



April 2020

Welcome to the April edition of the Dulles Direct newsletter. I hope everyone is doing well and managing to stay safe and healthy. These are really challenging times and we're at a point where it is probably getting old for a lot of people. Some in our community have lost their jobs and are hurting financially. Others are trying to balance sole responsibility for their kids' education while still maintaining their own work schedules, and lots of variations in between.

Hang in there. Stay the course. We're getting through this one day at a time!

Believe me, my house is having some of the same challenges and I get what everybody's going through. I'll go into more detail about COVID-19 below, but there's good evidence that what we're doing is working. There's also good evidence that it isn't yet time to stop doing it, as tempting as that may be. So let's keep at it!

In the meantime, I've never been busier working on various County and regional issues. I hosted a virtual meeting for our Dulles District HOA leaders a few weeks ago with several County staff members and the

In This Issue

[COVID-19 Update](#)
[Tall Cedars / Stone Springs Signal](#)
[Shops at Moorefield](#)
[Wawa Chantilly](#)
[MC Dean Property](#)
[7-Eleven South Riding](#)
[Greenway Update](#)
[FY21 Budget Update](#)
[Announcements](#)

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Operations and Economic
Development Committee](#)

Sheriff's Office, and I'm pleased to report that we had nearly 60 folks join that call.

In a normal year, I would have been traveling to New York City in my capacity as Finance Chairman to present the County's finances to Wall Street credit rating agencies. Instead, we did the meetings virtually last week. The County is seeking to access the debt market for previously approved projects that will improve our community, from new schools and roads to public safety facilities. COVID-19 or not, those needs continue. As you might imagine, the agencies are giving a great deal of scrutiny to municipalities, even those with AAA credit ratings. Our team worked hard to be ready and was fully prepared for their questions. We should receive our ratings in a little over a week and then we'll be closely monitoring the debt market to sell bonds at an advantageous time.

At our April 7 Business Meeting, the Board approved a resolution to recognize Dae Sik Kong's tae kwon do demonstration team for taking second place at the President's Cup G2 Premier Tournament in Las Vegas last October. The team is based out of Stone Ridge and did a phenomenal job representing Loudoun's athletic community against 1500 athletes from over 30 countries. While COVID-19 prevented me from presenting the resolution in person, I am glad that the team got the recognition they deserve for their excellent performance.

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COVID-19 UPDATE

What I'm thinking about (and what I'm concerned about)

Before I give you my standard status update, I want to share a few thoughts about what I'm seeing, what I'm concerned about, and what I'm trying to work on as it relates to COVID-19 in Loudoun. There is a LOT of confusing information out there right now. If your social media is anything like mine, people with different opinions and a lot of certainty about those opinions are dominating discussion, and it can be hard to know what to believe. This debate about reopening

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the economy vs keeping people safe is raging and it is being presented as if it is an either/or proposition. People with political leanings are jumping on these things one way or the other and ascribing motives to whoever they don't like. Personally, I'm just tired of all that. It is counterproductive and I'm afraid it could even be dangerous. But I'm also trying to figure out what's real and what the facts are.

From where I sit, we still have major limitations on testing and PPE in our County. The testing issue is getting more confusing each day. Let me start with something important. There are more and more "antibody tests" out there that purport to tell you if you've had COVID-19. If you look deep enough in the fine print, most of the tests will eventually say that they are really testing for ANY coronavirus antibody, up to and including the common cold. These are the tests that you can get at local pharmacies, but even Quest and some medical providers are now providing them.

You should be very skeptical of these tests. I fear that some people are going to get those and misinterpret the results and make bad decisions which will exacerbate the issue. There are only a handful of true antibody tests specifically for COVID-19 out there and they are NOT commonly available. I'm talking to some of our County advisors to understand better how to get these tests and who can get them.

With regard to actual COVID-19 testing, there is great variance between medical providers. Many still have very strict criteria in place because their supplies are low. Per capita, Virginia is ranking at the bottom in terms of overall testing. I don't know if that's because we have fewer people meeting that criteria or if there is just a major supply chain issue. Some of the testing capacity even for COVID-19 out there is NOT FDA approved, usually for good reason. Our core medical providers in the County are using FDA approved sources. While they are not themselves low on tests for their patients, it does not seem like they are at a point where they can expand testing capability either.

One other challenge we have is that many providers are no longer seeing patients. This is true for a lot of adult primary care practices in particular. It is difficult for primary care doctors to be handling suspected COVID-19 cases because their offices frequently aren't equipped with the proper PPE. Should they become exposed, they would not be available to treat any of the other ailments that need attention every day. So that is also a factor in the testing supply chain.

Ultimately, I think the County should step in with a task force of experts to help work through these issues, advise our citizens and figure out how to expand testing. I'm not saying it is easy or that I personally have all the answers. But I do think we have some smart people and good medical providers here who can help us work through this.

As far as PPE is concerned, our hospitals have adequate supplies but many other providers do not. The County itself is having difficulty actually obtaining the supplies we've ordered. Because of our enhanced EMS protocols we are using more PPE and our supply is constantly being monitored.

I'm worried in particular about nursing homes and elderly care facilities. We are already having challenges in these groups, including an outbreak of COVID-19 in at least one facility. Many are experiencing major PPE shortages and lack of workforce, because workers have quit, tested positive or are being quarantined. The County is doing its best to assist these facilities but given our own PPE issues we aren't able to share a lot and we don't have the personnel to help.

All these things bring us back to the "re-opening" discussion. We aren't there yet. As I'll share below, the numbers are still going up, but beyond that, until we get a handle on these issues, we really can't move forward. For instance, our Fire-Rescue call volume is down overall right now. If it was at a normal level, which it would be when people are back on the road

getting into car accidents and having industrial accidents for example, we would be really stretched thin in terms of keeping our personnel well equipped and able to respond to calls. Those are the kinds of issues that have to be weighed. The public doesn't necessarily see or think about them. There are a lot of more issues besides those I mentioned, and I won't get into all of them, but those things are on our minds as we continue to work through this.

Status of COVID-19 in Loudoun

According to the official numbers released today by the Virginia Department Health, there are 746 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Loudoun County. Fifteen individuals have died from the virus in Loudoun. Virginia now has 15,846 confirmed cases with 552 deaths. We currently have over 90 individuals hospitalized in our two Loudoun hospitals. We are not concerned about the overall capacity at either of our two hospitals nor ventilator usage rate. However, I will note that the number of hospitalizations, which is what I put the most stock in, is still going up. The Governor has discussed a metric in which the Virginia Health Department needs to see a fourteen day decline in cases and hospitalizations before going to a broader reopening. That is reasonable and sensible. In Loudoun County we are not seeing that decline - in fact, we are seeing an acceleration in cases and hospitalizations. You should still be taking precautions, wearing face masks when you go out, and following all the guidelines that have been given.

PPE

As I reported Friday, if you wish to help the County provide PPE to our frontline personnel and Loudoun-based healthcare providers but you don't have any to donate yourself, you can now make a financial contribution to help offset the costs. All major credit cards and PayPal can be used for online donations at loudoun.gov/ppe. Checks with "COVID-19 Donations" in the memo line may be sent to the Loudoun County

Treasurer's Office, located at PO Box 347, Leesburg, VA 20178.

If you do 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, and hand sanitizer. The County is not able to accept homemade equipment and any donations must be unopened. Loudoun-based healthcare providers and facilities can request PPE at the same link.

A reminder that you can donate PPE in South Riding: a drop-off location is at the Dulles South Recreation and Community Center, located at 24950 Riding Center Drive in South Riding. It is operating Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. A tent is located in the front parking lot of the center with a sign identifying the PPE donation site.

This is in addition to the Leesburg drop-off location at 751 Miller Drive, which operates Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Blue signs on Miller Drive and in the parking lot will guide individuals to the drop-off location.

Also, a reminder that the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office has implemented a program to pick up and deliver prescriptions from pharmacies to vulnerable residents at private residences. Residents will have to prepay for their prescriptions and confirm that their pharmacies will allow for pickup by someone other than the resident. You can request the service by calling 703-777-1021, which is a 24/7 LCSO line.

Governor Northam's Executive Orders

The Governor this week has lifted the ban on elective surgeries, effective May 1. I would expect a phased-in approach to this from providers, given the concerns about PPE and personnel availability.

The other Executive Orders from the Governor remain in effect, including those that:

- Extended the closure of DMV public-facing offices by two weeks, until May 11;
- Extended Directive Seven, which closed Virginia's 75 DMV offices and its mobile units to the public and extended the validity of driver's licenses and vehicle credentials that were due to expire, until July 31; and
- Expanded Directive Eight, directing the Virginia State Police to suspend enforcement of the time period in which new Virginia residents must get a driver's license or register their vehicles, the expiration of temporary license plates, and the time period in which temporary residents may operate vehicles with out-of-state plates until July 31.

Non-essential businesses in the state remain closed until May 8. LCSO has local legal authority to enforce this order. If a resident of Loudoun County observes a potential violation, they are encouraged to call the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office non-emergency number at 703-777-1021.

Economic Concerns

As of last week, over 21,800 of our neighbors in Loudoun had filed for unemployment since the pandemic began.

The Board of Supervisors has unanimously approved \$1 million in grant funding for a new COVID-19 Business Interruption Fund to support Loudoun businesses throughout the County impacted by the coronavirus outbreak. The Loudoun County Economic Development Authority added \$250,000 to this fund. The fund is intended to help businesses with 3-100 employees. I have received some questions about why we did not include sole proprietor businesses. The reasons are 1) we knew that we would not be able to help all businesses, and we were seeking to have the most economic impact possible, 2) we are trying to get money out very quickly, and sole proprietor business will require a greater level of review to ensure there are not fraudulent requests. Employing others is an easy way to verify economic activity. We may be able to revisit this in the future depending on our revenue

situation, but for now this is what we had to do. The fund opened for applications April 29 and will close on May 2. For eligibility requirements and the application form, please visit this [site](#). The fund received around 600 applications in the first hour so we know that many more businesses are seeking funding than what will be available. Once the applicants are verified as qualified, they will be selected randomly. The Board of Supervisors will have nothing to do with the selection of businesses.

Facebook recently announced the launch of a \$100 million Small Business Grants Program designed to help communities where Facebook already has a business presence. Given the company's enormous investment in Loudoun's Data Center Alley, Facebook listed Ashburn (and surrounding areas) as an eligible territory for businesses to apply. Learn more [here](#).

The Department of Economic Development has reinstated last year's successful "Take Loudoun Home" initiative, this time with an emphasis on supporting local businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. One great component of the initiative is the [Loudoun Made, Loudoun Grown Marketplace](#) - a digital e-commerce platform that allows users to support local farms. Furthermore, DED has compiled a [list](#) of over 200 businesses that residents can consult in order to support local businesses during this time.

DULLES UPDATES

Tall Cedars / Stone Springs Signal

On April 15, a virtual pre-construction meeting was held with County staff and the contractor. They agreed on a construction schedule and the notice to proceed has been issued. Once the required land use permits are secured from VDOT, construction will be cleared to begin. The schedule currently anticipates substantial completion in November. This timeline depends on

receipt of the poles and mast arms by late August. The process to secure those has already begun and there are no expected delays at this time. I have asked many questions about this timeline and the steel availability and staff is closely monitoring. I'll continue to update you as the timeline progresses.

DULLES 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, & SIDP2018-0008

The application was a request to incorporate 3.04 acres of additional property into the existing 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 worked with the applicant to address some community and staff concerns. The applicant agreed to hours of operation restrictions (7 AM - 10 PM) on the carwash I requested and to reduce the size of some of the proposed signage on the property. They have also agreed to provide an enhanced buffer adjacent to the gas station and carwash use that will incorporate more evergreen plantings.

With these changes, I was able to support the application and the Board voted unanimously to approve it at our April 7 Business Meeting. With the decision by Harris Teeter to close this location, the application was even more important to attract a high quality tenant into the center, which has not been doing well.

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. Staff was recommending limiting access to a right-in/right-out to and from Route 50 westbound. However, the applicant requested that a left-in turn be permitted from Route 50 eastbound. I shared the staff concerns over safety with allowing the left turns across three lanes of westbound Route 50 and operational impacts on the road. The feedback from other Board members at the February hearing was generally in support of completely closing the median and not allowing left turns into the site. The application was set for action by the Board at our April 21 Business Meeting, but the applicant needed more time to determine whether the end user, Wawa, would want to move forward with the location if the County wouldn't allow the left turn. The current answer is no. Therefore, the applicant requested an indefinite deferral and will have twelve months to act on the application or it will be considered withdrawn.

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.

The main problem from staff 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, in my view it would not be a good location for adding dense residential that is typically part of a mixed-use development. Even vertical integration of a commercial-only product creates a more intense use. The developer doesn't think it's economically viable and wouldn't build it in any case.

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. At our April 15 Public Hearing, we had a robust discussion of the application, and some Supervisors expressed some of the same concerns that the Planning Commission had. My main concern at this point is traffic management at the site, and since the public hearing, I've been having additional discussions with the applicant and VDOT on how to effectively manage traffic. In particular, I have received mixed messages from VDOT regarding the left turn from the site onto Pleasant Valley Road. The applicant received an exception permit for this left turn, but when I talked with the Traffic Engineering Division at VDOT, they shared operational concerns with it. I have some additional meetings scheduled to try to get to the bottom of this issue. It also has implications for Eastgate View Drive and whether a signal will be required after all at the Pleasant Valley intersection. This item has been scheduled for action by the Board at the May 5 Business Meeting, so stay tuned ... I'm not sure what the final outcome will be on these outstanding issues. I do think the majority of the Board is in basic agreement with the underlying application.

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 added (7 AM - 10 PM). We heard the item at our April 15 Public Hearing, where we discussed hours of operation and heard some concerns from the community about the noise of the current operation and potential residential impacts. The application will be discussed again at our May 13 Public Hearing due to an advertising error. While I don't have a particular concern about adding the carwash, I am working with the applicant on addressing some concerns that neighbors in North Riding raised at the Public Hearing regarding the noise they experience with the current 7-11 operation. I'm hopeful this can ultimately result in a better situation for them.

LOUDOUN UPDATES

Greenway Update

The Greenway is attempting to raise tolls over the next five years by as much as 34%. Loudoun County has requested an extension in the Greenway's case so that we have time to prepare our opposition to the increase. The Greenway predictably pushed back against this extension, but the State Corporation Commission has decided to move the hearing schedule back from June to August. We now have an extra nine weeks to prepare our case. The date for filing respondent testimony and exhibits on the application is now June 26. Staff will file its testimony and exhibits on or before July 10. The Greenway operating firm will file rebuttal testimony by July 24, and the evidentiary hearing will take place on August 13. Individuals can file written comments on the case by August 24 by visiting www.scc.virginia.gov/case. All comments should refer to Case No. PUR-2019-00218. All local hearings previously scheduled have been canceled due to COVID-19.

It is our hope that we can prove that the Greenway's toll increases have "materially discouraged" ridership, thereby making the case for lower tolls (or at the very least a halt on toll increases) for the future. It is the

belief of the Board of Supervisors that now is not the time to raise tolls on folks when COVID-19 is threatening financial situations and ridership is too low to get accurate data.

To read the case itself, please click [here](#) for information, documents, and summaries.

FY21 Budget Update

On April 7, the Board of Supervisors approved the FY21 Budget at a tax rate of \$1.035 per \$100 of assessed value. Following the vote, I published a comprehensive budget [report](#). I covered both the County's operating budget and our six-year Capital Improvement Program. Most importantly, I discussed the impacts of COVID-19 on revenues and our budget approach.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Donations to Food Banks

Food banks are in need of help now more than ever! Donations to Loudoun Hunger Relief can be made in person at 750 Miller Drive SE in Leesburg or via loudounhunger.org/donate-now.

Donations to the Dulles South Food Pantry can be made in person at 24757 Arcola Mills Drive on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM or online at dsfp.org/donate-money. 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. 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.

NOVA "JumpStart" Classes

Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) is using institutional dollars from the federal stimulus to launch a new summer schedule of tuition-free online classes for approximately 70,000 qualified Northern Virginia high school students. This is an opportunity for rising seniors through graduating seniors to JumpStart their summers and earn college credit by attending up to two online courses that will run from June 1 to July 15. Upon completion of the JumpStart application process, which includes applying to NOVA, completing their JumpStart application and uploading eligibility requirements, local high school students can start earning college credits. For students under 18, a parent or legal guardian's permission will be needed to register. For more information about the program, please contact JumpStart@nvcc.edu.

Personal Property Tax Due Date Delay

I want to remind everyone that 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 COVID19 related economic hardships can contact the Treasurer's Office and his collections divisions will attempt to work out arrangements with those in need. Currently, the Treasurer's Office is anticipating that property tax bills will be available starting May 1. 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.

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