

Dear Leesburg Resident,

The Loudoun County Health Department will resume using the single-dose Johnson and Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine following a [joint announcement](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) indicating the pause in the use of the J&J vaccine should be lifted. The next scheduled clinic that will use J&J COVID-19 vaccine is on Saturday, May 1st.

As you may have read, vaccinations using the J&J vaccine were paused due to multiple reported cases where women between the ages of 18 and 48 suffered from unusual blood clots, some fatal, thought to be related to this particular vaccine. After the initial reports, women older than 48 also experienced blood clots from this vaccine. As you read press reports to assess the risks and benefits of particular vaccines, consider that many press reports compare the number of cases of blood clots among young women to the total number of vaccinations given to men and women of all ages, which makes the risk of blood clots appear far lower than it is. A more accurate way to assess the risk is to compare the number of cases of blood clots among women in the 18 to 48 age range to the total number of vaccinations given to women in that age range.

FY 2022 Budget

At the April 6th Board business meeting, we [adopted the FY 2022 budget](#) and moved to release all remaining FY 2021 positions held as part of the FY 2021 expenditure reserve for immediate classification, recruitment, and hiring by County departments. The homeowners real property tax rate is \$.980 per \$100 of assessed value and the commercial and industrial real estate tax rate is \$.170 per \$100 of assessed value for tax year 2021.

Thank-you to our residents who took the time to analyze the proposed budget and weigh in on it. Every comment we received, whether approving or disapproving, was thoughtfully presented and extremely helpful. I think staff did an excellent job putting the budget together. At our Joint Board of Supervisors and School Board Committee Meeting, Co-Chair Brenda Sheridan reported that the School Board will need to reconcile \$28 million in the LCPS budget. I have a lot of respect for the School Board members and appreciate the work they do for our students and community.

Tax Relief Program for the Elderly and Disabled

At the April 6th Board business meeting, I moved that the Board direct staff to prepare a draft amendment to Chapter 872 of the Codified Ordinances of Loudoun County for the [Real Estate Tax Relief for the Elderly or Permanently Disabled](#) to increase the upper limit for annual gross household income for each income bracket by 6.5 percent, consistent with the increase in Consumer Price Index since 2015, to be advertised for public hearing by July 2021 to allow sufficient time for outreach to the impacted community. Any changes will be effective for tax year 2022 or January 1, 2022.

I further moved that the Board consider changes to the Chapter 872 of the Codified Ordinances of Loudoun County for the Real Estate Tax Relief for the Elderly or Permanently Disabled that would allow for periodic updates to the annual gross household income limits be forwarded the May 11th Finance/Government Operations and Economic Development Committee meeting.

COVID-19 Impact on Vehicle Values in 2021

Commissioner of the Revenue Robert S. Wertz Jr. wants vehicle owners in Loudoun County to know that they could see increases in their personal property tax bills that are due on May 5th. This is not due to a tax rate increase or reduction in tax relief but instead is due to increases in used vehicle values.

Vehicle values for tax assessment purposes are established as of January 1st and historically decline over time as vehicles age. Therefore, the value of any vehicle for tax purposes would normally be lower than the value of that same vehicle the previous January. In early 2020, vehicle values were trending normally. However, COVID-19 has altered the usual trends of the automobile industry. As a result, all major vehicle valuation services saw increased used vehicle market values between January 2020 and January 2021. During the summer of 2020, prices increased over 10% for the US used car market as a whole. Several key market events played a role in the values that were established in January 2021. These events include, but are not limited to:

- In March of 2020, the Federal Reserve cut interest rates to near 0%, allowing consumers to purchase vehicles sooner than they may have in the past. Strong demand results in higher prices.
- The COVID-19-related closing of certain auto manufacturing plants for the necessary production of ventilators and other Personal Protective Equipment caused a reduction in new car inventories.
- Companies with large vehicle fleets, including car rental firms, chose not to replace inventory, adding to the shortage of pre-owned vehicles that would normally be available in the used vehicle market.

The decline in availability of both new and used vehicles caused the prices of used vehicles to increase and therefore their valuation for tax purposes has gone up. Appealing an assessment does not guarantee that it will be reduced nor does the filing of an appeal relieve the obligation to pay the tax bill by the respective due date. Vehicle owners who believe their vehicle was worth less than its assessed value on January 1st, can obtain an [appeal form](#).

Vaccine Online Self-Scheduling Now Open

In mid-April, Loudoun County expanded COVID-19 vaccination opportunities to include all residents who are 16 years of age and older. Please note that anyone under 18 receiving the vaccine must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at their vaccination appointment or they will be turned away.

No Pre-Registration Required

Beginning yesterday, individuals 16 and over can directly schedule an appointment online to receive a free COVID-19 vaccine at the Loudoun County Health Department vaccination clinic located at Dulles Town Center in Sterling by visiting this [website](#). The website includes a link to the online form where individuals can request an account to schedule an appointment. An e-mail address or cell phone number may only be used once to create an account. If an e-mail address or cell phone number was used during the pre-registration phase, that contact information cannot be used again.

After completing the form, individuals will automatically receive an e-mail or text message from the CDC with a link to create an account in the Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS) and schedule an appointment at the Loudoun County Health Department vaccination clinic. With this change, individuals no longer need to pre-register.

Other Vaccination Opportunities

In addition to receiving a vaccine from the County, residents can also look for available vaccination appointments at pharmacies and other locations in the region by visiting [vaccinefinder.org](#). These entities do not coordinate their registrations with the Health Department.

COVID-19 Testing

Loudoun County will continue to hold free, drive thru [COVID-19 testing](#) events through May. The events are scheduled for Tuesdays, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, at the following locations:

- May 4: Franklin Park, 17501 Franklin Park Drive in Purcellville
- May 11: Philip A. Bolen Memorial Park, 42405 Claudia Drive in Leesburg (enter the park on Crosstrail Boulevard from Sycolin Road)
- May 18: Cascades Library, 21030 Whitfield Place in Potomac Falls (access the testing location in the back parking lot, near the senior center)
- May 25: Dulles South Recreation & Community Center, 24950 Riding Center Drive in South Riding

To help reduce wait times, people who plan to attend the testing events are strongly encouraged to complete a [registration form](#) for each person who will be receiving a test prior to arriving at the testing site.

COVID-19 TESTING

Multiple
Locations

May 2021

Tuesdays

10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Drive-thru only. Free & open to everyone.

LOUDOUN
COUNTY
VIRGINIA

loudoun.gov/COVID19testing

Loudoun Small Business Week

The 10th Annual Loudoun Small Business Week will be held May 3rd to May 7th. This year we are honoring the tenacity of our small business community as they navigated the incredible challenges faced during the COVID-19 crisis. We will be focusing on telling the stories of Loudoun's small businesses and highlighting those companies who have made an impact on our community during the pandemic. Unfortunately, many of our small businesses could not survive the Governor's shutdown. We estimate that the County lost about 25% of its small businesses and the jobs they provided due to the shutdown.

On May 3rd, the Small Business Development Center is hosting a mini-conference titled "Focusing on Recovery", and the applications for the [Loudoun Innovation Challenge](#) will open. The goal of the Innovation Challenge is to promote entrepreneurship and business growth by identifying and supporting companies that are developing truly innovative products and services in Loudoun County. Loudoun Economic Development Authority has dedicated \$150,000 in funding, divided into six total grants. Potential applicants can read about the different categories, awards and rules for applying on the [website](#) now. The application deadline is Monday, May 17th at 12:00 pm.

Loudoun Small Business Week will also launch an updated [website](#), which will showcase a variety of new resources for those starting or running a Loudoun small business. I plan to visit Leesburg small businesses for a 1-on-1 opportunity to hear first-hand how our businesses have adapted during COVID-19 and obtain feedback on what further local assistance may be necessary to survive. Now more than ever our small businesses need our support.

Data Centers Give Back to the Community

Most residents know that the data center industry provides great tax revenue, but what they might not know is all of the great work that they do in the community. During the pandemic, representatives of the data center industry delivered nearly 1,000 meals to COVID-19 first responders at Inova Loudoun while supporting local restaurants. In March and April of this year, members of the Data Center Coalition provided lunches for the volunteers at Loudoun's vaccination facility. Last year, representatives from local data center association 7x24 DC

packaged more than 16,000 pounds of food for local families through a partnership with Loudoun Hunger Relief (pictured below with me and Mayor Kelly Burk). For more information on how Loudoun's data centers are engaged in our community, please watch this [video](#).



Unmet Housing Needs Strategic Plan

At the April 6th Board meeting, staff presented the first draft of the [Unmet Housing Needs Strategic Plan \(UHNSP\)](#). The Board initiated this plan in September 2019 after the adoption of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan. The purpose is to address the unmet housing needs, over the anticipated 5-year life of the plan, and support the County's overarching goal to ensure residents are able to access housing that they can afford. The UHNSP has the following five objectives:

1. Establish a coordinated, collaborative, and integrated housing network.
2. Secure land resources needed to address unmet housing needs.
3. Obtain viable funding sources.
4. Reduce barriers to the development and preservation of affordable housing.
5. Implement policy changes to support affordable housing production and preservation.

These five objectives and their associated strategies and actions provide a comprehensive approach (please see [specific strategies and key actions in the plan](#)). A public hearing is scheduled on Wednesday, May 12th at 6:00 pm for the public to comment on the draft plan. To give electronic or in-person comments, speakers are encouraged to sign up in advance by calling (703) 777-0200 by 12:00 pm on the day of the public hearing. Based on your input, staff will present a final draft to the Board, including the first annual implementation and funding plan, for approval at a future Board business meeting. I hope you will take the time to review the plan and provide your input. There is no one-size fits all solution to the housing issue; it will take multiple and creative approaches.

Options for Collective Bargaining

At the April 20th Board business meeting, Chair Randall moved that staff return to the Board on May 18th with options for a local ordinance authorizing the traditional model of collective bargaining and recognizing labor unions or other employee associations as bargaining agents for eligible County employees.

Effective May 1st, changes to the Code of Virginia remove the prohibition against collective bargaining and allow localities to adopt a local ordinance or resolution authorizing the locality to enter into collective bargaining agreements. I believe collective bargaining agreements help protect the public by creating more efficient and effective government operations by building a cooperative relationship. I will support the County moving forward with a collective bargaining ordinance, which will come before the Board for public hearing and a final vote.

Form of Government Overview

At the April 20th Board business meeting, staff presented the [forms of government](#) available to Loudoun County, the process by which the County could change its form of government, and a preliminary analysis of what organizational and fiscal impacts could occur from such a change. Currently, Loudoun County deploys the traditional form of government and seeks General Assembly approval for additional authority based on the needs of our growing County. Under the traditional form, residents elect five constitutional officers and the Board appoints a County Administrator and County Attorney. The Board is responsible for the legislative and administrative affairs of the County.

The Board appears to have agreed to retain our current form of government and study the potential establishment of a police department that would include a comparative budget analysis of the impacts of forming and operating a police department. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) was selected as the most qualified vendor to conduct the requested study. A preliminary report will be issued to the County in November 2021 and a final report presented to the Board in February 2022.

As I stated months ago, when this process started, I am very skeptical about both a change in government and the establishment of a County police department. I have not seen any evidence that switching law enforcement duties from an elected sheriff to an appointed chief of police will change the quality of law enforcement in the County.

If we decide to establish a police department, the Board would petition the court, by resolution, asking that a referendum be held on the question, "Shall a police force be established in the County and the sheriff's office be relieved of primary law-enforcement responsibilities?" The court would order the election and the election would be held pursuant to law. If the measure passes, the County would then proceed to establish a police force following the enactment of authorizing legislation by the General Assembly (please see a visual of the process below).

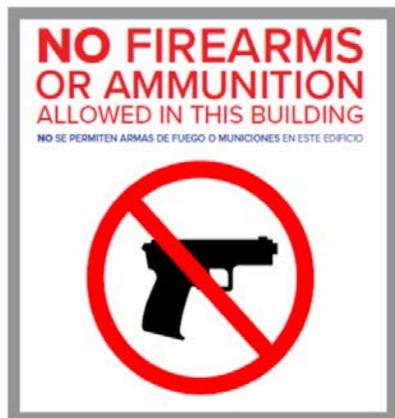


Signage Banning Firearms in County Facilities

Loudoun County is taking steps to enforce the recently amended Chapter 684 of the Codified Ordinances of Loudoun County – Weapons and Explosives, which prohibits guns in County facilities. Exceptions to the new ordinance allow some individuals to carry firearms, including concealed handgun carry permit holders visiting County parks only. Failure to comply with the ordinance could result in a fine of up to \$2,500 or up to 12 months in jail.

The question was raised recently by one of our diligent Leesburg residents as to whether a resident of a state that allows concealed-carry without a permit would be able to concealed-carry in a Loudoun County park. The answer is no. Virginia law does not extend concealed-carry reciprocity to residents of other states that have no permitting system.

Signage explaining the new rules is being placed at the entrances to County facilities. Security screening stations will be installed at the Loudoun County Government Center and the Shenandoah Building in Leesburg and at the County government's service center located on Ridgetop Circle in Sterling. Signs prohibiting the carrying of weapons are already in place at preschools operated by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services.



Enforcement of New Loudoun County Ordinance

Firearms Prohibited in County Facilities

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loudoun.gov/firearmsordinance

Youth Commission Vacancy

We have a vacancy on the Advisory Commission on Youth representing the Leesburg District. The Advisory Commission on Youth assesses youth needs, advises the Board on programs, issues and opportunities, fosters collaboration among all stakeholders, and encourages changes in law, policy and procedures that will improve conditions for wholesome youth development. Please contact Val Suzdak at valerie.suzdak@loudoun.gov if you are interested. Thank you!

Warm Regards,

Kristen C. Umstatt
Leesburg District

Loudoun County Board of Supervisors
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703-777-0203

Valerie Suzdak
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Business of the Month

Books and Other Found Things

Books and Other Found Things is an independent book store in historic downtown at 13 Loudoun Street, SW in Leesburg. It features a wide selection of gently used books and the works of over 20 local artisans.

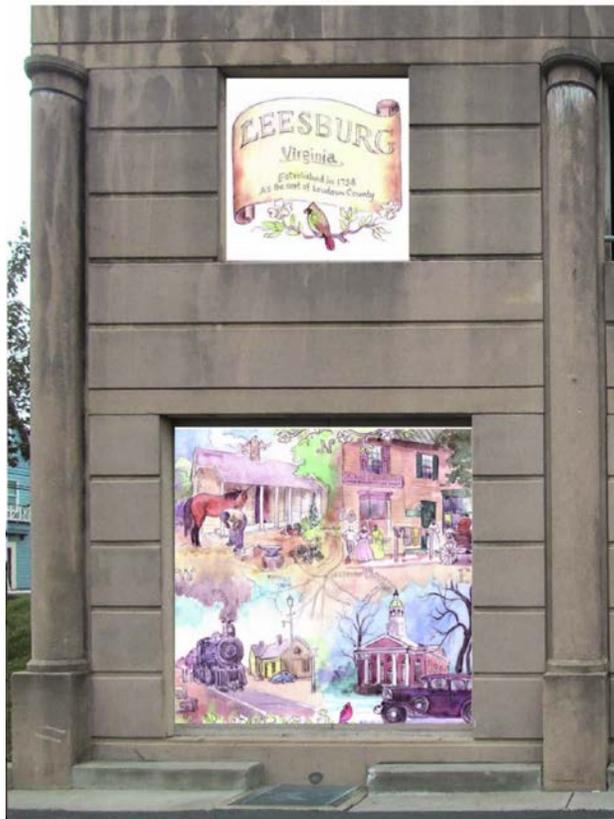
We enjoy tracking down books for people. We have the ability to connect with over 400 independent booksellers around the world as a resource for used and harder to find books. We also have an account with a "new" book wholesaler which enables us to order most books that are currently in print. Please let us know what you're looking for and we'll see how we can help at booksandoft@gmail.com.



Mayor Kelly Burk's Corner

CALL TO ARTISTS

The Leesburg Commission on Public Art (COPA) and Friends of Leesburg Public Art (FOLPA) are seeking design submissions for three murals that will be installed along the exterior of the Town Hall Parking Garage fronting Lassiter Way. The alley provides an ingress and egress to the Town Hall as well as a walking path to shops and restaurants on King Street. The initial niche mural, a vision provided by the late Gale Waldron and gifted to the Town of Leesburg through the generosity of Gale and Gerry Waldron, was installed in 2018. This Call to Artists is to provide murals on the remaining three wall niches. To learn more visit [here](#).



10th ANNUAL NATIONAL MAYOR'S CHALLENGE FOR WATER CONSERVATION

There are still a few days left to participate in the 10th annual Wyland National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation. The national campaign, which takes place April 1st to 30th, actively promotes civic participation and action around water conservation, efficiency, and the sustainability of our nation's water-based ecosystems. Leesburg residents are being asked to make online pledges to reduce pollution, water waste, and explore ways to improve the health of their community. Participants will be eligible to win \$3,000 toward their home utility payments in addition to other eco-friendly prizes. They can also nominate a deserving charity in town to win a Toyota Highlander Hybrid. Residents can find water-saving tips and make their pledges [here](#).



SAVE WATER AND WIN!

APRIL 1-30

TAKE THE PLEDGE NOW
WWW.MYWATERPLEDGE.COM

  @WYLANDFOUNDATION

 **TOYOTA**

COLLECTION OF YARD WASTE RESUMES

Patriot Disposal Services will be collecting yard waste every Monday for those living within the corporate limits of the Town of Leesburg. A maximum of 10 biodegradable paper bags (or 10 properly marked trash cans) will be picked up at each resident's home per week. No exceptions. Yard waste is limited to grass clippings, leaves, weeds and small twigs and must be placed at the curb by 6 am on the day of collection. Yard waste must be in biodegradable paper bags or in cans clearly marked as yard waste. The Town of Leesburg will provide residents with free "Yard Waste" stickers for this purpose. Residents can request stickers by calling 703-771-2790 or emailing trash@leesburgva.gov. For more information, please visit the [Town of Leesburg website](#).



EVENTS

The Town of Leesburg's 31st annual Flower & Garden Festival was held on April 17th and 18th. It was a gorgeous weekend for the ticketed event. I would like to commend staff for their organization while following all COVID-19 guidelines. Thank you to the vendors and to everyone who attended. It was a great feeling to see everything come together.



Update from Beth Barts

April has been a busy month of excitement and renewed energy for students and staff in LCPS.

- Students whose families selected the hybrid model of instruction for the second semester of the school year returned to school for four days of in-person learning starting April 20th.

- Governor Northen heard the collective voice of parents, students, elected officials and our music educators statewide to make a much needed change to the capacity limits for indoor and outdoor performances. This is wonderful news for our performing arts students!
- During the month of April, LCPS recognized our military families. LCPS encouraged the entire school community to wear purple on April 21st in a show of support for our military students and appreciation for their strength and sacrifices. Purple represents the blending of the colors of the five branches of our armed forces. Here in Virginia, we are proud to be home to Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, National Guard and Reserve families.

Update on the Douglass School:

The School Board is establishing a commemorative committee to engage and formulate ideas for historical displays at Douglass School, in conjunction with upcoming renovation plans. The Douglass High School building renovation and associated construction should be complete by fall 2022.

Commemorative works will be key elements incorporated in the building renovation to tell the story of Douglass High School. The charge of the Douglass High School Commemorative Committee will be to review and develop options, both permanent and temporary, for relevant historic artifacts, memorabilia and other possible interpretive building displays. The committee's mission will be to determine how the history and importance of Douglass High School will be shared and to recommend commemorative components for School Board action and funding, as necessary.

Budget news:

The School Board is in the reconciliation process. We were pleased to find out that COVID-19 Recovery monies can be used for Summer School, and as a result, this lowered the funding gap. I will update you with the final budget numbers in the May newsletter.

Over the next year, I will be focusing on our literacy program. While there is no "silver bullet" to make sure all children can read, it is critical that the entire community be vested in our literacy curriculum as reading is a fundamental right. More information will be shared on this topic in the coming months.

Community Information



New Law Limits Greenway Toll Increases: The legislation provides additional regulatory oversight for future toll rate increase applications made by the operators of the Dulles Greenway and takes effect on July 1st.

Some key points of the new law include:

- Proposed Greenway toll rates must be “reasonable” to users in relation to the benefit they are deriving from using the road, should not “materially discourage” use of the road and should provide the operator no more than a reasonable return.
- Toll increase requests are limited to one year at a time.
- The Virginia Department of Transportation will have the authority to independently review all traffic-related analyses submitted by the Greenway operator in support of higher tolls.
- Basic evidence of financial fitness (including creditworthiness) will be required when applying for permission to transfer, extend or amend the certificate of authority to operate the Greenway.
- Requires the operator of the Greenway to obtain approval from the State Corporation Commission (SCC) before refinancing any debt and establishes specific criteria that the operator must meet for approval.

Assistance Available for Loudoun Residents Impacted by COVID-19: If you or someone you know has been economically affected, **Loudoun’s Information and Referral Program** can connect you with a variety of services such as:

- Child Care Assistance
- Employment Services
- Food Resources
- Health and Dental Care
- Housing and Homeless Services
- Legal Services
- Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Developmental Services
- Older Adult Services
- Public Benefits
- Utility Assistance

Contact an Information and Referral Line specialist at 703-777-0420 or **online**, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. After hours and on the weekend, complete an **online form** or send an e-mail to **dfs@loudoun.gov** and a specialist will respond the next business day.

Early In-Person Voting for June Democratic Primary: Early voting is available through June 5th, Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm at 750 Miller Drive SE in Leesburg (closed May 31st for Memorial Day). Extended hours begin May 29th to include Saturdays in Leesburg and additional early voting sites throughout the County. Exact dates, times and locations are posted on the **early voting website**.

Any registered voter may request an absentee ballot by mail. The deadline to request a ballot by mail for the June primary is Friday, May 28th, at 5:00 pm. Voters who cannot safely have a witness present while completing the absentee ballot for the primary election are not required

to have a witness present. Information on how to request a ballot is [online](#). Anyone who has not registered to vote in Loudoun has until May 17th to register to vote in the June 8th election. More information about the upcoming primary election is [online](#).

Route 15 South Survey: Submit your input by taking the [Concepts Alternatives Preference Survey](#) through May 21st. The project is a safety and operational study of approximately 12 miles of Route 15 from the south corporate limit of the Town of Leesburg to the Prince William County line. These survey questions are based on information presented at the virtual public input meeting which was held on Thursday, April 22nd. If you missed the meeting or would like to review the materials, you can watch a recording of the meeting before proceeding further with this survey. [Click here](#) to view the meeting recording and detailed concept alternative maps for each segment of the study corridor.

Public Input Needed for Countywide Parks and Trails System: In 2019, the Board directed the Loudoun County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Board to develop a detailed implementation plan for an interconnected, countywide linear parks and trails system. Public input and engagement is a vital part of the planning initiative. Residents are encouraged to participate in the online survey, submit comments and find more information about the Linear Parks and Trails system project [here](#). The deadline to complete the survey is May 20th. Inquiries and comments can be sent by e-mail to lpot@loudoun.gov.



Joint Study to Restore Potomac River Ferry Service: The joint study will be led by the Loudoun County Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation. The study's scope will include:

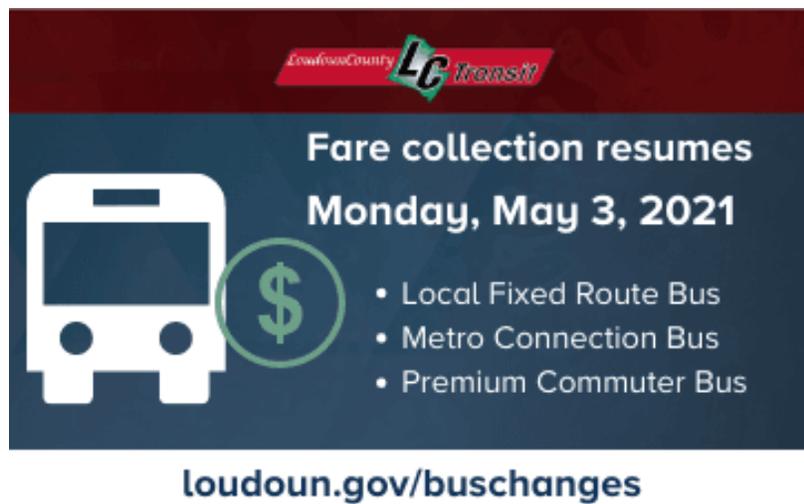
- Roadway access and ferry use along with any other pertinent transportation issues;
- Identifying legal and regulatory requirements associated with ferry operations;
- Landing site improvements and landing location options; and
- Operating alternatives that may include a public/private partnership.

Prior to closing on December 28, 2020, White's Ferry transported approximately 600 to 800 vehicles per day across the river and connected bicyclists and pedestrians between the two counties. The joint study will help evaluate the long-term feasibility and reliability of Potomac River ferry service between Loudoun and Montgomery Counties and help identify alternatives

for ferry operations with a common goal of re-establishing daily ferry service that benefits the greater community. The study is expected to begin within the next 30 days and be completed within 90 days of the start date.

Transit Fare Collection Resumes: Loudoun County Transit will resume fare collection on all bus routes on Monday, May 3rd. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, bus fares were waived.

In preparation for this service change, riders are encouraged to review the fares for their trips on the [transit website](#). SmartTrip cards and/or cash will be accepted for all Commuter Bus, Metro Connection Bus and Local Bus routes. Riders of the Route 40 Purcellville Connector will still use cash only or the Virginia Regional Transit punch pass.



Loudoun County Launches New Transit App: The transit app is available for free download to iPhone and Android phones. For instructions on downloading the app, frequently asked questions and to learn about the App's functionality, visit [here](#).

Upon launching the app, Loudoun County transit riders will see nearby options and departure times for local, commuter and Metro connection bus services. App users will have the ability to receive important service alerts and breaking news information directly on the transit app's home screen. Users of the app can customize how they receive service alerts through their mobile phone's notifications by signing up for push notifications for specific routes. Helpful features of the transit app will allow users to :

- Check Nearby Departures.
 - Track Their Ride.
 - Plan a Trip.
 - Get Step-by-Step Directions.
 - Identify Favorite Bus Routes.
 - Connect with the Regional Transit Network.
-

SolarizeNOVA: A program that reduces the cost and complexity of going solar by providing a one-stop shop for education and installation. This grassroots, community-based outreach initiative is managed by the nonprofit, **Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP)**. Through June 30th, you can utilize SolarizeNOVA to access discounted prices and vetted installers through a competitive bidding process, and experts at LEAP will be by your side to provide ongoing customer support and education to make the experience as streamlined as possible. Join now by visiting the **website** and help make Loudoun solar. Loudoun's clean energy future starts with your roof!