



# Dulles Direct Newsletter November 2018

Welcome to the November edition of the Dulles Direct Newsletter. It's hard to believe that Wayde has called before Thanksgiving, but the County received up to six inches of snow in addition to freezing rain already this season. There's a reminder about VDOT's plowing policy in the announcement section for the next time it snows.

In this newsletter, for the first time in a long time, I have a major update about the Avonlea project. Earlier this week, I met with Jon Peterson, CEO of the Peterson Companies, and Taylor Chess, President of Development, at the company's headquarters to discuss the Avonlea project. I have since received a letter from Peterson confirming some of the details of our discussion, and below I've shared that letter and my thoughts.

Veteran's Day was a few weeks ago and I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for all the servicemen and women who have sacrificed so much for our country. I also want to make sure that all of our veterans and families are aware of Loudoun County's Veterans Services program, which was expanded by the Board of Supervisors last year. The County now has a full time Veterans coordinator who is helping to

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Retail Updates Silver District West Amazon HQ2 Former United Rentals Building Elk Lick / Tall Cedars Intersection Tall Cedars / Riding Center Drive Intersection Claiborne Parkway VDOT Truck Prohibition Announcements facilitate assistance of all kinds for our veterans. You can learn more about this program <u>here</u>.

I want to thank everyone who voted and helped run our recent elections. As the County grows, more and more precincts need to be staffed, and our Registrar's office does an excellent job ensuring fair, safe and reliable voting in Loudoun County. Regarding the election results. Loudoun County will have a new representative in Congress, Jennifer Wexton. I have served with Congresswoman-elect Wexton, who has been a State Senator representing Loudoun and Fairfax, on the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission for the past several years and I stand ready to work with her to further the interest of our County. I also want to take a moment to thank our outgoing Congresswoman, Barbara Comstock, who served Loudoun ably during her time in office. In particular, Congresswoman Comstock was the driving force behind a \$25 million federal TIGER grant for Northstar Boulevard, which has been one of my top transportation priorities. She was also a major force for positive change with Metro, and I worked closely with her on those issues. I wish her the best as she transitions out of office.

I had the honor of hosting two local youth baseball teams at our November Board business meeting. The Loudoun South Little League 9-11 and 11-12 American All Star teams both made the entire County proud with an extraordinary run in postseason play this past Little League season. The 9-11 team had the distinction of becoming the first LSLL team from their age bracket to win both district and state titles. They also went on to compete in the Tournament of State Champions, advancing all the way to the semifinals as the number one seed. The 11-12 team won the District 16 Championship and the Virginia State Championship, outscoring opponents by a whopping margin of 56-1. During the Southeast Regional Tournament, they advanced all the way to the championship - falling just one game short of representing the region in the Little League World Series. I enjoyed welcoming LSLL President Joe Soricelli and the teams' players and



Matthew F. Letourneau Dulles District Supervisor Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

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coaches to the Board Room, and I wish them luck in their future endeavors.





At the same meeting, I had the honor of presenting a resolution commending local Eagle Scout Brian Lai for his great accomplishment. He identified a problem - the lack of benches at the Little River Commons community pond area. He then designed, constructed, and installed benches to the great benefit of everyone who frequents the pond. Becoming an Eagle Scout is a long and involved process. Getting there shows dedication, integrity, and hard work. I am very proud of Brian's achievement, and am looking forward to seeing the good things he goes on to do in the future.





# **RETAIL UPDATES**

#### Avonlea

I don't normally lead with a retail update, but there is nothing that has greater interest in our community than Peterson's Avonlea project. I do have a major update to share. As I mentioned, earlier this week I met for several hours with Jon Peterson and Taylor Chess, who are the top executives with the company. I was also joined by Buddy Rizer, Executive Director of Loudoun Economic Development. I requested this meeting after discussions with the company that had me increasingly concerned about the status of the project and its future. Our meeting was candid and ultimately productive. First, let me share <u>the letter I received from Taylor</u> <u>Chess</u> confirming the details of our discussion:

#### Supervisor Letourneau,

Thanks for your time on Monday to discuss Avonlea. As you know, our team has been working diligently to develop Avonlea into the premier shopping, dining, and entertainment destination that Loudoun County deserves. We've had discussions with best-in-class retailers and restaurants to complement Cinépolis and even signed a few leases and LOI's but the market was sending us a clear signal that we would see greater tenant interest and create a more sustainable

#### Sign Up for Alert Loudoun

Loudoun Express Request (LEx) Citizen Request System

Loudoun County Government Master Calendar and viable project if we considered a new approach to Avonlea.

Simultaneously, we've been following the progress of the Envision Loudoun Plan as it creates some opportunities that were not available to us in the original planning for Avonlea. We believe we can embrace the guiding principles outlined in the Envision Loudoun Plan to develop a new plan that combines Avonlea and the adjacent Bryant property to create a true regional mixed-use town center inclusive of retail, dining, entertainment, office and residential components. This would necessitate taking the time to create a new plan and going through the approval process, but ultimately we believe this approach will deliver a project that is more consistent with what the County, the market and the community is looking for.

We recognize that the community will be disappointed, as are we that Avonlea is not moving forward as quickly as we would have liked. We have made a significant investment in Avonlea including design and infrastructure work, as well as building Tall Cedars Parkway and advancing other proffers earlier than required for the benefit of the community. We remain 100% committed to developing a project that we will all be proud of.

In the meantime, at your request we are dispatching a team to clean up the construction site and we will keep posted as our new plans progress.

Thanks again for your ongoing support.

Taylor Chess President Development

Now, here are my thoughts. Obviously, first and foremost, I'm disappointed that Avonlea will not be moving forward in the immediate future. The decision described above means that Peterson will no longer be pursuing the current, approved project. However, in the long run, I think there is reason to be encouraged. First and foremost, Peterson still intends to develop Avonlea. They are maintaining ownership and the discussion at our meeting laid out the groundwork for a new plan that has a much better chance of success. In this difficult retail environment, I am encouraged that Peterson is still committed to Avonlea and is pledging major resources going forward to make it a reality.

To get into details, many likely didn't understand that there were actually two Peterson projects adjacent to each other. There was the approved Avonlea project, which is the parcel that has had site work done; I'll refer to this project as Phase I. Then there was the rest of the property that goes from that parcel over to the existing shopping center with Home Depot and Giant, called the Bryant parcel; I will refer to this project as Phase II. After Peterson received legislative approval for the first Avonlea project, they entered into an agreement with Toll Brothers to develop the Bryant parcel.

As I understood it from our discussion, one of the challenges that Peterson has had is their need to change the Phase I plan to adapt to the market. However, under the legislative approval they received it is not legally possible for them to deviate from the site plan that was approved. A legislative approval with a proffered site plan such as this one is basically like a law. The developer submits a specific plan, and they must build exactly what is on that plan, right down to the detailed square footage. In short, Peterson Companies has determined that they can't build that plan as it was approved. Now I understand that many will wonder why they couldn't simply build the movie theater. They told me that from a financial standpoint it is not viable as a standalone, or even with just the cinema and a few restaurants around it.

The executives discussed with me their desire to integrate both parcels they own and develop it as one larger master plan. Their proposal for the Bryant parcel never reached the Board of Supervisors, but was to include residential units mixed with commercial something I discussed in previous newsletters when Peterson first acquired the parcels. This is consistent with what they've built at Fairfax Corner, which has a large apartment complex with ground floor retail, and at National Harbor, which has condos throughout the core. It is also consistent with One Loudoun, Reston Town Center, and the Mosaic District, which are the other successful mixed-use projects in this region.

As they allude to in the letter, and as I have mentioned in this newsletter, the County is updating its Comprehensive Plan for land use. The plan contains changes to the "Town Center" (TC) designation for zoning that Peterson will be seeking for these parcels. These proposed TC changes include greater allowance for mixed residential, retail and commercial uses. My understanding from our meeting is that the Company will be seeking to take advantage of some of that extra flexibility to sprinkle all types of components throughout the project.

Should Peterson be bringing a new or updated application to the County for the entire parcel, as I expect, we can also work on giving them greater flexibility within the project approval to move pieces as the market demands. In other words, if a particular restaurant or retailer is interested in a certain square footage in a certain type of building, we can work to ensure that Peterson can adjust its plan without requiring a lengthy, expensive application process with the County. That type of flexibility would exist under certain parameters - for instance, a certain number of residential units, commercial square footage, etc. that could not be exceeded.

I do expect to see residential as part of this mixed-use proposal. This would be the same type of residential that we've seen at other projects of this type and likely would be integrated into the commercial side - things like ground floor restaurants. Obviously, with congestion being a major issue in our area we'll have to evaluate that aspect of the proposal very carefully. But I also recognize that the type of residential that is included in these mixed-use developments does not generate as many students as typical residential. It has become a necessary element for project financing and success for a project that contains amenities like what we are seeking. As I've assisted the company in recruitment with potential tenants, it has been very clear to me that the presence of some walkable residential in the project would make the overall concept far more attractive. Of course, as Peterson develops their proposal, there will be a significant County legislative process including public input. The Company also expressed a desire to engage directly with the community as they work on this, and I will facilitate that as much as I can. Obviously, I want this project to succeed and I want to get a movie theater, restaurants, and some retail here. I'm willing to consider a true mixed-use project to make that successful, but I've already made clear that I'm not interested in simply adding apartments, townhouses or condos and nothing else. The entire project must make sense, and I'll want to see firm commitments on the commercial side of it before we seriously consider it.

Over the last several years, I have invested a lot of time and effort to help Peterson try to get Avonlea off the ground. Our Department of Economic Development has played an active role in trying to bring potential tenants to the project and has provided both a commercial market study and the latest demographic information to the Company. In addition to working on the original approval and the Bryant applications, I've personally met with potential tenants and done my best to sell them on the area and the project itself. I was truly hoping that we would have a vibrant, thriving commercial center for Dulles South by now. I know all of you were too. At this juncture, with this decision now having been made, you have my word that I will continue to be as engaged as possible with making this successful and coming up with a final product that the community is proud of. As I said, it is still my goal and theirs - to have a movie theater, restaurants and public spaces that we will all frequent. Buddy Rizer and I also introduced some new ideas for potential users now that the project is larger. Both the County and Peterson will be evaluating these proposals. I am thankful that Peterson has already completed some of

their proffered requirements in terms of infrastructure, and as you can see they also agreed to my request that they come and spend some time cleaning up the site since our community must now live with it in the interim.

I'm happy to answer questions to the best of my ability, and I anticipate quite a bit of public dialogue at future Town Hall meetings and newsletters.

#### **Dulles Landing**

As the County has begun the process to design turn lane improvements from Dulles West Boulevard to the intersection of Loudoun County Parkway and Route 50, it has become apparent that there could be some synergy with a project to construct a right-out at the Dulles Landing entrance from Route 50. I have answered many questions over the years about this, so you probably know that Beatty did not construct this exit because they would have been required to add an acceleration lane to Route 50. We have had conversations with Beatty Companies about some potential partnerships that could implement this exit sooner and have determined that Zoning staff can administratively approve the exit. What we don't know yet is the exact amount of right of way for an acceleration lane or utility relocation that is required. We have engaged with an engineering firm and we hope to have more definitive answers on these items and the impacts they would have on the cost, as well as a timeline, in the next few months. This will inform any further discussions we have with Beatty on a partnership to get this done, so that we can improve access and egress as soon as possible. We do have other projects moving forward in about a 2-3 year timeline to build the road network around this shopping center, which I've discussed at length in previous newsletters.

## **LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

**Silver District West** 

As you may recall from past updates, Silver District West is a mixed-use community between the Ashburn and Loudoun Gateway Metro stations. As it currently stands in the planning process, Silver District West is comprised of 158 acres of 3,706 residential units, over one million square feet of non-residential construction such as office space, and recreational amenities such as trails. It will be one of, if not the largest land use application I've voted on during my time at the Board. At the November Transportation and Land Use Committee (TLUC) meeting, the application was moved to the full Board with a recommendation of approval on a 3-1-1 vote. I don't sit on the Committee and thus didn't vote but I was in attendance. (Had I been able to vote, I would have supported moving the application out of Committee, but not with a recommendation of approval at this juncture). From my standpoint, there are still some significant issues that need to be addressed, and to that end, I met with the applicant this week. Of specific interest to my constituents will be ensuring that Loudoun County Parkway between Ryan Road and Shellhorn Road is completed before much development occurs. We are also discussing specific additional road projects including the extension of Shellhorn Road and the completion of the bridge over the Greenway along Barrister which will connect this project to Shellhorn and give vehicles another way out besides Loudoun County Parkway. The bridge issue is dependent on actions by the Greenway which are also being discussed.

Another concern is the timing of commercial development, specifically office space, in relation to the planned residential units. As currently proposed there is no phasing requirement to bring on much needed office space in a timely manner. I am pushing for that requirement because our Department of Economic Development has identified the shortage of completed office space as a detriment to our efforts to attract new businesses to locate here.

A significant factor in this development is new FAA flight patterns around Dulles Airport as part of the

NextGen air traffic control rollout. The County will get its first look at those plans when the Airports Authority releases its draft noise study in early January. Because of the proximity of this project to the Airport, the location of some of the buildings could well be affected by changes to noise contours. TLUC sent the item to the January 17th Board meeting, but if I believe that does not provide enough time to adjust for the information from the noise study, I will vigorously push for a delay until that data can be fully accounted for in that application.

The applicant will be providing updated proffer statements dealing with some of the transportation issues and the specific location of residential units. I have advocated for as many on the north side of the project adjacent to Metro as possible. As that information becomes available, I will continue to share and will engage residents in impacted areas.

#### **Amazon HQ2**

As I'm sure you saw, Amazon recently selected Crystal City as a location for its split HQ2 project. Over the course of the summer, it became clear that Amazon had deviated from its original RFQ in terms of the type of environment it was looking for and the timeline and number of jobs involved. As has been reported, Loudoun County and Fairfax County teamed up to propose the CIT/Hub/Waterside projects to Amazon. I believe these projects represent the best greenfield development opportunity in the United States. The proximity to Dulles Airport, to Metro, to the existing Dulles Tech corridor and Washington make them truly unique, and millions of square feet of commercial development has already been approved on these sites. Nevertheless, Amazon was looking for buildings that could be immediately moved into, and was no longer concerned about comingling their space with other companies.

As Chairman of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, I noted that the selection of Crystal City was an economic development win for the entire

region. From the Loudoun standpoint, I am incredibly proud of the work that our Department of Economic Development did to prepare our bid. The shame of the outcome is that many will never know the quality of that bid and the outstanding effort that was made to bring together Loudoun and Fairfax in an unprecedented partnership. Fortunately, that synergy is continuing and will continue. Once it became apparent to us that Amazon was going in a different direction, our team renewed its efforts to promote our sites and continue our work with Fairfax County. As a result, interest remains strong. I believe that these parcels are a critical piece of our ultimate goal, which is to create jobs closer to where all of you live and give you options to reduce your commutes. I look forward to continuing our work to attract top companies and talent to Loudoun County.

## **DULLES DISTRICT UPDATES**

#### **Former United Rentals Building**

Ding, dong, the witch is ... well, anyway, I am pleased to report that the former United Rentals structure has been completely torn down. There is still some site work being done to complete removal of debris. Getting this building demolished has been a long and often arduous process, so I was happy to see the property owner finally take action before the County's contractor had to step in. I am convinced that this would not have happened without the Board approving my proposed Blight Ordinance, as well as our vote to ultimately approve a County funded demolition. Thanks for your patience during this process, and a special thanks to those who reached out to the Board in support of demolition.

Many of you will now turn your attention to the former hotel site. I have been in touch with staff in Building and Development to keep tabs on any permit activity. To date, a process has been completed to amend the site plan to incorporate parking changes and update storm water management for the site. Needed financing is now being secured. As long as the site plan remains active, the County's Blight Ordinance does not apply.

#### Elk Lick / Tall Cedars Intersection

I recently convened a meeting of top officials from the Loudoun County Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure, VDOT, the Sheriff's Office, and consultants to move forward with plans for the ultimate condition of this intersection. In the interim, I am also pushing for flashing stop signs, which to date have not been approved by VDOT. Our meeting reviewed the most recent traffic count data and engineering analysis done by VDOT. We will be reassembling in early January to - I hope - make a final decision as to whether we are pursuing a signal, removing stop signs, or making configuration changes - or some combination thereof. At this most recent meeting, VDOT made it very clear that the Traffic Engineering Division does not support a signal and really pushed the County to do some preliminary engineering work on other options, which is now happening. I'll keep you updated.

#### Tall Cedars / Riding Center Drive Intersection

In the last newsletter, I informed you that I have been in talks with Toll Brothers to accelerate the timeline of this signal. Toll Brothers' original timeline was October 2019, which I was not pleased about. The intersection has seen no shortage of backup and accidents, and the interim solution we agreed on was to have flashing red beacons attached to stop signs at the intersection. I have some minor updates as to the progress of the project from Toll. About three weeks ago, soil borings were completed. These are necessary to move forward with design for the signal foundation. Two different signal contractors have submitted bids to design and install the signals. Toll Brothers has gone back to both contractors with questions and clarifications regarding the bids. Toll Brothers is also completing the permit package for the flashing stop sign attachments. They hope to approach VDOT with the permits soon. They have ordered solar powered flashing attachments and I believe they could be installed by the end of December. Progress with this intersection has moved at a snail's pace in the past, but I am optimistic that solutions are starting to come together. I am insistent on staying in

the loop on exactly where things stand between Toll Brothers and VDOT. Please stay safe as you continue to use the intersection, and I will provide you with any updates that come my way in the future.

#### **Claiborne Parkway**

The project is now in the final stages of construction and completion of landscaping improvements along the road frontage. Based on current project timelines, it should be ready to open in mid to late December. A specific date will be set as it gets closer and we see what impacts the weather may have. It has been a long time coming, and I'm happy that Claiborne will be serving its intended purposes soon. Stay tuned for an opening date as soon as it has been set.

#### **VDOT Truck Prohibition**

VDOT is granting the Board's request to restrict through truck traffic on Route 3172 (Sacred Mountain Street) and Route 616 (Goshen Road / Marrwood Drive / Lenah Mill Boulevard) between Route 3171 (Northstar Boulevard) and Route 50 (John Mosby Highway). After a traffic engineering study and analysis, VDOT determined that these stretches of road met the criteria established by the Commonwealth Transportation Board in considering through truck restrictions. The aforementioned roads are now prohibited to through traffic of trucks. This closure will not apply to trucks with points of origin or destination along the affected routes. Rather, the new regulation is intended to eliminate trucks using these roads as cut through routes. VDOT will be installing the proper signage along the routes.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Syrian Refugee Blanket Drive

Since 2011, over five million Syrian refugees have fanned out to surrounding nations in order to escape the civil war ravaging their homeland. One of the biggest challenges facing these refugees is the harsh winter weather that they are ill-equipped to face. Since 2013, Northern Virginia leaders and communities have worked with the NOVA Relief Center to aid and assist the immediate physical needs of these refugees. Once again, we will be collecting blankets and coats to distribute to Syrian and other refugees abroad. This year, the NOVA Relief Center will be donating to three camps in Jordan: Mafraq, Jerash, and Irbid. You can help this process by making and collecting monetary donations, giving gently used blankets and/or coats, and volunteering. All items will be shipped free of charge this winter, thanks to Paxton Van Lines and Maersk. For more information on how to volunteer and where to drop off items, please visit https://novareliefcenter.org/. There is a drop off location in the lobby of the Dulles South Recreation and Community Center in South Riding, weekdays between 7 AM and 6:30 PM. This location will be functioning until December 8.

#### **Brambleton Library Grand Opening**

After much anticipation, the Brambleton Library will open its doors to the public on December 1 at 1 PM. Located at 22850 Brambleton Place in Brambleton, VA 20148, the facility is 40,000 square feet and features meeting rooms, dedicated space for children and teens, a videogame room, study rooms, and a makerspace with access to 3D printers and a recording studio. Residents are encouraged to visit the library and make use of its varied and state-of-the-art resources.

#### **Rust Library Passport Service**

While not in the Dulles District, Rust Library in Leesburg is now offering passport services. This is part of a pilot program in Loudoun County that, if successful, could be expanded to other libraries such as Gum Spring. Rust Library is offering passport book and card application processing as well as photo services. The library is located at 380 Old Waterford Road NW and is open six days a week for the passport services. Applications will be accepted from 11 AM to 8 PM Tuesday through Thursday, 11 AM to 4 PM Friday and Saturday, and 1 to 4 PM on Sunday. Applicants will need to bring a completed application Form DS-11 (available at <u>www.travel.state.gov</u>), a check or money order for each application being submitted, proof of identity such as a driver's license, and proof of U.S. citizenship such as an official birth certificate. Rust Library does not currently accept or process passport renewal applications. For more information, please visit www.library.loudoun.gov/passport.

# Loudoun County Cable Subscriber Survey and Meeting

Loudoun County is gathering information from cable television subscribers in the county related to the quality of service they receive from their cable TV provider pertaining to outages, response time, value and service calls. Under terms of the franchise agreement with Comcast Communications and Verizon Virginia, a subscriber satisfaction survey is to be conducted periodically. The results of the subscriber survey will be shared with the Loudoun County Communications Commission and will help form recommendations to the Board of Supervisors as the county prepares for franchise renewal negotiations that are expected to occur within the next three years.

A link to the survey is available at <u>www.loudoun.gov/cable</u>. The survey will remain open through January 31, 2019.

The Loudoun County Communications Commission is scheduled to hold a public input meeting to further solicit feedback from cable TV subscribers Wednesday, December 19, 2018, at 7:00 PM in the Dulles Room of the Loudoun County Government Center, 1 Harrison Street SE in Leesburg. Anyone who has questions about the survey may contact Loudoun County Administrator of Broadband & Cable TV Services Zenon Dragosz at 703- 771-5966 or Zenon.Dragosz@loudoun.gov.

#### **VDOT Snow Plowing Information**

As mentioned before, we've already experienced the first snow of the season.

When we have a snow event this winter, VDOT's 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 72 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:

 <u>http://www.virginiadot.org/about/emer\_response.asp</u> f or news releases, important messages, frequently asked questions and links to many other resources, including:
@VaDOTNOVA on Twitter

- <u>www.511virginia.org</u> for road conditions and traffic cameras

- <u>www.vdotplows.org</u> for neighborhood status and locations of plows

- <u>http://www.virginiadot.org/</u>

or 800-FOR-ROAD (367-7623) to report issues

#### **Dulles South Food Pantry Expanded Service**

The Dulles South Food Pantry provides food assistance up to twice a month to any person who resides in the school attendance zones for Freedom High School, John Champe High School, Independence High School, Rock Ridge High School and Briar Woods High School. The Pantry also provides one-time emergency food assistance to anyone in need. The food pantry is open Wednesdays in the historic white chapel at Arcola United Methodist Church, 24757 Evergreen Mills Road, Dulles, VA 20166. Call 703-507-2795 or email <u>info@dsfp.org</u> to schedule an appointment. See the Dulles South Food Pantry's website at <u>http://www.dsfp.org/</u> for information on how you can help the food pantry fight local hunger. Donations to the Dulles South Food Pantry, Inc. are tax deductible.

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