

Dulles Direct Newsletter March 2019

Welcome to the March edition of the Dulles Direct newsletter. March is always one of our busiest months, with the Board holding work sessions to finalize the FY20 budget.

Last week, we broke ground for the upcoming Loudoun United soccer stadium at Bolen Park. Loudoun United has already begun playing, and it's very exciting to see our new club on television competing against teams from Nashville, Memphis and Tampa Bay (our first 3 opponents). The construction process for the stadium is a quick one because it is a pre-fab modular facility; we expect the first home match to be on August 9th. The deal to bring the team and the MLS DC United training center to Loudoun, which I led negotiations on, was named the 2018 "Deal of the Year" by the Northern Virginia Chapter of Commercial Real Estate Women. Go Loudoun!

A big congratulations is in order for several athletic programs at Freedom High School. The gymnastics team won first place at the Virginia High School League's state championship. Their coach Laura Wright was also named the Cheers and LoCo Sports' Coach of the Year. I will be presenting a resolution to honor the team at an upcoming Board Business Meeting.

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On the basketball court, it was an exciting "March Madness" for the Freedom boys' basketball team. The Eagles made it to the Virginia Class 5 State Finals, making them one of the top two teams in the entire state in their division. The girls' team lost narrowly in Virginia Class 5 State Semifinals, earning them a spot in the top four teams across the commonwealth. Congratulations to the players, coaches and parents who put time and effort into a very successful season.

DULLES UPDATES

Updated MWAA Noise Contours

At our March 5 Business Meeting, the Board was briefed about updated Dulles Airport noise map contours being developed by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (including governing policies and implementation strategies). The current contours are over twenty years old and provide the basis for Airport Impact Overlay District (AIOD) zoning in Loudoun and Fairfax Counties. MWAA is currently finalizing the new draft.

Under the updated noise contours, there is no change to the current AIOD. There will be, however, slight changes to the 60 and 65 Ldn noise contours, which appear to mostly affect areas in Stone Ridge. I've been seeking more information about exactly what has driven these changes, since I believe that there are three possibilities: 1) existing flights aren't being accurately accounted for in the current map, 2) the FAA's Next Gen Air Traffic Control system, which will be implemented soon at Dulles, will change some flight patterns, or 3) future growth at the airport, such as the addition of one more east-west runway, could result in changes. I'll provide more information once the drafts are finalized and approved by MWAA. You can read more about the study and the new contour maps [here](#).

Beach Commercial Property

As you may remember, Van Metre has an application to consider special exceptions for the Beach



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commercial property, which is 2.92 acres in the suburban policy area on the north side of Tall Cedars Parkway, west of Pinebrook Road and on both sides of Meadows Farm Court. This is an oddly shaped, orphan parcel that was created by the right of way acquisition process for Tall Cedars Parkway.

According to the developer, there is no end user for this site yet, but the original application seeks a special exception to allow an automotive service station, a car wash, and a convenience food store with gas pumps. I've been concerned about this application since it was first proposed, for the simple fact that there is already a gas station under construction at the corner of Gum Spring and Tall Cedars. This parcel just seems out of place for that kind of use.

Van Metre and I met with a significant number of concerned residents of the EastView community, which is across the street from this parcel. There was no resolution at that meeting. However, I have continued my dialogue with the developer and at this point they have decided to postpone the Board's vote on their application until at least June, which will give them more time to explore other users. I am pleased to also report that Van Metre has taken the gas station out of the equation for this parcel. While they are likely to continue seeking automotive uses, they likely won't be operating all day and night like a gas station does and will not saturate the area with gas stations as I feared. I will provide further updates when we know more.

Silver District West

At long last, the full Board of Supervisors has taken a vote on Silver District West. As you will recall, Silver District West is a 158-acre mixed-use community between the Ashburn and Loudoun Gateway Metro stations that will have 3,700 residential units, over one million square feet of non-residential construction such as office space, and recreational amenities such as trails. The Board voted to approve the application 8-1 at our March 21 Business Meeting.

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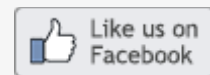
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This was a difficult application, and one that I did not think I would be able to support. However, my colleague Supervisor Ron Meyer (whose district shares this application with us) and I worked very hard to negotiate an entirely new deal for the County. Ultimately we made so much progress that I felt comfortable voting yes.

When it was first proposed, Silver District West was not up to par for such a large development. It didn't limit specific unit types and proffered less than \$10 million in transportation improvement. That was clearly something I could not support.

I know firsthand how congested traffic is in the Loudoun County Parkway corridor. I have worked hard over the years to complete the unfinished section of LCP in the LVE area. I have also tried my best to slate improvements for Waxpool Road and construction of Gloucester Parkway - both projects that I saw as bearing material benefit for commuters. Despite all these improvements to quality of life for our residents, I was acutely aware that previous Boards had approved thousands of yet-unbuilt homes at Moorefield Station and elsewhere. There's no way to get around this conundrum. That's where Silver District West came in. It will help redirect growth into an area with planned infrastructure instead of continuing sprawl to the west, where road networks and amenities have not yet caught up.

Our evaluation of Silver District West was piloted by fiscal and transportation analyses conducted by the County that I insisted on early in the process. These independent analyses represent a new blueprint to consider large applications like this. Thanks to those, it became clear what the County's actual needs would be for a project like this to work.

Thanks to our negotiations, the SDW applicant is now providing the County over \$84 million in infrastructure in the first phase of development. This number actually represents a \$130 million value in our budget due to financing costs and project escalation over time. The

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applicant has also agreed to a stipulation that limits the number of townhomes, which are the most concerning from a fiscal standpoint. Thanks to those stipulations, under all scenarios the final application now projects to be fiscally positive for Loudoun County, even at full buildout.

There are several proffered road improvements that Silver District West will be constructing. In most cases, these proffers speed the projects up by several years. All of them will be built privately within 24-36 months of the first permits being issued. Proffers include the widening of Loudoun County Parkway and the construction of Barrister and Shellhorn to relieve congestion in the LCP and Waxpool corridors. Shellhorn will also act as a major alternative to the Greenway, which will be welcome for commuters that are consistently strapped by ludicrous tolls. Before Silver District West was on the table, these projects existed in our CIP but often were many years away from construction and required us to compete for increasingly limited regional funding. Turning them into SDW proffers will benefit everyone involved.

I know that some residents have still expressed concerns, particularly in the Westwind Crossing community. For Westwind residents, we were able to include language to improve the buffer between the new project and the existing neighborhood, provide access to shuttle bus service to the Metro station, ensure that a trail linkage with the Loudoun Gateway Metro station is pursued, and provide for some fencing around community amenities. I sent a [letter](#) responding to many of the concerns from residents. I won't stop communicating with you on this important application: be on the lookout for continued updates in the months and years ahead.

Tall Cedars / Riding Center Drive Intersection

Work at this intersection has been permitted by VDOT, but signal operation is not expected until late August or early September. VDOT has approved the submittals for poles and arms and the signal pole foundations have

been poured. Some borings for conduit placements have been completed, and the process of laying down conduit has begun. Due to production delays and steel shortages, Toll Brothers expects delivery of the poles and mast arms in mid-July. Please stay tuned for updates and additional timeline information.

Tall Cedars / Stone Springs Intersection

This project has been delayed by a number of factors, the most recent of which was a conflict with a Loudoun Water main. The final redesign plans for the signal were submitted to VDOT, Loudoun Water, and Building and Development for final review in mid-March. The redesign was required after a conflict with a Loudoun Water main was discovered and the pole locations had to be moved. Geotechnical work at the intersection is anticipated this spring and we should have all final approvals in place by summer to bid the project out for construction. If all goes according to plan, it should be operational by the upcoming winter.

LOUDOUN UPDATES

Envision 2040 Comprehensive Plan

The Planning Commission presented their draft of the new Comprehensive Plan at our March 21 Business Meeting. The Comprehensive Plan addresses land use and transportation at a high level, and sets the stage for potential changes to parcel zoning. This draft comes at the end of a long process that began with recommendations from a stakeholder's group and continued with a lengthy Planning Commission process.

I will be conducting a thorough review of the draft comprehensive plan. Land use is never a black and white issue, and the Board is already hearing from those on different sides of the debate. On one hand, the business community and realtors are supporting the notion that Loudoun needs more housing units to meet demand. On the other hand, others are arguing that the draft plan contains too many units, and industrial development in areas they don't want it to go.

There are some governing principles by which I'll be approaching the draft plan. For starters, congestion in Loudoun is already at an unacceptable level. This congestion strongly affects Dulles, especially Dulles South. I don't want to see more development there until we have adequate infrastructure for what already exists. What complicates matters even more in Dulles South is our reliance on Fairfax and Prince William's infrastructure. As much as I wish we could, we can't address all the issues related to Fairfax's jurisdiction, such as Route 50 and Braddock Road.

Under the existing Comprehensive Plan, there are thousands of by-right units that can be built. The southern part of the County seems especially attractive to developers trying to locate land to build on. That means growth and congestion are likely to increase even under the current plan, not accounting for the additional units proposed by the new plan. The housing market in Loudoun is also growing tighter. Lower and lower inventories mean that unit types are not as diverse or affordable as we would like to see. That being said, it's more favorable to be growing than contracting - history teaches us that lesson, and it's important to keep it in mind going forward.

Some of my principles seem contradictory, which I acknowledge. That's why it's so hard to develop a Comprehensive Plan for a County as diverse as Loudoun. There's also the present comprehensive plan and the legal entitlements that come with it to consider. We will have our work cut out for us as we weigh these issues.

I anticipate several changes to the final plan, with ample opportunity for public input. Here is the Board's schedule for reviewing the draft Comprehensive Plan, including two Public Hearings for providing input (all meetings are at the government center, located at 1 Harrison St. SE in Leesburg):

- Wednesday, April 3 / 6 PM / Work Session

- Wednesday, April 24 / 6 PM / Public Hearing
- Saturday, April 27 / 9 AM / Public Hearing
- Wednesday, May 1 / 6 PM / Work Session
- Wednesday, May 8 / 6:30 PM / Work Session
- Monday, May 20 / 6 PM / Work Session
- Wednesday, May 29 / 6 PM / Work Session
- Wednesday, June 5 / 6 PM / Work Session
- Thursday, June 20 / 5 PM / Business Meeting (potential adoption)

I am also planning on hosting a Dulles Direct Town Hall meeting on this topic early in the review process to hear from you.

FY20 Budget

We recently had our last work session for the FY20 Budget. While the Board will formally adopt the tax rate at our April 2 meeting, we voted to move forward at the equalized tax rate of \$1.045/\$100. This is four cents lower than the current tax rate. The equalized tax rate is the level at which the owner of a property assessed at the average value would pay the same in taxes as they did last year. Depending on the area in the County in which you live and the type of housing you own, this number may vary.

This year, the budget process was a bit easier than in the past. The School Board's request came in within the Board's fiscal guidance, and we were able to accommodate most of the County's needs at that rate as well. Two main areas of focus this year were the Department of Family Services and employee compensation. Family Services has historically been stretched thin. They were at the point where they had more service calls than they could handle. We added several new positions, including dedicated intake positions and Child Protective Services caseworkers. These additions will help ease the burden on the department and will provide for continued quality service to Loudoun residents. As the County grows, so do the number of service calls received by our various governmental departments. This increase is to be

expected. I'm glad we were able to budget enough new positions this year to keep pace with the growing need.

A recent compensation study found that Loudoun County is only paying its employees, on average, 86% of market competitive pay. This has led to a growing turnover rate over the past several years. Frequent turnover means that projects don't get seen through to completion by the same employees that started them, which can often result in confusion and delays. That is why we provided funding to phase in expected revisions to our salary scales as a result of the ongoing classification and compensation study.

There has been a lot of talk about School Resource Officers (SROs) and Juvenile Resource Officers (JROs) this budget cycle. It has probably been our most contentious and (regrettably) political issue. The Sheriff announced his intention to add a SRO at every school in the County, but did not include any of those positions in his budget request this year. The current policy is to provide one SRO at each high school and middle school, but not at elementary schools. Adding SROs to each elementary school would mean hiring over 50 officers at a cost of over \$10 million. It would also mean that far more Sheriff's deputies would be inside schools than out on patrol at any given time. I'm not sure that's the wisest approach.

In response to the Sheriff's announcement, several members of the Board pursued additional SROs in this year's budget, even though they were not requested. Instead of funding a portion of this initiative, the Board voted 6-3 to send the issue to the May 8 joint School Board and Board of Supervisors committee meeting. I voted with the majority.

As a parent of four children currently in LCPS, nobody has a bigger stake in safe schools than I do. Last year, I led the charge to fund the construction of security vestibules at the entrance of every school - a program that is now being implemented. SRO's provide a resource for school communities and work to gather

intelligence on things happening in the school. They are a very positive influence. That being said, SROs are not the fix-all to school security. While armed, they are not body guards, and their job is not to stand guard at the entrance of a school to protect it against intruders. We must approach this issue rationally, and with the appropriate amount of dialogue from the School Board, LCSO, parents, teachers and administrators. At the time this topic was introduced, the School Board hadn't been consulted at all, and they ultimately asked the Board not to impact their budget with these changes until we've had a chance to have a dialogue. LCPS funds its own safety and security staffing and we need to ensure that any expansion of the SRO program works in concert with security protocols and is deployed effectively.

I believe that the best approach is a multi-faceted one that includes technology, policies, and personnel. That may well include more SRO's, and if that's the case, I'll be happy to support them in the budget. But there are many other factors involved in school safety, and I'm not convinced that placing a deputy in every elementary school is a good use of resources. There have been several incidents lately that demand a closer look at LCPS procedures and the general approach to school security. In one such incident at Madison's Trust Elementary, a group from a different part of the state visited the school to confront administration. LCSO was called and a deputy was on scene in 61 seconds. The response time was not the issue. So, I look forward to having a productive conversation with the School Board on this topic in May.

For more information on the FY20 Budget, please look for my comprehensive analysis via email coming after the budget is officially approved on April 2.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Walk-In Rabies Vaccination Clinic

Loudoun County Animal Services will be hosting a walk-in rabies vaccination clinic for household pets on

Sunday, June 9 from 11 AM - 3 PM. The clinic will take place at Dulles South Recreation and Community Center, located at 24950 Riding Center Drive in South Riding. Dogs will cost \$20 and must be kept on a leash; cats will cost \$10 and must be kept in a carrier. The minimum age for vaccination is twelve weeks. For a complete list of rabies vaccination clinics happening around the County, please [click here](#).

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Drive

Loudoun will once again be operating its Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Program. This program provides a safe and free way for residents to get rid of hazardous material that may have accumulated in their homes. Household hazardous waste is any waste produced in the home that is dangerous or potentially harmful to human health or the environment. Please don't bring ammunition, propane tanks, motor oil and car batteries, electronics, medical waste, or paint. Most of these items are recyclable or accepted at other disposal events throughout the year.

The Dulles area drive will take place on Saturday, June 22 from 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM at Freedom High School (25450 Riding Center Drive in South Riding). More information, including a semi-comprehensive list of what does and doesn't constitute household hazardous waste, can be obtained by visiting [this site](#). For information on recycling, please click [here](#).

Dulles South Food Pantry

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.

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