Peterson Companies is moving forward on plans for their **Avonlea** project. They have completed a section of Tall Cedars Parkway and recently received approval of a comprehensive signage plan. Site work stopped due to some extensive soil issues, and market conditions have prevented them from restarting.

However, they have made adjustments to their phasing plans and I expect that site work could begin in the next few months. The first announced tenant was Cinepolis, a high end movie theater and they continue to recruit other tenants. Peterson acquired the land between their project and South Riding Market Square, and has an application to expand with a mixed use community of apartments and additional retail/dining. Expect more updates soon.

Arcola Center next to Dulles Landing has some big changes coming. They have an active application to build data centers on a large portion of the property—much of which already allows it. However, they also now have a signed agreement with Wegman’s to build a grocery store, and are working with several other major tenants for the commercial part of that project. I do not have a timeline yet for Wegman’s, but it is likely at least a few years away. Still, this is very good news for our area.