



March 2020

March has been quite a month - for everyone. It is hard to believe how much has changed in such a short period of time. First and foremost, I hope everyone is healthy. Second, I hope that your income is steady and your economic well-being is secure. Unfortunately, I know that is not the case for some members of our community. But I also know how caring we can be, and that we will take care of each other the best we can while we all try to get through

this.

The coronavirus hit close to home last week when we learned of Loudoun County's first fatality, Susan Rokus. Ms. Rokus was a beloved teacher at the original Arcola Elementary and Little River, and most recently as a reading specialist at Liberty and Pinebrook. She actually worked with my kindergartner last year and I know that literally thousands of our students have learned from her. The Washington Post had a nice write up about her here.

I have an update below on some of the latest COVID-19 developments. I appreciate having some interaction with you last week at our first virtual Dulles Direct Town Hall meeting. Over 5,000 of you

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Matthew F. Letourneau

have seen the video and I was pleased to be joined by Dr. David Goodfriend, the Loudoun County Health Director. The video is still available here.

Consistent with the County's guidance on telework, my Dulles District office in the Government Center is closed. However, my staff are teleworking. They are checking voicemails (so you can call my County office and leave a VM) and we are responding to email. While I do make frequent updates on Facebook, email is a better method to communicate with me.

At the March 5 meeting, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) voted to appoint me as one of Virginia's two Principal Directors to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Board of Directors. I was sworn in by the Metro Board a few days later. In this role, I am serving as the representative of Virginia's Metro jurisdictions: Alexandria, Arlington, the City of Falls Church, the City of Fairfax, Fairfax County and Loudoun County. It is obviously a very difficult time for Metro - we are losing over \$3 million a day in ridership revenue - but it is also a great honor to have this opportunity. I first rode Metro as a 13 year old visiting our nation's capital. As a college student at Catholic University, the Brookland/CUA Red Line station became my gateway to the whole city. It is a little bit surreal to now be one of the 8 people making decisions on behalf of the system. This is also budget season for Metro, and we will be voting on a final FY21 budget later this week. I have been involved in many discussions and meetings about that over the past few weeks.

Dulles District Supervisor, Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

Chairman

Finance, Government
Operations and Economic
Development Committee

Alternate Director

Washington Metropolitan

Area Transit Authority

Board of Directors

Member

Rt. 28 Transportation Improvement District Commission

Member
Northern Virginia
Transportation
Commission

Member
Transportation Planning
Board

Member

<u>Dulles Area Transportation</u>

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Finally, I will note that we still have some "normal" things in this newsletter. That is because the County is still fully functioning and while I am spending much of my time on coronavirus issues, we are still open for business and still have land use applications and budgets and all those sorts of things. I think it is just as important as ever that we be transparent in undertaking the County's business, so you'll still be getting these kinds of updates from me even though I know they aren't everyone's top concern right now.

COVID-19 UPDATE

The situation with COVID-19 (coronavirus) continues to change rapidly. I will keep the same format I have used for the COVID-19 email updates we have sent, with some updated information. I am also using my

Facebook for more regular information sharing as well.

I do want to note initially that the Governor has issued several Executive Orders related to the coronovirus, the most important of which was <u>Executive Order 53</u> released last week. <u>Executive Order 55</u> was released yesterday. While the media





Helpful Links

Loudoun County

Loudoun County
Government
Master Calendar

Meeting Documents

Dulles District

VDOT 511 Traffic Information

VDOT Snow Plowing Information

Loudoun County Road
Maintenance
Information

Loudoun County Traffic
Incident Map

Sign Up for Alert Loudoun reported it to be a "stay at home" order, it really didn't change much substantively from EO 53, other than extending those provisions until June 10 and closing public campgrounds and beaches.

Status of COVID-19 in Loudoun

As of today, there are 87 presumptive positive cases in Loudoun County. Two individuals have passed away. In the state of Virginia, there are 1250 cases and sadly, 27 deaths. In reality, there are probably far more individuals who have coronavirus but have not been tested. The Virginia Department of Health has advised jurisdictions in our area that there is evidence of community transmission in parts of Northern Virginia and we must remain vigilant in limiting our exposure to COVID-19. Community transmission means that there is no evident link to where the individual contracted the virus such as overseas travel or contact with an infected individual.

Our hospitals remain in good shape with plenty of room to treat sick patients. We are having issues with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at smaller medical providers. Last week, I worked with South Riding's own Dr. John Farrell, Chairman of our Health Commission, to create a County program to collect PPE donations and disburse them to practices in need. This program is off to a strong start and distribution is starting today. We have more requests than we do PPE, so if you have access to PPE and can donate it, please visit loudoun.gov/ppe. We need surgical masks, N95 respirators, disposable gloves, face shields, coveralls, gloves, hand sanitizer, and monetary donations. The County is not able to accept homemade equipment but will accept equipment that is opened and unused. Loudoun-based healthcare providers and facilities can request PPE at the same link.

Healthcare and Testing

Loudoun Express
Request (LEx)
Citizen Request System

Loudoun Online Land
Applications
System (LOLA)

The County has access to a daily patient census to help us track the situation at our hospitals and be ready to assist as requested. Contingency plans are being made in consultation with the Virginia Department of Health for additional hospital space if it is required.

The testing issue is gradually improving but still remains one of our largest problem areas. The criteria for testing remains very high because of the limited number of kits. I know that both our hospital providers are working to obtain more tests and our County staff remains very engaged on this issue. Just this week, the federal government did change some designations for the National Capital Region so we are hopeful that it will lead to a greater supply of tests.

Inova is operating a Respiratory Illness Clinic at the Dulles South Urgent Care Center (24801 Pinebrook Road). This allows patients with respiratory symptoms to be evaluated separately. The Urgent Care Center is now also providing vehicle-side testing for those with a doctor's order. The center will remain open to all patients with other issues.

LCPS

For the latest information on LCPS activities, click here. In additional our School Board Representative, Jeff Morse, has created a new Facebook page to share information. You can like his page here.

Loudoun County Facilities

All Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) programs are canceled and facilities are closed. County parks are open for self-directed trail and leisure use during normal park operating hours; however, all offices, playgrounds, athletic complexes and courts, pavilions

and other features that would encourage gatherings and negatively impact social distancing practices are closed. Signs will be posted at features affected by this closure and residents are urged to adhere to any closure notices. Subject to County ordinances, entering these facilities is trespassing and the Sheriff's Office will respond. Routine cleaning of playground equipment will be maintained. Meal service for our elderly in need will still be provided. More information on home-delivered meals to the elderly in Loudoun County can be found here.

Loudoun County Public Library branches are currently closed. Other County departments are still operating. One of the most important right now is our Mental Health Division. For resources on mental health services, please click here.

Personal Property Tax Payment Delay

At the request of County Treasurer Roger Zurn, the Board of Supervisors has approved a one-month delay in payment of personal property taxes (such as the car tax). The tax deadline will now be June 5 instead of May 5. This is being done to allow residents more flexibility. In addition, Treasurer Zurn indicated that residents facing COVID-19-related economic hardships can contact his office and his collections divisions will attempt to work out arrangements for those in need. Loudoun County Commissioner of the Revenue Bob Wertz has also extended the deadline for filing 2020 Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled renewal forms to June 1.

Unfortunately we are not able to extend other deadlines any further. The County does need to collect the revenue that we budgeted for in order to pay our employees and vendors and fund our services. The June collections for taxes are one of two in FY20, the current fiscal year.

Metro/Transit

Metro trains will run 5 AM - 11 PM on weekdays and 8 AM - 11 PM on the weekend. Trains will run every 15 minutes on each line. All track work will be cancelled except for emergency maintenance and inspections. Furthermore, Metro bus service will be reduced to support essential trips only. The front and rear cars on Metro will be closed. Click here for up to date Metro status.

Loudoun's commuter bus services have been temporarily suspended, but local fixed routes are still occurring for folks who have no other way to travel. Fees have been waived and buses are being boarded from the rear in order to protect drivers. Click here for up to date transit status.

Economic Concerns

Loudoun's Department of Economic Development has set up a webpage here with information including financial resources for local small businesses affected by COVID-19. There is also a list of helpful webinars and local companies that are providing special opportunities for consumers during the crisis. I also encourage businesses to watch Executive Director Buddy Rizer's message to the business community.

There is an emergency response team within DED that is contacting businesses and addressing needs as they arise. DED is working with the Small Business Administration and the USDA on grant programs for affected businesses and will be assisting with the application process. The SBA recently approved all of Virginia for the disaster loan program. More information on this program is available here.

My Thoughts/Advice

There is a lot of debate about what the appropriate level of response is. Terms like "shelter in place" are used. In reality, some of those things are more semantics than anything else. The bottom line is that

we need folks to use common sense and take this seriously. The amount of resources it would take to enforce a true "stay at home" policy is beyond reasonable. I certainly am not an expert in infectious diseases, but I am concerned that we're still closer to the beginning than the end of this situation. Many of us may well end up with the virus, and the vast majority of us will tolerate it as we would any other. We are really taking all of these precautions to help those whose immune systems are not strong. It can be difficult for some healthy people to understand that and avoid the temptation of seeing friends and engaging in shared activities. We're just going to have to get creative. It IS important to get out and get some fresh air, but be smart about it - and know where your kids are and what they are doing. Think about our first responders who have to turn their attention to those in our community who aren't following directives. Is that really where they should have to be devoting their resources?

Finally, I remain so proud of our County staff. They're working really hard at all levels to keep the County functioning in this challenging time. I'm also thankful to our healthcare workers. Obviously our doctors and nurses come to mind, but don't forget that it takes a lot of people to make our healthcare facilities run - the folks who clean them, technicians, lab assistants, etc. All of them are being asked for a lot right now and we're thankful they are there!

FY21 BUDGET UPDATE

On Thursday, March 19, the Board of Supervisors wrapped up our work sessions on the FY21 operating budget. We will vote to approve the budget in its final form at our April 7 Business Meeting. I will have a much more comprehensive standalone update once that happens, but I wanted to provide some highlights.

The Board voted 8-1 to approve the budget at a tax rate of \$1.035, one cent lower than the current tax rate and slightly above the equalized tax rate. The largest new expenditure is employee classification and compensation implementation at \$24 million, which makes Loudoun employee pay competitive with neighboring jurisdictions. We were able to fund the entire School Board budget request of \$1.37 billion, including using some additional state funding to close the \$2.5 million gap - leaving us with over \$3 million to put aside at the end of the day.

It is important to note that the County faces an uncertain financial future. As Finance Committee chairman I have been deeply involved in discussions on this topic. At the April 7th meeting, I will be supporting a motion to suspend implementation of new spending in the budget including most new employee positions until we have a better handle on the County's revenue picture. There are going to be many issues associated with the virus response, from fee-offset PRCS positions for which we are no longer collecting fees to costs associated with purchasing PPE and staffing emergency operations. We have worked very hard to institute sound financial planning and a solid fiscal reserve for precisely this type of situation. But, like every other government and many businesses, we simply don't know exactly what lies ahead.

On the capital budget side, we approved a six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that accompanies our budget. It is a robust schedule of transportation, school, and infrastructure construction projects that will continue to track with our growing population. This year, the CIP totals \$2.9 billion for the six-year planning period. Transportation projects occupy 40% of this budget, with school projects accounting for 27% - fully incorporating the School Board's adopted capital plan and accommodating all school projects. Some of the highlights for us are widening sections of Braddock Road, constructing the Route 50 Northern Collector Road, and building new schools: elementary schools in the Dulles South and Dulles

North areas, a Dulles North middle school, and a Dulles North high school. I'll be discussing the rest of the district-specific CIP projects in greater detail in my final budget report following adoption on April 7 and in my annual report mailer later this spring.

DULLES UPDATES

Route 28 Commission Update

As I've mentioned before, I am a long time member of the Route 28 Transportation Improvement District Commission. At the Commission's annual March 6 meeting, we received an update on the final landowner-funded improvement, the widening of 28 from Route 50 to McLearen Road. This project is the last big initiative of the tax district that was set up years ago to facilitate infrastructure improvements. At the meeting, I raised my concern about the rough condition of the pavement under construction. Shirley Contracting, the contractor hired to perform the construction, reports that they are in "constant repair mode" and conducting weekly inspections. Right now, we are estimating substantial completion of the widening by November. This timeline means that by December, the stretch of Route 28 from 50 to McLearen will be widened and open to drivers. This will be just in time for winter temperatures.

We are also targeting this summer to complete a study of the Route 267/28 interchange area. The study is examining potential improvement projects to handle traffic should the area be developed to its full potential. I'll go into detail on the results of the study once they are available.

Tall Cedars / Stone Springs Signal

I am very happy to report that the project to install the traffic signal at Tall Cedars Parkway and Stone Springs Boulevard has (finally) entered the construction phase. The contract has been awarded to Virginia Sign and Lighting for \$788,452. Loudoun's Transportation Department held a kick-off meeting that included all stakeholders involved in the construction. The notice to proceed is tentatively anticipated on April 6 at a preconstruction meeting. Once that takes place, the signal will start to go up. With the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 and recommended social distancing, I'm not sure if construction schedules will be changed or delayed. I'll keep you updated on the progress of the signal construction. It's been a long time coming, and I know we will all breathe a sigh of relief when the traffic lights are finally in place. Thanks for your patience, and continue driving safe in the area during the construction phase.

LAND USE UPDATES

To view application materials, visit www.loudoun.gov/lola and enter the application number.

Shops at Moorefield

ZMAP-2018-0013, ZCPA2018-0014, SPEX-2018-0036, ZMOD-2018-0032, ZMOD-2018-0042, & SIDP-2018-0008

At our March 11 Public Hearing, the Board of Supervisors voted to send the Shops at Moorefield application to the April 7 Business Meeting for action. The application is a request to incorporate 3.04 acres of abandoned right-of-way into the Shops at Moorefield Station shopping center, provide access onto Ryan Road and from Loudoun County Parkway, and add 10,000 sq. ft. of commercial and an 8,400 sq. ft. automobile service station use.

I have worked with the applicant to address some community and staff concerns. They have agreed to hours of operation (7 AM - 10 PM) on the carwash and have agreed to reduce the size of some of the proposed signage on the property. They are also moving one of their pricing signs to the shopping center side of the property so that internal traffic can see the gas prices. They have also agreed to provide an enhanced buffer adjacent to the gas station and carwash use that will incorporate more evergreen plantings. With those changes, I expect approval of this application at the meeting on April 7.

Unfortunately, Atapco received notice that Harris Teeter will be closing its Moorefield location at the end of April. We were hoping that this application would help keep them in business, but apparently not. This new vacancy makes the application even more important so that we can attract a high quality tenant.

Wawa Chantilly SPEX-2019-0020 & ZMOD-2019-0027

This application is for an automobile service station with gas pumps for a Wawa at the Meadows Farms Nursery in South Riding. The Wawa would replace the yard between the storage facility under construction and Meadows Farms. The only outstanding issue is Route 50 access to the site. The current staff recommendation is for access to be limited to a right-in/right-out to and from Route 50 westound. However, the applicant is requesting that a left-in turn be permitted from Route 50 eastbound. The feedback from the Board at the February hearing was generally in support of completely closing the median and not allowing left turns into the site, which Wawa stated may result in them pulling out of the project.

I see this facility as serving westbound traffic only anyway, and I'm concerned that it would generate significantly more traffic turning left at the median break from the eastbound direction. We are currently scheduled to take this item up at one of our April Business Meetings.

Dash-In at Gateway Village

SPEX-2019-0008, SPEX-2019-0009, SPEX-2019-0010, SIDP-2019-0001, & ZMOD2019-0042

The Dash-In at Gateway Village application requested an automotive service station with 17 fueling stations, a carryout restaurant, and a standalone carwash. The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the application on March 11. One final change I requested was an hours of operation restriction (7 AM - 10 PM) for the carwash and removal of some of the proposed signage. The adjacent neighbors were concerned about trucks utilizing the entrance on Gateway Village Place, but County staff felt that making a restriction on that use a condition of approval would prove to be unenforceable and would not allow a proffer. At my request however, the applicant agreed to direct vendor truck traffic away from the entrance on Gateway Village Place and to the other entrance directly off Gum Spring Road. As the applicant does want to be a part of the community I trust they will keep this commitment.

MC Dean Property

SPEX-2018-0029, SPEX-2018-0030, SPEX-2018-0031, SPEX-2018-0032, SPEX2018-0033, SPEX2018-0034 & ZMOD-2019-0043

Originally, the MC Dean property application was a series of special exceptions and a zoning modification that sought to develop an 11.42-acre property at the Route 50 / Pleasant Valley Road intersection. The following uses would have been incorporated, all of which require special exceptions under the current commercial light industrial (CLI) zoning: an automotive service station, retail sales establishment,

up to two restaurants with one drive through, motor vehicle rental, and motor vehicle sales use.

There were significant concerns with the single-story, single-pad sites that aren't in keeping with the 2019 General Plan guidance for Suburban Mixed-Use Place Type. VDOT's Access Management team also took issue with the proposed vehicular access point on Pleasant Valley Road. Following meetings with surrounding HOAs, the applicant made some revisions that removed the motor vehicle rental and motor vehicle sales uses and the new proposal reduced the maximum square footage of the automotive service station from 6,300 square feet to 5,000 square feet. The remaining 1,300 square feet, as well as the 7,275 square feet that would have been used for the auto-oriented facilities, was reallocated to retail and sales.

The plan was also revised to improve internal pedestrian movements, refine building footprint locations, add more greenspace including a 5,000 square foot pedestrian plaza, enhance walkways with foliage, and provide an Illustrative Landscape Plan for the application.

Staff still has some outstanding issues. As I understand it, the main problem is that the fundamental nature of the proposal is a single-story, single-use pad site. This site type is not in keeping with the "pedestrian oriented vertically integrated mix of uses" envisioned for the Suburban Mixed-Use Place Type under the new comprehensive plan. However, given the traffic issues we are experiencing at that location and the limited size of the site, it would not be a good location for adding dense residential that is typically part of a mixed-use development. The Planning Commission had a work session to go over the changes in the application and talk about existing Staff concerns. They ultimately recommended that the Board of Supervisors deny the application as it exists due to these concerns and expressed a desire to see the site develop as dense residential.

I think this is a case where the plan in theory is different than reality. This is a relatively small parcel and I don't think mixed use is viable. I'm willing to consider residential as part of true mixed use projects such as Avonlea because they will lead to high quality development, but that's just not realistic here. This is a tough situation because the traffic in this location is absolutely terrible. A gas station is probably not going to improve things either, but the reality is that MC Dean is exiting this property and something is going to go there. The application has been greatly improved since it was first filed and the closest HOAs have dropped their objections. The Board will be holding a public hearing on this application on April 15th.

7-Eleven South Riding SPEX-2019-0021

One of the items the Planning Commission heard at its December 17 Public Hearing considered a special exception request to add a 1,025 sq. ft. carwash to the existing 7-Eleven located at 25140 Loudoun County Parkway in South Riding. The convenience store and 6 gas pumps currently operate 24/7. Staff has not identified any outstanding issues. The Planning Commission voted to send the item to a work session, where hours of operation for the carwash were discussed. The application will be coming before the Board at our April 15 Public Hearing, and the hours of operation discussion will be included in the item.

LOUDOUN UPDATES

Personal Property Tax Relief

At our March 3 Business Meeting, the Board passed personal property tax relief for the 2020 tax year. Any vehicles assessed at or below \$1,000 in value will be completely exempt from personal property tax. Furthermore, for the amount of the vehicle assessed between \$1,001 and \$20,000, 35% is reduced by the

state. The amount of Virginia's car tax relief funding to localities such as Loudoun County has been capped at \$950 million since the 2004 legislative session. Since 2006, Loudoun has received \$48,070,701 for car tax relief annually. Since that number doesn't change and because the County population has grown so much, the percentage of relief for individuals has shrunk to 35% now.

As a reminder, personal property tax payments have been delayed until June 5 due to coronavirus. More information can be found here.

Linear Parks and Trails Study

Also at our March 3 meeting, the Board voted to move \$350,000 from our General Fund balance to accelerate planning funding for the Linear Parks and Trails project in the FY21-26 CIP. The developed plan was originally going to be discussed during the FY21 budget process, but we identified leftover Fund balance that could be used instead. The plan will include trail connectivity recommendations, prioritized areas of opportunity for trail development, a feasibility study to identify the level of system complexity, determination of amenities, and location of trailheads. It will also include conceptual designs, meet regulatory and real estate needs including accordance with the 2019 Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinances and facilities standards. The plan will also forecast the cost of system construction and maintenance, allowing for more exact pricing models in future CIPs. I am glad we are able to facilitate acceleration of the plan.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Loudoun Tourism Grant Applications

Loudoun County's annual Tourism Grant process is underway with the posting of the FY21 application at loudoun.gov/TourismGrant. The grant program is designed to support local tourism initiatives and events that drive tourists to Loudoun County. Nonprofits, municipalities, and businesses located in Loudoun County are invited to apply for funding for projects to attract regional and national visitors to Loudoun County.

Any organization interested in submitting a request for funds must complete the grant application online. Applications must be submitted by 4 PM on Wednesday, April 15. Additional information about the process, as well as a link to the online application form, may be found at loudoun.gov/TourismGrant. Questions about the process may be directed to Megan Cox in the Department of Finance and Budget by <a href="emailto:ema

United States Census

The 2020 Census opened on March 12th, and your response ensures every family in Loudoun has services and resources to thrive. Please complete the census by April 1. For every child or adult not counted in the 2020 Census, Loudoun County loses \$2,000 each year for the next decade.

Ready to respond? Here are the Top 5 Things to Know:

- 1. Respond online at 2020Census.gov. You will receive a letter in the mail between March 12th and 20th with instructions for how to respond online. The letter will include a code corresponding to your address that you will enter online. If you prefer to respond by paper form, do not respond online and a paper form will arrive in mid-April. OPTIONAL: A sample of the mailer can be found below.
- 2. The Census only takes 10 minutes, and you can respond at your convenience.
- 3. Avoid Fraud Do NOT click a link in an email to respond to the Census. The Census will not ask for your Social Security Number, financial

- information, email address, or immigration status.
- 4. Everyone Counts. From 1 day old to over 100 years old, anyone that lives in your home most of the time counts. If you have a child in college, they will either be counted by their school in on-campus housing or should complete the Census as normal using their own off-campus address.
- 5. Encourage Your Neighbors to Respond. Many Loudoun residents may not have participated in the Census before. Let your neighbors know how the Census impacts the community and how to respond. The Census is available in 13 languages online.

Community Emergency Relief Fund

The Community Emergency Relief Fund provides assistance directly to individuals for rent, utilities, prescription medication and more. It is active right now to respond to COVID-19-related economic concerns. The link to learn more or to make a gift of any amount is

https://communityfoundationlf.org.

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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