



May 2020

Welcome to the May edition of the Dulles Direct newsletter. I hope everyone is staying healthy and mentally sound. As today is Memorial Day, I want to take a moment to recognize and thank all those veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice to defend our freedom. They are true heroes and we should never forget what they've done for all of us.

There is a lot to cover in this month's newsletter, starting with the question on everyone's mind - when will Loudoun County begin easing COVID-19-related restrictions? That discussion is below. I also share some of the additional steps that the Board of Supervisors is taking to help individuals and businesses get through this difficult time. The Board also took action on several land use cases in the Dulles District, and I've covered those as well.

The Board of Supervisors passed a resolution naming May 17-23 Emergency Medical Services Week. Emergency medical professionals are always on the front lines of medicine performing lifesaving services, but it was an especially fitting tribute this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I was very pleased (and relieved) that one of our volunteer EMS providers was recently released from the hospital following several

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**Matthew F.
Letourneau**

Dulles District Supervisor,

weeks of treatment after he (likely) contracted COVID-19 from a patient transport.

Speaking of EMS, our Loudoun County Fire-Rescue Department led the effort to hold a Salute to Our Healthcare Heroes at StoneSprings Hospital during a shift change last Thursday. I was pleased to be there on behalf of the Board and was joined by numerous LCFR apparatus and personnel including Combined System Chief Johnson, members of the Sheriff's Office including Sheriff Chapman, MWAA Police and Fire / EMS including Chief Huchler, Leesburg PD including Chief Brown, Purcellville PD including Chief McAllister, Health Commission Chairman Dr. John Farrell and many others. I hope it brightened the days of some of our dedicated healthcare workers!



May is also Mental Health Awareness Month. The Board passed this resolution to bring attention to the various mental health conditions that can affect individuals, and also to honor mental health workers. Oftentimes when we think of health, physical health is what comes to mind, especially right now. But COVID-19 has also shone a light on the importance of mental health to greater overall wellbeing. Loudoun's spotlight this May is on Tools 2 Thrive, which are available [here](#) and address topics such as connecting with others, creating healthy routines, finding the

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positives after loss, eliminating toxic influences, overcoming addiction, and more. As always, Loudoun's Mental Health Department stands ready to assist any individuals in need; please don't hesitate to [reach out](#).

COVID-19 UPDATE

Bottom line first: the Board of Supervisors has taken a straw vote to recommend to Governor Northam that Northern Virginia move to a Phase 1 reopening this coming Friday, May 29th. I supported this recommendation. The regional Health Directors provided an update to elected officials this weekend which reviewed the gating criteria set forward by the Governor. I also spoke at length with County Administrator Tim Hemstreet and received his recommendation on the metrics that involve County operations. The final decision rests with the Governor, who is likely to announce it early this week.

Based on this evaluation and these conversations, I can conclude that community transmission in Loudoun County and in Northern Virginia has begun to decline - which was perhaps the most important evaluated criteria. The actual number of positive cases continues to not be a particularly effective metric because it varies on testing. As I have said from the beginning, the number of daily hospitalized patients in the region is a much better metric because it tells us who is getting sick and it is less variable. The chart below shows that table:



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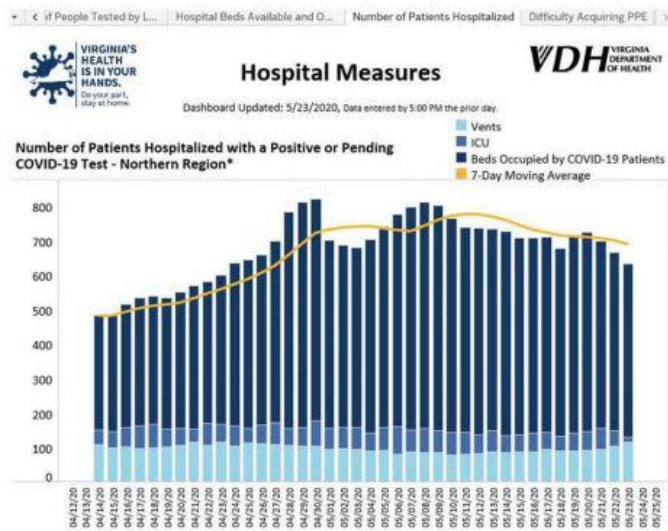
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Northern Virginia Key Measures



As you can see, the overall number of patients in the hospital for COVID-19 in the region is now on the decline. It has been just over two weeks since the Board was asked to make a recommendation, and as you can also see, at that time the number of cases was essentially at its peak (as I suspected). Now, I do wish to make a couple points about this chart. Over 600 COVID-19 patients in Northern Virginia hospitals is still a major strain. Evaluating this criteria is not as simple as merely looking at the number of patients against the number of beds. COVID-19 patients require dedicated staff and physical areas, including things like negative pressure rooms. We have seen a decline in other ailments and thus other hospital patients, but our expectation is that those numbers will start to come up once more people are out and about. I've seen a number of individuals advocate for Loudoun being separated from the rest of the region, but the healthcare and hospital system is not separated at all. The two hospitals in Loudoun are part of organizations with hospitals in other parts of Northern Virginia and they shift resources between locations. There are finite numbers of employees and resources for all of them. In addition, about half of Loudoun residents work in other jurisdictions, almost exclusively to our east, where exposure is greater than it is here. It will be very

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

[Loudoun Online Land Applications System \(LOLA\)](#)

difficult to not have some spread from their work environments to our community. So, even with this number declining, we should still be vigilant and cautious about our healthcare and hospital system, and we will continue to closely monitor this metric.

Two of the gating criteria were deemed "unmet" by the Health Directors. One is related to contact tracing, and the other is PPE. Contact tracing is a state (Department of Health) function, and the state is proceeding with plans to hire contact tracers. The numbers I have seen are probably not going to be adequate for what will be needed, and that is a discussion we will continue to have with the Commonwealth, and potentially need to augment at the County level.

PPE is a more complicated discussion. The situation is improved over where it was two weeks ago. In the past week, the Commonwealth's PPE supplies for localities to tap into has vastly improved. The County itself received a PPE shipment last week and has more scheduled for June. In addition, Loudoun County Fire-Rescue is preparing to test the new Battelle decontamination equipment which was recently sent to Washington, DC. This would allow them to decontaminate the equipment that first responders are using and reduce the burn rate of PPE. That said, private institutions and especially doctors offices (and some nursing homes) are still very short on PPE. Given that Phase 1 is still limited and the County itself has seen improvements in PPE availability, I hope we can better assist the Loudoun medical community.

Testing availability also continues to improve. The one-day event at Bolen Park demonstrated there is a strong public desire for testing. My focus is less on "mass testing" of asymptomatic patients and more on ensuring those with "lighter" symptoms, front line workers who come in frequent contact with many people, and medical personnel have access to tests. Criteria on who can get a test still varies from provider to provider, and it's still stricter than I would like. The County Administrator's Testing Task Force, co-led by Dr. John Farrell (chairman of our Health Commission

and known to many of us as Dr. John at South Riding Pediatrics), has been meeting and making progress on these issues. There are enough private providers offering testing to those with stepped-down criteria that I can say we are moving in the right direction.

Now, what does Phase 1 look like, and what's next?

Forward Virginia: Phase One		
	PHASE ZERO	PHASE ONE
NON-ESSENTIAL RETAIL	Open with 10 person limit	Open with 50% capacity
RESTAURANTS AND BEVERAGE SERVICES	Takeout and delivery	Takeout and delivery, outdoor seating at 50% capacity
ENTERTAINMENT AND PUBLIC AMUSEMENT	Closed	Closed
FITNESS AND EXERCISE	Closed	Closed (limited to outdoor fitness classes)
BEACHES	Exercise and fishing only	Exercise and fishing only
GATHERINGS	10 person limit	10 person limit
TELEWORKING	Strongly encouraged	Strongly encouraged
FACE COVERINGS	Strongly encouraged	Strongly encouraged
CHILDCARE	Open for working families	Open for working families
PLACES OF WORSHIP	Drive-in services; 10 person limit	Drive-in services; 50% capacity
PERSONAL GROOMING	Closed	Appointment only
PRIVATE CAMPGROUNDS	Closed	Open
OVERNIGHT SUMMER CAMPS	Closed	Closed
STATE PARKS	Day use only	Day use; Overnight in phases
SCHOOLS	Closed	Closed

In terms of what's next, we are awaiting more specific information on what Phase 2 looks like, and what criteria should be met for us to move forward with it. I anticipate that we will need to see continued downward trends in COVID hospitalizations and continued progress on the other stated metrics. I will share more information about this when it becomes available. The Board of Supervisors will receive another public COVID-19 update at our June 2 business meeting. There may also be further orders from the Commonwealth regarding mask use in certain settings, so we're on the lookout for that information.

DULLES UPDATES

Tall Cedars / Stone Springs Signal

The signal contractor has begun project stakeouts at the intersection and VDOT has issued the Land Use Permit for construction. This allowed mobilization and field

work within the VDOT right of way to begin around mid-May. At this point things are moving at a steady rate, and I feel confident in the current timeline of having the signal substantially complete by the fall.

Belmont Ridge Road Widening - Utility Relocation

Widening work on Belmont Ridge Road continues with the piece from Truro Parish Drive to Croson Lane. At our May 19 Business Meeting, the Board voted to award the contract for utility relocation to Dominion Energy. The relocation of overhead utility lines will include the installation of 37 new utility poles and approximately 24,500 feet of new lines, as well as three new transformers. Dominion will also need to remove 34 existing poles, 23,800 feet of cabling, and two transformers. The estimated cost is \$1,895,396. Since Dominion owns the utilities, they are technically the only ones that can relocate the structures in question. The Board's awarding of the contract was therefore more of a formality, but still represents an important step forward in getting this widening project underway. County land acquisition staff are also working to secure needed right of way from property owners along the roadway. Right of way and utility relocation are major items that need to be complete before the County can award a contract for construction. 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.

7-Eleven South Riding *SPEX-2019-0021*

This item is 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. 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, which is consistent with current County guidance on carwash hours). We initially heard the item at our April 15 Public Hearing, where we discussed hours of operation and heard a few concerned individuals from the community speak about the noise of the current operation and potential residential impacts. The big issue seemed to be early morning trash collection and general noise associated with the existing use on the property. There was a notification error with that hearing, so the item was reheard on May 13.

At our May 13 Public Hearing, I discussed my desire to see a fence constructed alongside the property, as well as an enhanced landscaping berm to further shield the site from the residents in North Riding. In addition, based on the feedback I had received, it sounded as if the timing of the existing trash collection was in violation of the County noise ordinance, and I asked the applicant to confirm on the record that they would adjust hours. The applicant was agreeable on these points, and we're now waiting to see the final plans. The application was forwarded to the June 2 Business Meeting for action.

MC Dean Property

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

The Board of Supervisors voted 7-1-1 (Supervisor Kerhsner absent, but had previously supported) to approve special exceptions and a zoning modification to develop an 11.42-acre property at the Route 50 / Pleasant Valley Road intersection currently owned by MC Dean. The plan includes an automotive service station (with approval for up to 8 gas pumps), and retail sales and restaurant uses. Two of the pad sites are allowed to serve drive-through uses.

Since we last heard the application at our April 15 Public Hearing, I worked with County staff, VDOT, and the applicant to address some significant traffic-related issues. First, VDOT and the County were not in agreement on allowing a left exit from the site onto Pleasant Valley Road. I agreed that this was not an appropriate location for that turning movement and ultimately VDOT acknowledged that their analysis only looked at proximity to Eastgate View Drive and not Route 50. I worked to secure applicant agreement to remove this left turn so that it didn't further degrade operations on Pleasant Valley Road.

Second, with the removal of the left turn, we needed to evaluate the Eastgate View and Pleasant Valley intersection for potential improvements. This is a tough situation because the traffic in this location is already terrible and any development on the site (even by-right) would add trips to the adjacent roads. We secured agreement with the applicant to complete an intersection analysis that will evaluate improvements to the intersection. During a warrant analysis, it only met the peak hour warrant for a signal and VDOT generally will not approve a signal in just that case. However, this analysis will also look at other control methods. The applicant will contribute to the recommended improvement.

The County and VDOT are currently working to remove one of the two left turn lanes on Route 50 to southbound Pleasant Valley. We're doing that in order to have the ability to reconfigure northbound Pleasant Valley to have two southbound lanes (going eastbound on 50) instead of the current configuration. That will be a separate project, but I have begun talking to VDOT and County staff about it. My hope is that we won't need a great deal of additional right of way, and this can be more of a pavement and marking shift, but we'll see.

This was a difficult application but it doesn't meet the new Comprehensive Plan for this parcel, and for that reason it was not supported by staff or the Planning Commission. However the plan calls for mixed use in

this area, and the only viable uses that are not part of this application are residential units. I simply did not want to see residential units on this parcel. The question then is, what else is going to come here? The property has been on the market for several years. The only other interest has been a car dealership which is a use that I couldn't support since the property backs directly to residential. I think the applicant has made a good faith effort to create a layout that will be attractive, and to mitigate some of the concerns I had with traffic. I know how much residents want more dining and this will be another project looking for those kinds of tenants. I can't predict what will actually develop here - the market now is obviously in an unprecedented place. But this application meets the full Route 50 corridor landscaping plan, which means the property will have a 100 foot landscaping buffer consistent with other newer projects, and that alone will improve the corridor significantly since the current site is not exactly something to be proud of when you first drive into Loudoun County.

LOUDOUN UPDATES

Credit Ratings

As I mentioned last month, as Finance Chairman one of my responsibilities is to present the County's finances to credit rating agencies in advance of our municipal bond sales. This year, the meetings were held remotely due to COVID-19. In my six years taking part in this process, this was by far the hardest. The agencies were rightly focused on our financial durability during COVID-19, and they asked many challenging questions. In the end, however, the County's AAA bond ratings were once again affirmed. Last week, the County sold \$200 million of General Obligation bonds at a record-low 1.48% interest rate, which underscores just how important these ratings are for saving taxpayer dollars. (For comparison, last year's interest rate was 2.28%). The three agencies also affirmed Loudoun's AA+ and Aa1 ratings on the upcoming sale of lease revenue bonds, as well as

outstanding lease revenue bonds and the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan, which will go toward financing Metro's Silver Line expansion into Loudoun. The County also refinanced two existing bonds for a total savings of about \$4.1 million over the next nine years.

Here are excerpts from the agency reports:

Moody's:

- The AAA rating on the General Obligation Bonds incorporates the County's sizable, diverse and growing tax base, above-average resident income levels, healthy and stable fund balance and liquidity, and manageable debt and pension burdens.
- The stable outlook reflects the likelihood that the County's fund balance and liquidity position will remain sound driven by conservative and proactive budgetary management and that the County's sizable and regionally important tax base will continue to expand and diversify.
- Loudoun County is not susceptible to immediate material credit risks related to coronavirus.

Fitch:

- The ratings reflect very sound operating performance, supported by strong revenue growth and solid expenditure flexibility, and a moderate long-term liability burden.
- Due to substantial economic development the past several years, assessed value appreciation has been rapid and has generated a strong level of natural revenue growth. Fitch expects this trend to continue given solid economic prospects.

S&P noted the County's:

- Extensive and well integrated financial management and long term planning
- Very robust local economy that continues to grow, and success of economic development team in attracting commercial investment
- Very strong overall economic and financial indicators, including flexibility and liquidity

Business Interruption Fund Updates

The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved \$1.15 million in grant funding for a Round One 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 as well. The County received about 670 qualified applicants, with enough funding for about 200 recipients. A random drawing was held to select those businesses (58 of those selected were in the Dulles District).

As you'll read below, the County's CARES Act funding, which flows from the Commonwealth, will be arriving shortly. The Board has elected to use \$5.7 million of that funding for two more rounds of support. Round Two will deliver grants to the more than 450 businesses that were eligible in Round One but didn't get selected (\$3.7 million). Round Three (\$2 million) will be used for businesses under 3 employees, which were excluded from the first process.

For eligibility requirements and the application form, please visit this [site](#).

CARES Act Funding

The County typically receives about \$1 million annually from the federal Community Development Block Grant program. This year, that comes with an additional \$831,931 from the CARES Act for COVID-

19 response measures. \$480,000 of the CARES Act funding will be directed to the County's Limited Rental Assistance Program. Requests to date for the rental assistance program are expected to total about \$650,000. With the additional CARES Act funding, we will be able to commit at least \$680,000 to rental assistance (additional funds had already been diverted from another County program for this purpose).

Overall, the County will receive \$36,079,596 in CARES Act funding from the Commonwealth as a one-time payment for assistance with our response to COVID-19. These funds are subject to the federal conditions established in the CARES Act, and any unused funds will be returned. I'll provide a brief breakdown of how the funds will be spent:

Business Interruption Fund	\$6,850,000
Cleaning and supplies	\$700,000
Facility and workspace modification	\$547,734
Food assistance	\$600,000
Housing assistance	\$2,000,000
Life sustaining services	\$1,000,000
Mental Health Dept. contracts	\$800,000
Network infrastructure, licensing, and equipment (for teleworking)	\$1,500,000
Nonprofit support	\$2,000,000
Personnel costs	\$4,500,000
PPE	\$9,500,000
Towns	\$6,081,862
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$36,079,596</u>

Loudoun United Rent Deferral

At our May 19 Business Meeting, the Board voted 6-2-1 to defer Loudoun United's two scheduled 2020 payments for the Bolen Park soccer facility. (Supervisor Kershner was absent for the vote due to the birth of his child, but had previously supported the item in the Finance Committee). Since this item was the subject of some controversy in a few quarters, let me

take a moment to explain exactly why we made the decision.

Segra Field is owned by Loudoun County, not the team. The training facility is still under construction. The fields themselves will be owned by the County. DC United is building a training center at their own expense for themselves and for the Washington Spirit, the National Women's Soccer League Team. The terms of the agreement with DC United/Loudoun United call for the County to pay for and construct our portion of the project, and the team to pay back our expenses, with interest, over a 30 year period. In order to do this, the County utilized lease revenue bonds, a typical financial instrument when facilities are used for commercial purposes (in contrast to General Obligation bonds, which we use for County facilities and require a voter referendum).

As you know, since March, the County has closed all of our PRCS facilities. That includes Segra Field. As a result, the team has not had access to the field. The relationship between the County and the team is like a landlord and tenant. The County has the ability to allow other tenants to use Segra Field or use it for our own purposes. Loudoun United is one user, and because of the reach of the DC United organization, they have been assisting us with programming for the stadium this summer. For instance, a summer concert series was being planned before COVID-19 hit.

The DC United organization received Paycheck Protection Program funding to help cover payroll and expenses for April and May, and that's due to run-out in early June. The team is planning on keeping as many employees as it can so that they can resume operations for both teams as soon as it is safe to do so and the leagues restart. At this time, the organization is receiving no revenue from any source, and is only incurring expenditures. In Loudoun United's case, with only a half year played so far, there is obviously no financial or cash reserve.

The request to the County was to restructure the terms of the repayment plan so that no payments would need to be made in 2020, and those payments would instead be added to the regularly scheduled payments over the next 6 years. The overall 30 year length of the agreement was not changed. The County Administrator and the Department of Finance recommended approval of the deferral. The County has already sold the lease revenue bonds and is making payments from the debt service fund, so there is no impact to the general fund, which is what we use for expenditures. (We have to segregate funding to repay debt anyway). The total amount involved in 2020 is about \$600,000.

The argument against granting the deferral is that many businesses are in similar circumstances with no revenue. That is certainly true. However, the County is and has been strongly encouraging landlords to work with their tenants to defer payments. In this case, the County IS the landlord, which is a unique situation for us, and my belief is that we should lead by example and do what we're asking others to do.

The team stated that if the request was not granted, then they would in fact make the payments in 2020, but it would result in accelerated layoffs of their staff. That is something we should avoid. We have a long-term partnership with the team, and we want it to be successful as soon as they can resume play. In addition, it is not as if not granting the deferral would actually have any financial impact on the County. The other issue for me is simply that as a landlord, we should not expect payment for a stadium that we are literally prohibiting the team from using (even for practices or non-public activities).

On a positive note, construction on the training facility is continuing to proceed. The team expects this to be a temporary blip in their trajectory, and they stated on the record at the Finance Committee meeting that this is a one-time request.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COVID-19 Testing at Ashburn Healthplex

Inova Loudoun has announced that the Ashburn Healthplex (22505 Landmark Court in Ashburn) is now a COVID-19 testing site. While the Dulles South Recreation Center remains open as a respiratory clinic as well, the Ashburn Healthplex will be for testing only with a doctor's note.

Donations to Food Banks

Food banks are in need of help now more than ever!

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.

Donations to Loudoun Hunger Relief can be made in person at 750 Miller Drive SE in Leesburg or via loudounhunger.org/donate-now.

Property Tax Deadlines

I want to remind you that the Board of Supervisors approved a one month delay in payment of personal property taxes (such as the car tax). The tax deadline will now be June 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 the Treasurer's Office and his collections divisions will attempt to work out arrangements with 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.

Upcoming Blood Drives

I previously announced that Loudoun County Public Schools would be hosting blood drives during the month of May at John Champe High School and Freedom High School. Those ended up being cancelled by the Red Cross; I apologize for any inconvenience. The blood drive at John Champe, located at 41535 Sacred Mountain Street, has been rescheduled for Monday June 15. Due to COVID-19, appointments are necessary and drop-in donations will not be allowed. To make an appointment, click [here](#). Blood donations are more necessary than ever right now, so I encourage you to take this opportunity if you are able.

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