

Dulles Direct Newsletter December 2017

Welcome to the December edition of the Dulles Direct newsletter. I hope you had a wonderful Christmas holiday, and you have a safe and enjoyable New Year's celebration.

As I'm sure most of you have heard, Christmas Eve was a difficult one in Loudoun after two of our Sheriff's deputies were shot in Sterling while attempting to deescalate an abusive situation involving a 19 year old woman and her father. The suspect in this case pulled a gun on the deputies and fired several times. He has been charged with attempted capital murder, among other things. I know one of the deputy's well, as he used to serve here in Dulles South. I have not spoken directly with them, but I've heard that both deputies are recovering without surgery and that their prognosis is good. It is gratifying to see our community quickly mobilize to support the injured officers and their families.

In other news, we recently received the final financial report for FY17 which ended on June 30th. I'm pleased to report that we ended with a surplus of \$84 million. Of that, about \$15 million comes from Loudoun County Public Schools, and the rest from County government. This surplus is a reflection of both higher

In This Issue

[I-66 Tolling](#)

[Greenway Widening](#)

[Elderly Tax Relief](#)

[Evergreen Mills and Stone Springs Intersection](#)

[New Dulles North Elementary Site](#)

[County Pursues Agreement with D.C. United to Locate Offices and Second Division Franchise in Loudoun](#)

[Dulles South Recreation and Community Center/Senior Center Update](#)

[Tall Cedars and Riding Center Intersection](#)

[Route 50 Corridor Study](#)

[Northstar Boulevard - Route 50 to Shreveport Drive](#)

than expected revenues, and a concerted effort throughout our organization to be cost-conscious and to under spend budgets when possible. Many thanks to staff across departments for being good stewards of taxpayer funds.

The Finance Committee recommended that the Board allocate about \$43 million of that funding to a variety of projects and needs (such as replenishing our capital projects contingency fund, funding a safety audit of Evergreen Mills Road, smoothing out our equipment replacement fund, adding classrooms to Lucketts Elementary School and a wastewater treatment plant to serve County facilities in that area, among others). The rest, about \$39 million, is being reserved for the next fiscal year, where it will help us fund items without needing new revenue, thus keeping the tax rate lower. The full Board will vote on that recommendation in January, and we will begin our FY2019 budget process in early February.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

I-66 Tolling

A hot topic in our region has been the implementation of tolls on I-66 inside the Beltway, except for those with 2 or more people in the car. All vehicles with an EZ-Pass transponder are now able to use it, but you'll have to pay, similar to the HOT lanes on the Beltway. Pricing is entirely demand and congestion based. If you have a hybrid with a clean special fuel plate, you can no longer use I-66 unless you pay. The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors opposed this concept, but we were unsuccessful in our efforts to prevent it.

My issues with the I-66 tolls are as follows: 20,000 hybrid drivers were kicked off the road, despite not actually having congestion from hybrids or HOV riders during peak periods (as much as half of the drivers on I-66 were violators, but enforcement was almost non-existent). Beyond that, the restricted hours were extended, which punished people who got up early to get to Arlington or DC to work. Finally, Loudoun commuters pay some of the highest tolls in the country. They have to deal with tolls on the Greenway,

[Residential Parking District Adjacent to John Champe High School](#)

[Braddock Road and Summerall Drive/Supreme Drive Improvements Community Meeting](#)

[Proposed Through Truck Restriction on Goshen Road](#)

[Retail/Commercial Updates](#)

[Announcements](#)



Matthew F. Letourneau
Dulles District Supervisor
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

Chairman
[Finance, Government Operations and Economic Development Committee](#)

First Vice Chairman
[Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Board of Directors](#)

Secretary-Treasurer
[Northern Virginia Transportation Commission](#)

Dulles Toll Road, and now this. Even within Virginia, we are being singled out unfairly, and I've had enough of it. Even when the tolls went into effect, the costs peaked at close to \$40.00 for one way in the AM period. PM costs have trended lower. I was a guest on the Kojo Nnamdi radio show for a discussion that included Secretary of Transportation Aubrey Layne where I reiterated all of the concerns over this plan that I had expressed at every step along the way-you can listen to that discussion [here](#).

At our December meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, I supported a motion by my colleague, Supervisor Ron Meyer (Broad Run), to call on VDOT to make changes to the program or suspend it. However, an alternative motion was offered by a member of the Arlington County Board to defer any discussion on the tolling plan until the January meeting of NVTC. I spoke forcefully against that motion, arguing that we didn't need to see more data to know that the hours of operation for tolling should revert back to the previous rules, and that commuters shouldn't be used as guinea pigs while VDOT figures out algorithms. Further, I have heard nothing from the Secretary of Transportation that suggests that VDOT has any intention of changing anything - they seem to be doubling down on this and arguing that everything is going well.

Despite our objections, the motion to defer passed the Commission on a 13-5 vote. Voting no were: myself, Supervisor Meyer, outgoing Delegate Jim LeMunyon (Fairfax/Loudoun), Delegate Dave LaRock (Loudoun) and Senator Jennifer Wexton (Loudoun) - you may notice a geographic trend. Jim LeMunyon was the sponsor of the legislation in the General Assembly that would have blocked the tolling program (which did not pass). So, we'll continue this discussion at NVTC in January and I'll work with my regional colleagues to try to build support for a resolution that will pressure VDOT to make changes. On the plus side, I did have several discussions with fellow commissioners who were open to joining our side of this, but weren't ready to do it that evening. I have some specific concerns that

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Commission](#)

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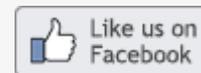
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Quick Links



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Dulles District Site](#)

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I have shared with VDOT about signage and notification for commuters of toll rates as well.

Greenway Widening

Speaking of tolls, while we were unsuccessful in court to try to get tolls lowered on the Greenway, we have made progress at least trying to improve what you get for your money. Last year, I introduced a Board Member Initiative with Supervisor Meyer and Supervisor Tony Buffington (Blue Ridge) directing a review of the comprehensive agreement between VDOT and TRIP II, which operates the Toll Road. My suspicion was that TRIP II was not holding up its end of the agreement because the Level of Service (a technical term regarding roadway congestions) had deteriorated at interchanges and at the beginning and end of the Greenway. Since that time, we've learned some very interesting things, and I do believe that the agreement was not being comprehensively reviewed by VDOT as it should have been every year. Besides changes to some lane configurations at the Loudoun County Parkway off ramp, the Greenway had just announced that it will be widening the road east of the toll booth as you head toward the Dulles Toll Road. This is a big deal, as it is a major cause of congestion almost every single day. I have to believe that the pressure we've put on the Greenway contributed to this decision. I intend to follow through on all of my concerns and questions and will continue to work with VDOT and the County to ensure that the terms of the agreement are being met. I would love nothing more than for the state to require the Greenway to institute distance pricing, but that is now out of our control. This is the best that I can do to try to get some relief.

Elderly Tax Relief Expansion

The Board voted 8-1 to approve an expansion of the allowance for elderly tax relief. I voted against this expansion, for reasons I will explain. Currently, seniors (over age 65) with an annual income of \$72,000 and a net worth of up to \$440,000 (not including the residence and up to three acres of property) are eligible for 100% real property tax relief.

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The Board expanded the program to provide 50% real property tax relief to those over age 65 that fall within the following income and net worth limits:

- Annual income does not exceed \$65,000 and net worth is greater than \$440,000 but does not exceed \$560,000; or
- Annual income does not exceed \$59,000 and net worth is greater than \$560,000 but does not exceed \$680,000; or
- Annual income does not exceed \$52,000 and net worth is greater than \$680,000 but does not exceed \$800,000; or
- Annual income does not exceed \$46,000 and net worth is greater than \$800,000 but does not exceed \$920,000.

I would have been open to changing the program to help make it fairer. But a further expansion of what is already one of the most generous programs in the entire nation is too much for me. The fiscal impact of this decision will be in the millions. This tax relief is not free - the burden just becomes greater for everybody else who doesn't get it. So, in effect, we've raised taxes on everybody who doesn't qualify in order to expand the program for those that do. Nobody appreciates our elderly citizens more than I do - it is why I fought so hard to get the Dulles South Senior Center built. But there are many in this County who are struggling to meet ends meet and don't get any tax relief. People who don't have a net worth of \$900,000, for instance! At some point, we have to draw a line, and to me, this is just too much. It's never fun being the only "no" vote, especially against something that will be politically popular among the constituency that benefits, but I felt I needed to speak up on behalf of everybody else that will literally be paying for this. To me, there is just a basic level of unfairness for the County to be giving tax relief to people with that kind of net worth when I know very well there are many who have almost no net worth - just debt - but aren't elderly and therefore don't get anything.

Evergreen Mills and Stone Springs Intersection

The Board has approved the needed funding for a dedicated right turn lane to be added for turns from east bound Evergreen Mills Road onto southbound Stone Springs Boulevard. We have been looking at ways to improve traffic flow between the Belmont Ridge and Stone Springs intersections on Evergreen Mills for quite some time. The recent opening of Loudoun County Parkway to Route 606 has helped the corridor tremendously, but there are still some improvements needed.

The turn lane will require some right of way and easement acquisitions as well as mitigation of impacts to adjacent properties. The total cost is \$1.4 million and work on design and engineering should begin this spring.

New Dulles North Elementary Site

After a long search, the School Board along with the Board of Supervisors has approved moving forward on the purchase of a 13 acre site for the future ES-31. The site is located on the east side of Belmont Ridge Road, north of Waxpool Road. The property purchase price is \$3.7 million. The construction funding for this school was approved during a bond referendum in November 2015 and the funds were already appropriated in our CIP during FY18. The School Board anticipates the school to open for the fall of 2019. This is not a perfect site for a school, but finding land in the densely populated areas of the County is increasingly difficult. It also wasn't a perfect contract, and has spurred some continued discussions over how contracts are formulated for school sites. There will be more to come on that issue.

County Pursues Agreement with D.C. United to Locate Offices and Second Division Franchise in Loudoun

For several years, I have been engaged in discussions with D.C. United to make a home in Loudoun County. We now have an incredible opportunity to bring a global sports franchise to Loudoun and to build upon the already-strong youth soccer programs in our County. At our January 10, 2018 Public Hearing, the Board will be considering a proposed Memorandum of

Agreement (MOA) between the County and D.C. United to locate team offices and training facilities on county-owned property at Philip A. Bolen Memorial Park. The County would also become home to D.C. United's professional second division team.

The team will be repaying the County for the cost of constructing its facilities, so this agreement is a win for our finances and for our residents. We will provide land for the facilities and approximately \$15 million in financing for construction of the fields, offices, training facility and an approximately 5,000-seat stadium. D.C. United will make regular lease payments to the County that will fully offset any debt payments incurred as part of the financing package.

Four soccer fields will be constructed adjacent to the facility, two of which will serve as the team practice fields and two of which will have shared use with the County during peak recreational periods. The stadium will be available for other purposes, such as college sports, concerts and other events. Approximately 50 employees would work at the United facility and the second division team is expected to play a 30-game schedule, with 15 home dates.

DULLES DISTRICT UPDATES

Dulles South Recreation and Community Center/Senior Center

We still don't have a firm opening date, but we're getting close to being able to announce one. The final stages of systems testing and outfitting is occurring in the facility right now. There will be further updates soon.

Tall Cedars and Riding Center Intersection

I received confirmation that the signal warrant study submitted to VDOT by Toll Brothers has been approved for a signal at the intersection of Tall Cedars Parkway and Riding Center Drive. Prior attempts to get approval of a signal had been unsuccessful as it was found to not meet warrant criteria. The signal itself is

proffered by Toll Brothers and they have already engaged an engineer to begin the design process. We expect installation to be complete by the end of 2018.

Commercial Break-we've struggled in our area with four way stop sign intersections. Here's what the DMV has to say:

A reminder that according to the Virginia Driver's Manual ([here](#)), "Octagon (Stop): This eight-sided shape always means stop. You must come to a complete stop at the sign, stop line, pedestrian crosswalk or curb. Wait for any vehicle or pedestrian to clear the way. At some intersections you'll find a sign beneath the stop sign that reads "All Way" or "4 Way." At these intersections all vehicles on all roads leading into the intersection must stop. If you get to the intersection at the same time as other vehicles, the driver on the left must yield to the driver on the right."



Route 50 Corridor Study

Last year, I worked to put together a Route 50 Task Force that would work jointly with and include representatives from Fairfax County. Unfortunately, I was unable to gain any buy in from their Board, though we were able to have some discussions at a staff level.

Here in Loudoun, we commissioned a study of the Route 50 corridor, looking at improvements that could be made to help traffic flow and access on this vital route. The recommendations of that study were

provided to the Board as part of our December meeting. Those recommendations ranged from small turn lane improvements all the way to a new parallel northern collector road that would provide a direct connection to Air and Space Parkway on Route 28.

The Board unanimously approved forwarding several intersection improvements to our CIP discussion early next year. I have identified some additional improvements from the study to submit for consideration as part of the CIP as well. During our budget process, I will be looking for ways to fund as many of these as possible. The concept of a northern collector road has also been moved forward for further discussion with impacted parties such as MWAA and Fairfax County and I look forward to participating in that dialog.

The item that came to the Board with the full study attached is available [here](#).

Northstar Boulevard - Route 50 to Shreveport Drive

The County's project to construct Northstar Boulevard from Tall Cedars Parkway in Stone Ridge to Shreveport Drive in Brambleton continues. It has been split into two phases, the first (Tall Cedars to Route 50) is nearly complete with the design process, and construction funding should be fully in place in FY2019.

The second phase (Route 50 to Shreveport Drive) just received Board approval to award a contract for design services this month. That segment is much longer and will take a significant amount of work to design as it goes north from Route 50. Funding for construction is currently scheduled to be fully in place in FY2019, though we are pursuing funding from regional sources for that and that could impact the timeline.

Residential Parking District Adjacent to John Champe High School

The Board approved the implementation of a Residential Parking District in the Village Run neighborhood adjacent to John Champe High School. The action is a result of a request made by the Stone

Ridge HOA on behalf of residents in the area that were experiencing extreme overflow parking from the school. Residents also completed the required petition process to show support from a majority of homeowners in the identified area. When implemented, parking on the neighborhood streets next to the school will be by resident permit only. Sacred Mountain Street was not included in the district, though VDOT is considering parking restrictions there due to limited space for buses using the street to access the school.

Braddock Road and Summerall Drive/Supreme Drive Improvements Community Meeting

The Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure is completing preliminary engineering for intersection improvements at Braddock Road and Summerall Drive/Supreme Drive and associated roadway improvements along Braddock Road between Kilkeen Way/Crested Wheat Drive and Foley Headwaters Street. A community meeting will be held on January 11, 2018 at Pinebrook Elementary School to present the design concepts and receive public input. The meeting will occur between 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM.

Proposed Through Truck Restriction on Goshen Road

VDOT is considering the proposed restriction of through truck traffic on Goshen Road from Northstar Boulevard to Route 50. The proposed alternate route for trucks is via Northstar Boulevard to Tall Cedars Parkway to Stone Springs Boulevard to Route 50. The Board of Supervisors has expressed concerns about this alternative route for trucks, which will send them through densely populated neighborhoods.

RETAIL/COMMERCIAL UPDATES

I have added a section to the newsletter that will provide information related to ongoing retail and commercial development in the Dulles South area. That seems to be the most frequently asked topic, especially updates on Avonlea.

Avonlea

Peterson Companies continues efforts to recruit tenants for Avonlea. They have told me that they are moving closer to getting the commitments needed to restart work at the site. There has been some leasing activity for smaller tenants, and they are closer to gaining the commitment for a larger tenant needed to move forward with construction. I expect that there will be more concrete news to announce in the March 2018 timeframe.

Arcola Center-Wegmans and Google

Last month, Supervisor Buffington and I confirmed rumors that Wegmans has signed a contract contingent on a large rezoning. The rezoning is primarily related to conversion of property for a major Google data center. Wegmans has stated that they are not providing any timelines for construction of a store there as it is dependent on any approvals and site preparation that may be needed before they can begin. They also allow a minimum of two years between the opening of stores in the same area and the Chantilly store will not open until mid-2018.

Dulles Landing

With the holidays, there were a lot of complaints about access out of Dulles Landing. There is no exit to Route 50 because the developer would have had to build another lane on 50 to merge, and that was cost prohibitive for them to do. Perhaps someday we can make that happen between various developers, but the County can't fund a project like that. We can, and we are, continuing Dulles West Boulevard to the west where it can connect with other roads that will provide a route out of 50.

In the meantime, traffic has grown worse on Loudoun County Parkway between Old Ox Road and 50. It hasn't helped that we had an unusually high number of accidents during the PM commute at the 50/606 intersection. VDOT has looked at signal timing of both Dulles West Blvd and 606/50 and made adjustments, but when things get bad at the intersection, it does impact traffic exiting Dulles Landing. Personally, I've found it to be very hit or

miss. Some nights, I've seen very heavy traffic. Other nights, I've had no problem at all leaving in the middle of rush hour with my Coal Fire Pizza to eat at home. Obviously, we continue to talk to VDOT about this all the time, but there are no easy fixes. They can't just add a right turn lane, because it has to line up properly to Route 50 which it wouldn't. So, it will take a bigger fix. The interchange is many years away.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

VDOT Snow Removal

When the snow begins to fall this winter and we have an event of at least 2"; VDOT's goal is to have at least one passable lane on every road within 24 hours when snowfall is 2-4", 48 hours for 4-6", over 6" is expected to be at least 72 hours. If you feel that your street is missed after these timeframes have passed, you can use the resources below to get more information on plowing status and/or report your issue directly to VDOT:

- www.virginiadot.org/novaemergency:for news releases, important messages, frequently asked questions and links to many other resources, including:
- [@vadotnova](https://twitter.com/vadotnova) on Twitter
- www.511virginia.org for road conditions and traffic cameras
- www.vdotplows.org for neighborhood status and locations of plows
- www.my.vdot.virginia.gov or 800-FOR-ROAD (367-7623) to report issues

Notary Services

Loudoun County Public Library now offers free notary services at its eight branches. Licensed professional notary publics are available by appointment. Walk-in appointments may be accepted, but customers are strongly encouraged to call ahead.

For more information, visit

<https://library.loudoun.gov/Services/Notary>.

Dulles South Food Pantry

The Dulles South Food Pantry provides food assistance to any person who resides in the school attendance

zones for Freedom High School, John Champe High School or the upcoming Independence High School in Brambleton. 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 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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