

Dulles Direct Newsletter August 2019

Welcome to the August edition of the Dulles Direct newsletter. With children back in school, we are now entering one of the busiest times of the year. Next week is traditionally one of the worst for traffic, so we'll all need some extra patience. Let's make sure not to take out driving frustrations on our local streets, as there are many students and pedestrians out and about. Over the next several weeks, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office will be conducting a Back to School Campaign of safety enforcement in school zones around the County aimed at keeping kids safe. To read more about the program, click [here](#).

In the last several weeks we have had a number of accidents and challenging situations at local intersections. I have more details about what is happening at several of those below.

On August 6th, we celebrated National Night Out in South Riding. We enjoy a great relationship with law enforcement and first responders in our area, and National Night Out is a good opportunity for the community to meet them and have positive interactions.

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A highlight of the summer was the incredible performance of our Loudoun South Little League American All Stars! These boys became the first team from Virginia to win the Southeast Regional Championship and compete in the Little League World Series in Williamsport, PA. I have coached and been involved in LSL for many years, and my older son has played for the team's coaches and with many of the players, so this was particularly special for my family. I know that all of us are so proud of this team and coaches, not just for their success on the field but for the way they conducted themselves during this great run. It was also really nice to have such a positive event for our community to rally around. We are in the final stages of planning a very special event to honor the team. Stay tuned for details.

Thanks to the Loudoun Valley Estates III HOA for inviting me to join them at a recent board meeting. The Department of General Services has been working with the HOA on a stormwater dry pond on their property that is being converted to a bioretention area. I was also able to answer some questions regarding our updated Countywide Transportation Plan as part of the newly adopted Comprehensive Plan.



Matthew F. Letourneau
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I had the opportunity to attend a ribbon cutting and tour of our new IHOP at Evergreen Mills Road and 606. Initially the restaurant will be open until 10 PM and then they will evaluate based on demand. The restaurant looked great and I got to tour the kitchen where I can attest to the fact that they are making food from scratch. Judging by the full parking lot when I've driven past, this restaurant is going to do very well. In this month's newsletter, I also have updates about other commercial projects in the Dulles South area.



Finally, I was notified this month that I have been selected by the Loudoun Times Mirror as one of Loudoun's "40 Under 40." I appreciate this honor and more importantly, I am excited to be associated with some really great leaders in our community. For a list of all the honorees, click [here](#).

DULLES UPDATES

Tall Cedars / Riding Center Intersection

The steel signal poles and mast arms shipped from the manufacturer on August 20 and arrived this week. As you might have seen, they are now being installed. We did have a 4-5 week delay from when they were supposed to arrive due to continued shortages in the steel pole industry. Next up will be the electrical

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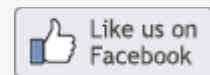
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hookups, signage and pavement striping. VDOT will be inspecting, certifying and then accepting the signal into their system so it becomes operational. From this point, we're expecting about 3-5 weeks for all those things to occur. Stay tuned.

Tall Cedars / Stone Springs Intersection

We've had a really bad run at this intersection with three accidents in the last few weeks. As I've been reporting, there *IS* a traffic signal coming here, but it has been delayed for a variety of reasons. I've been so frustrated with the slow progress on this and I'd love nothing more than for the signal to be up and running, but there's still quite a ways to go.

I receive a bi-weekly written update from the project manager on this intersection, and I recently had a briefing with the County Administrator and Deputy Director of Transportation - both to understand better what has gone wrong and what I can do to push forward with a faster timeline in the future.

On the "gone wrong" side, the bottom line is that the original signal design was flawed. It sounds like it was a combination of mistakes by a signal design firm that was under contract and poor supervision from County staff. I first brought an item to start a signal warrant process back in June of 2016. The process took about 6 months, which is fairly typical. The study affirming that the intersection met warrant for a signal was accepted in January of 2017. There was apparently a bit of a procurement delay and the contract was awarded for the design of the signal in the summer of 2017. This is when things seemed to go off track. During this time, our Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure had several key departures and new positions created by the Board of Supervisors had not yet been filled. In any event, the design had conflicts with some existing ground features, including a large water main. There was a lack of markings for this particular water main on some of the mapping that was used during the design process, so the locations were not right (I don't know why and how that

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happened). During the course of 2018, the designs were finished, these conflicts were discovered, and the design had to be redone. There is a multi-step approval process from VDOT during the design process. Part of the problem is systematic - VDOT has a very sequential approval process.

By the end of 2018, new staff and a new project manager had been brought on board and the issues were corrected or better understood. Since that time, the design has now been accepted, though VDOT's review took more than twice the standard four-week time period to be completed. VDOT requires a separate geotechnical process to look at the ground where the foundations for the signal poles will be, and that can only happen after the design is accepted. If you've driven through the intersection recently you may have seen equipment out there doing those tests. Those will be submitted to VDOT this week. From that point, we will proceed to foundation design and approval. Then the signal design and the foundation design will be turned into plats, and those plats will be submitted to VDOT for approval. At that point, we can begin the procurement process for signal construction, which at this point looks like it will come in around \$700,000. I am not expecting funding to be an issue. We are constrained by Virginia procurement requirements on the timeline for that contract award process. Once the contractor is in place, we can finally begin construction.

My discussion with staff was about ways to move on multiple pieces at once. As I mentioned, the signal process is very sequential, which in turn makes it very slow. There are macro issues here that need to be addressed with the signal design process and, as I've mentioned previously, I've engaged the Secretary of Transportation directly on those things. We will be asking VDOT for some help on this project to be able to conduct some parallel track items and also to ensure that we get very quick turnaround on the various approvals still needed. There are specific items identified which we think can be sped up. I don't have

an expected timeline yet because there are unknowns, but we are continuing to track this regularly.

John Champe Dismissal Issues

The situation at John Champe High School, especially during PM dismissal and at the intersection of Northstar and Sacred Mountain has been very challenging so far this school year. Let me run through some of the issues:

1) *Pedestrian access / Northstar crosswalk:* Several years ago, LCPS worked directly with VDOT to have a crosswalk installed across Northstar Boulevard. I have been public about the fact that I didn't think that was a good idea. VDOT almost never permits crosswalks except at signalized intersections, which this is not (more on that below). I was concerned that drivers wouldn't stop even for pedestrians in a crosswalk, because this type of setup is virtually non-existent anywhere else. Sure enough, while the crosswalk was operational, multiple pedestrians legally crossing the street were struck by cars. Earlier this spring, LCPS initiated a review of the crosswalk with VDOT. I was not aware of the outcome of that process until a few days before school started, when I learned from a community page Facebook post that the crosswalk was being removed. I got in touch with Kevin Lewis, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, who told me that the consensus between LCPS staff, VDOT and LCSO was that there was no way to ensure safe passage for students across Northstar. Therefore the crosswalk needed to be removed. I do not disagree with that conclusion. However, removing the crosswalk is not going to remove the temptation to walk, so at the present time (albeit just one week into the school year), a significant number of students are attempting to cross Northstar, which is now more dangerous than ever. I had a member of my staff conduct field observations several days in a row. This past Tuesday, we had present a larger group with several members of LCSO and LCPS leadership, School Board Representative Jeff Morse, and myself. LCPS has engaged further with the school community and affected parties, and I

received an update from LCPS this morning on some of the plans moving forward. Champe is continuing to alert students via the school's PA system on potential dangers of crossing the intersection. Flashing school zone signs will now extend until all buses leave campus, typically around 4:50 PM. Portable message boards will be temporarily displayed to caution Northstar drivers. Finally, Champe has ordered a campus sign to be displayed at Three Goals and Sacred Mountain. The sign will encourage pedestrians to cross at Conejo. I am hopeful that these solutions will make headway on the problems described above.

2) *Internal traffic flow at Champe:* LCPS is working on some changes to internal traffic flow at John Champe intended to shift traffic away from the Sacred Mountain intersection. There are 40 school buses that serve Champe - so many that they have to depart in two groups because the bus loop can't fit them all at once. This situation is temporary; when Lightridge opens, the Champe student population will go down and become more manageable. As part of the solution package I heard from LCPS this morning, Champe Principal Tyson has implemented the prohibition of traffic entering Sacred Mountain from Three Goals. Barricades have been provided for Three Goals as well as other traffic control measures in the stadium parking lot.

3) *Village Run neighborhood access to Northstar:* I have been asked many times if a traffic signal or even a stop sign can be installed on Northstar at Sacred Mountain. During the evaluation process this spring, LCPS engaged VDOT on that question and the answer was no for several reasons. Most notably, Sacred Mountain has high volume for a very limited amount of time. Outside of school arrival and departure, the volume is actually very low. If you follow this newsletter, you know that VDOT has a very specific traffic control warrant process with criteria that have to be met. The overall volume of traffic from the side streets is not going to be sufficient to meet warrant for a device, whether it is a stop sign or a traffic signal, on Northstar. Furthermore, a traffic signal is planned at

the Northstar / Tall Cedars intersection. When that's in place, it will provide a safe crosswalk across Northstar. It is so close to Sacred Mountain that it would be in conflict with the minimum distance requirements that VDOT has. We are engaged in a discussion with VDOT about other potential items. Addressing the internal flow issues would help, because there is a lot of non-school bus traffic coming from the school using Sacred Mountain.

4) *LCSO involvement:* I have had several conversations with the Dulles South Station Commander, Captain Dondero, about this situation. As I mentioned, we had other representatives of LCSO leadership on site this week. First and foremost, it's safe to assume that you will be seeing an increased LCSO presence around the school due to the removal of the crosswalk and the installation of school zone signage. Our observation was that many cars ignored the new signs and were driving too fast. Fair warning: do that at your own peril. There may well be law enforcement watching and it will be an expensive mistake. Beyond that, some folks have asked me if the School Resource Officer can direct traffic. It's a good thought, but the answer is no. Arrival and dismissal are vulnerable times on a high school campus. We want our SROs fully available and engaged during those times should a situation arise. If LCPS decides that they need LCSO traffic control, they would have to pay for a dedicated detail to bring in an off-duty officer. My sense is that they'd like to solve this problem in other ways before they consider that option.

As you can see, LCPS has the lead on a lot of these items. I understand how frustrating this issue is both for members of the Champe community and for the Village Run neighborhood adjacent to Champe. I wish we could go back in time and design this area differently to be more pedestrian friendly with better access. Unfortunately, all of this predates those of us in office now, so we've inherited this issue. The very large student population at Champe this year has certainly exacerbated the problem.

Long term, I am optimistic that the signal at Tall Cedars and Northstar will effectively create gaps for traffic at Sacred Mountain, especially if it is synced with Conejo. The widening of Northstar to four lanes will also create a shared use path on both sides of the road, improving pedestrian access. But, those things are a few years away and we'll have to continue to deal with these configuration challenges.

Whitman South Commercial Application

I have been sharing updates over the past several months on the Whitman South application. This parcel is on property located at the southeast quadrant of Braddock and Gum Spring, west of Paul VI High School. The current approvals on that site allow for 35,000 square feet of commercial retail and service uses, a convenience store with gas pumps, and a 12,800 square foot child care center. The new application increases the size of the project to 57,000 square feet, and adds an automotive service station (without gas pumps, essentially a service center) and a small drive through restaurant (no tenant identified yet). All of this would be on a larger site than the original application since they have increased the acreage from 8.9 acres to 15.9 acres by expanding south to where an existing cell tower sits. Both then and now, the anchor tenant is a grocery store user. Besides the service center, the main changes are driven by the grocery tenant's desire for a stand-alone building without in-line retail, so the smaller retail spaces are being moved to standalone structures. Several Supervisors expressed support for the application. The Dulles Farms HOA, which includes Virginia Manor, has several concerns. I moved the item to the September 3 meeting to allow time for the applicant to meet with the HOA to work out some of those concerns, which include the use of open space in the application, buffering and traffic flow.

Since that time, it was determined that the new Countywide Transportation Plan has upgraded the status of Gum Spring Road from a collector to an arterial road and with that comes zoning ordinance

requirements for increased setbacks from the roadway. This directly impacts the planned development and would require approval of a Zoning Modification to reduce those setbacks and bring them in line with existing development in the corridor and the current approvals on the site. Van Metre has filed for those zoning modifications and they will need to go back through the Planning Commission review process. I don't expect this to come back before the Board of Supervisors until our Public Hearing in November.

LOUDOUN UPDATES

Loudoun United

I'm happy to report that both the ribbon cutting and opening game for Loudoun United went very well. After working hard over the last five years to make a professional soccer team in Loudoun County a reality, it is truly special to see the team playing at Segra Field in Leesburg. The opening game was an exciting and tense 3-3 draw, with some spectacular goals from our home side. The sold out crowd of 5,000 was energetic and created a great atmosphere for the game. Loudoun United has already played several more games in Leesburg since opening day, all of which have been entertaining and well attended. I'm looking forward to many more years of professional soccer in the County.



Inc. 5000 Fastest Growing Companies List

Twenty-nine Loudoun companies made Inc. 5000's annual list of fastest growing companies. The list is a ranking of percentage revenue growth for privately owned companies over the most recent three-year period. Two Loudoun companies have even achieved 1,000% growth since 2015. Nineteen companies made the list for the second year straight, and three companies celebrated six straight years on the list. All twenty-nine Loudoun companies combined for more than \$500 million in revenue last year. You can read more about it [here](#).

Braddock Spring

I have provided several updates over the last year on Peterson's proposal for a development on the southwest corner of Gum Spring and Braddock Road, in the neighboring Blue Ridge District. This was originally proposed as a retail center, but following some concerns from the neighboring community, they made some changes to a mixed use proposal. The mixed use proposal had a lesser amount of retail development and added in a residential component. Last spring, Peterson announced that they were making the application inactive pending the outcome of the County's Comprehensive Plan update for the area.

The new Comprehensive Plan was adopted in June and identified that area as Transition Compact Neighborhood. This particular place type would allow 3-5 units per acre on smaller lots with the option for various housing types while maintaining at least 50% open space. Peterson worked with other builders and determined that the price that the current owner was seeking for the property would not allow them to meet the plan policies and still make it workable from a business standpoint. The current owner is still interested in seeing commercial on that location and their asking price reflects that. Peterson has advised the County that they are withdrawing the applications and will not be moving forward in purchasing the property. I am aware of other developers that have looked at the

feasibility of this property and have elected not to pursue anything at this time.

RETAIL & COMMERCIAL UPDATES

The status of various commercial developments in the Dulles South area continues to be a hot topic of discussion on social media. Below I am providing the latest information I have on several ongoing projects of interest.

Avonlea

I have had two meetings this summer with Peterson Companies regarding Avonlea. I know the level of community interest and frustration. I will reiterate that Peterson has already invested over \$15 million into this project, and would very much like to get their money recouped. Motivation is not the problem.

As we reported last year in our town hall meeting with Peterson, they are doing a reboot on design of the project. Attention has shifted from the existing planned site to a tract next to it behind Home Depot that could be developed much sooner, depending on the exact land use. Peterson has continued to market the project and talk to potential tenants. As I also mentioned, a lot of this is really dependent on the ability to finance the project. In order to secure that financing, a residential component is needed - the market is there for that aspect of the project and it provides the backstop for the commercial and dining.

In that regard, we have hit a new obstacle. As previously reported in my newsletter, MWAA has worked with the FAA on new noise contours for Dulles Airport. Those contours are based on future growth of the airport, which includes the construction of a new east-west runway parallel to Route 50. Should that runway be constructed, our area will experience a lot more airplane noise. The County follows a longstanding FAA standard and does not allow residential construction in what we call the LDN 65 noise contour. There is a formula to come up with those numbers; it is not just 65 DBA for a single given

airplane. In any event, the new noise contours include much of the Avonlea property in the LDN 65, which means new restrictions on residential.

Besides that issue, Arcola Center - anchored by Wegmans - has been active in tenant recruitment as well. There is some overlap there with tenant interest.

That's where things stand at the moment on Avonlea. I honestly don't know what resolution on these items is going to look like. Ultimately this land is privately owned and there is a limit to what the County can do. Peterson is expending money and continuing efforts to get this off the ground and we're going to be as supportive as we can.

Arcola Center

On the north side of Dulles West Boulevard is the retail area of Arcola Center. We are still anticipating Wegmans to be open by the end of 2021. Currently, site work is being done for the proffered Arcola Boulevard and Dulles West Parkway construction. Kohl's has been announced as an additional tenant. Other tenants are in discussion, with the potential inclusion of some restaurant pad sites.

East Gate Marketplace

Development of the sites at East Gate continues. Zaxby's is nearing completion and is currently hiring staff in preparation for opening. An exact date has not yet been set. Many of you have noted the slow construction at King Spa. I have been in touch with the owners and they say they remain committed to the project and currently anticipate an opening in summer 2020.

Evergreen Commerce Center

As I noted earlier, we just celebrated the opening of IHOP in this commercial area. Construction is currently underway for Aldi, a child care / preschool

facility, and Wendy's. There is one remaining site where a tenant is still being identified to occupy.

East Gate Hotel Site

The new ownership of the hotel site has told me that they expect to close on their secured financing this fall and that we should begin to see their general contractor commence activities on the site shortly after. They have obtained permits for the construction trailer and are working to refresh old permits and drawings given the time that has lapsed since the project first started. They are utilizing a new green commercial financing program for this project; they are still working to sort that out as it will be one of the first projects in the County under this program.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LCSO Quarterly Public Safety Meeting

The Loudoun County Sheriff's Office will hold its quarterly public safety meeting at the Dulles South Public Safety Center (25216 Loudoun County Parkway in South Riding) on August 29 at 7 PM. Residents are encouraged to attend.

Inova Loudoun Hospital Blood Pressure Screening

Inova Loudoun Hospital Mobile Health Services will be hosting a blood pressure screening at the Dulles South Multipurpose Center (24950 Riding Center Drive in South Riding) on Tuesday, September 3 from 9 AM - noon. For further information call the Mobile Health hotline at 703-858-8801 or visit their [website](#).

PRCS End of Summer Sale

The Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services is hosting an end-of-the-summer sale on recreation center memberships. The sale will last through September 9 and apply to memberships purchased for the Claude Moore Recreation and Community Center and the Dulles

South Recreation and Community Center. Six-month and annual membership passes will be eligible for a 15% discount.

Passes must be purchased in person during normal operating hours at DSRCC (24950 Riding Center Drive in South Riding) and Sterling Community Center (102 Enterprise Street in Sterling). For more information, please call Claude Moore RCC at 571-258-3600, Dulles South RCC at 571-258-3456 or Sterling Community Center at 703-430-9480.

Support Loudoun Firefighters as they Fill-the-Boot for Muscular Dystrophy

Since summer is rapidly coming to a close, firefighters across the nation will once again be busy filling their boots to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) and "Jerry's Kids". Members of the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System and the Loudoun Career Fire Fighters Association (LCFFA) Local 3756 are determined to help. From August 26 thru September 2, 2019, donations will be collected at various locations across Loudoun County.

The Fill-the-Boot drive is the result of a partnership between MDA and the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF). For over sixty years the IAFF has pledged to assist MDA in any way possible until a cure is found to treat this debilitating disease. Research and assistance for individuals suffering from neuromuscular disease can be an incredible financial burden on a family and Loudoun's first responders are here to support them.

All funds raised by Loudoun County firefighters assist local families affected by one of the forty-three neuromuscular diseases. These donations provide families with a network of specialized clinics, financial aid for assistive equipment, support groups, informative publications and accessible summer camps for kids. Thank you in advance for your contributions to this worthy cause. For more information, please click [here](#).

EDAC Spots Open

Loudoun County is looking for candidates to serve on the Economic Development Advisory Commission, a group of business leaders charged with advising the Board of Supervisors on items impacting economic development. Members of the Loudoun business community who are interested in volunteering their time and expertise to promote the economic growth of the County should submit an [application online](#) no later than Friday, September 13. Applicants with expertise in government contracting, commercial real estate, transportation, aviation, and logistics are a plus.

Ellie's Hats Golf Tournament

Ellie's Hats is a South Riding nonprofit dedicated to helping children who are battling cancer. The second annual Ellie's Hats Open golf tournament will take place on Friday, September 20 with proceeds benefitting the organization. The South Riding Golf Course at 43237 Golf View Drive will host the tournament, which begins at 9 AM after breakfast at 7. The event contact is Jay Coakley, who can be reached at jay@ellieshats.org. Click [here](#) for more information and to register for the tournament.

Lunsford Middle School Veterans Day Program

Drew Sansonetti, a teacher at Lunsford Middle School, is working with students to develop a Veterans Day program for later this year. To thank veterans for their service and sacrifice, the school's leadership is inviting veterans to Lunsford to talk to students about their military service. The veterans will also serve as judges in a patriotic poster competition that the students put on. The event will run from 8:40 - 10 AM on Veterans Day, which is Monday, November 11 this year. Lunsford is looking for 105 veterans or current Armed Forces members to attend the event. For more information, please reach out to Mr. Sansonetti directly at drew.sansonetti@lcps.org or 412-480-9929.

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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