



Dulles Direct Newsletter December 2018

Welcome to the December edition of the Dulles Direct newsletter. I hope that everyone is enjoying the holidays. A very merry Christmas from my family to yours, and I wish everyone a safe, healthy and happy New Year. For our Jewish friends, I hope you enjoyed your Hanukkah season earlier this month.

As we approach the end of the year, I am working on our 2018 Annual Report which will be mailed to each household. We'll include all the latest information on transportation projects and other important issues.

Thank you to everyone who came out to my Town Hall at Freedom High School last Thursday evening. We had a rather spirited and robust discussion about the Avonlea development. I'd like to thank the team from Peterson Companies for coming to the meeting, particularly Taylor Chess, President of Development, who took questions from the audience. I included an in-depth discussion on Avonlea in my [November newsletter](#). Additionally, video of the Town Hall was streamed live on my [Facebook page](#). If you couldn't make the Town Hall and have questions, feel free to contact me at mattletourneau@loudoun.gov.

In This Issue

[Signal at Route 50 & Lenah Mill / Fleetwood](#)

[Signal at Riding Center Drive & Tall Cedars Parkway](#)

[Claiborne Parkway](#)

[Edgewater Sidewalk Project](#)

[What's the Deal with the Greenway Deal?](#)

[Firearms Discharge Ordinance](#)

[Retail](#)

[Announcements](#)

The Brambleton Library Opening was a big success, with over 10,000 people walking through the door on December 1 & 2. The library is now open and fully operational. Hours are 10 AM - 9 PM on Monday through Saturday, and 1-5 PM on Sunday. The library offers a number of resources, including 3D printers, a recording studio, and dedicated spaces for kids and teens. It is a wonderful place to relax and learn, so I recommend that everyone check it out. I handled some of the negotiations between the Brambleton developer and the County, so it is good to see that project come to fruition.



Last week I helped cut the ribbon for the new Home2 Suites hotel on Defender Drive in South Riding. It is the first hotel to open in Loudoun in five years and the only within its zip code. They have a large meeting room onsite and comfortable outdoor fire pit area. They are also partnering with a fantastic local charity, [Ellie's Hats](#) as their supported local community organization.



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

Chairman
[Finance, Government
Operations and Economic
Development Committee](#)

Chairman
[Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments
Board of Directors](#)

Vice Chairman
[Northern Virginia
Transportation
Commission](#)

Member
[Rt. 28 Transportation
Improvement District
Commission](#)

Member
[Region Forward Coalition](#)

Contact Me

Mailing Address:

1 Harrison Street, S.E.,
5th Floor
P.O. Box 7000
Leesburg, VA 20177-7000

E-Mail:



As you may remember, I served as Chairman of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) this year. Last week, we held our Annual Meeting in which I delivered a report to the broader Metro DC community about what our Board accomplished this year. We made progress on several fronts. We set up the Metrorail Safety Commission, which will replace Federal Transit Administration oversight, played a major role in coordinating legislation to secure long-term dedicated capital funding for Metro (which had to be passed by DC, Maryland and Virginia), and provided a baseline presentation on the DC region that was part of every local bid for Amazon's HQ2.

matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov
v

Office Phone:
(703) 771-5069

Legislative Aide:
[Tom Parker](#)

Staff Aide:
[Jared Midwood](#)

Quick Links



[Join My Mailing List](#)

[Supervisor
Letourneau's Dulles
District Site](#)

[Loudoun County
Government Website](#)

[VDOT 511 Traffic
Information](#)

[Loudoun County Road
Maintenance
Information](#)

[VDOT Snow Plowing
Information](#)

[Loudoun County Traffic
Incident Map](#)



I had two major initiatives as Chairman this year. We examined the safety and security of government buildings and schools, which gave each of us tools to use when discussing these issues within the context of our own local jurisdictions. We also commissioned a Traffic Incident Management task force comprised of public safety and transportation experts from all levels of federal, state, and local government. This task force presented the Board with several recommendations that are currently being implemented to improve traffic incident response in the region and I expect that the task force will be an ongoing project.

[Sign Up for Alert Loudoun](#)

[Loudoun Express Request \(LEx\) Citizen Request System](#)

[Loudoun County Government Master Calendar](#)



Just last night I had the privilege of meeting with a Cub Scout troop, South Riding Pack 1148, working hard towards their merit badges. One of the requirements is that they meet with a locally elected leader and talk about some community issues. We had a great discussion! I always admire the hard work and effort that the Scouts put forward on a daily basis.



DULLES UPDATES

Signal at Route 50 & Lenah Mill / Fleetwood

VDOT is currently working on installing a traffic light at this problematic intersection. It has been a long time coming, so I'm happy to bring news of progress on the project. Underground utility work has been completed, which is a big component in getting the signal hardware set up and ready to function. Unfortunately, there has been a pretty widespread delay in the manufacture of signal poles and mast arms, so the project is waiting on those to be delivered. This issue has to do with a shortage of steel from market demand and tariffs. They hope to have the poles and mast arms by mid to late January. Warning signage has been placed at the intersection to caution drivers of turning traffic in the interim. Thank you for your patience during the process, and I should have a more specific timeline for completion next month.

Signal at Riding Center Drive & Tall Cedars Parkway

I was alerted last week that all eight poles, beacons, and stop signs have been installed at the intersection of Riding Center Drive and Tall Cedars Parkway, as you can see in the picture below. These additions will significantly improve traffic flow and reduce dangerous conditions. Please continue exercising caution when going through the intersection. At the moment, the flashing beacons are not fully operational because they are solar powered and there hasn't been very much sun. The units will store energy for nighttime when it is dark, but they need a few days of sunlight to work properly. There is no electricity at this intersection yet; that's part of the signal project.

The beacons are an interim measure until a full signal can be constructed. Toll Brothers is bringing on a contractor and should be starting the process soon. The previous expected date of completion is October 2019, but I have been able to get certain review processes expedited that should help bring it online sooner.



Claiborne Parkway

We have seen some weather delays on the Claiborne Parkway project primarily due to the heavy rain we've been experiencing. These delays have impacted the expected opening. We had originally planned to open the road in mid December, but it is now looking like

the final items should be complete and ready to open in early January.

Edgewater Sidewalk Project

To complement the completed roundabout at Poland and Edgewater, we are constructing a sidewalk connection from Poland Road to Paramount Place. Unfortunately, there were some unexpected delays in securing needed easement dedications from the property owner. We have also seen some weather issues that have impacted the contractor being able to start work. They are scheduled to begin by the end of the year and it should take about 3 months to complete once they get going.

LOUDOUN UPDATES

What's the Deal with the Greenway Deal?

I have been fighting Greenway tolls for years now. Our former delegate, David Ramadan, challenged Greenway toll increases and ultimately Loudoun County took the issue of whether they could be challenged to the State Supreme Court.

It was with some surprise that I learned a "deal" had been brokered by Delegate Bell, Delegate Reid and the Greenway to implement distance pricing.

Distance pricing has long been a goal. One of the positives we did get from the original State Corporation Commission decision was the recommendation that the Greenway install the equipment necessary for distance pricing.

However, as I came to learn more about this deal, I realized that it was good only for the Greenway, not the County or toll payers. Here's why.

Our challenge to the Greenway's toll increases was based on a provision in Virginia code that says toll increases cannot materially discourage use of the toll road. We have ample evidence that high tolls do in fact discourage use of the road-as the population of the

County has gone up, Greenway traffic is flat, and traffic on surrounding alternatives is way up. The SCC never let the County and Delegate Ramadan present this case. Instead, they ruled that the Herring Bill - a piece of legislation from then State Senator Mark Herring which locked in toll rates at Consumer Price Index +1% for five years - superseded our ability to challenge tolls. It was this issue that we took to the Supreme Court, which upheld the SCC decision.

The Herring bill expires next year. That expiration gives the County the opportunity to challenge future toll increases on their merits. I'm more than ready and willing to do that. The SCC must follow the law. For the Greenway, there will probably be a period of uncertainty. The longer term agreement for toll increases helped them sell bonds and finance projects. Of course, their entire model has been based on using the Greenway to leverage financing for unrelated projects. Another aspect of the County's case will be to show that the primary burden on the Greenway is debt service and that debt service is not actually generated by Greenway projects. In fact, the Greenway includes about \$1 billion in unrelated debt in its calculations of what the tolls should be.

The Greenway has some incentive to lock in an agreement for toll increases, and that's what this deal is. It guarantees that every single person will be paying more until 2056, because CPI +1 will kick in. In return for this great privilege, the Greenway will install the equipment for distance based pricing, and implement it only for off-peak users. In addition, they have set a base rate of \$1 dollar per mile, which means that even for off-peak, the vast majority of users are not going to see much relief. If you were to use the Greenway off peak to go between 606 and Loudoun County Parkway, you would see a reduction of under a dollar, but only those limited scenarios are helped by this.

So, I oppose this deal, and I will be urging the General Assembly to reject it. It isn't a good deal for the County. If the Greenway is seeking additional toll increases, they will have to go make their case to the

SCC to do so. The County has the ability to contest that case, and I believe it should. The risk is that the SCC could approve an even higher rate increase than CPI +1. However, without a long term commitment, the Greenway still does not have the financial security to finance, so there would still be some incentive to lock that into place. Should the County decide to mitigate the risk of a larger toll increase by agreeing to a locked in longer term deal, we should be receiving much more in return than just some minor off-peak relief in toll prices. In fact, I would argue that what has been offered only really benefits the Greenway, because virtually nobody uses the road for short trips right now. Any revenue the Greenway gets from that type of traffic is a big benefit to the people who own it.

Firearms Discharge Ordinance

At the December 4 Board Business meeting, we heard recommendations from a working group comprised of County staff and representatives from hunting and gun clubs regarding firearms discharge ordinances in Loudoun County. The Board had asked this group to take a look at this issue in response to multiple incidents of stray bullets hitting homes throughout Loudoun. Specifically, there were 8 homes hit over the last 6 months, some of which had adults and children inside them. I should add that these aren't the only incidents that have occurred in the County; these types of things have been going on for some time.

Unfortunately, this topic is very politicized and there are strong feelings about guns on each side of the aisle. I don't view this as just a gun issue, but also as an issue of personal and property rights. I have received plenty of emails from residents of different political leanings and perspectives on guns.

I felt that the working group's recommendations were incomplete as they only met twice and were not briefed on all the discharge incidents. If you'd like to read their recommendations, you can do so here:

<http://www.loudoun.gov/3426/Board-of-Supervisors-Meetings-Packets>. The group saw no problem with the

status quo and said that they thought this was not a problem worth devoting resources to. I don't agree with that. As I have maintained all along, this issue needs a scalpel and not a hammer. Broad strokes don't do us any favors when addressing a topic as weighty as this one.

There have been two proposals so far during this discussion which I think are too broad and would essentially result in a wholesale ban on shooting throughout the County, or in too large a section of it. I didn't vote for either of those proposals. But I'm also not willing to accept the status quo. The risk calculus is simply not acceptable.

Ultimately, my colleague Supervisor Meyer and I decided that the best thing would be to continue this discussion in the Board's Transportation and Land Use Committee, focused on four specific areas that we want additional research and discussion on. Those are 1) whether we should consider expanding the shooting prohibition area to the entire Suburban Policy Area, due to the density of homes found therein (the current prohibition area is east of Route 659 and was drawn before there was suburban development west of 659), 2) whether we should consider increasing the shooting buffer from 50 to 100 yards from a roadway as all surrounding counties have done, including Clarke and Fauquier, 3) whether we should consider a berm requirement for target shooting, be it natural or manmade, since berms may have prevented several of the stray bullet incidents we've experienced, and 4) a discussion regarding the current criminal code, which has two separate pieces of code regarding reckless discharge and firing a weapon towards a home. After much debate, the motion passed on a 5-4 vote, with opponents arguing this conversation is not needed.

In most of the cases of gunfire hitting homes, I have been frustrated with the County's inability to prosecute the perpetrators. This difficulty stems from the reality that it is extremely difficult to ascertain who in a group of shooters fired the actual bullet that struck the home. I have had several conversations with the

Commonwealth's Attorney and Sheriff. Both expressed to me how difficult it is to prosecute a shooter when they were in a group of people and no one is clear on who fired the offending weapon. This is not their fault - it is not a case of the CA or the Sheriff not doing his job as some has alleged. In fact, there is case law in Loudoun on this very issue in which an individual was struck by a stray bullet. Two individuals were shooting nearby and were both charged, and a judge dismissed the case because the prosecutor could not prove which one of them actually fired the bullet. I want to review the current criminal code and see if there is a way it can be tweaked to provide for a more definitive prosecution process. Some have argued that this discussion isn't needed because the code should cover these issues, but it obviously doesn't. Furthermore, the code sections are dealing with prosecutions after something has happened. The question should be, what can we do to prevent an incident in the first place? Obviously, nothing is foolproof, but are there steps such as the ones we've asked to look at that would at least mitigate the risk.

Furthermore, there was a motion to promulgate an educational campaign about responsible weapon usage. I support the idea of the motion but had to vote against it, since it was offered as a substitute motion in place of ours. That motion passed, and had it not I would have offered it as an addition to ours.

Finally, we also included the actual recommendations of the working group for discussion. They were minimal, but there were a few suggestions that may help clarify the noise surrounding the issue. That motion also passed 5-4 (I'm not really clear why some of my colleagues didn't even want to discuss modest recommendations from our own working group).

I don't believe that anyone should fear this conversation. It is not a referendum on the Second Amendment. The vast majority of hunters and shooters are responsible. The goal here should be to eradicate irresponsible behavior. Hunting is valuable for Loudoun; it cuts down on the deer population, which

helps control Lyme disease and reduces vehicle crashes. That being said, people living with their children also have the right to be protected from stray bullets entering their living space. When current laws do not allow us to prosecute offenders who perpetrate such incidents, it is a pretty clear indication that we as locally elected leaders can do better.

I expect that the Transportation and Land Use Committee's discussion will take place in February. Like all of our meetings, it is open to the public and will be televised, webcast and archived. If you have thoughts on this topic, I'm always open to hearing them. Unfortunately some of the comments that Supervisor Meyer and I have received since the Board's vote have not been based in fact and have not been respectful. There are some groups and organizations who are attempting to "stir the pot" for political reasons and are describing our positions inaccurately. Let's stick to the facts and have a respectful dialogue.

RETAIL

Eastgate

The wet weather this year has delayed much of the site work and the developers are behind schedule going into the winter. Royal Farms, Zaxby's, Learning Care Group, Dunkin Donuts, Pacific Dental Care, Aago Indian Restaurant, and a nail salon are all planned. Look for more announcements coming soon. You should see a lot of stores opening in the first quarter of 2019. King Spa is also opening in 2019.

South Riding

Fitness Equation is currently under construction next to the newly opened Home2 Suites on Defender Drive. They are anticipating a January 2019 opening.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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:

- http://www.virginiadot.org/about/emer_response.asp for news releases, important messages, frequently asked questions and links to many other resources, including:
- @VaDOTNOVA on Twitter
- www.511virginia.org for road conditions and traffic cameras
- www.vdotplows.org for neighborhood status and locations of plows
- <http://www.virginiadot.org> 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 info@dsfp.org to schedule an appointment. See the Dulles South Food Pantry's website at <http://www.dsfp.org/> for information on how you can help the food pantry fight local hunger. Donations to the Dulles South Food Pantry, Inc. are tax deductible.

Did someone forward this to you? Click below to sign up to receive future updates directly.

Join My Mailing List



Copyright © 2018. All Rights Reserved.

Supervisor Matt Letourneau, 1 Harrison Street, S.E., 5th Floor,
P.O. Box 7000, Leesburg, VA 20177

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov in collaboration with

Constant Contact

Try it free today